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FACULTE DES SCIENCES ET DE
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EVALUATION

***THE ROLE OF INTERACTIONS ON THE
ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENTS IN
ECONOMICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
YAOUNDE IV - MFOUNDI DIVISION***

*A Dissertation of a Master's Degree of Education defended on 15th
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This Master's dissertation entitled "*The Role of Interactions on the Engagement of Students in Economics in Secondary Schools in Yaoundé IV - Mfoundi Division*" has been read and approved by the undersigned as meeting the requirements of the University of Yaoundé 1 (UY1)

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EXAMINER

SECRETARY

DECLARATION

I, MBAH KINGSLEY TEKUM, a student of the Department of Curriculum and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Yaoundé 1, with the registration Number 21V3696, hereby declare that this piece of work entitled “*The Role of Interactions on the Engagement of Students in Economics in Secondary Schools in Yaoundé IV - Mfoundi Division*”, under the supervision of **Pr. MAINGARI Daouda**, is my personal work and all used materials have been acknowledged by means of quotations and references.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that MBAH Kingsley TEKUM, registration number 21V3696, a student in the Department of Curriculum and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education at the University of Yaoundé 1, has satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Education. This work, entitled *“The Role of Interactions on the Engagement of Students in Economics in Secondary Schools in Yaoundé IV - Mfoundi Division”*, under my guidance and supervision, was carried out in the Department of Curriculum and Evaluation, and in the specialty of Curriculum Developer and evaluator. The work embodied in this research is original, and has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree of this institution, or in another University.

President of Jury

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Date ____/____/2024

DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my beloved parents,

Mr. NJASAP John TCHANDA, and

Mrs. NJASAP Lucia NGUM,

To my lovely wife, Mrs. Tekum Shirley Agwa,

As well as to the Cameroon Secondary School Community,

Especially, the 0525 community of Economics Teachers

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TABLE OF CONTENT

APPROVAL.....	i
DECLARATION	ii
CERTIFICATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENT	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONMYS.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
RÉSUMÉ.....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Study	2
Historical Background	2
Contextual Background	4
Social Learning Theory (SLT)	6
Self - Determination Theory	7
The Theory of Social Constructivism	7
Conceptual Background	8
Curriculum in Education.....	9
The New syllabi for secondary schools	12
General Presentation of the Economics Syllabus.....	13
Place of the Syllabus in the Curricula	13
Contribution of the Teaching Syllabus to the Broad Area (Field) - of – Learning	13
Contribution of the Teaching Syllabus to One or More Areas-of-Living	13
Statement of the Problem	14
Purpose of the Study.....	14
Objectives of the Study	17
General Objective.....	17
Research Questions	18
General research question	18
Specific research questions	18
	vi

Hypotheses of the Study	18
General hypothesis	18
Specific hypotheses	18
Significance of the Study	19
To the Teacher:	19
To the Learner:	19
To the School:	19
To the Government:	20
To the Economics Community:	20
Justification of the research	20
Delimitation of the Study	21
Definition of Operational Terms	21
CHAPTER TWO	23
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	23
Conceptual Framework	23
Rational for Classroom interactions (CI) and the Economics syllabus	23
Classroom Interactions and types	25
Teacher - Student Relationship (TSR)	27
Student - Content Relationship (SCR)	32
Student-Student Relationship (SSR)	40
Student Engagement	44
Cognitive Engagement	46
Emotional Engagement	47
Behavioural Engagement	48
Agentic Engagement	48
Students' Engagement and Teacher – Student Relationship	49
Students' Engagement and Student-Content Relationship	51
Students' Engagement and Student-Student Relationship	52
Theoretical Framework (SLT)	54
Social Learning Theory	54
Self-Determination Theory	56
Social Constructivism Theory (SCT)	57
Empirical Studies	58
Research Gap	62
CHAPTER THREE	63

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	63
Area of the Study	63
Research Design	64
Population of the study, sampling technique and sample size	65
Table 5: Table of population and sample size for quantitative study	67
Instruments used for data collection	68
Pilot Study and reliability measurement	70
Data analysis	71
Techniques for hypothesis testing	72
Ethical considerations	72
CHAPTER FOUR	74
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	74
Introduction	74
Descriptive Findings	74
Demographic Profiles of Respondents	74
Descriptive Analysis of the Independent and Dependent variables	75
Teacher - Student Relationship on Students' Engagement in Economics	75
Table 9: Summary of Descriptive statistics	81
Qualitative Findings	85
CHAPTER FIVE	91
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, PROPOSALS, AND CONCLUSION	91
Discussion of the Findings	91
The Role of Teacher - Student Relationship on Students' Engagement in Economics	91
Proposals of the Study	97
Conclusion of the Study	98
Implications of the research	99
Suggestions for future studies	100
REFERENCES	102
APPENDIXES	114

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AL:	Advanced Level
ANOVA:	Analysis of Variance
CBA:	Competency Based Approach
CGCEE:	Cameroon General Certificate of Education Examination
CI:	Classroom Interaction
HCD:	Human Capital Development
HCDI:	Human Capital Development Index
HCI:	Human Capital Index
LYF – M:	Learner – Younger one – Friend Model
MKO:	More Knowledgeable Others
NDS30:	National Development Strategy 2020 – 2030
OL:	Ordinary Level
SCR:	Student – Content Relationship
SCT:	Social Constructivism Theory
SEE:	Students’ Engagement in Economics
SLT:	Social Learning Theory
SSR:	Student – Student Relationship
TSR:	Teacher – Student Relationship
ZPD:	Zone of Proximal Development

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of Areas of life and Problematic family of situations to be treated in the 1 st Cycle of Cameroon's Anglophone system of education	4
Table 2: Summary of Macro curriculum of the Cameroon Secondary General Education	33
Table 3: Presentation of the Families of Situations Covered by the Ordinary Level Economics Syllabus	36
Table 4: Summary Table of Content of the Different Modules of the Ordinary Level Economics Syllabus	36
Table 5: Table of Population and sample size	66
Table 6: Questionnaire options and weights for the Likert Scale	68
Table 7: Demographics of the Respondents.....	74
Table 8: Teacher - Student Relationship on Students' Engagement in Economics	75
Table 9: Student - Content Interaction on Students' Engagement in Economics	77
Table 10: Student - Student Relationship on Students' Engagement in Economics.....	78
Table 11: Affective Engagement of Students	79
Table 12: Cognitive Engagement of students	79
Table 13: Behavioural Engagement of students.....	80
Table 14: Agentic Engagement of students.....	81
Table 15: Summary of Descriptive statistics.....	81
Table 16: Model Summary of Interactions	83
Table 17: ANOVA table for Interactions and Students' Engagement in Economics	83
Table 18: Coefficients ^a for Interactions and student Engagement	83

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Different models of Engagement adapted from Skinner and Pitzer	45
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Interactions and Engagement based upon the conceptual Literature.	53
Figure 3: Social Learning theory of Bandura.....	54
Figure 4: The Cognitive Processes of Bandura’s Social Learning Theory	55
Figure 5: Map of Cameroon showing the various regions (left) and position of Sub-division of Yaoundé 4 (right)	64

ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of Teacher–Student, Student–Content, and Student–Student interactions on students' engagement in Economics education. The research is situated within the framework of curriculum implementation in Cameroon secondary schools, focusing on Form 4 Economics classes in Yaoundé IV Mfoundi Division. The central aim was to evaluate how classroom interactions influence student engagement, especially given concerns about classroom disengagement and the increasing need for economically literate graduates. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 306 students across 18 secondary schools in Yaoundé IV municipality using structured questionnaires. Qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations in three Economics classes. Quantitative analysis using regression revealed that the overall model was significant ($F(3, 302) = 43.016, p < .001$), explaining 29.2% of the variance in students' engagement in Economics. Specifically, Teacher–Student Relationship ($\beta = .269, p < .001$), Student–Content Relationship ($\beta = .354, p < .001$), and Student–Student Relationship ($\beta = .163, p < .001$) were all significant predictors. Qualitative findings aligned with the quantitative results, reinforcing the importance of classroom interactions. The study concludes that Teacher–Student, Student–Content, and Student–Student relationships are significant predictors of student engagement in Economics education. These findings hold implications for educators and policymakers aiming to improve engagement and learning outcomes in Economics. Proposals of the research holds that teachers should be provided with training and professional development programs that focus on building strong teacher-student relationships, as well as implement the LYF – Model to building a strong TSR given that teachers are still at the center of enforcing different levels of interactions amongst learners and content. By fostering positive relationships among students and between teachers and students, and between the students and content, educators can create a more supportive and engaging learning environment that promotes academic success.

Keywords: Student – Teacher Relationship, Student – Content Relationship, Student – Student Relationship, Students' Engagement, Economics, classroom, Curriculum

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude a examiné le rôle des interactions enseignant–élève, élève–contenu et élève–élève sur l'engagement des élèves dans l'enseignement de l'Économie. La recherche s'inscrit dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du curriculum des établissements secondaires du Cameroun, en mettant l'accent sur les classes de Form 4 en Économie dans l'arrondissement de Yaoundé IV, département du Mfoundi. L'objectif principal était d'évaluer comment les interactions en classe influencent l'engagement des élèves, notamment face aux préoccupations croissantes liées au désengagement en classe et au besoin croissant de diplômés économiquement alphabétisés. Une approche méthodologique mixte a été utilisée. Les données quantitatives ont été recueillies auprès de 306 élèves dans 18 établissements secondaires de la municipalité de Yaoundé IV à l'aide des questionnaires structurés. Les données qualitatives ont été collectées par des observations lors des classes de trois cours d'Économie. L'analyse quantitative par régression a révélé que le modèle global était significatif ($F(3, 302) = 43.016, p < .001$), expliquant 29,2 % de la variance de l'engagement des élèves en Économie. En particulier, la relation enseignant–élève ($\beta = .269, p < .001$), la relation élève–contenu ($\beta = .354, p < .001$) et la relation élève–élève ($\beta = .163, p < .001$) se sont toutes avérées être des prédicteurs significatifs. Les résultats qualitatifs ont corroboré les données quantitatives, soulignant davantage l'importance des interactions en classe. L'étude conclut que les relations enseignant–élève, élève–contenu et élève–élève sont des prédicteurs significatifs de l'engagement des élèves dans l'enseignement de l'Économie. Ces résultats présentent des implications pour les enseignants et les décideurs politiques qui souhaitent améliorer l'engagement et les résultats d'apprentissage en Économie. L'étude recommande que les enseignants bénéficient de formations et de programmes de développement professionnel axés sur le renforcement des relations enseignant–élève, ainsi que la mise en œuvre du modèle LYF pour bâtir une forte relation pédagogique, étant donné que l'enseignant reste au centre de la promotion des différents niveaux d'interactions entre les apprenants et les contenus. En favorisant des relations positives entre élèves, entre enseignants et élèves, ainsi qu'entre élèves et contenus, les enseignants peuvent créer un environnement d'apprentissage plus favorable et stimulant, propice à la réussite académique.

Mots-clés: relation enseignant–élève, relation élève–contenu, relation élève–élève, engagement des élèves, Économie, salle de classe, curriculum.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The quality of delivery of education is affected by the quality of the environment in which education takes place. Education is the erecting of skills, knowledge and values into learners. This primarily takes place through teaching. Over the years, greater concerns have been given to how learners learn and what has to be put in place for effective learning to take place. It is possible for learners to be in an atmosphere of teaching but without any learning taking place. Therefore, the teaching and learning process has to be an effective one, where we find learners actually grasping what is being taught by the teachers. All human experience is ultimately social (Dewey 2003). This means, education, which is an aspect of human experiences of learning through teaching, has a social aspect of it. Hallinan (2008) postulated that “Learning is a process that involves cognitive and social psychological dimensions, and both processes should be considered if academic achievement is to be maximised.” Teaching is considered a demanding and challenging social activity in our society with the ultimate goal of training students to acquire the ability, knowledge, social values and skills in order to apply and integrate them in the community (Juchniewicz, 2008). Teaching and learning being social activities, implies the room and latitude for interactions. Thus, learning takes place through interactions. Interactions on its part should go a long way to bring about engagement in the learners as the teaching process takes place. It won’t be an overstatement to say that better interaction enhances the engagement of students during the teaching and learning process. This is actually what this research will be looking at; the role of interactions in the engagement of students in Economics at the secondary school. Also, the teaching and learning process is determined by the nature in which curriculum and curriculum goals are designed. This is because teaching and learning are aspects of the implementation of curriculum. Hence, this research is founded on the basis of evaluating how the curriculum for the Cameroon secondary schools and syllabus for Economics are actually implemented in the classroom, taking into consideration the psychological aspects of classroom interactions and engagement of students.

Ellis (1990) stated that interaction is meaning-focused and is carried out to facilitate the exchange of information and prevent communication breakdowns. If learners must learn well, communication, which is the transfer of information and feelings, has to be effective. Interaction is a channel through which this communication is channelled. Interaction has three main domains; learner - instructor interaction, learner - content interaction and learner - learner interaction (Moore, 1989). Interactions in the school classroom makes the teaching and learning

process to run smoothly in that it permits communication to happen in the classroom, helps the instruction to reach the target - which is the students, breach the gap between the teachers and the learners and increases the level of students' engagement in whatever they are learning. Engagement has three main domains that are frequently mentioned within classroom based learning which are affective engagement, cognitive engagement and behavioural engagement (Fredericks et al., 2004; Parsons and Taylor, 2011). However, in addition to this, a further form of engagement - agentic engagement has recently been introduced by Reeve and Tseng (2011). When interaction takes place in the classroom, learners are engaged in learning and this is adequately reflected in their academic performance as it experiences a boost. Engagement has a positive relationship with improved educational outcomes which teachers must see as a construct that is relevant for all students (Christenson et al., 2012, p. vii). As such, with regards to academic achievement and enjoyment of learning, evidences have revealed that students who are intrinsically motivated and inherently interested or engaged in the learning process will more effectively master classroom assignments and achieve higher levels (Harter, 2012a, p. 273). Disengaged learners hardly experience high academic achievement. This is all reflected in the implementation of interaction in the learning process. Therefore, interactions are a necessity for students' engagement in the learning of Economics at the secondary schools in Cameroon as it helps to increase their performance in the subject.

Background of the Study

Historical Background

Education in Cameroon is being offered by the private and public sectors. In both sectors, their practices of education have been subjected under the different evolutions of education. The evolution of education has consistently seen the gradual incorporations of all forms of classroom interactions for engagement to take place. Through this evolution, one can better assess the level of interactions in our secondary schools as well as to see the need for emphasis on it, as it goes a long way to influence the level of engagement in the teaching-learning process. The study of the evolution of education framework has to go through four basic stages. Education has effectively evolved through three of these stages, the fourth being awaited. This ultimately presents different forms of interactions in order to meet the needs of the industry as well as to produce the right quality of students.

Education 1.0 or classroom 1.0 is one that reflects an authoritarian teaching setting where the student is only a passive receiver of the concepts or ideas taught by their respective teachers. It was a traditional form of education which saw a large part of teaching being carried

out by teachers alone. Hence, it was more of a teacher-centred system. The teacher does all the talking while the learners sit back to only receive the information taught. The teacher takes the authoritarian position while the learner takes the passive position. Learner - teacher interaction as well as learner – Learner interaction was at minimal. In such a learning atmosphere, engagement is minimal as learners are likely to distract themselves, since teaching is mostly one-sided. Such form of education is intrinsically revealed in some of the Cameroonian secondary schools today who believe they are operating in Education 2.0.

With respect to education 2.0, it is one that reflects the growth of communication and collaboration activities between teacher and students in a physical classroom setting. An underestimated student-centred approach is experienced, however, not fully applied. Hours of teaching are still being mentioned instead of the hours of learning by learners. All three interaction domains are still minimal. Learners are engaged at the cognitive level where they cling on the memorization of knowledge as result is on the exam-based approach. It is possible to find less affective, behavioural and agentic engagement towards learning.

Education 3.0 is one which is student-centred, whereby the teacher is transformed into a facilitator, advisor, learner and practice guide. The student is researching to acquire more knowledge under the guidance of the teacher. As teachers provide support for learning, there is a high teacher-student interaction, learner-content interaction and learner-learner interaction. Learners become engaged at different levels as there is a flip classroom method of teaching being applied, with more dialogue. This type of teaching framework is highly driven by forces such as self-directed learning, problem-solving activities, potential interactivity between the teachers and the students.

Education 4.0 sees the learners as co-creators and innovators of knowledge. Learning plans have been transformed into creativity plans with more interactive practical face-to-face exercises being carried out. It encourages the execution of projects for which learners are being evaluated rather than examined as in the case of traditional frameworks.

Education 1.0 to 3.0 depicts the level of interactions found in most of the learning classrooms of the contemporary times in the Cameroon secondary schools. From this evolution in education, it becomes necessary to find out how the delivery of education through interactions will go to influence the level of engagement of learners in their study of Economics at the secondary schools in Cameroon. However, a focus on Education 3.0, will be of priority with respect to it encapsulating all the levels of interactions, thereby providing the necessary engagements needed for learning to effectively take place. This type of education helps learners

to not only become engaged with the content but to actively use it to become problem solvers in the society. This brings in quality in the education being rendered to learners thereby grooming a better society. Student engagement has been seen as a key facilitator of academic achievement (Skinner et al., 2009; Khine, 2016). Facilitating student engagement through the right interactions will lead to higher student achievement, as well as reduce the level of student dissatisfaction and dropout rates (Quin, 2017; Lei et al., 2018). Education 4.0 is gradually creeping in, and likely to be fully practiced 2030s.

Contextual Background

Interactions and students' engagement in Cameroon's secondary schools is being shaped by the nature of its educational goals, curriculum goals, subject objectives, the approaches of teaching, as well as national goals for the country.

Cameroon's education is made up of basic, secondary and higher education. The context of secondary school education in Cameroon, which is the niche sector of this research, ranges from Form 1 to Form 5, usually referred to as first cycle secondary. According to Law No. 98/004 of 14th April, 1998 To lay down guidelines for education in Cameroon, the general goal of education in Cameroon is to train children in the intellectual, physical, civic and moral development and their smooth integration into the society, bearing in mind prevailing economic, socio-cultural and moral factors. In this light, the ultimate training goal of the secondary school curriculum is that, at the end of the first cycle, a learner should be self-reliant, to be able to keep on learning throughout his/her life, to contribute to sustainable development and become a responsible citizen.

Different learning areas and subjects have been put in place to achieve this goal. The curriculum of secondary school education has been broken down into 5 core areas of learning with each of them having a given number of disciplines (subjects) totalling 31 in number. The five areas of learning are; Languages and Literature, Science and Technology, Social Sciences (Humanities), Personal Development and Arts and national culture. As such, the learner is expected, after the first cycle of secondary education, to be able to use his/her competences from the different domains of learning, to solve problems through family of situations relating to domains of life as indicated in the table below:

Table 1: Summary of Areas of life and Problematic family of situations to be treated in the 1st Cycle of Cameroon's Anglophone system of education

S/N	Domain/Areas of life	Families of Situations to be treated in the 1 st Cycle
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1	Family and social life	➤ Participation in family life ➤ Healthy professional relationships ➤ Social integration
2	Economic life	➤ Discovery of income generating activities ➤ Discovery of the job market, social roles, jobs and professions ➤ Self-confidence, aspirations, talents, self-potential ➤ Practicing healthy eating habits
3	Environment, health and well being	➤ Preservation of the Environment ➤ Quest for a healthy life style ➤ Choosing and practicing a healthy life style
4	Citizenship	➤ Mastery of rules and regulations governing the Cameroonian society ➤ Discovery of cultural values and customs of the Cameroonian society
5	Media and Communications	➤ Discovery of the media world ➤ Discovery of Information and Communication Technologies

Source; Adapted from the Economics Syllabus for Secondary General Education by the Ministry of Secondary Education.

In the learning area of Social Sciences or Humanities, there are four disciplines which include; Citizenship Education, History, Geography and Economics. This research is based on how interactions take place in Economics in order to foster engagement of students in learning the subject, thereby contributing their own quota to the growth of the nation's economy. Judging from the goal of Education in Cameroon, objective number 7 of Law 98 says that; learners should develop creativity, a sense of initiative and a spirit of enterprise. This suffices the introduction of the subject of Economics at the secondary school, as a context of this study.

To further strengthen this view, Cameroon's vision 2035 reveals that the country is in expectation to become an emerging nation. This has actually seen a shift of the country's approach of learning from just knowledge acquisition, to learning that will help the learners to be able to cope with complex and diversified real life situations. Hence, the curriculum for secondary school education (first cycle secondary) has been geared to incorporate the change towards Competency Based Approach with an entry through real life situations as seen on table 1. This has been in effect from the 2012-2013 academic year till date.

The National Development Strategy for 2020 – 2030 (NDS30) had a lot to reveal concerning building the Human Capital Development (HCD) as one of the factors to achieve emergence and development in the country. This development can be made possible only if it hinges on a population that has the suitable characteristics such as: good training, good health, and social and economic well-being. Thus, health and education policies in a climate of good governance will allow the development of a healthy and productive human capital, hence development of the country. Generally, education as a component for development in Cameroon needs to be enhanced for proper development to be experienced. This is because the Human Capital Development Initiative (HCIDI) for the country experienced a drop from 0.42 (42%) in 2012, to 0.39 (39%) in 2017, which is below the average for Africa (0.42)¹. This drop was explained mainly by a fall in the quality of education. Some of the factors that promote the quality of education are the teacher and the teaching methods, as well as the learning environment.

With all these changes and expectations towards learners being able to solve problems by themselves through competencies acquired, the teaching of these subjects such as Economics, which is part of the inherent subjects taught for the economic development of the nation, also needs a revisit in its teaching in order to bid up amongst other subjects, the quality of education in Cameroon. This revisiting will experience a shift in the execution of the subject, with emphasis on all the levels of interactions in the classroom being necessary driving forces in birthing engagement from the learners as the teaching and learning process unfolds.

Theoretical Background

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

This theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977. It stresses on the importance of observing, modelling and imitating behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions of others. This is to say, social learning theory takes into consideration the combination of environmental

¹The Human Capital Development Initiative (HCIDI) was designed by the World Bank to advocate for increased investment in future generations. It is based on the Human Capital Index (HCI), a composite indicator that measures the ability of a new-born to reach adulthood with all its human, physical and productive potential under unchanged conditions. The HCI has three main dimensions: survival, education and health.

and cognitive factors towards human learning and behaviour. Siding with behaviourist's theories such as classical conditioning and operant conditioning, where learning takes place through direct interaction, Bandura went ahead to assert that learning takes place through observational learning and mediational processes, whereby mental factors are involved in learning. People think before they imitate an action observed from their environment. Social learning theory which was later modified to Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in 1986 goes to enhance the student - teacher interaction and behavioural engagement concepts as per the study of this research.

Self - Determination Theory

Motivation drives engagement. This means interactions should bring about motivation for engagement to take place. Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, who were psychologists at the University of Rochester, published their Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in the January 2000 Issue of the Journal of American Psychologist. This theory was developed in **1985**, to address how some people are highly motivated and engaged, while others feel alienated and disengaged from activities. It is in man's nature to get highly motivated and engaged. This motivation comes from three universal psychological needs which are competence, relatedness and autonomy. When these needs are not met, people are likely to be disengaged. There is a tendency for student-teacher relationship or interaction to bring about agentic and emotional engagement of learners towards their studies. The relatedness aspect of SDT vividly supports this view. Hence, SDT serves a relevant role in this study.

The Theory of Social Constructivism

Lev Vygotsky (1896 - 1934) developed this theory. It purports that learning occurs through social interaction and with the help of others, often in a group. Hence, the engagement and understanding that an individual develops is adjusted through social interaction. Knowledge is the outcome of interaction and engagement. It is sometimes hard for learning to take place when the learner finds a difficulty with what he or she is learning and without any assistance. In this case, engagement becomes very low. Mediated learning experiences can help reduce this situation. Mediated learning experiences involve interaction between learner and another person, appropriately, a more knowledgeable other (MKO), who can be a teacher, parent or a more cognitively advanced person. This person mediates how the learner interacts with the stimuli in the environment thereby, helping the learner makes sense out of an event or phenomenon in the environment. The more a learner works through mediated learning with a MKO, or in groups with others, engagement is heightened as it brings the learner to the zone of

proximal development, which is the distance between the individual's independent problem-solving abilities and the problem-solving abilities that same learner can display with guidance from MKO as well as collaboration with peers. This theory enhances the student - teacher interaction as well as the cognitive engagement aspects of this research study.

Conceptual Background

The teaching-learning process involves at least three parties; the facilitator (teacher), the learner and the content. It is highly visible that interactions must occur amongst these parties for the teaching-learning process to be effective, hence, a proper delivery of education to the learners. The efforts of the teacher in passing on knowledge must be compensated with the grasping of that knowledge by the learners - learning. As interaction takes place, the intermediate factor for learning has to come into play. This factor is engagement. The extent to which learners take keen attention in the process of learning at a given point in time will depend on the type and quality of interaction that are put in place at that point in time. And, the more engaged learners become, the more they are likely to increase their performance in what they are learning. Thus, the main concepts of this research include aspects such as secondary schools, curriculum, classroom, interactions, engagement, teaching and learning. They are interwoven to bring out the finesse of this project.

Classrooms are complex social systems, yet they are potentially powerful settings that can influence the development of learners as they engage in their studies. Interaction plays a vital role towards engagement in learning. (Nicholls and wells, 1985:6) asserted that it is only from interaction with other people in particular situations that the child can discover the appropriate ways of deploying his resources to achieve particular intentions. In the classroom, these interactions stem primarily from teachers and students, what is called teacher - student relationship. Relationship between teachers and students is vital for the development of students. Learners develop through knowledge and this knowledge needs engagement to get it. Hence, engagement is a function or result of the relationship between teachers and students. Thus, the sequence is teachers - learners - engagement. Interaction takes place at the level of teacher - learners. This concept was asserted by Pianta 2013, in his research on teacher - student relationships and engagement. There also exists student - content interaction as well as student - student interaction. Hence, this is in line with Tickoo (2009), who stated that, in classroom interaction activities, a productive class hour can be described as one whereby:

- The teacher interacts with the whole class
- The teacher interacts with a group, a pair or an individual pupil

- The pupils interact with each other, groups, in pairs as individuals or class
- The pupils work with materials or aids and attempt the task once again individually or in groups.

When this interaction is carried out effectively in the classroom, engagement will be the outcome.

Engagement is an outcome that teachers have on students through their interactions with them. It is about students being meaningfully engaged in learning activities through interaction with others and worthwhile tasks. Engagement is a “broad construct intended to encompass salient academic as well as certain non-academic aspects of the student experience” (Coates, 2007; p. 122). Aleksandar Tomovic (2021) defined Student engagement as the interaction between the time and effort devoted by both students and higher education institutions intended to improve the student experience and enhance learning outcomes. Kuh (2009) defined student engagement as “the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college” (p. 683). Student engagement boils down to academic achievement and performance, and this is where teachers and students will love to see themselves as interaction takes place.

Curriculum in Education

Interactions and engagement in Economics, do not just surface on their own accord. This is because they are both means to an end. The right interactions in the classroom should bring about engagement in students towards the content taught in Economics. This will further bring about the desired outcome of the objectives of Economics. The subject of Economics itself is part of the overall curriculum goal (General objectives of the curriculum) in which it is attached to - the Cameroon secondary school curriculum. Thus, interactions in the teaching of a subject are aimed at achieving that subject’s objectives as well as the curriculum objectives to which the subject is tied to. But what then is a curriculum?

There are varied definitions of what a curriculum is, and these varied definitions are due to the rising ideas of the different stakeholders involved in the usage of the term such as students, educators, researchers and administrators. However, a few definitions can be viewed of what a curriculum is. According to Pratt (1994, p.5) and Barrow and Milburn (1990, p.84), the word “curriculum” is derived from the Latin verb “Currere”, which means “to run.” This became known as a race track.

According to Richards et al. (2010: 152), a curriculum is also defined as an educational program that embodies three essential components; firstly, the educational purposes of the

program. Secondly, the content, teaching procedures, and learning experiences required to achieve those purposes. And lastly, a means of assessing whether the educational ends have been accomplished. This is in line with the definition of curriculum put forth by Ralph Tyler. (Cruickshank 2018:208-209), dubbed Tyler's publication on "Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction" in 1949 as one that has had a far-reaching effect in the field of education. According to this publication, Tyler viewed curriculum as the sum total of all the experiences that students have in school, both planned and unplanned. To him, curriculum should address four fundamental issues which are; the educational purposes for which curriculum planners seek to achieve; what are the different educational experiences that will help planners achieve these educational purposes; how will the organisation of the educational experiences be carried out; and finally, how will evaluation be done to ensure that the learning experiences have actually met the educational purposes. This view of Curriculum by Tyler incorporates aspects of interactions, especially in addressing the issues of learning experiences and their organization, to fully engage learners to the content of the curriculum.

An understanding of curriculum can stem from a narrow perspective to a broader one, as asserted by Barrow and Milburn (1990) and Beauchamp (1997). They brought out five constructs of curriculum to incorporate curriculum as a set of objectives, as a courses of study or content, as plans, as documents, and as experiences. This can be viewed below.

1. Curriculum as a set of objectives: In this case, a curriculum is a means of achieving specific educational objectives. Objectives are stated in clear behavioural and observational forms and emphasis is made on products or outcomes of that curriculum. This curriculum is often times teacher-centred or administrative centred. Teacher – centred means that the curriculum is drawn taking into consideration the teacher’s view point as a stakeholder in the curriculum development process. While administrative-centred means the curriculum is set by politicians without taking into consultation the teachers’ view point. In this case, teachers feel alienated and have less sense of interest in what they are forced to teach the learners.

2. Curricula as courses of study or content: According to Beauchamp, 1977; Wood & Davis, 1978) curriculum is understood as a process of selecting courses of study or content. In this case, the focus is on course content and not learning objectives. This is a little broader than the first. The curriculum becomes “the totality of courses that constitute a course of study offered by an institution or followed by a student” (Wood & Davies, 1978, p.16).

3. *Curricula as plans:* A curriculum is seen as a set of plans or blueprint through which educational activities can be systematically implemented. In this case, there is a combination of content and instructional methods. Hence, Pratt (1994) explains that curriculum is a plan for a sustained process of teaching and learning (p.5).

4. *Curriculum as a document:* Brady (1995), view curriculum as a document of a course program that is written on a piece of paper. Thus, such curriculum is an officially written program of study that is published by ministries such as the ministry of secondary education in Cameroon. The purpose of presenting such document is to provide teachers with a guide to follow in the curriculum process. As such, according to Barrow & Milburn, 1990, p. 84, the term curriculum in this sense is synonymous to “syllabus”.

5. *Curriculum as Experiences:* In this sense, curriculum is seen as a sum of all learning experiences that takes place in and out of the school, planned or unplanned. Marsh (1997) writes that a curriculum is; “an interrelated set of plans and experiences which a student completes under the guidance of the school” (p.5). Shao-Wen Su (2012) explains on this in that, the relationship between “plans and experiences” is intertwined, where “plans” are attributed to planned curricula in advance and “experiences” refer to unplanned happenings in the classrooms. Often times, activities are planned to be carried out. But blind eyes shouldn’t be given towards activities that may occur in the classroom. Barrow and Milburn (1990) defined curriculum as “all the experiences that a child has in school” (p.85). Thus, experiential learning in this case can be a summary of the subject matter or content being taught to the students, the actions and interactions of teachers which include attitudes, motivation and emotional connection to learners in the classroom, the actions of the students which also encompasses elements of their engagement such as attitudes, reactions and motivation, and the instructional materials and methods. This is a vital point towards classroom interactions and the engagement of students. In this light of experiential learning, the concept of hidden curriculum cannot be left out. Hidden curriculum portrays unintended messages sent to the students during the teaching-learning process, which can either be an enhancement or a detrimental factor to their learning. As teachers and students as well as administrators interact, the employment of hidden curriculum can help the learners shape their attitudes (Henry 1955).

These five views of curriculum can be seen in algebra equations as below;

1. Curricula as a *set of objectives* = **goals or objectives**.
2. Curricula as *courses of study* = **content + goals**
3. Curricula as *plans* = **content + goals + teaching methods**
4. Curricula as **document** = **content + goals + methods + assessment**
5. Curricula as *experiences* = **content + goals + methods + assessment + extracurricular activities and learning environment + hidden curriculum + cultures.**

Curriculum as experience will be a good view towards this study. This is to say, curriculum will be viewed in a broader sense of a syllabus, that incorporates goals and objectives to be attained by students as well as the methods and hidden experiences used by teachers to pass on the content of economics to the students in an environment that will help foster the student's engagement as they learn.

The "Cameroon secondary school curriculum" for the Anglophone sub system per se doesn't really exist as a single booklet or document. However, taking curriculum as a sum of all experiences a student go through under the guidance of a school, the content to be taught in the secondary school curriculum has been divided into programs of study or syllabuses. And the focus of this work is on the syllabus of Economics for Cameroon secondary schools.

A syllabus refers to a subject or discipline, for example, History, Citizenship Education, Philosophy, Geography, Economics, etc. organized in modules². Hence, the Economics syllabus is a part of all the other subjects that a student is supposed to learn or experienced in the secondary school. Economics has contributions to play in the lives of the students in line with other subjects as well in the entire curricula.

The New syllabi for secondary schools

The new syllabi for Cameroon Secondary General Education have undergone certain reforms as earlier stated. It has been divided into two levels; Level 1 is made up of forms 1 and 2; while Level 2 comprises of Forms 3, 4 and 5. They are also organised into the 5 areas of learning, with each of these areas containing a series of related disciplines or subjects. Learners

²A module is a unit of instruction or main topic, based on the resources that enable the development of particular competences. In the syllabus, a module corresponds to a theme.

are expected to acquire knowledge, competencies and attitudes in each subject as well as the area of learning.

General Presentation of the Economics Syllabus

Economics studies the efficient use of scarce resources in the production of goods and services to achieve the maximum satisfaction of economic or human wants. Learners will develop a clear understanding of the main principles of economic theory and basic economic problem of allocating resources. Learners will also acquire the skills to apply economic principles in bringing out solutions to economic and social problems within their locality, Cameroon and the world at large.

Place of the Syllabus in the Curricula

The Economics syllabus is designed to help the learners to understand the principles essential for identifying the basic economic problem, specific economic issues and the policy alternatives. It permits the learner to grasp and use the fundamental tools of economic reasoning, enabling him/her to adopt rational economic practices that can promote the attainment of economic policy objectives.

Contribution of the Teaching Syllabus to the Broad Area (Field) - of – Learning

Economics as a social science contributes to the study of economic and social phenomena in the society. It analyses situations by identifying the various factors involved in them and the interrelationships between the factors. This makes it possible for the learner to reason accurately and objectively about economic and social concerns.

Contribution of the Teaching Syllabus to One or More Areas-of-Living

This syllabus handles issues related mainly to economic life as the broad areas of living. It promotes a lasting learner's interest in economics and economics related issues. It also develops in the learner awareness of some major issues of economic policy within his/her locality, the national economy and the world.

From the foregoing discussions on the Economics syllabus for secondary schools in the General Anglophone system of education in Cameroon, it is seen that Economics has a vital role to play in the lives of learners as well as the society as a whole. Making these learners engage in the study of this subject is therefore paramount to higher order academic stakeholders such as teachers and other schools and school administrators. It is a call for concern to each of these authorities to come to the consciousness that the economic life of the nation is at stake.

Although some secondary schools leave it as an option, it is due to the consciousness of the importance of Economics to the society that has made many secondary schools in Cameroon not to render it an optional but a compulsory subject to be registered by students when it comes to the Ordinary Level Cameroon General Certificate of Education Examination (CGCEE)³.

Statement of the Problem

Learning requires engagement for better understanding. In today's fast changing educational landscape, advancing student engagement is pivotal in achieving worthy learning outcomes for learners. This is especially true when we take into consideration subjects like Economics that connects theoretical knowledge with real-life decision making. It has also been earmarked that classroom interaction is a great promoter towards enhancing students' engagement.

Positive classroom interactions contribute towards enhancing a vibrant learning environment. In such environment, students consider themselves valuable, feel motivated and stimulated intellectually to study. Pushing this further, teachers who make use of interactive strategies like group work, discussions and constructive feedback have the tendency to experience greater levels of participation and enthusiasm amongst learners (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). In the same vein, peer collaboration supports cooperative learning while helping students to build communication skills and confidence in exploring economic ideas (Gillies, 2016).

Looking at the educational framework of Cameroon, it provides an encouraging platform for learner-centered pedagogies, and as such Economics educators are constantly on the move to explore different ways through which they can make their classrooms more engaging and participatory. This is because when interactive practices are harnessed by teachers, it creates inclusive spaces for students to actively get involved in the learning process. Such environment for sure tends to promote curiosity, sustained attention, and a deeper cognitive engagement (OECD, 2017). Positive relationships and support experienced by learners develops a stronger sense of belonging and purpose to the learners in the classroom. This emotional and social connection greatly enhances their willingness to engage with content and persist through academic challenges that come their way (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer,

³The CGCEE is one of the official examinations for the Anglophone sub system of education. It is usually taken after 5years of secondary school studies; that is in Form 5. Students have the latitude of writing a maximum of 11 subjects. A pass in at least 4 subjects with combinations will guarantee a student an entrance into the high school to either take on the arts or science series.

2009). Looking at the potentials that these interactions have in transforming Economics learning experiences, it is substantial and worthy of detailed exploration. By focusing on the positive influences of classroom interactions, this study aims to find out the enabling role of classroom interactions in promoting student engagement in Economics in secondary schools in Cameroon so that we can celebrate and amplify what is working well in the Cameroonian classrooms.

The learners of Economics according to this study are adolescences who are gradually moving into adulthood. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, there is a progressive reorganization of mental processes as a result of biological maturation as well as environmental experiences. He divided these developmental stages into four. The stage concerned with learners who are related to this study is the 4th stage; Formal Operational Stage. This stage begins from 11 years. Learners can carry out abstract thought activities that aren't limited to a current time, situation or person. The children are capable of carrying out hypothetical-deductive reasoning which makes it possible for them to test hypotheses or statements and draw conclusions from the results. This means the learners know how to carry out abstract activities and at the same time possess the ability of focus. However it is also possible for this category of learners to be influenced by the effect of puberty with its accompanying negative effects such as distractions towards studies in and out of the classroom. Contrary to this reality, it has been realised that as learners grow in age, their concentration level decreases and learners are likely to quit their learning. In view to this, this is what Ryan et al. (2013) and Skinner et al. (2009) have to say; "engagement of students in learning often decreases during the transition to middle school". Another view holds that engagement by students in school starts declining early in adolescence, such that by the time of entry into high school, the evidence of this decline is so clear to a level where more than half of high school students from all types of schools are reported not to take their school or their studies seriously (Marks, 2000; Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996). At the same adolescent age, students have the means to not only withdraw energy from educational pursuits but also the ability to drop out altogether from school (NRC, 2004). Can this view be altered by the way teachers implement their classroom interaction to ensure that these learners become engaged in their studies especially in the classroom?

According to NDS30, Cameroon needs to build its human capital to achieve development. This development can be made possible only if it hinges on a population that has

the suitable characteristics such as: good training, good health, and social and economic well-being. When people have their most basic survival needs met, and have sustainable income and assets that can prosper them, they can easily contribute to the development of the nation. It will take more than governmental institutions to make this sustainable income available to school graduates or job seekers. There is a need for the appropriate authorities to device or create an entrepreneurial spirit in learners to make this sustainable income a reality for almost everyone in the country. This is also in line with one of the five structural avenues of Cameroon's HCD and wellbeing development policy – quality, education, and employability. In this light, entrepreneurship has to be strengthened amongst learners, with emphasis on the role of entrepreneurs in the society. This is also an aspect of Economics. Even though there has been a recent introduction of entrepreneurship as a subject, it is highly limited to the commercial education. Hence, enhancing the teaching of Economics suffices attention at the secondary school level. This, again, can begin with how interactions in the subject take place for better engagement.

Taking into consideration the aim of Economics and its relationship to Cameroon's educational goal, learners should be able to develop creativity, a sense of initiative and a spirit of enterprise. Judging from the complaints of many youths in the country about the level of unemployment, it suffices every learner to develop at least, basic knowledge of this entrepreneurial spirit from the study of Economics. A major portion of this aspect is treated in form 4 (which also happens to be the sampled population for this study) as per the syllabus of Economics for the OL. Statistics from the year 2014 to 2022 of the CGCEE also show that, out of the 3 major chapters in the syllabus for form 4 Economics, the chapters on Price and Market, together with Setting up of Business Units have been recurrent for paper 2, each of them occurring 9 times⁴. This means, out of 8 questions given for the examination, they have a featuring probability of 2/8. That's almost consistent for every year, to show how important they are, and also related to the goal of fostering entrepreneurial spirit in learners. Hence, there is the need to foster engagement in learners through classroom interactions.

Interactions with some learners revealed that some of them have the desire of leaving out the study of Economics at an early stage, if they were given the opportunity to do so, especially for students who will be tilting their academics towards the Science series at the high school.

⁴Compiled Past CGCEE questions for Economics from the year 2000 to 2022 (The Maker in Ordinary Level Economics)

Teachers have complaint on disengaged behaviours from students, not only in the subject of Economics but in other subjects being taught in the classroom. During my internship session in Ladybird High School Mvan - Yaoundé, I witnessed a lot of disengagement amongst learners, both with the subject of Economics and other subjects. Some teachers could hardly implement all the three levels of interactions to elicit the different levels of engagement.

The above discussions cite pertinent worries concerning the discharge of economic knowledge to learners. They include the paradoxical growth mind of learners towards being engaged in their studies as they get into their formal operational stage, threats towards the stake of the pivotal role of the study of Economics in the national secondary school curriculum to be a subject that is geared towards the study of the management of resources both at private and national levels, and building basic foundations for an entrepreneurial mind-set that will help curb the worries of an overcrowded job market. Hence, there is an urgent need to verify the extent to which interactions are implemented in the classroom to enhance the teaching and learning processes of Economics so as to spur proper engagement from learners of it. How can the learning of Economics be made more engaging to ensure that learners do have a better outcome? This can begin at the level of finding out how interactions towards the subject can enhance the engagement of its learners for a better outcome.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the role of interactions in the classroom on the engagement of students in Economics in Yaoundé IV - Mfoundi division. Over the years, there has been a growing concern about interactions in the classroom and how it affects students' engagement. However, majority of this interaction has been on the Teacher - Student interaction. Little has been done so far about all the three dimensions of classroom interactions. Hence, this research seeks to explore, from the learner's perspective, as well as the perspective of the researcher through observation, the role played by classroom interactions on student's intellectual, social, behavioural and agentic engagement.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to observe if classroom interactions have an effect on students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school, taking Form 4 students of secondary schools in Yaoundé IV municipality as case study.

Specific objectives

Specifically, this study seeks;

- To analyse the role of Teacher - Student relationship on learner's interest in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV
- To Investigate the effect of Student - Content interaction on students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV
- To Evaluate the role of Student - Student relationship on the engagement of students in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV

Research Questions

General research question

The general research question guiding this work is, does interactions have a role to play in the students' engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary school in the Yaoundé IV municipality?

Specific research questions

The specific research questions were;

- Does Teacher - Student relationship affect the manner in which students show interest in the learning of Economics at the secondary school?
- Is Student - Content interaction an influencer on the engagement of students in studying Economics at the secondary school?
- Will Student - Student relationship influence students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school?

Hypotheses of the Study

General hypothesis

The general hypothesis for this research is;

- **H₀₁**: There is no significant role played by interactions on students' engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality
- **H_{a1}**: There is a significant role played by interactions on student's engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary school in the Yaoundé IV municipality.

Specific hypotheses

- **H₀₁**: There is no significant effect of Teacher - Student interaction on students' engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality
- **H_{a1}**: There is a significant effect of Teacher - Student interaction on students' engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary school in the Yaoundé IV municipality.
- **H₀₂**: There is no significant influence of Student - Content relationship on students' engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality

- **Ha2:** There is a significant influence of Student - Content interaction on student's engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary school in the Yaoundé IV municipality.
- **Ho3:** There is no significant influence of Student - Student relationship on how students engage in the study of Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality
- **Ha3:** There is a significant influence of Student - Student relationship on how students engage in the study of Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality.

Significance of the Study

To the Teacher:

To the teachers, this study is vital. It is said that the teacher-student relationship lies at the core of schooling experience of students (Pianta and Allen, 2008; Brinkworth et al. 2017). The individual teacher is key factor in motivating students to engage with learning activities within their specific educational contexts (Martin and Dowson, 2009; Reeve, 2002, 2012; Reeve and Tseng, 2011; Royal Society, 2007; Ryan and Deci, 2009; Willms, 2003). This study will help teachers to devise the best means as well as enhance the different interactions in the classroom to engage learners and produce better outcomes. It is not useful only for the Economics subject, but as well as other subjects.

To the Learner:

Learners are the other physical party involved in the learning process. They form the subject from whom change is expected through engagement. Students' declining motivation to engage with learning has been reported across the whole range of school grades over several decades (Eccles et al, 1984; Fredericks and Eccles, 2002; Fredericks et al, 2004). This work will give them a view to work towards engagement, with the help of teachers. It will also give them a view of how important the subject is to their individual lives, thereby taking the right measures towards learning and performing better in it.

To the School:

The school is an environment for transformation. The degree of engagement in subjects by learners in an institution is an indication of the type of interactive systems put in place by the institution. Classrooms and hence schools, are powerful settings that influence the development of a child. The capacity of the classroom or school to promote the development of a learner is reflected in the relationships between teachers and students. Thus, this study will help schools to enhance the degree of interaction that occur within schools, not only to achieve

good grades in subjects but also to ensure the development of learners in other aspects such as their emotional development.

To the Government:

At the governmental level, it will help them reinforce engagement strategies in schools during aspects such as pedagogical supervision.

To the Economics Community:

The study will help the 0525 Economics ordinary level family to enforce engagement in teaching the subject, especially when it comes to the Form 4 modules. It will provide lapses and guides that will help teachers better interact with learners, thereby making them to engage and like the subject, for their personal as well as societal benefit.

Justification of the research

A wealth of studies has been carried out on interactions and students' engagement. However, most of these studies have been geared either towards online studies or blended learning. Scanty research has been carried out towards classroom interactions and engagement of students. Online learning has been on a growing nature in recent years, with its peak at the outset of the 2020 Corona virus Pandemic which saw the world turning towards online learning due to a temporal global halt in the operation of traditional classrooms between the months of March to May 2020. Again, without the face-to-face experience learning in online learning, educators and researchers turned to explore how online learning can be enhanced at the interactive and engagement phases. However, this has not stopped physical face-to-face learning classrooms from existing, especially in a country like Cameroon.

So, while teachers still experience disruptive and disengaged behaviours from students in such classrooms, especially in a country like Cameroon, it behoves that more studies be carried out to seek better ways of continuously keeping learners glued to what is being taught. If online learners can feel engaged to learn even without seeing the teacher, why should students in a normal classroom feel disengaged to learn, as reflected in indicators such as their weak academic performances and complaints from teachers, irrespective of the vast physical learning facilities available to them, such as the presence of their teachers? Given that most of our secondary schools in Cameroon are yet to fully incorporate technology into learning in the classrooms, there is need to seek ways to enhance the engagement of learners in the face-to-face classrooms. If interactions and engagement in online learning can be promoted, the same can be done for the face-to-face classroom learning, even as the world continues to evolve towards the digital age even in the teaching and learning process.

Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited thematically to classroom interactions of Teacher - Student, Student - Content, and Student - Student interactions or relationships. Students' Engagement covers the four domains of Social, Cognitive, Emotional and Agentic engagements. It is limited to finding out what role is played by these levels of interactions on Students' engagement in the study of Economics.

The population is limited to Form 4 students of Private and Public Secondary schools that are found in Yaoundé IV - Mfoundi Division. And the subject concerned is Economics.

The scope per time of this work was limited to the period of February 2023 to June 2023. This is because this period marks the active presence of students as well as teaching in secondary schools and a time given for the analysis of the results to be carried out.

Definition of Operational Terms

Interaction

The Cambridge dictionary defines interaction as a situation where two or more people or things communicate with each other or react to each other. "Simply stated, interactions are reciprocal events that require at least two objects and two actions. Interactions occur when these objects and events mutually influence one another" (Wagner 1994). In this study, relationship will also be used to denote interaction. This is because for two things or events to go together, there is a relationship that is developed between them. Hence, interaction will be synonymously used as relationship at the level of determining the different forms of interactions in the classroom. This interaction takes on different forms such as;

Teacher – Student Relationship (TSR), which is the positive atmosphere that exists between teachers and students, as seen in indicators such as trust and respect.

Student – Content Relationship (SCR), which identifies Learners' relationship with facts, ideas or subject matter.

Student – Student Relationship (SSR), which deals with students' knowledge of one another and how they share interest, trust and support towards the subject matter under study or learning as a whole.

Student: Merriam Webster dictionary defines a student as a scholar or learner – one who attends a school. A student is also defined as one who enrolls in a school and undertakes the process of learning, with goals to achieve such as knowledge acquisition, developing a profession and easy employment in a given field (Tekum, 2022). Since a student is one who learns, the word student and learner will be synonymously used in this study.

Student Engagement

Student engagement is seen as the extent to which attention, effort, participation, curiosity, interest, and passion are demonstrated by students as they are learning or being taught (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Student Engagement has four dimensions; cognitive or intellectual, emotional or affective, behavioural and agentic.

Behavioral Engagement: It refers to the ability of students to be involved in learning to the point where they comply with behavioral norms, such as regular attendance, participation in class, as well as shunning disruptive and negative conducts (Trowler, 2010).

Cognitive Engagement: Cognitive engagement is defined in terms of students' mental effort to complete tasks using a deep, self-regulated, and strategic approach to learning, rather than superficial learning strategies (Chiu, 2021).

Emotional or Affective Engagement: It implies students' affective reactions to their classmates, teachers, learning activities, and school, especially through distinct emotions such as happiness, excitement, boredom, and anxiety or sadness (Fredericks et al., 2004).

Agentic Engagement: It is not mostly involved in different studies. It refers to proactive efforts made by learners in order to constructively contribute to the learning and teaching process (Reeve, 2013; Reeve & Tseng, 2011).

Economics

Economics is a science which studies human behaviour, as a relationship between ends and scarce means that have alternative uses (Lionel Robbins, 1932)⁵. As a discipline, it studies the rational management of limited resources in meeting unlimited wants in an economy by the different economic entities such as households (individual), firms, government and the rest of the world.

Secondary schools

It is a school for young people between the ages of 11 to 18 (Oxford Dictionary). In the Cameroon context, Secondary or grammar schools are institutions of learning which can be pursued after primary schools studies, and are designed to train students for five years (Form 1 to Form 5) in order for them to be able to sit for the Cameroon General Certificate of Education

⁵Amidst the many definitions of economics propounded by different economists, Professor Lionel Robbins's definition is the universally accepted or most formal definition of economics as it challenged the traditional view of the nature of economic science. He published this definition of Economics in his book, *Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science* in the year 1932. This gave a new idea of thinking about what economics is all about.

Examination at the Ordinary level, which happens to be the most qualifying examination into High Schools in Cameroon, in the Anglophone system of education. These secondary schools are mostly operated by the Government, religious denominations and a growing number of private entrepreneurs.

Classroom

It refers to any space designed to facilitate the teaching and learning process and ensure the comfort of the parties involved physically, mentally and emotionally (Tekum, 2022). However, there are many types of classrooms based on the nature of the teaching and learning processes that occur in such classrooms. Hence, the word classroom cannot be subjected only to a physical building or space, but more to the meaning of its activities. For example, there are online platforms that serve as online classrooms, such as Google classroom serving online learners. Hence, classroom in this study will be referring to a physical building in which learning takes place through the face-to-face interaction of the students, teachers and the content, as well as other teaching and learning aids such as charts.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This work is out to investigate the role of interactions on the engagement of students in Economics in the Secondary schools in Yaoundé IV municipality - Mfoundi Division. With respect to this chapter, there will be revelations of related literature to the study, different interactions, engagement and its types, and how they can be influenced by interactions, methods of facilitating interactions and engagement in the classroom, and theoretical framework.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an explanation, either graphically or in narrative form, of the main things to be studied - the key factors, variables, or constructs - and the presumed relationships among them (Miles et al., 2014, p.20). Miles et al. had a major contribution to the idea of a graphical representation of the conceptual framework. A conceptual framework is also seen as an argument about why the topic one wishes to study matters, and why the means proposed to study it are appropriate and rigorous (Ravitch and Riggan, 2017; P.5).

Rational for Classroom interactions (CI) and the Economics syllabus

Going to a classroom and teaching the student is not a great deal. But the question is; will learning actually take place? When learning is taking place, engagement has to become visible. The new syllabus for Cameroon Secondary Schools advocates for a learner - centred approach towards learning. This is an approach to learning where by the learner is put at the centre; his or her needs are addressed by the teacher and the learners are provoked to take active participation in the learning process. In this case, CI becomes a necessity.

The new syllabi are rooted in the Competency Based Approach of teaching, which is designed to unleash the latent talents and potentials of the learners in handling real life situations. This means, a learner should be able to carry out a task by him or herself. Again, a closer look at the new syllabus for Economics as well as for the other subjects at the Ordinary Level program, do show that special elements such as actions, skills or aptitude, have to be integrated by teachers and acquired by learners during the learning process, as earlier explained in chapter 1. More so, CBA which is also learner-centred requires only active teaching methods and techniques that place the learners at the centre of instruction, Alemnge (2021). When the learner is placed under active conditions, he or she is put into an interactive state.

But for all these to occur, the learner has to be guided by the teacher through active interactive methods that will help the learner get a good grasp of what is being taught. The teacher has to be at the forefront, through the facilitation of interactions in the classroom, either through the written curriculum (curricula as a document) or hidden curriculum (curricula as experience). Both can be expressed through the methods employed by the teacher in carrying out the teaching - learning process. In this light, the role of the teacher becomes very essential in fostering interactions in the classroom through different means in order to facilitate engagement in learning. The teacher is no longer an authoritarian as in the traditional classroom paradigm or in the Education 1.0 evolution. He or she switches to become a facilitator. In a school system like Cameroon where some teachers receive rigorous training only in their academic disciplines without sufficient complementary pedagogic training in educational learning theories, this change has to be given serious thought (Alemnge, 2021). A closer look into the teaching field in Cameroon will show that it is made up of teachers who didn't go through the teachers' training school. Most of the knowledge they possess in the subjects they teach was acquired by a blend of that subject being taught to them in school, both at the secondary, high and higher institution level, and their maturity in cognition towards understanding that subject at higher levels. Hence, it is in this same vein that Alemnge (2021, cited Robertson, 1999) who posited a model through which a teacher's developmental process

can take place, by transitioning from just having a mastery of the content (egocentrism) through identifying different strategies of teaching that will engage the learners (aliocentrism) until the teacher can critically reflect on practice and acknowledge it as part of the growth process (systemocentrism).

Taking into consideration the skills or aptitudes, attitudes and competencies to be acquired by learners during learning, a proper acquisition of the same will need the right classroom interactions and not just interaction to be in place. This means, fusing all the levels of classroom interactions to bring about proper engagement of learners in the subject under study, and in this case, Economics. When this is done, the end result is likely to be a capturing of learners' attention and engagement in their studies. Thus, it hovers to explore the different models of interactions so as to facilitate student engagement in Economics at the secondary school.

Classroom Interactions and types

There is hardly any effective teaching without some sort of interaction. Fauzan (2019) saw Classroom interaction as a collaborative exchange of thought, feeling, or ideas between two or more people resulting in reciprocal effect on each other in other ways.

Interaction is a vital activity in all forms of education, whether with the use of technology or not, Moore & Kearsley (1996). Anderson (2003) regards interaction as a critical component of the educational process. As such, given its importance in all types of education, irrespective of the delivery methods, many have given attention to the importance of interaction in education (Kuo, Walker, Schroder, & Belland, 2014). Agwa (2022, cited Haji, 2021) positing that, since interaction amongst learners, instructors and content occur in all types and level of education, having an understanding of these interactions and developing supportive measures towards such interactions are imperative. In the same vein, Fauzan (2019, cites Ellis, 1994) who writes that, when we take a look at the classroom, it is possible to find at least three views of studies that are opened to researchers, which are: comparative method studies, the study of the effects of formal instruction, and classroom interaction (CI) studies. Amongst these three views, the last view (CI) has captured a prolonged interest for researchers. A fundamental reason for this is that, interaction is “the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy. Everything that happens

in the classroom happens through a process of live person-to-person interaction” Fauzan (2019, cited Allwright, 1984).

Interaction involves reciprocal actions. That is to say that, two or more parties acting simultaneously upon each other and not necessarily an action eliciting a reaction. For example, when teachers solve questions in the classroom with students, it is a collaborative work and not necessarily a response to their questions. As such, teachers must learn to make their classroom environment to be in such a way that will spur the minds of learners to become interactive by themselves, and not only of command or directives from teachers.

Interactions are necessary to bridge the gap between teachers, learners and the content that is being taught. The tense nature of some classes is more than enough factor to disengage students. It is also likely that students can be in the classroom, but no active engagement in lesson is being attained due to the level of interactions that take place. When the right interactions take place, students feel they have actually learned. Swan (2001) revealed that the number of learners’ interactions with content, instructors, and other learners had a positive association with how satisfied they felt and the extent to which they believed they had learned. As interactive learning takes place, students will learn to think critically, solve complex problems based on the analysis of situations and relevant information, weigh alternative opinions, make thoughtful decisions, participate in discussions, and communicate with other people. Agwa (2022, cited Ramzidinova, 2022).

Fauza (2019, cited Chaudron 1998, p.10), classroom interaction covers classroom behaviors, such as turn-taking, questioning and answering, negotiation of meaning and feedback. Supporting this view, Brown (2001) also referred to interaction as the heart of communication, and says that interaction occurs as long as people are communicating with each other and giving action and receiving the reaction one to another anywhere and any time, including in the classroom setting (p. 165). Thus, Interaction between students and teacher is fundamental to the learning process. Agwa (2022, cited Haji, 2022), articulates that, Communication, collaboration and active learning are the components that embody the concept of interaction. And to crown this, the concept of interaction involves learner’s engagement with the content of the course, the instructor or teacher, other students as well as the technical means used in the course (Moore, 1989). From the aforementioned discussions, it is revealed that classroom interaction has varied views, although majority have seen it only from the spectrum of teacher to student communication. However, from the perspective of (Moore, 1989 and Haji, 2021) classroom interaction has three main perspectives; Teacher to Student Relationship

(TSR), Student to Content Relationship (SCR) and Student to Student Relationship (SSR). These are the levels of interactions to which this study will be addressing.

Teacher - Student Relationship (TSR)

A teacher-student relationship (TSR) in the classroom is a positive relationship between the teacher and the student in efforts to gain trust and respect from each other, (Coristine et. al., 2022). This makes it possible for teachers to show how much they value students and keep a safe and friendly environment for both the teacher and the learner. The idea of teacher-student relationship started in 1995 by Mann who holds that “the aptness to teach involves the power of perceiving how far a scholar understands the subject matter to be learned and what, in the natural order is the next step to take” (Ajongakoh, 2021). In this light, teachers are called upon to be skilful in determining whether learners understand the subject matter and the necessary actions that are needed to make learners interact with their environment in order for them to learn what they need to know. Relationships between teachers and students reflect a classroom’s capacity to promote development, hence in this light, relationships and interactions are the key to understanding engagement of students in the learning process (Pianta et al., 2012). (Aultman et al., 2009) revealed that, a teacher is endowed with skills, attitude and knowledge which can play a significant role in students’ academic performance and how to make a meaningful life after school. If teachers do possess such skills, then they should also be able to know what attitudes are needed for the continued growth of the students as well as those that are detrimental for the students, and to use that knowledge to build worthwhile educational experiences for the students Ajongakoh (2021, cited Dewey, 2003). Teachers are the main channels through which knowledge is transmitted to the learners. It is only of necessity for them to build a good relationship with the students in order to pass across this knowledge. This is also in line with the ideology of Dewey, 2003.

The learning process has two main parties; the teacher and the student. If this process must become effective, the two must work together. Hence, it is not only the responsibility of the teachers to build or create a platform that can be easily accessible by learners to the teachers in order for the latter to help them learn, but it is also the responsibility of the learners to adapt themselves and put up positive attitudes towards engagement and learning. A good look at the syllabus for Economics OL shows that, one of the values to be cultivated and put up by learners in the classroom is responsibility - the ability to respond to what is being taught as well as taking the right actions to better understand what is being taught. Race to the Top initiatives have strongly focused on measuring teacher- student relationship in test scores of students

(Ajongakoh, 2021). Teacher-Student interaction or relationship shouldn't only be geared towards test scores but towards their co-existence which ends up affecting the entire life of learners, including their test scores. In his view of teaching as a performing art, where the teacher has the responsibility of triggering productive learning in learners, by first of all knowing who the learners are, as well as knowing effectively how to engage them, Sarason (1999) asked "are there not characteristics of a good teacher which can be observed in which the teacher interacts with children?" And for sure, if there are, such teachers are best to bring out of students, the motivation they need in order to engage in what is being taught to them in the classroom. The interaction in classroom amongst teachers and students is one that can foster or diminish learning, depending on how it is handled. TSR in the classroom is a major factor towards students' engagement. According to (Dewey, 2003) the goal of educators is to be able to create lifelong learners. This means, learners who will grow to love the art of learning without much duress. As a teacher for the past 9 years and interacting with learners, I have come to discover that some students grow a phobia for studies as well as for some subjects because of the way a particular subject was handled by a teacher with respect to their relationship with such students. The more conscious teachers become towards the execution of the teaching-learning process, the more students will become engaged towards their studies, and the expected positive results will be seen. Thus, building positive relationship with students will provide motivation, initiative and engagement which are essential ingredients for success. On the contrary, if students realize that their teacher is not friendly, learning would not take place effectively (Ajongakoh, 2021). Ajongakoh (2021, cites Marzano, 2003) revealing from a studies on the practices of effective teachers, that "an effective teacher-student relationship may be the keystone that allows the other aspects to work well". Taking TSR from the picture of the teaching - learning process, will hamper any form of positive results we intend to see both in and out of the classrooms. This will not only affect the learner's academic engagement and performance, but the entire developmental process of learners.

According to Hattie (2012) there are 10 mind frames that teachers need to adopt in order to maximize the success of students. Of this 10, the 7th mind frame quotes: "teachers/leaders believe that, it is their role to develop positive relationships in classrooms/staff rooms". In this light, Coristine et. Al. (2022) asserts that teachers must establish a positive interpersonal interaction with each student, and kids must feel safe, fair and compassionate in the classroom.

I also see the TSR to be of two forms. Firstly, parasitic TSR; one in which only one party benefits from the teaching learning process, in this case a teacher, usually due to the

survival stage of teaching⁶. Secondly, symbiotic TSR; one in which the teacher is focused on effectively and efficiently carrying out his or her job, thereby helping the learners to become engaged and meeting their needs. Often times, teaching for survival as a teacher will have a high probability of ending the relationship into a parasitic type. Contrarily, when the relationship is symbiotic, the teacher leaves from survival stage to the essence stage⁷ and the benefits abound to both parties. This is the stage where a strong and positive TSR becomes the order of the day. Thus, TSR is one that is supposed to be symbiotic, what I also call a win-win approach⁸. In this light, we can be sure of having engagement in the classrooms in the different subjects.

(Coristine et al, 2022) cited a research carried out on Positive teacher-student relationship has cascading benefits, 2021, to reveal the following advantages to validate the importance of positive TSR;

- Positive TSR helps to develop stronger social-emotional skills which make it possible for the learners to absorb a large amount of academic knowledge.
- Again a strong TSR will allow learners to feel confident through exploration and taking risks in their academic tasks. Hence, students who have a positive teacher-student relationship show a stronger performance in the classroom.
- It also produces an environment that incorporates mutual respect
- In addition, it improves on mental health and assists students in developing self-worth.
- Most students look up to their teachers as mentors. As such, they are likely to feel pride when the educator encourages them in their learning and social interactions.

Other benefits of a positive TSR include;

- It fosters students' academic growth as Hallinan (2008), writes that Learning is a process that involves cognitive and social psychological dimensions, and both processes should be considered if academic achievement is to be maximized.
- It maintains students' interests and academic participation in learning
- . This is also in line with students' behaviour in the classroom

⁶A stage where the teacher is more focused on the pay package to the detriment of the engagement and learning of the students. It is the stage where teachers teach solely for the sake of survival from the pay package they receive.

⁷This is the stage where the teacher focuses on the needs of the learners. This is actually the essence for teaching – ensuring the job is done well.

⁸An approach in which, the teacher benefits through a self-fulfilment of impacting knowledge to the learners, and the learners also benefit through the receiving of knowledge for the development of themselves and greater use when the knowledge is demanded.

- It helps students to accept classroom rules and procedures, trust in the teacher, and listen to what they have to say, even as they sense that teachers do value and respect them.
- (Amin, 2017) posits that while positive TSR is beneficial to students, it is also beneficial to the teachers as it helps educators to strengthen their own interpersonal communication and professional skills, which helps them to respond effectively to stressful situations.

How positive TSR can be attained

Looking at the above mentioned benefits of TSR, it becomes necessary to put in strategies that can go to foster this relationship or interaction in the classrooms. According to a study carried out on 6 ways to build stronger Teacher-Student Relationships with SEL, 2022, as cited by (Coristine et al., 2022) the following can be applied to build stronger TSR;

- Making apparent that the teacher cares about the students. This can be done by talking with the students on their daily activities or plans.
- Another means of building TSR is to listen to the students through hearing their points of view, taking their interests into concern and practicing multimodal learning⁹.
- Mutual trust can also be developed with the learners, as they are provided with choices
- The ability to be respectful and to be fair with every one of the students will help build positive TSR. In this light, there will be the need to eschew from the common disease of having favourite students. That bias will need to be dropped, no matter how tempting it looks. There will be need for the same correction method to be applied on disruptive behaviours for all students in your classroom.
- Give the students positive words of encouragement and constructive criticism is a booster point to having a strong TSR with your students.

Manifestations of TSR in the classrooms

Positive TSR is characterized by mutual acceptance, understanding, warmth, closeness, trust, respect care and cooperation between the teacher and the student (Jerome & Pianta, 2008). Open communication as well as emotional and academic support that exist between teachers and students is another way to describe a positive relationship between teachers and students. According to (Moore, 2003) effective communication is the building block of a stronger TSR.

⁹A learning method which suggests the engagement of a number of learners' senses in learning in order for them to experience learning in a variety of ways and to understand better what is being taught and remember more of the same. It also helps to create diverse learning styles for the learners. Introduced by Fleming, it is usually abbreviated as VARK - Visual, Aural, Read/Write and Kinesthetic.

How well teacher communicates with learners in aspects such as voice tone, confidence, questioning, is vital to the engagement of learners.

Pastore & Luder (2021) cited the manifestation of TSR in the classroom as based on two indicators which are emotional resonance (i.a.w Leitz, 2015) and shared intentionality (i.a.w. Tomasello et al., 2005). Firstly, Emotional resonance is embedded in the attachment theory. It embraces teacher's empathy and interest towards the concerns of each student and the closeness built up by the teacher with students. A secondary aspect is the ability of a teacher to understand the emotional current state of learners and appropriately responding to it. Secondly, TSR manifests in the classroom through shared intentionality and this is found within the field of cognitive psychology. It deals more with face-to-face interaction between teachers and learners, which boosts attention on, and retention of new learning contents. According to Tomasello et al., (2005) shared intentionality goes to allow teachers and students understand each other's intentions, willingness to support each other for achieving a learning goal and the motivation to share emotions.

Despite the importance of TSR in the classroom, it is possible to have poor TSR in the classroom and this can lead to the poor engagement of learners in Economics as well as other subjects they study. A few factors account for this, which are;

- A lack of the teacher's awareness of educational approaches needed by some students, since they do not respond to learning in like manner as other learners. Failure to recognize these individual needs can create a chaotic and tensioned atmosphere between the teachers and the learners.
- Lack of an open-minded skill of the teacher to identify other factors that can influence interaction with students. For example (Tucker, 2021) states that, each student's ability to learn and interact with educators is influenced by their personality, family backgrounds, mental processes, learning styles, priorities, maturity levels, and academic ambitions. Hence, if a teacher is not opened to vast array of knowledge and show empathy towards the students, it will lead to a poor TSR.
- Again, Coristine (2022, cited Tucker, 2021) that a bad TSR develops when the main or only priority of teachers in the classroom is academics. Students do not only have academic needs but other needs such as emotional needs. They need to be cared for and have a chance to feel strong emotions. Hence, if other relationships that are not academically focused are not built with students, the students feel less trusted and cannot communicate freely with the teachers. This can result to poor TSR.

TSR cannot be left out of the scene when it comes to engaging learners to study in a subject such as Economics. It stands as a vital block to engagement in the classroom. The TSR must be effectively coordinated to produce the benefits of both parties involved - the teachers and the students. And at the heart of this, is the teacher, who must endeavour to ensure that this relationship is effectively realised to achieve its intended goals.

Student - Content Relationship (SCR)

Another spectrum of interaction is the SCR. In the teaching-learning process, there is who is teaching (the teachers), who is being taught (the student or learner) and what is being taught (the content). These three must work hand in gloves to ensure the ultimate end result, which is students' engagement in the lesson, through to their performance towards that lesson. The content of every subject will affect the way learners understand it. Without learner or student content interaction, there cannot be education, since it is the process of intellectually interacting with content that results in changes in the learner's understanding, the learner's perspective, or the cognitive structures of the learner's mind (Moore, 1989). Hence, Moore (1989) sees learner-content interaction to be at the heart of all learning experiences.

Learners are shaped by what they learn and what is to be learnt also has a bearing on how engaged learners will be in learning it. For example, a learner who considers no relevance in the content of a subject with respect to his or her study life will hardly engage in studying that subject. While, those who consider continuing their academic studies with that content or subject, will find themselves engaging the more in it. Other students from my interview sessions have considered certain subjects for example, Economics, to be bulky in nature, with respect to the content. As such, bulky content negatively affects the Students' engagement in the study of such a subject. Hence, the content has to be taken into consideration as far as the engagement is concerned.

Learning content is broadly defined as the topics, themes, beliefs, behaviours, concepts and facts, often grouped within each subject or learning areas under knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, that are expected to be learned and form the basis of teaching and learning (UNESCO-IBE, 2013). Content refers to the ideas, facts, subject matter, information or knowledge that we teach students every day. It refers to what is taught to the learners; the skills and knowledge transferred to learners. It can be a discipline like History, Geography or Economics. Content knowledge is actually the focus of what learners come to acquire in schools. It is thus, the principal attractive force of why students come to school.

Identifying Student-Content Relationship

As earlier highlighted, there must be SCR in a classroom, whether traditional or online, for learning to be able to take place. When learners encounter ideas, facts or knowledge for their first time, there is need to cause them interact with that knowledge. Some common SCR in a traditional classroom include;

- **Writing lecture materials or notes:** This has to do with you dictating to the learners what you intend them to copy in their note books.
- **Exercises or Assignments:** Giving them work to do while they are in or out of the classroom, to broaden their understanding of a given topic taught.
- **Listening:** One of the ways teachers transmit lessons is by talking. Hence, the learners will have to listen to what the teacher is explaining, thereby interacting with the content.
- **Reading:** Learners also interact with content through reading scripted materials such as textbooks as well as their notes.

Given the fact that content is the link between the student and the teacher as to why both of them are in a classroom, it places emphasis on how content should be selected by the competent authorities and how the same content should be treated in the traditional classroom setting, to ensure that it is actually learnt by learners. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that learners do have effective interaction with the content or subject matter.

The content needs to be carefully selected in order to make it useful to the learners as well as engaging to the learners. For the Cameroon General secondary school curriculum, which we can call the macro curriculum, the content represents the different subjects that make up the curricular program. They can be seen on the table below;

Table 2: Summary of Macro curriculum of the Cameroon Secondary General Education

Area of learning	Subjects
1-Languages and Literature	Living languages: English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Ancient languages: Latin, Greek National languages Literature Cameroon Literature; French Literature; Francophone Literature; Other literatures
2-Science and	Mathematics,

Technology	The Sciences such as Chemistry, Physics, biology, human biology, additional Mathematics, Computer Science
3- Social Sciences/Humanities	Citizenship Education, History, Geography, Economics
4- Personal Development	Moral Education; Home Economics; Sports and Physical Education Health Education
5- Arts and National Cultures	Arts/Artistic Education; National Cultures

Source: Adapted from the Economics Syllabus for Secondary General Education by the Ministry of Secondary Education.

These subjects all blend together to provide the goal of secondary general education in Cameroon. As they blend together and not taught as isolated subjects, they help the students to develop cross curricula competencies¹⁰ in the areas of methodical, intellectual, social and personal domains.

Taking into consideration the focus of this study, which is Economics, and can be considered as a micro curriculum, the selection of content is guided by criteria. According to (Mary, 2015) she highlighted 7 of these criteria which are;

1. Self-sufficiency: In this criterion, students should be given the chance to experiment, observe and do field study, thereby helping them to learn independently. Scheffler (1970, cited Bilbao et al., 2008) by saying that, to help learners attain maximum self-sufficiency most economically is the central guiding principle of subject matter or content selection.

2. Significance: The content is significant in that it helps addresses and develops the three domains of learning, which are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. Let the content achieve the overall aim of the micro curriculum.

¹⁰This is a set of intellectual, personal and social skills to be developed by students to help them engage in deeper learning. That is, learning that encourages students to see things from different angles and correlate the relationships between things they learn in different subjects. Cross curricula competencies in education can include skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, global citizenship, self-directed learning, and career management (Andrade, 2020, p. 165).

3. Validity: This criterion addresses the fact that, the content should not be obsolete. The content should be valid to the needs of the present time. For example, the concept of choice based on unlimited wants and limited resources will always be a valid concept for study as the problem of scarcity has not changed over time.

4. Interest: Students tend to learn best when the subject matter is interesting and makes meaning to them. Hence, it should be learner-centred.

5. Utility: This deals with the usefulness of the content to the learners. When the learner believes that the content or a given subject is necessary to him or her, that learner will see that subject as having utility or usefulness. As such, they will be engaged in studying it. They tend to ask questions such as; will this content be helpful in my career? Will the subject matter help me solve my problems?

6. Learnability: The content must be within the schema of the learners or their experiences. This will make it easier for them to understand. For example, teaching on the bargaining process of price determination in demand and supply should be within the reach of the students for them to actually engage in a bargaining process physically in the classroom, to have a better understanding of how it is done in the market – any effective arrangement for the buying and selling of goods and services.

7. Feasibility: This entails the full implementation of the subject matter to ensure that it considers the school's real situation, the government, the student and the allowable time available resources.

A careful criteria selection of content will go a long way to enhance the engagement of students towards the different subjects and in the focus of this research, which is Economics.

Economics Content at the secondary school

As seen from the foregoing discussions, one of the components of curriculum is Content or subject matter, which is usually derived from the goals or objectives of a curriculum. One of the objectives of the Cameroon secondary school curriculum is to see students who come will become self-reliant after their completion of secondary school education. This directly touches the economic life of every student. This is one of the reasons why the study of Economics, as a key discipline under the domain of Economic life, has been made a compulsory subject by many schools for students at the ordinary level general education. Hence, the content of Economics for the General Secondary School education in connection with the respective family of

situations to be handled by the syllabus, have been carefully selected by a combination of key authorities such as the Inspectorate of Pedagogy for the Social Sciences, Inspectorate General of Education, and the Ministry of Secondary Education, as seen on the table below;

Table 3: Presentation of the Families of Situations Covered by the Ordinary Level Economics Syllabus

S/N	Families of Situations to be treated	Areas-of-Living
1	Management of resources	Economic life
2	Management of distribution	
3	Development of business units	
4	Changes in population	
5	The market	
6	Management of finances	
7	National income	
8	Interaction with the rest of the world	
9	Poverty	

Source: Adapted from the Economics Syllabus for Secondary General Education by the Ministry of Secondary Education.

In line with the above families of situations covered by the Economics syllabus, is found the table of content for the modules treated in the different classes as seen below;

Table 4: Summary Table of Content of the Different Modules of the Ordinary Level Economics Syllabus

CYCLE	CLASS	TITLES OF MODULES (UNITS)	STATUS
1ST CYCLE	Form 3	Economics and Resource allocation	COMPULS ORY
		Contribution of resources in the process of production	
		Enhance proper distribution of goods and services	
	Form 4	The setting of Business units	
		Managing population growth and available resources	
		Interaction in the market	
		Competition in the market	

	Form 5	Easing financial operations	
		Management of Public finance	
		Promotion of international trade and cooperation	
		National income accounting	
		Fight against poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment	

Source: Adapted from the Economics Syllabus for Secondary General Education by the Ministry of Secondary Education.

From the above criteria for the selection of content, as well as a breakdown of the content it is realised that, teachers have little to contribute towards the selection of the content to be taught in the secondary schools. Rather, they are largely charged with the implementation of the content both at the macro and micro level curricula. Hence, a greater task rests on teachers to ensure that learners interact appropriately with the content to enhance their maximum engagement, especially for a compulsory subject like Economics.

How content can affect Interaction

The Content of every subject still affects the way learners interact with that content. Here are some of the ways content affect student interaction or relationship;

- 1. Bulky notes:** This deals with the scope and breadth of the notes given to learners. Students often complain of copying notes and how it is cumbersome for them read, a sign that notes are bulky to some of the students¹¹. This boils down to the non-simplification of content, especially when transferring the content from textbooks to the notebooks to be delivered unto learners. This affects the way learners tend to interact with the content of the subject. It's been the habit of some teachers who do not take time to make simplified notes, and as such, resort to the textbook to dish out contents to the learners. The same applies to teachers who direct learners to copy notes of sections of their lessons from the textbook¹². This negatively affects students' interaction with the content due to the bulky nature of the notes copied.
- 2. The degree to which notes are copied rightly or wrongly:** This is often times on the part of the learners. Learners cannot effectively interact with contents that have been

^{11&12} Conclusions from researcher's years of teaching experience, Master's 2 internship program, and interviews with students and complaints from certain students with respect to notes given to them by their teachers

wrongly copied in their own notebooks. Reading such notes becomes boring and difficult as it is backed with greater degree of not understanding what is being read.

3. Manner of presenting content: SCR has a bearing from the teacher's perspective.

When teachers do not present content in a manner that is understandable, learners are likely to have diminished interaction towards that content, even if it is simplified. Hence, a bad presentation of content influences a negative SCR.

4. Learners' perception of the future: When the choice of a learner is to continue with a particular subject for future purposes such as higher level of education, the content of the subject imposes interaction on the part of that learner. The learner tends to see the content as a necessity and not just an option.

Hence, a careful understanding of these influencers, amongst others, will guide teachers on how to foster SCR in the classroom.

How Learners should interact with content

Generally, given the importance of content in the learning process, it becomes a necessity for learners to interact with whatever content that is being taught to them. The following are some of the ways through which facilitators or teachers can promote SCR;

1. Copying of notes: This usually occurs during classroom lessons, especially as a large part of the transfer of knowledge do take place through lecturing by the teacher and dictating of notes to the students. The nature of the examination, although gradually changing, still gives room for erudition – which is the reproduction of concepts and knowledge during examination as the concepts were given in the classroom. A large part of disengaged learners in the classroom is seen with them not copying their notes. This is why in some schools, note-checking is made compulsory, in a bit to make sure learners interact with their content and engage during lessons.

2. Using different colour inks in writing: Teachers can encourage learners to copy their notes with pens having different colour inks such as blue, red, black or green. In this way, they are able to differentiate key words from ordinary sentences, as well as words that can support the better understanding and remembrance of a given concept or sentence. This is because, amongst the elements of memory which are encoding, stocking and retrieval, there is the function of “Saillance” - which is the ability for one's memory to retrieve an odd element in the midst of an observation having similar characteristics. Hence, the different colour ink such as red being used for key words amongst a regular colour ink such as blue, can easily attract remembrance

to those odd words in a different colour ink (red). This was the work of Hedwig von Restorff (1933)¹³

3. Jotting other relevant materials at the margin of books: This is rarely done by some students. During explanation, it is likely for the teacher to explain certain concepts in a way that a learner can better understand what has been copied. Alternatively, a teacher can use an example to explain a concept for better understanding. It becomes a wise decision for learners to jot down other useful materials at the side of their margin, which will help them to better understand and remember what they have copied as notes. Teachers should encourage learners to jot key explanatory statements in the margins of their books.

4. Carrying out exercises and assignments: Another way learners interact with content is through assignments. Assignments are extension of classroom learning. They are often times, an equal to or advanced version of individual work-to-do in relation to the content given in class, in order to ascertain the knowledge of what has been learnt by the student. The more students do assignments or exercises, the more they interact with the content being taught to them, and the better they will come to engage and understand that concept. Hence, teachers should designate certain amount of time per lesson or week, to cause students interact with their lessons through assignment.

5. Reading of notes: In subjects like literature, reading of the textbooks by the students in the classroom is a key factor for them to interact with the content. However, with a subject like Economics, the students often times read these notes when the teacher is free. Nonetheless, teachers can still cause learners to interact with their content in the classroom through reading, by giving them an allowable time for short questions and answer sessions, within the class time. This can be scheduled as an activity that holds once or twice in a week.

6. Real life situations: Students can interact with the Economics content through learning experiences. This is the core of the CBA to learning. And it is actually the aspect that makes learners to develop competencies in solving real life situations. The Tyler's model of curriculum development has Learning experiences as one of its main components. Maheshwari (2015) cited Tyler's definition of learning experience as the interaction between the learner and the external conditions in the environment to which they react. This means, the learner has to interact with

¹³Adapted from course notes on CEV 513; Seminaire sur la Psychologie D'apprentissage et de L'education Morale

the content to be taught in such a way that reality is brought to the learner to actively interact with the same. And just like Maheshwari (2015) notes on Tyler's model of curriculum will put it; learners' learning takes place through the active behaviour of students. The student should be directly involved in what he does in order to facilitate learning. So, learning through the interaction of content is actually a function of what the student does, not what the teacher does. Hence, it is a great responsibility for teachers to look for measures to play with the environmental variables so as to align contents of subjects in such a way that will elicit interaction from the learners and bring about the desired engagement.

7. Promoting Metacognition and Motivation: (Chick, 2020) defined metacognition as the thinking about one's thinking. That is, thinking about one's thinking and learning, as well as oneself as a thinker and learner. In carrying out a lesson, one should be able to think about the optimal way to teach that material, as well as reflecting on what might be the thinking pattern of the learners. Teachers should help learners think about their thinking. Help them identify their strengths and weaknesses as learners and what it takes to overcome those weaknesses. Help them find out the knowledge gap in the content being taught to them and better ways of closing that gap. This will lead to a kind of individualised learning strategies developed by the learners in order to understand the same content being taught to them. As a teacher, you can share with your learners some of the strategies you used in understanding the same content you are teaching them. This can cause them to interact more with the content. Motivation is about making students feel motivated in the content they are learning. Students sustain their motivation to learn when they are more connected to a supportive class community (Alderman, 2008). Give learners the urge to interact with the content of your subject by connecting them to the essence of the content in their lives. Also, give them enthusiasm to interact through your vocal tone, body language and high demonstration of your love for your subject.

After looking at the concept of who teaches and what is being taught, it is important to look at who is being taught and the relationship that exists between them.

Student-Student Relationship (SSR)

Another phase of classroom interaction is that which takes place between students. In as much as the teacher is like a central processing unit of the classroom, other elements should not be given little importance. In fact, some teachers have overstepped their positions in the classroom to the point where they forget about making the learners or students to interact amongst themselves. SSR is students having knowledge of themselves, share common trust in

the subject of study, communicate ideas about it and working towards helping one another achieve greater understanding about the subject of study. In the classroom environment, students ask each other questions, carryout reflection on certain topics, listen to the viewpoints of one another, work together to meet up with certain tasks. SSR will occur when students socialize in the classroom, collaborate with one another, discuss or learn together on a given topic, as well as helping one another achieve their goals. Overtime, this has also proven to have a great effect on the different facets of engagement for students.

Learning by interactions or relationship can take place vertically and horizontally. Vertical interaction learning is when learners at different stages of knowledge interact for knowledge to be shared by the person of higher knowledge, to the one of lower knowledge. If we consider a teacher to be an advanced learner, then TSR can be a form of vertical interaction learning. Also, an aspect of vertical interaction learning in the classroom occurs when teachers can decipher those supposed “smart students” from the late bright learners. This makes it possible to pair such students during group work exercises. On the other hand, horizontal interaction learning occurs amongst learners of the same level of knowledge. This is also what is called peer learning. In this case SSR fits better. Learners also have ideas to contribute amongst themselves, such that when paired in their peers, they can better activate their knowledge and understanding of certain concepts. Often times, some of my students admit that they better understand some economic concepts when they study as a group or when a student further explains to them. This isn’t strange as I have also experienced the same scenario in my secondary and university level studies.

Classes that have low student interaction are usually found to be more of lectures from the teacher. In the process of the teacher presenting the lectures, he or she is likely to prompt into the minds of the learners and clear off any dark spots before the learners can identify where problems areas might be found. Hence, the teacher covers up all areas where questions could arise from the learners. Is it possible for such a teacher to be applauded as one who has gotten a mastery of the content of the subject or lesson? Yes. But this doesn’t help the learners to develop their cognitive as well as emotional engagements towards the lesson.

However, a class with high SSR can be seen as one having group discussions or conversations that involve the whole class, with the teacher sometimes present to guide these discussions and help the students achieve the correct outcome of such discussions. In a subject like Economics, where it is possible to have varied answers to certain questions or topics, such discussions or interactions become very essential for the learners, as it will help them generate

different answers, develop deeper thinking of the topics, and help the learners to better appreciate the extent to which solutions can be used under different circumstances in relation to the same topic. This also makes it clear that, SSR in the classroom depend on the teaching style as well as methods employed by teachers in carrying out their lessons.

SSR is important in that it has a positive impact on learning, develops a deeper thinking amongst learners as well as create socially conducive learning environment amongst the learners. This goes in line with promoting the engagement of learners in the subject as will be seen in subsequent pages.

Types of Student-Student Relationship or Interaction

According to Kristin & Daniel, they found out three types of SSR that exists in online learning. A closer look at these structures of SSR is not really at variant as that which occurs in the traditional classroom environment. Meaning, these interactions can be borrowed into the traditional classrooms. They are social and content based interaction, assessment-based interaction and presentation/peer assessments.

1. **Social and content based interaction:** The emphasis here is on discussions and co-learning. When students are allowed to discuss on the content of the subject, it promotes them to share prior knowledge of that content. Teachers can throw questions to the class for the learners to respond in conversation with one another. To increase socialisation, especially on first-time class, teachers can cause learners to introduce themselves. Interaction amongst students is enhanced when learners know with whom they are interacting. Discussions help the learners not only to interact with the content, but also to interact amongst themselves.
2. **Assessment-based interaction:** The Focus in this type of interaction is group assignments and projects. Assignments have always been a part of learning. In this case, students will be able to work together in order to achieve the goal of a specific task. Sometimes, the projects are graded and incorporated into each individual's final grade. In this light, the students interact with one another especially in groups, where they build a stronger bond in learning, they share ideas and the overall project of the class is being achieved as each group works in synergy. For Economics at the ordinary level, this can be done with topics that entail calculations of a previously learnt lesson like Price Elasticity of Demand, or for a topic that is yet to be treated, such as sources of public finance.

3. **Presentations and peer assessments:** In this light, students are expected to come to class and present their findings to the class and get feedback from the teacher as well as other students. This is an important aspect of interaction because it also helps the learners to build communicative skills and confidence in expressing their findings in front of their mates. Students will be able to compare different findings obtained during their assignments. Overall, such type of interaction in the classroom is necessary to keep the students buoyant as they learn the content being presented to them.

How to Promote Student-Student Relationship

The promotion of SSR begins with the teacher. There are a number of ways through which SSR can be promoted. Some of them include;

1. **Social Discussions:** Kristine & Daniel opined that, to foster social interaction, the most important strategy is modelling. This means, there must first of all be the promotion of a sense of social presence between the teacher and his or her students. By so doing, there will be a natural encouragement for the students to extend this same treatment amongst themselves. Some of the techniques to carry this out include greeting your students early in the morning, letting your personality shine and being socially present in class. Don't initiate a discussion and remain absent psychologically through manipulation of phone, browsing online or physically absent from it. Your social presence in your subject will have a positive effect on the experiences of the students as well as their own interactions (Paquette, 2016). Social discussions can also involve the teacher introducing himself as well as asking learners to introduce themselves, as in first class introduction of names. This will enhance subsequent classroom interactions amongst students.
2. **Content Discussions and debate:** The teacher can ask the learners to discuss in groups, especially for large class sizes, or an entire class discussions for smaller class sizes. In discussions, the teacher can generate a question for learners to respond or ask an open-ended question for them to share their thoughts on the question or topic. While, during a debate, learners create two contrary groups to defend their contrary views on a topic. Content discussion and debate will require that the teacher sets objectives and preliminary steps as well as guiding the discussion. For example, the object can be to find out what learners know about a topic or develop discussion skills such as humility, tolerance and patience. To set the preliminary steps, the teacher can ask the class or groups to listen carefully to other students, and wait until they have finished before

another person or group can talk. The teacher will then manage the discussion or debate by putting on the board the topic or question, the desired result or outcome, allowing time for students to reflect on the topic and jot down their thoughts and acknowledge the contribution of each student while writing the key points on the board.

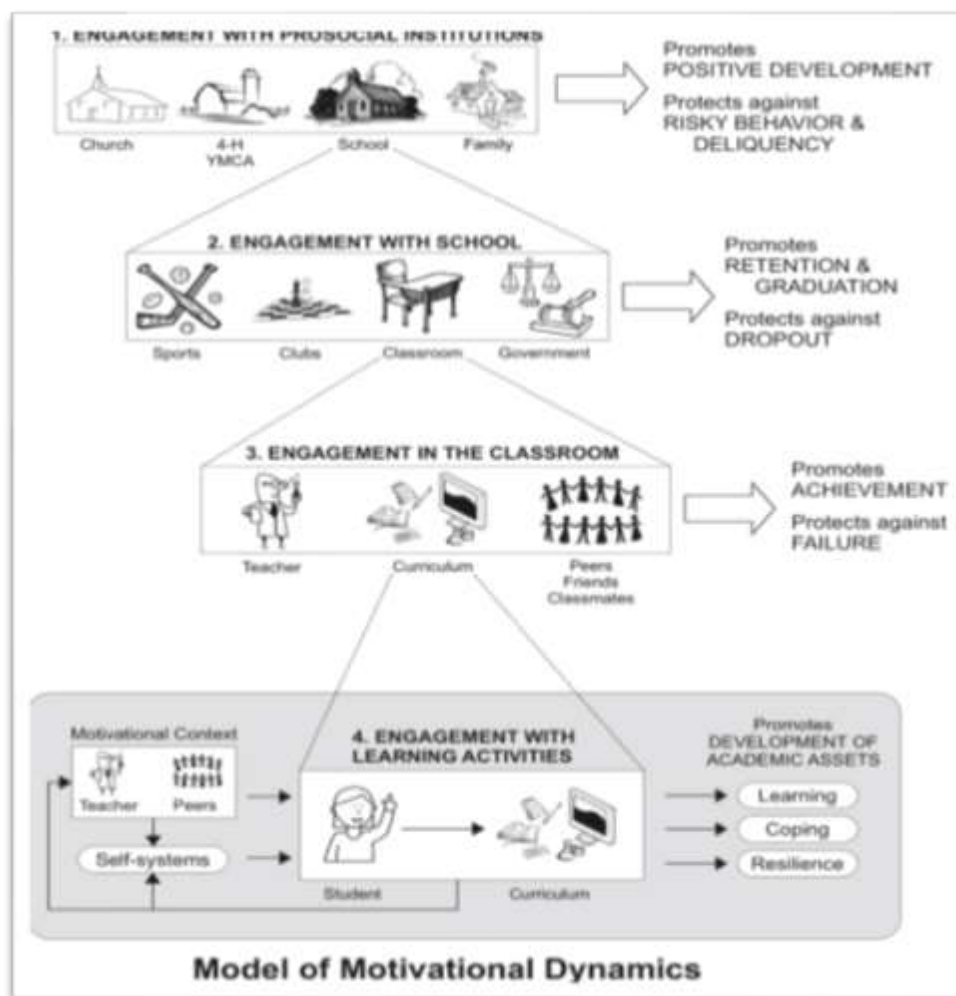
3. **Brainstorming:** This technique encourages thinking in the students by creating an atmosphere of suspended judgement. As such, students have the leeway to generate as many ideas as within their thinking in a given period of time. They can brainstorm amongst themselves or individually - to self. This is in line with (Barker, 1982) who divided classroom interaction into 4. Amongst the four are intrapersonal interaction, where an individual such as a student speaks to himself and interpersonal interaction, where two or more persons communicate. To do this, a teacher can compile the original ideas to feed respond to a question and inform the students that he or she wants to collect as many ideas as possible from them. In this case, there is need for both the teacher and other students not to mock but to be receptive to the comments of students, in order to encourage them. When this, amongst others is done, brainstorming amongst the students will be highly effective, thereby encouraging SSR.
4. **Role Playing:** Although this sounds more like in the subject of literature, it is still possible to ensure SSR through this strategy in the study of Economics. It mostly entails learners carrying out demonstration in front of the classroom to the view of others. They can act out a lesson. For example, the method of determining price in the market through the bargaining process can be acted out in the classroom to see how the intentions of the seller and buyer can establish the equilibrium price in the market. To do this, the teacher will have to explain the situation such that each participant will know his or her role to play as well as what it entails. Give them background information of what you want them to do, such as the place and time, so they can appropriately place themselves in the situation. Give them time to rehearse, know the goal or objective of the play and as they act, let the other students be able to judge their performance as well as bring out what they learnt in relation to the acting.

Student Engagement

A student interacts with many entities and all of these entities or institutions shape the engagement of the student in the different institutions. For example, a student may have a behavioural problem as a result of the student's interaction and engagement at home. According

to Skinner and Pitzer (2012), they developed a multilevel perspective of student engagement as seen on the figure below;

Figure 1: Different models of Engagement adapted from Skinner and Pitzer



From the above model, the focus of this work is on the third category of engagement, which comes as a result of the Teacher, content and students having a relationship or interaction and how these relationships affect their engagement in the subject or minor curriculum being

taught in the classroom. This will go a long way to promotes achievement and protect against failure.

The purpose of instilling the necessary interactions in the classroom is so that engagement can occur between the students and the lesson or subject that is being taught. Student engagement refers to students' active involvement in educationally effective practices and their commitment to educational goals and learning, and is an essential pathway to highly valued educational outcomes such as academic achievement (Christenson et al., 2012). Facilitators have the responsibility to ensure that learners become engaged with their subject.

Student engagement can largely be accredited to the work of Alexander Astin, who defined engagement as the quantity and quality of physical and psychological energy that students invest in the college experience. Real student engagement occurs when cognitive focus (mental action and attention) as well as emotional fuel (motivation, curiosity, interest), work together to induce constructive learning behaviours (effort, persistence, attention) that will lead to deep and long-lasting learning (Astleitner & Wiesner, 2004). According to these authors as well as other authors, this definition gives three types of student engagements which are Cognitive, emotional and behavioural. However, there is fourth type of engagement which is agentic engagement as proposed by Reeve and Tseng (2011).

Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement has its bedrock in enhancing attention and memory. The capturing and maintaining of student's attention is highly needed in cognitive engagement because it will help learners to easily remember and integrate information. Cognitive engagement deals with the internal psychological processes that help learners to bridge between context and learning outcomes (Connell and Wellborn, 1991; Reschly and Christenson, 2012). Cognitive engagement has been defined as drawing "... on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 60). Cognitive engagement is the behavior of the student, which incorporates motivation, effort, and strategy used to comprehend what is being taught. This deals with learners that are intellectually invested and absorbed in their academic work, which also causes the students to exceed the requirements and enjoy the love of taking challenges in learning (Trowler, 2010).

When learners are cognitively engaged, it is possible to identify the scenario; you can observe that learners are purposeful, show enthusiasm towards learning activities, willing to participate in learning activities, seek challenges, and exhibit a thoroughness and desire to

achieve the best possible learning outcomes (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012). Learners become focus and tend to give attention as to how they can master the concepts being taught to them (Fredricks et al., 2004). Just as one can identify learners who are cognitively engaged, it is also possible to identify learners who are cognitively disengaged. Skinner and Pitzer (2012) highlighted some indicators, amongst which include a lack of self-direction, presenting themselves as helpless, unwilling to handle learning challenges, avoiding or being uninterested during learning activities, and presenting themselves as incapable.

Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement has been seen to be the fuel for learning and what pushes learners to move forward in learning. Also known as affective engagement, it shows the degree to which a learner is emotionally invested and motivated to maintain attention and put effort towards learning. It "...encompasses positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school, and is presumed to create ties to an institution and influence willingness to do the work" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 60). People are driven by emotions to take actions, in this case, in learning. That's why teachers should ensure the emotional or affective state of the learners as it affects their attention and how they approach and process information. It is important to note that, emotional engagement has a mixed characteristic of several cognitive emotions, psychological, contextual, teacher behaviour and motivational factors (Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012). When learners have positive affective or emotional state, they are likely to demonstrate a spirit of creativity, creative problem-solving skills and openness to new ideas in the learning process. This is contrary to a negative emotional state such as mild stress, anxiety and confusion. It is possible to find resistance to learning from students or reduced attention during learning (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005).

It is very possible to identify indicators of positive affective engagement as well as negative indicators of affective disengagement. Indicators of positive affective engagement during learning activities include enthusiasm, interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, pride, vitality and zest (Ryan and Deci, 2008; Skinner and Pitzer, 2012). Others include the feeling of connectedness, support and humour. On the other hand, negative emotions include boredom, disinterest, frustration, anger, tension, sense of pressure, sadness, worry, anxiety, shame and self-blame (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012, p. 25). Hence, a little emotion will go a long way to learning and as such, teachers will have to think on how to jolt learners towards emotional states that will be conducive towards their engagement and learning.

Behavioural Engagement

These are the observable and measurable actions of students in the classroom. Hence, in its simplest form, behavioural engagement is actually the actions carried out by students in the classroom. Behavioural engagement is the amount of time students invest within a specific learning activity, subject or participate within the classroom in general (Janosz, 2012). Specifically, it draws upon "... the idea of participation; it includes involvement in academic, social or extracurricular activities, and is considered crucial for achieving positive academic outcomes and preventing dropping out" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 60). Other observable actions include the degree to which students persist when a concept is difficult, students calling out the teacher's attention as well as how they approach contents. It is as a result of behaviours demonstrated by students in the classroom, for which they are judged by teachers as not engaging in their subject or lesson. Not all students are the same. Some students are intrinsically interested or motivated to learn a subject or lesson. As such, they will have a high behavioural engagement towards that subject, while other students must be behaviourally engaged by their teachers.

Some indicators of positive behavioural engagement in the classroom include initiating self-directed actions, making attempts to master concepts, persistence and intensity of concentration, focus, absorption and involvement. In the case of behavioural engagement, effort means participating in and completing learning activities (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 64). On the other hand, indicators of behavioural disengagement include procrastination, lack of resilience in the face of challenges, restlessness, lack of effort or sustained effort, being easily distracted, and showing a disinclination to work hard or be prepared to participate (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012, p. 25).

Agentic Engagement

This is the fourth type of engagement proposed and not too common amongst authors on student engagement as they limit it to cognitive, emotional and behavioural. Agentic engagement is defined as "...students' constructive contribution into the flow of the instruction they receive [and] ...captures the process in which students intentionally and somewhat proactively try to personalise and otherwise enrich both what is to be learned and the conditions and circumstances under which it is to be learned..." (Reeve and Tseng, 2011, p. 258). In this situation, students are not just consumers of knowledge but active producers and contributors to knowledge received from their teachers during the learning process. For a learner to take what has been given to him or her and reproduce knowledge with it is a proof of the agentic

engagement of that learner during the learning process. It also records that the learner is able to carry out pro-action on learning. The crux of agentic engagement is that learners are able to make effective and constructive contributions in learning activities. Just as the essence of life is contribution, so is the essence of teaching, whereby the learners can get knowledge and contribute towards the increase in knowledge. When students have that latitude for exercising agentic engagement, where their autonomy and initiative ability can be exercised, it will serve as a motivation for them to be engaged the more.

Although these dimensions of engagement have been seen individually, patterns do show their interrelatedness. For example, the positive affective state of a learner (affective engagement) can cause that learner to focus and show enthusiasm towards learning (cognitive engagement), making attempts to master concepts (behavioural engagement) thereby making positive contributions towards the lesson being taught (agentic engagement). This is why Roger (2017, cited Fredricks et al., 2004; Guthrie and Anderson, 1999; Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000) as researchers who have argued that a full picture of engagement may only be claimed when all components are considered together, rather than in isolation, and in association with potential motivators within classrooms. It is for this reason that in the descriptive presentation and regression analysis of the data to this study, engagement will be mostly considered as a whole, making it necessary and simple to see how the different types of interactions influence engagement in Economics in the classroom.

Students' Engagement and Teacher – Student Relationship

Teachers are considered to be hub through which interactions and engagement takes place in the classroom. The presence of a teacher in class has the ability to impact the cognitive and emotional engagement of students. It is of prime importance for teachers to enhance their relationship with learners as it "... engenders the will to participate cooperatively in classroom activities and to try hard and persist in the face of challenges" (Hughes and Chen, 2011, p. 278). And just as Roger (2017) will cite (Hamre and Pianta, 2001; Pianta, 1999; Ryan and Deci, 2009; Wentzel, 1998, 2002; Wigfield et al., 2006) the ability of teachers to influence their students' engagement with learning and to motivate their affective and cognitive investment towards learning goals is a universally desired one across schools. When teachers build positive relationship with students such as understanding the learners, being approachable by them, offer the opportunity for attentiveness to the learners, the teachers end up providing an atmosphere of trust for such learners. Learners become confident to express themselves, they become willing to learn and make positive contributions. This builds joy in them as some learners will

find it enjoyable whenever the teacher walks into the classroom. And in line with this, for a class to be engaged, the TSR needs emphasis on “... teacher empathy (understanding), unconditional positive regard (warmth), genuineness (self-awareness), non-directivity (student-initiated and student-regulated activities) and the encouragement of critical thinking (as opposed to traditional memory emphasis)” (Cornelius-White, 2007, p. 113).

In the classroom, a TSR influences engagement through tone of voice towards students, facial expression and body language. A warm smile is all that may be needed to light up the emotional engagement of a learner. Greeting your students can open the door for communication to lighten them up for the commencement of the lesson. That can bring them into a positive affection state and cause them to be engaged cognitively and contribute positively during the lesson. Once a strong TSR is built, it can affect the cognitive and emotional engagement of learners. This will in turn affect the behavioural engagement of learners. When learners don't take actions in class, teachers should endeavour to check their relationship with the cognitive and emotional nature of that learner. Some students exercise behavioural engagement in the classroom just because they feel that a teacher is there for them and can always assist them when possible. If you want them to do the work in the class, show them that you care about them.

With respect to agentic engagement, it also thrives in a classroom with a high TSR. A TSR creates a positive effect on students' ability to self-regulate and self-direct their approaches towards learning of concepts and mastery of knowledge. Hence, agentic engagement is seen to thrive in a classroom where students see their teacher as one who supports autonomy of students (Fiedler, 1975; Reeve et al., 2004; Reeve and Tseng, 2011). Agentic engagement is a predictive indicator of a strong positive TSR (Reeve, 2013). It can be observed through engagement-indicative behaviours such as “... students might offer input, express a preference, offer a suggestion or contribution, ask a question, communicate what they are thinking and needing, recommend a goal or objective to be pursued, communicate their level of interest, solicit resources or learning opportunities, seek ways to add personal relevance to the lesson, ask for a say in how problems are to be solved, seek clarification, generate options, communicate likes and dislikes, or request assistance such as modelling, tutoring, feedback, background knowledge, or a concrete example of an abstract concept” (Reeve, 2017, (cited, Reeve and Tseng, 2011, p. 258).

Students' Engagement and Student-Content Relationship

As Economics teachers prepare lessons or content to be taught, they must ensure that these contents should be engaging to the learners. Learners often times turn towards engaging behaviours when they find content easy to understand. Now, whether or not a given content in Economics is easy, will largely depend of the manner in which the teacher causes the students to interact with that content. Also, content for which they find useful, in this case Economics as a whole, will cause them to be engaged. Although the learner has to relate with the content, the teachers should facilitate the engagement of the learner with the content. In SCR, we talked about metacognition – thinking about how others think and helping them think in the right direction towards a given task. Cognitive engagement with Economics content can be increased when teachers are able to bring the content closer to the students and prompting questions from the content. For example, if the teacher has to teach on business units, one way to do so is to ask the students to name the different types of businesses they have seen around town. By so doing, they will be forced to think of the businesses they have encountered overtime, put their mental faculties to work and spur attention to the topic. Areas that seem difficult in the subject or content are considered as “confusion” (Tanner, 2012). Such areas can be clarified by helping the learners identify better ways of understanding it. For example, drawing or demonstrating it, rather than just explaining it in the classroom.

What about emotional engagement? The joy of a student with interest to own a business in the future is already of interest and joy to the student about learning on businesses. Hence, excitement towards that subject will put the student engaged to learn. Taking into consideration the thriving nature of personally owned businesses and how they help people come out of the “salary trap”, it is an opportunity to raise this issue to the learners as a sign of building curiosity in them towards learning the subject so as to be able to create businesses for themselves and become financially sustainable in the future. Owing to the fact that most teachers have once been students, it becomes necessary to bring in some personal experiences in engaging their learners. The cognitive and emotional engagement of learners will be fostered when teachers are able to put a touch of personal experience on how they handled certain difficult topics in Economics while they were students as well as being teachers now. When learners are caused to engage cognitively and emotionally, they will confidently take on behavioural and agentic engagement in the classroom. Their actions in the classroom will show signs of commitment and autonomy towards making positive contributions in the classroom.

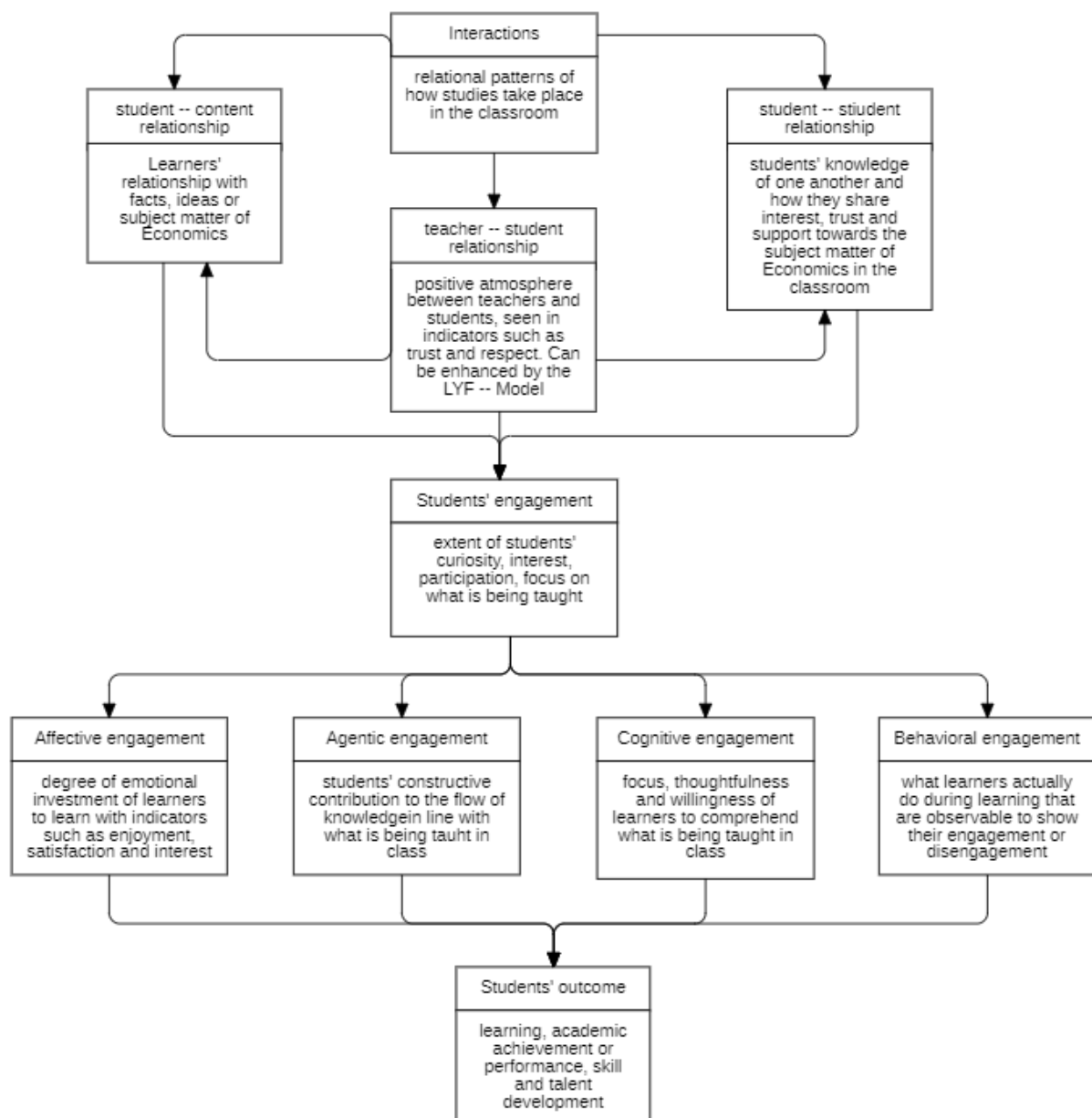
Students' Engagement and Student-Student Relationship

SSR boosts both cognitive and emotional engagement. As teachers cause students to interact amongst themselves, cognitive engagement is enhanced through the opportunities that are being created for students to learn as well as to teach one another. These students intentionally think diverse answers to questions and share them in their groups to ultimately learn new knowledge. Emotional engagement is also influenced by SSR in that it allows learners to share their interest about the subject. They have people they can trust and share knowledge with. Hence, the bond amongst the students helps them to be engaged emotionally in the study of Economics.

Behavioural engagement is also influenced by SSR in that people learn by the actions of others. When learners are paired in SSR, these students gain the strength to learn from each other, which helps them overcome certain difficulties they may have in the lessons. The long term effect of this is that, such learners who were strengthened to learn through their interaction with other students will now be able to learn by themselves. They gradually move from a state of showing incapacity to learn, to making attempts in mastering concepts and making contributions in the classroom, which is an aspect of agentic engagement. This is the withdrawal phase of SSR cycle as revealed by (Brown, 2001; Downing, Lam, Kwong, Downing, & Chan, 2007). As Students learn together, their focus begins to increase on the subject, they now have little difficulties with certain concepts, there is an increase in their work done when they interact on subsequent projects or assignments, because they have been able to help one another share strategies to study the subject easily.

From the above concepts looked at, it is seen that students' engagement in a subject like Economics at the secondary school can be affected by the level of interactions in the classroom. However, it is seen that teachers have a stronger responsibility to ensure all three types of interactions in order to facilitate engagement of students. Teachers must take the initiative to ensure that students actively interact with their content (SCR) as well as with other students (SSR) for engagement to become a reality. This is in line in Marzano (2003) who considered teachers to be the corner stones on which other things work well. The above concepts can be summarised in the conceptual framework as seen below;

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Interactions and Engagement based upon the conceptual Literature.



Theoretical Framework

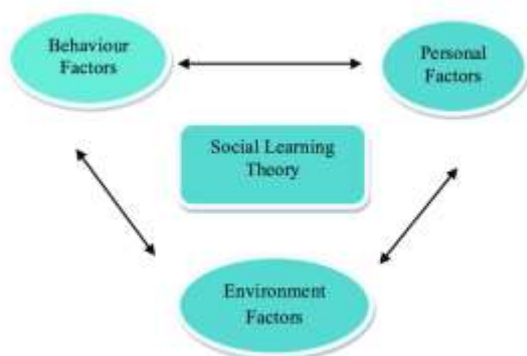
This will look at the different theories that support this work.

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

This theory supports interactions in the classroom to foster learning. Learning is an enduring change in behaviour, or it is the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience (Hoffman, 1993). Hence, SLT is one of the learning theories that bridge the gap between behaviourist and cognitive learning theories (Muro & Jeffrey, 2008) because it involves attention, memory and motivation when it comes to learning. The impact of learning applies throughout the lives of individuals because at any age, it is still possible for observational learning to be possible.

SLT was developed by Albert Bandura who was an educational psychologist from Stanford University, USA. It explained how people learn in a natural environment. According to SLT, most human learning occurs in a social environment and how their learning is also affected by personal factors such as cognitive, affective and biological events. By observing people, human can acquire knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs and attitudes. People also look to models or examples from whom they can study the useful behaviours possessed by these persons, then act according to the beliefs of these people and the result they expect to have. Taking the case of students, they will be able to develop their own knowledge or information gained from observing the environment or a model such as their teachers or other students. This observation takes place from time to time, and as such it causes the learner overtime to repeat the observation thereby resulting to the building of capacity as manifested by the learners' behaviour in reproducing the same action observed. SLT makes it known that, learners can learn from one another through the following ways; observation, imitation and modelling.

Figure 3: Social Learning theory of Bandura



Observational learning: This observational learning was discovered through the Bobo Doll Experiment in 1961. He discovered three fundamental models in line with observational learning;

- A live model of a real person demonstrating or performing a behaviour
- Verbal instructional models that include behavioural descriptions and explanations
- A symbolic model that includes real or fictional people who display behaviours in books, movies, TV shows or online media.

A social setting of learning as proposed by SLT can be classroom where interaction takes place as stimulated by the teachers. Students do observe their teachers, mimic what the teacher does, and model the teacher after repetitively mentally capturing the act that is being done by the teachers. A teacher's style of communicating or interacting with learners helps to build up mental schema in the minds of those students for them to be able to reproduce what the teacher has taught.

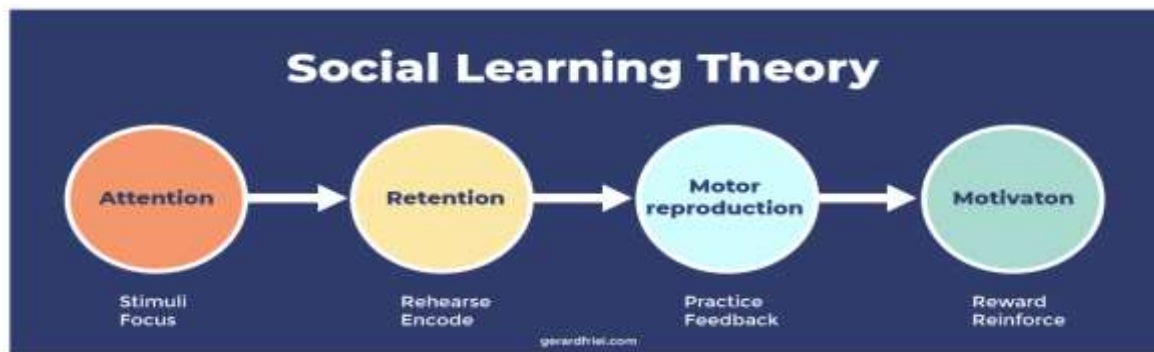
Modelling process:

According to Bandura, effectively modelling is the cognitive base for learning, and for this to effectively take place, four conditions are necessary. They are attention, retention, reproduction and motivation.

- With **attention**, the person must pay attention to the model. A certain attention from the model must attract one's attention. This goes in line with cognitive engagement of learners.
- **Retention:** This is the ability to remember what has been observed. This deals with the memory. The behaviour that will be replicated is the one that remains in the memory of the observer.
- **Reproduction:** The ability to replicate the behaviour observed.
- **Motivation:** It is the necessary ingredient that will actually cause the observer to replicate the behaviour that was observed or what has been learnt.

This modelling process is seen on the diagram below;

Figure 4: The Cognitive Processes of Bandura's Social Learning Theory



The classroom serves as a social environment in which learners learn by interacting with one another through observation, imitating and modelling the behaviours of the other parties involved, such as teachers and students. Since the behaviours that will be remembered and reproduced are those that are captivating and motivating to the learners, teachers have the responsibility to properly interact with learners and cause them to also interact with other learners and the content through the right strategies as earlier discussed under interactions.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT), proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985) is a macro-level theory of human motivation that aims to explain the dynamics of human need, motivation, and well-being within a social context. According to this theory, individuals have three universal psychological needs which are; autonomy (feeling self-governed and self-endorsed), competence (feeling competent and effective), and relatedness (feeling connected, loved, interacted) and these needs tend to move them towards taking actions or not. When these needs are adequately met or satisfied, individuals will have a sense of high psychological well-being, but if on the contrary, they will feel isolated. When it comes to the classroom, these needs have to be addressed by the teachers in the course of lesson delivery because it will make the learners to become motivated and engage in the learning tasks (Hsu et al., 2019; Reeve, 2013). This theory can be used to explain the classroom interactions on students' engagement, judging from the point of TSR by being supportive to allow learners exercise autonomy and self-regulation when responding to questions, as well as SSR when the learners feel connected and loved by the other learners as they study in groups.

SDT has been widely applied to improve student learning in the face-to-face context or traditional classrooms (Ryan & Deci, 2017, 2020), SDT is grounded on the assumption that individuals are actively oriented towards personal growth and the need to be self-determining of their actions. This motivation to grow is what teachers should handle in the classroom by giving the necessary support for learners to interact and learn from one another. Competence is

the ability to perform a given task confidently. When students feel competent, they recognize that they can perform and complete a task successfully (Ryan and Deci, 2002). This will then need the assistance of a teacher to instil this confidence in the learners through various supportive measures. In the areas where students have interest and value, competence involves being able to achieve effectively within these areas, especially if success is required and determined by some other person such as the teacher (Painter, 2011).

Autonomy goes in line with the agentic engagement of learners such that they desire that liberty to have some freedom and make positive contributions to the learning process (Skinner and Edge, 2002). The more teachers support, interact and collaborate with learners without hushing them, the more the learners will turn to be engaged in the classroom. When learners know they can fully participate autonomously in the lesson, they will give in their engagement.

Relatedness is defined as the quality of the teacher-student relationship as perceived by the student (Hughes et al., 2008; Painter, 2011). How the students perceive relationship with the teachers has a lot to play on the way they will engage to learn. The learners must be able to feel some connection with their teachers as well as peers in the community of the classroom (Ryan and Deci, 2009). That is why enhancing a positive TSR is important to instil engagement on the part of the learners.

The three constructs of SDT – Competence, autonomy and relatedness are interwoven to serve as a good theory both on how interactions in the classroom take place and how it impacts on the motivation that students can generate to make them to become engaged during learning.

Social Constructivism Theory (SCT)

It falls under the learning theory of constructivism – the learning perspective which shows how students actually construct or create knowledge out of experiences. This theory supports classroom interactions. The SCT also called the Socio-Cultural Theory focuses on the relationship and interaction of a learner with others who are more knowledgeable or experienced (MKO).

Lev Vygotsky is a major proponent of this theory of learning. His theory is founded on three main ideas which are;

- **More Knowledgeable others (MKO):** According to him, a child's or novice's learning is influenced by a relationships with others who are more capable, knowledgeable or expert learners. The expert helper or learners here can be a classroom teacher in the case

of our study, who helps and suggest ways of learning a given task. The child performs faster in learning a new skill when accompanied and helped by an expert learner than if performing alone. In this light, there is the necessity of using elementary mental functions in helping the learner to be able to perform higher mental functions. Examples of elementary mental functions are attention, sensation, perception and memory. While higher mental function will include independent thinking. The knowledge to be taught is possessed by the teacher. As such, knowledge is initially found in the expert learner. But gradually, the skill or knowledge of the expert learner becomes the knowledge of the learner.

- **Language:** In order to help learners learn, there is need for teachers' external speech to be well communicated for learners to internalize them thereby generating their own internal speech or thoughts that are generated in them as ideas in learning new things or building new knowledge. Hence, thoughts develop through conversations, and that is why teachers must carefully enhance the conversation with learners through appropriate language, simple understandable words, and voice tone.
- **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD):** ZPD is the concept that shows the difference between solo performance and assisted performance. This symbolically means the place of immediate change in the knowledge of the learner. What the learner knows has been enhanced and the learner has been brought into what he or she didn't know through assisted learning. The process of helping or supporting learners into new knowledge is called instructional scaffolding. This helps learners to build confidence and push their limits to develop new skills and accomplish greater tasks.

Empirical Studies

This section covers previous works and findings concerning interactions and students' engagement in the classroom. Owing to the fact that academic performance is an inherent outcome or indicator of students' engagement, studies that look at students' performance due to any of the components of interaction will also be included here as a part of the empirical studies to this study.

Interactions

In India, Fanani (2012) carried out a research through his thesis on "A Descriptive Study on Classroom Interaction in Speaking Class of the second semester student at STAIN Tulungagung". His research looked at the types and levels of classroom interaction in speaking class, how the teacher stimulate and encouraged the students to engage to speak in speaking

class, and how the students got themselves involved in interaction during the teaching learning process in speaking class. From the observation of the researcher, the result shows that there were three types and levels of classroom interaction that occurred in speaking class, interpersonal interaction, group interaction and cultural interaction. There were some processes used by lecturers to stimulate and encourage the students to speak. They were: breaking down the topic, monitored the student or group and the teacher made some jokes or humours in the classroom, which captured the attention of the students and got them to speak.

In 2019, a study was carried out by Fauzan Saputra, of the English Education Study Program in The State Islamic University of Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. The work was based on The Classroom Interaction between a Teacher and The Tenth Grade Students at SMA Al-Falah Islam Jambi. The purpose of the study was to investigate classroom interaction in English class of tenth grade students of SMA Al-Falah Islam Jambi. It adopted a qualitative approach with instruments such as interviews and observation used in collecting the needed data. The finding of this research showed that teachers used three kinds of classroom interactions which included student-student interaction, teacher-student interaction and student-teacher interaction. The first was suitable during small group discussions as well as classroom discussions. The second was best used during classroom interaction and also when the teacher gave instructions to the learners. While the last happened when the students needed help on a concept or word they didn't understand, as such, they turned to the teacher for help. The researcher also went ahead to offer suggestions for teachers to offer more opportunities for learners to better improve themselves by giving them more opportunities to ask questions. Teachers should also be models to their learners by enriching themselves with more knowledge. The result will be an engaged learners who will have their academic performance and skill development improve upon.

Teacher – Student Relationship

As concerns TSR, a study was conducted in Tanzania by Mahona Joseph Paschal and Demetrai Gerold Mkulu in 2020. This study explored the influence of teacher – students' relationship on students' academic performance in Tanzania using Magu District as a case study. The researchers had 130 respondents as a sample size for the study. The sample was drawn from 6 public secondary schools through random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. It included 6 school Heads, 57 teachers, 66 students and one District Educational Officer. The study used a descriptive survey approach. To obtain information, the researchers used the instruments of questionnaires and interviews. Their result showed that teacher–students' relationship is a crucial determinant and catalyst to academic performance in

Tanzanian public secondary schools. It also showed amongst others that TSR helps students to feel cared for by their teachers, helps students to have freedom of expression in the classroom and help teachers and students to be an integral part of the classroom as they participate actively. From the findings, it is concluded that despite the fact that teachers and students were aware of the elements of TSR, poor teacher – student relationships were still recorded in schools. They ended up recommending that teachers should instil closer relationships with their students as it will go to enhance the performance of students.

Moving over to Cameroon, another study was carried out in 2021 by Ajongakoh Raymond Bella on Teacher – Student Relationship as a Determinant of Students’ Classroom Participation in some Secondary Schools in Kumba I Municipality. The target population for the study was made up of three secondary schools - one government, one confessional and one lay private school. The sample was 160 students purposively selected from them these schools. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with instrument of questionnaire of closed ended questions being used to collect data in order to answer its four research objectives that guided the study. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics that is tables and frequencies. The findings revealed that all the variables exploited by the study - communication, emotionally- safe learning environment, student perception of teachers, motivation and praise which happened to be elements of TSR, all have the potential of affecting students’ classroom participation in secondary schools in Kumba I Municipality. Based on the findings, the researchers made the following recommendations; Teachers are advised to routinely show positive attitudes, beliefs and expectations that will motivate students, build a cordial relationship with their students, and students are encouraged to feel free to express their problems especially academic problems to their teachers.

A study was conducted by Prof. Maingairi Daouda on Demotivation de l’enseignant et performances scolaires dans les lycees de Yaounde. It analysed factors such as lack of recognition and limited career advancement opportunities contribute to teacher demotivation and affect student performance. Demotivation itself is a factor that can affect how teachers relate with their students, while engagement affects performance. The study employed a mixed methods approach which combined quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data that is more comprehensive. He sampled multiple secondary schools within Yaounde. His findings concluded that teacher demotivation significantly hampers student’s academic engagement and achievement. Hence the study emphasized the need for improved working conditions, and professional development for teachers to enhance student outcomes.

Secondly, he also carried another work on assessing the relationship between teacher's effectiveness and students' acquisition of mathematical knowledge in upper primary classes in N'Djamena, Tchad. Teacher competencies, instructional strategies and classroom management are part of the factors that will determine how teachers relate with their students' and in turn influence their engagement in the classroom. The research encompassed several primary schools in N'Djamena's 7th district. The findings showed a strong correlation between teacher's effectiveness and student success in Mathematics. It also indicated the necessity of continuous teacher training and the adoption of effective methodologies of teaching to improve the performance of students.

Student – Content Relationship

A study carried out by (Blumenfeld, Kempler, & Krajcki; Keller, Hoy, Goetz, & Fenzel; 2006, 2016) revealed that, teachers greatly motivate learners to interact with the contents of their subjects and for learning, when the teachers show a great deal of enthusiasm during teaching. This research strengthened the work of (Zhang, 2014), who confirmed that the result of this will be the benefit of the students in the behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement.

Student – Student Relationship

In 2015, a study was carried out by Marcus Birkengrahe and Harald Kjellin on improving student interaction and engagement in a flipped classroom in the University of Stockholm in Sweden and the Berlin School of Economics and law in Germany. The researchers adopted an experimental qualitative study and selected two courses and relied on how students taught each other according to the Learning by Teaching Method developed by Jean-Pol Martin (Grzega and Schöner, 2008). They used a variety of online support methods and student interactions and peer reviews. Their findings revealed that, in order to increase interaction and student engagement in the flipped classroom setting, it is best to teach the students in a customised rather than a standardised manner.

Students' Engagement

A research on High School Student Engagement in active learning classrooms was conducted by Lotulung et al. and published in 2023. It was a descriptive analytical study which examined the engagement of the Indonesian high school students as they participated in the classroom activity, particularly in the whole classroom discussion setting. The researchers carried out engagement in three categories of word count, unprovoked student talk and turn

count. Teacher talk was also examined in order to compare the interaction and measure between the student talk and the teacher talk. The researchers sampled 380 students of grade 10-12 in a private high school and they used a recorded meeting of 30 sessions. Engagement level was made certain based on analysis of classroom observation and transcript. The result of their finding showed that the teacher dominated the classroom talk and low engagement from the learners in terms of unprovoked student talk and turn count in the whole discussion setting. This was measured at a ratio of 5:1. The teacher made most of the initiative which is a reflection of low Student – Student interaction as well as low Teacher – Student interaction. The researchers gave recommendations for more research to be carried out on how to instill active participation in learners as well as better methods in engaging learners in the classroom.

Research Gap

A lot of researches have been carried out on STR with respect to student engagement and performance in academics. However a few researches have been carried out concerning SSR and SCR. And very limited research can be found on a combination of these three types of interaction in the classroom on students' engagement. For SCR, a great deal of this study has mostly been done for online or virtual learning and not traditional classroom learning. For most part of a body of researches, and with the present growth in these modes of learning, much attention has been placed on how to make online learning content more interactive with the learners. The traditional classroom content is yet to take on this. Hence, this research is going to fill the gap of combining the three major interactions in the classroom, in order to foster the engagement of students with respect to economics as the subject of study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will be examining the methodology used in this study as well as the research design, the population of the study, development of the instruments, the characteristics of the participants, sampling procedure, the data collection as well as analysis techniques. Keeping in mind, the purpose of this study is to examine the role of interactions – TSR, SCR, SSR on the engagement of students in Economics at the secondary schools in Yaoundé IV and it has the following objectives;

1. To analyse the role of Teacher - Student relationship on learner's interest in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV
2. To Investigate the effect of Learner - Content interaction on students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV
3. To Evaluate the role of Student - Student relationship on the engagement of students in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV

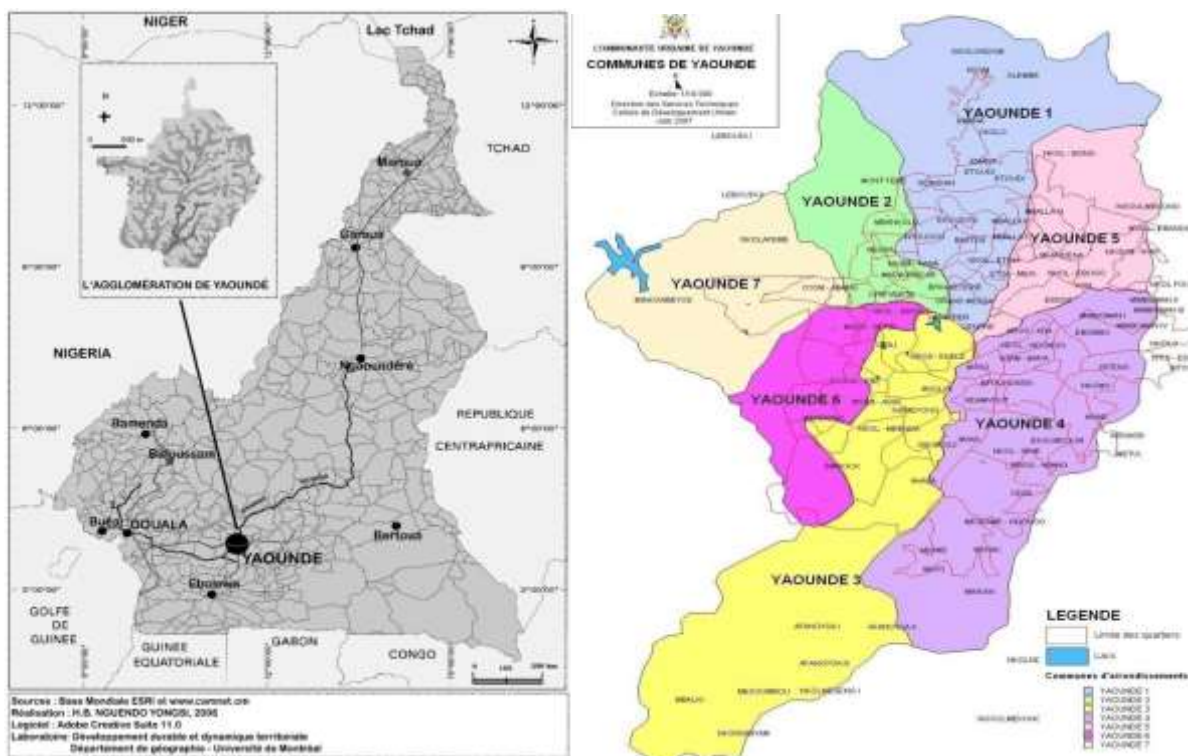
Area of the Study

Yaoundé IV is one of the seven sub divisions or district municipality of Mfoundi division in Yaoundé, the political capital city of Cameroon. The area is found in the south part of the City of Yaoundé. It has as head quarter, Kondengui. It was created in 1987. It is limited to the west by the river Mfoundi which separates it from Yaoundé 3. It has been experiencing a boom in private business investments over the years, especially in the opening of schools in the tertiary sector. Most of the schools operated here run from primary to higher institutions and are either of the two languages – English and French (bilingual schools) or purely one of the two languages. The schools found in this area are either, of the Government sector – owned and controlled by the government or private sector – owned and controlled by individuals or missions. Dealing with the secondary schools, according to statistics from the Delegation of

secondary education, there are over 112 secondary schools operating in Yaoundé IV, of which 7 are publicly owned while 105 are privately owned.

The map of Yaoundé 4 can be seen below;

Figure 5: Map of Cameroon showing the various regions (left) and position of Sub-division of Yaoundé 4 (right)



Research Design

This is defined as a systematic plan used in studying a scientific problem. This research adopts a mixed design, employing both quantitative data and qualitative data. This was to allow for a thorough exploration of the subject. An article published by Dovetail on the 20th of February 2023 holds that, as both qualitative and quantitative data is being collected and analysed, it is possible for more meaningful conclusions to be drawn about a given situation under study. The quantitative research survey will make it possible for the researcher to gather information from as many persons as possible thereby giving the opportunity for numerical data

to be turned into useful descriptive statistics to measure aspects such as engagement and interactions from a large sample size. Also, it will be possible to make extrapolation of the findings to other regions of Cameroon. This quantitative research design enabled the establishment of how indicators such as TSR, SSR and SCR influence the engagement of Students in Economics.

The researcher thought it wise to have an onsite experience of how interaction occurs in the classroom. As such he also included an observation study to this effect in some selected Economics classrooms in some of the schools where the research was carried out, which formed the basis of the qualitative research design of this study. Observational research is a type of research method where the researcher observes and records the behaviour of individuals or groups of people in their natural environment (Hassan, 2022). There are many types of observational research based on the level of control and degree of involvement of the researcher (Hassan, 2022). However, the researcher was interested in three types of observations; Participation observation, structured as well as unstructured observation.

1. **Participation observation:** It is one where the researcher interacts or participates actively in the group or situation being observed. Hence, in this case, the researcher's presence was felt in the classroom both by the teacher and students, and he went ahead to interact in the learning of Economics to observe the engagement level of students.
2. **Structured observation:** It is one in which the researcher defines the set of behaviours to be observed and records the occurrences. Hence, the researcher was interested in certain aspects that related to interactions in the classroom and student's engagement in Economics.
3. **Unstructured Observation:** In this case, the researcher wasn't stereotyped in his observation. He went ahead to look for other occurrences in the classroom that didn't have a predetermined category in his observation guide.

The qualitative research was added in order to give a balance in obtaining information from learners about classroom interaction and engagement as well as the researcher having first-hand experience of the same information obtained through the questionnaires. This research was also carried out with the main respondents being form 4 students and teachers of some selected secondary schools in Yaoundé IV.

Population of the study, sampling technique and sample size

The population for the quantitative study was secondary school students selected from over 28 secondary schools in the area of Yaoundé IV, since the researcher was interested in how interactions affect students' engagement in the secondary schools. The target population for quantitative aspect of this study was form 4 secondary school students in Yaoundé IV, for the academic year 2022-2023, since they are the intermediary class of the subject being taken at the CGCE as well as the area where the researcher had also been teaching the subject of Economics and has encountered some complaints about disengaged students. 1706 Form 4 students were chosen because they are in the intermediate class between the introductory phase and closing phase of the subject in the secondary school. As such, some of the students may start losing or developing more interest in the subject at this stage. The class of Form 3 is more of excitement in the students, as they encounter a new subject. While F5 students are obliged to study the subject. Therefore, F4 was the ideal class for such a study because they have gone past the excitement of the subject at its beginning phase and are now faced with intermediary phase, and also where the content is at a much higher order thinking. Classroom interactions can have a greater impact on the learners as to how they can go about being engaged in continuing to learn the subject, such that it will not be an obligation in form five, but a matter of interest and importance, even if many of the learners will not continue with the subject in the High school as a part of their series. However, the sample for this study stood at 306 students.

The sampling techniques used were purposive sampling, stratified and systematic random sampling. Firstly, the secondary schools were stratified into private and public schools to give 105 private schools and 7 public schools. A purposive sampling technique was done in selecting the public schools. As such, all the 7 public schools were selected for this study. For the private schools, a systematic random sampling technique was used to get the number of schools to work with. The 105 private schools were now written on a list, where the researcher selected every 5th school on the list in a systematic manner to give a total of 21 secondary schools. Hence, the public and private schools gave a total of 28 schools to work with. However, the researcher ended up working with 18 schools because of the following;

- Difficulty in accessing all the schools within the time limit of the work upon obtaining data from the delegation of secondary education for Mfoundi Division.
- The large population of students already reached, which was also closer to the maximum sample size of any population at confidence interval ratio of 95% and 0.5 error margins as revealed by the population and sample size table of the “surveyors” as well as the

Krejcie & Morgan table. This maximum sample size per this table is 380 for population greater than or equal to 1,000,000.

- Some of the public schools selected were purely French incline. As such, the researcher couldn't work with the schools.
- The population already reached after going around 18 schools was judged to be large enough to give a good estimated representation of all the schools around Yaoundé 4. This judgement was based on the sample size that was going to be derived for this study. It exceeded the minimum required sample size for a quantitative survey research as this, which is usually set at 100.

A sample size is a portion of the population whose results can be generalized to the entire population and which is usually gotten from the target population. After obtaining the target population of this study, which was 1,706 Form 4 students, consulting the sample size table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), as well as the surveyor's table, the researcher came out with a sample size of 306 Form 4 students and to administer questionnaires to.

However, for the qualitative study, the researcher purposefully selected 3 Form 4 lesson classes to observe how interactions occurred in the classroom. Hence, the population here was made up of both the Form 4 students and teachers and some selected secondary schools in Yaoundé IV

Table 5: Table of population and sample size for quantitative study

S/N	Name of school	Population	Sample size	Percentage of sample size
1	Ladybird High School	111	26	8.5
2	Greener Pastures International College	25	08	2.6
3	Adventist Bilingual College	130	26	8.5
4	Pinnacle of Success Academy	53	12	3.9
5	Lycée Bilingue D'Ekounou	250	28	9.2
6	Horeb Bilingual College	40	10	3.3
7	Marie Albert Prestige	70	15	4.9
8	Purpose Driven High School	40	10	3.3
9	College Amasia	170	35	11.4
10	Lycée Bilingue d'Anguissa	200	20	6.5
11	Baptist High School	100	28	9.2
12	Institute Petou	62	14	4.6

13	College Espoir de Minkan	32	12	3.9
14	Lycée Bilingue de Mimboman	260	20	6.5
15	College Bon Berger	60	18	5.9
16	College Institute Dipito	25	06	1.9
17	Saint Joseph Bilingual College	48	10	3.3
18	Harford International College	30	08	2.6
Total		1,706	306	100

Source: Field work 2023

From this population and sample size, data was collected using appropriate instruments suited for quantitative research in the subject of Economics, as interactions take place in the classroom.

For the qualitative study, the population was made up of three schools, and in 3 different classes composed of students and Economics teachers for Form 4. The schools were purposefully selected on the basis of proximity to the researcher.

Instruments used for data collection

Two instruments were used for this research in order to gather information; questionnaires and observation guide. With respect to the quantitative survey, the instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The questionnaire had self-reporting items that made it possible for data to be collected on how students viewed how their engagement in Economics lessons was affected by the nature of interactions in the classroom, principally Teacher-Student, Student-Content and Student-Student Relationships. Their level of engagement was based on the behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic dimensions.

The questionnaire had closed-ended questions using the Likert scale from Strongly Agree being the option with the highest weight, to Strongly Disagree being the option with the lowest weight as seen the table below;

Table 6: Questionnaire options and weights for the Likert Scale

Option	Weight (points)
Strongly Agree (SA)	4
Agree (A)	3
Disagree (D)	2

Strongly Disagree (SD)	1
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The questionnaire was divided into three constructs and each construct had items that sought to explore information concerning the construct.

Firstly, there is personal information of the learners. This sought to look at aspects such as gender, age range within the limits of adolescence and the nature of the school in which the learner attended – private or public.

The second construct was the independent variable which dealt particularly with interactions. The main indicators of interactions here are TSR, SCR and SSR. TSR sought to explore how teachers create conducive environment between them and their learners, manifested in aspects such as paying attention to students, advising them, assisting them or creating an emotionally friendly environment. It dealt with aspects that related to positive TSR. SCR had items that went to explore how student perceived the content of Economics that is being taught to them in terms aspects such as usefulness, interest and comprehension levels of the content. While SSR had items that explored the nature in which students lived as a community and not as an island in the classroom, while lessons are on-going.

The third construct dealt with the dependent variable, which was Students' engagement. The items sought to explore the emotional state in which learners find themselves while learning (affective engagement) which can permit them to be focus on the lesson, devote efforts towards learning (cognitive engagement), and as a result, join the teacher as well as other students to actually do what is expected of them in the classroom as learners of Economics (behavioural engagement) such as making immediate contribution to knowledge as lessons are going on as well making pro-active attitudes towards learning of Economics (agentic engagement).

For the qualitative research, the researcher used classroom observation to carry out the research. However, he did this with the aid of an observation guide to observe and record how interactions occurred in the classroom. An observational guide is an outline provided to help a researcher track certain behaviours as intended in the research objectives of the researcher. In this light, the researcher had his observation guide to remind him of the key points of observation as well as how a given observation affected him, that might also stimulate him to contribute towards the observed behaviour, especially in the participatory observation (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The observation guide was also accompanied by an observation grid which made it possible for the researcher to record certain observations in his own words as well as uncategorized events that occurred in the classroom. The observation guide was concerned with 6 main contents in line with the objective of this study, amongst which were TSR, Student

engagement through note taking, jottings and contributions in the lessons, SSR and enthusiasm demonstrated by the teachers. And an additional component which permitted the researcher to present anything he noticed interesting in the classroom, that was important that could affect the level of interactions and student engagement in the classroom.

Pilot Study and reliability measurement

A pilot study was carried out to test the reliability of this quantitative instrument – the questionnaires. The pilot study was made up of 20 students who were later on involved in the sample size. These students were randomly selected from two of the schools in Yaoundé IV. As earlier seen, Interactions involved TSR, SCR and SSR while Student engagement included affective or emotional, behavioural, cognitive and agentic. The students were made up of 8 males and 12 females.

The pilot data was analysed to examine reliability and consistency using the Cronbach's alpha value or coefficient and this was done on IBM SPSS statistics 21 software. A construct is said to be reliable when the Cronbach's alpha value gives 0.70 and above. The researcher carried out a pilot test and the reliability of the constructs for independent variable of TSR, SCR and SSR gave a Cronbach's value of .778 for the 22 items involved. This means the data for this study can be found to be reliable for the purpose for which it was intended. Again, it can serve as a useful material for further research on this topic of interest.

The observation guide for the qualitative section of this study was reviewed by the researcher's supervisor and propositions made on how to enhance the research. The researcher also went ahead to verify the result of the data analysis to reduce biases and prejudices. As such, he employed triangulation. This is a view of Lodico (2006) who views that in collecting data, a researcher will need to apply more than one method of data collection technique in order to validate the findings and such sources of data collection will then be compared with one another through the process of triangulation. Hence, triangulation is the use of two or more methods in collecting data in the study of some aspects of human behaviour. Four types of triangulation are revealed by Denzin (1978) cited in Fauzan (2019). They are;

1. Source or data triangulation
2. Investigator triangulation,
3. Theoretical triangulation
4. Methodological triangulation

Based on this research, the researcher used source or data and methodological methods. With respect to the source or data triangulation, the different types of sources according to

(Denzin, 1978) are time, space, and person. So, the source or data in this research are persons, which were actually the teachers and the students and this was done by examining the components that make up TSR, SCR, and SSR in the classroom. Again, according to (Denzin, 1978), methodological triangulation shows how different methods are being used to measure the same unit. Given to the fact that triangulation can be used both in quantitative and qualitative research, the researcher employed some elements of his questionnaires into his observation guide, to find out whether what will be received on the path of the students from the questionnaires will correspond to what he will observe in the classrooms. Hence, it can be said that, the two methods used were observation and the questionnaires that were administered to the students under the qualitative research of this study.

Data analysis

Descriptive Analysis

In this study, descriptive analysis was employed. Descriptive analysis is a statistical technique used to summarize and describe the basic features of the data under investigation. It involves calculating measures of central tendency (such as mean, median, and mode) and measures of variability (such as range, variance, and standard deviation) for each variable in the dataset. Descriptive analysis is often used to provide a preliminary understanding of the data and identify any pattern or trend that may exist.

Tables and frequencies are common tools used in descriptive analysis. Tables are used to display summary statistics for each variable, such as mean, median, and mode. Frequency tables were used to display the number of times each value appears in a variable or indicator, which can help researchers identify any patterns or trends in the data.

Inferential statistics and hypothesis verification was done with regression technique.

Qualitative Analysis

Since this observation study was already structured into components that concerned TSR, SCR and SSR with specific indicators which the researcher went to observe in the classroom, there was no need for selective reduction and codification of data. Hence, the researcher performed a narrative presentation of the data and analysis of the findings of the different components by connecting them in order to get a better idea about classroom interactions and engagement, without forgetting the uniqueness discovered in each class observed, that greatly imparted on the Interactions and Engagement of students in Economics.

Techniques for hypothesis testing

Hypothesis testing is a statistical technique used to determine whether there is a significant difference between two or more groups or variables in a sample. In the quantitative section of this study, regression technique was used and the model specified as:

Dependent Variable: SEE (Students' Engagement in Economics)

Independent Variables: TSR (Teacher-Student Relationship), SCR (Student-Content Relationship), SSR (Student-Student Relationship)

Model: $SEE = \beta_0 + \beta_1(TSR) + \beta_2(SCR) + \beta_3(SSR) + \epsilon$

Where:

- β_0 is the intercept (constant) term
- β_1 , β_2 , and β_3 are the regression coefficients for each independent variable
- TSR, SCR, and SSR are the independent variables representing teacher-student relationship, student-content relationship, and student-student relationship respectively
- ϵ is the error term representing the random variation in the data that cannot be explained by the model

This linear regression model is used to examine the relationship between the three independent variables (TSR, SRC, and SSR) and the dependent variable (SEE). The model estimates the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, while holding all other variables constant.

The model specification is important because it provides a clear and concise description of the variables and their relationship in the regression analysis. It helps to ensure that the statistical analysis is transparent and replicable, and allows other researchers to understand and build upon the findings of the study. Thus, the regression model specification developed from the results of this study can be used to analyze the relationship between TSR, SCR and SSR Students' Engagement in Economics education.

Ethical considerations

In conducting this study, several ethical considerations were taken into account to ensure the rights and well-being of the participants. The following ethical considerations were addressed;

Informed Consent

All participants in this study gave informed consent before participating. They were informed of the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. Participants were assured that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from

the study at any time. They were also informed that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous.

Data Confidentiality

All data collected in this study were kept confidential and anonymous. Participants were assigned unique identification numbers, and all data were stored securely and accessible only to the research team. Data were used only for the purpose of this study and were not shared with any third parties.

Risk of Harm

The study did not pose any significant risks to the participants. However, to minimize any potential discomfort or distress, participants were assured that their responses would be anonymous and that they could skip any questions they did not feel comfortable answering.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The study was designed to examine if there exists a relationship between interactions and students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school. This chapter presents the findings from 306 questionnaires completed by secondary school students selected from 28 secondary schools in Yaoundé IV, as well as observational results and findings carried out from 3 Economics classes. The study specifically sought to identify the role of Teacher - Student Relationship, Learner - Content Relationship and Student - Student Relationship on the Engagement of students in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV, and the findings are presented using both descriptive, inferential statistics and narration, taking into account the objectives of this study.

Descriptive Findings

Demographic Profiles of Respondents

The study examined some demographic attributes of the students particularly student sex, age and the type of school (public or private) and the findings are presented on Table 4.1

Table 7: Demographics of the Respondents

Items	Option	Frequency (306)	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	107	35.0
	Female	199	65.0
	Total	306	100.0
Age range	13-14years	78	25.5
	15-16years	204	66.7
	17-18years	21	6.9
	19-20years	3	1.0
	Total	306	100.0
Category of school	Private school	241	78.8
	Public school	65	21.2
	Total	306	100.0

Source: Field work 2023

From Table 7, 306 students were sampled among which 199 (65%) were females, and 107 (35%) were males suggesting a slightly female dominated student population.

Another demographic aspect examined was the age distribution and the study found that the majority of the students, 204(66.7%) were between the ages of 15-16 years, followed by 78(25.5%) who were between 13-14 years. Only a small percentage, 21(6.9%) were between 17-18 years, and just 3 (1%) were between 19-20 years.

Out of the schools sampled, 78.8% (241) of the respondents were from private schools, while 65(21.2%) were from public schools.

Descriptive Analysis of the Independent and Dependent variables

Teacher - Student Relationship on Students' Engagement in Economics

The first objective of the study was to examine the role of Teacher - Student relationship on students' engagement in Economics with attention on practices such as Dynamic Teaching, mastery of Content: Attentive Listening, recognition and Praise, Real-World Connections, Approachable, and the findings are presented on Table 8;

Table 8: Teacher - Student Relationship on Students' Engagement in Economics

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
Our teacher presents Economics lessons in a manner that is easy to understand	52 (17.0%)	181 (59.2%)	56 (18.3%)	17 (5.6%)
When our teacher moves around the classroom teaching, we understand better than when he or she sits more often on the teacher's seat.	126 (41.2%)	115 (37.6%)	47 (15.4%)	18 (5.9%)
Our teacher communicates confidently with signs of mastery of the content of Economics.	96 (31.4%)	116 (37.9%)	69 (22.5%)	25 (8.2%)
Our teacher listens attentively to the suggestions of students with respect to their answers of questions asked.	103 (33.7%)	138 (45.1%)	43 (14.1)	22 (7.2%)
Our teacher acknowledges student's efforts through ways such as recognitions and praises.	64 (20.9%)	104 (34.0%)	81 (26.5%)	57 (18.6%)
Our teacher consistently engages students in meaningful classroom activities or brings examples that relates to real-world experiences	123 (40.2%)	113 (36.9%)	41 (13.4%)	29 (9.5%)
Our teacher is approachable even when he has finished from teaching his lessons in the classroom	104 (34.0%)	126 (41.2%)	49 (16.0%)	27 (8.8%)
Our teacher corrects me on my errors even on aspects outside of the classroom	107 (35.0%)	117 (38.2%)	54 (17.6%)	28 (9.2%)
Our teacher sacrifices personal time to assist individual students that need help academically	78 (25.5%)	116 (37.9%)	71 (23.2%)	41 (13.4%)
We see our teacher as someone who is a coach or mentor	53 (17.3%)	127 (41.5%)	80 (26.1%)	46 (15.0%)
Our teacher views us as an important part of the class in the classroom	42 (13.7%)	106 (34.6%)	97 (31.7%)	61 (19.9%)
We are able to take risks in answering questions in the classroom without feeling embarrassed by our teacher.	82 (26.8%)	108 (35.3%)	57 (18.6%)	58 (19.0%)

We enjoy coming to our teacher's classroom	56 (18.3%)	124 (40.5%)	71 (23.2%)	55 (18.0%)
Our teacher connects emotionally with the students	45 (14.7%)	77 (25.2%)	121 (39.5%)	63 (20.6%)
Our teacher is patient with students when directing them to learn appropriate behaviours during classroom learning.	61 (19.9%)	125 (40.8%)	60 (19.6%)	60 (19.6%)

Source: Fieldwork 2023

When it comes to the presentation of Economics lessons, 59.2% (181) of the students indicated that their teacher presents the material in an easily understandable manner, and this 17.0% (52) strongly concurred. On the other hand, 18.3% (56) did not share this view and 5.6% (17) were strongly opposed to the view that economics lessons by their teachers are well presented.

On the issue of whether students understood Economics lessons better when the teacher moved around the classroom, most of the study accepted that they understood lessons better when the teacher moved around the classroom unlike presenting on a single spot 41.2% (126) strongly agreed, 37.6% (115) agreed, 15.4% (47) disagreed, and 5.9% (18) strongly disagreed.

Furthermore, effective communication skills were found to be crucial for teachers to convey confidence and mastery of the subject matter. 31.4% of the respondents strongly accepted and 37.9% agreed that their teacher communicated confidently and showed mastery of Economics content and conversely, 22.5% (69) did not share this view and 8.2% (25) were strongly opposed.

In terms of the teacher's attentiveness to students' suggestions related to their answers to questions asked, 45.1% (138) agreed that their teacher listened attentively, while 33.7% (103) strongly agreed. Contrary to 14.1% (43) who disagreed, and 7.2% (22) strongly disagreed.

In line with the teacher's acknowledgement of students' efforts, 34.0% (104) agreed that their teacher acknowledged their efforts through ways such as recognitions and praises, while 20.9% (64) strongly agreed, 26.5% (81) disagreed, and 18.6% (57) strongly disagreed.

On whether the teacher engaged students in meaningful classroom activities or brought examples that related to real-world experiences, 40.2% (123) strongly agreed, 36.9% (113) agreed, 13.4% (41) disagreed, and 9.5% (29) strongly disagreed.

Regarding the teacher's approachability, even after finishing teaching in the classroom, 41.2% (126) agreed that their teacher was approachable, while 34.0% (104) strongly agreed, 16.0% (49) disagreed, and 8.8% (27) strongly disagreed.

With respect to the teacher's correction of students' errors, even on aspects outside of the classroom, 38.2% (117) agreed that their teacher corrected them, while 35.0% (107) strongly agreed, 17.6% (54) disagreed, and 9.2% (28) strongly disagreed.

On whether the teacher sacrificed personal time to assist individual students who needed help academically, 37.9% (116) agreed, while 25.5% (78) strongly agreed, 23.2% (71) disagreed, and 13.4% (41) strongly disagreed.

Student - Content Interaction on Students in Economics

The second objective of the study was To Investigate the effect of Learner - Content interaction in Economics with attention to note bulkiness, notes jotting, and importance of subject matter. The findings are presented on Table 9 below;

Table 9: Student - Content Interaction on Students' Engagement in Economics

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
What we learn in Economics is important to us	181 (59.2%)	84 (27.5%)	23 (7.5%)	18 (5.9%)
I plan to continue Economics study after having Ordinary Levels	89 (29.1%)	65 (21.2%)	57 (18.6%)	95 (31.0%)
Economics notes are too bulky but understanding them is easy	96 (31.4%)	116 (37.9%)	54 (17.6%)	40 (13.1%)
When our economics teacher is explaining the notes, we usually jot down some notes at the margin of our notebook.	87 (28.4%)	118 (38.6%)	67 (21.9%)	34 (11.1%)

Source: Field work 2023

Regarding the importance of what students learn in Economics, 59.2% (181) of the respondents strongly agreed that what they learn in Economics is important to them, while 27.5% (84) agreed, 7.5% (23) disagreed, and 5.9% (18) strongly disagreed.

On whether students plan to continue their study of Economics, 29.1% (89) of the respondents strongly agreed that they plan to continue their Economics study after having their Ordinary Levels, while 21.2% (65) agreed, 18.6% (57) disagreed, and 31.0% (95) strongly disagreed.

Regarding the ease of understanding Economics notes, 37.9% (116) of the respondents agreed that understanding Economics notes is easy, while 31.4% (96) strongly agreed, 17.6% (54) disagreed, and 13.1% (40) strongly disagreed.

On the issue of Economics notes being too bulky, 31.4% (96) of the respondents strongly agreed that Economics notes are too bulky, while 37.9% (116) agreed, 17.6% (54) disagreed, and 13.1% (40) strongly disagreed.

Regarding the practice of jotting down notes at the margin of students' notebooks when the economics teacher is explaining the notes, 28.4% (87) of the respondents strongly agreed that they jot down notes, while 38.6% (118) agreed, 21.9% (67) disagreed, and 11.1% (34) strongly disagreed.

Student - Student Relationship on the Engagement of Students in Economics

The third objective of the study was To Evaluate the role of Student - Student Relationship on the engagement of students in Economics with attention to assignments solving and cooperation. The findings are presented on Table 10.

Table 10: Student - Student Relationship on Students' Engagement in Economics

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
We usually solve Economics assignments with our classmates	72 (23.5%)	124 (40.5%)	68 (22.2%)	42 (13.7%)
When we study Economics with our classmates, we understand better.	101 (33.0%)	115 (37.6%)	53 (17.3%)	37 (12.1%)
Our Economics teacher usually gives us group work in Economics to carry out through different means such as discussions and presentations.	47 (15.4%)	58 (19.0%)	94 (30.7%)	107 (35.0%)

Source: Field work 2023

Table 10 presents the SSR on the Engagement of Students in Economics. Regarding solving Economics assignments with classmates, 40.5% (124) of the respondents were in acceptance to the view point that they usually solve economics assignments with their classmates, while 23.5% (72) strongly agreed. On the contrary, 22.2% (68) disagreed, and 13.7% (42) strongly disagreed.

On the issue of understanding economics better when studying with classmates, 37.6% (115) of the respondents agreed that they understand Economics better when studying with their classmates, while 33.0% (101) strongly agreed, 17.3% (53) disagreed, and 12.1% (37) strongly disagreed.

Regarding the Economics teacher giving group work in Economics to students, 19.0% (58) of the respondents agreed that the economics teacher usually gives them group work in economics through different means such as discussions and presentations, supported by 15.4% (47) who strongly agreed. On a contrary, 30.7% (94) disagreed, and 35.0% (107) strongly disagreed.

Students' Engagement in Economics at Secondary Schools in Yaoundé IV

Table 5: Affective Engagement of Students

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
Learning Economics makes me happy.	64 (20.9%)	139 (45.4%)	56 (18.3%)	47 (15.4%)
The content of Economics is quite interesting and attractive to me	75 (24.5%)	149 (48.7%)	62 (20.3%)	20 (6.5%)
I always try to participate in learning activities in class	89 (29.1%)	158 (51.6%)	43 (14.1%)	43 (14.1%)

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Table 11 presents the affective engagement of secondary school students. Regarding the statement that learning Economics makes students happy, 45.4% (139) of the respondents agreed that learning economics makes them happy, 20.9% (64) supported the view point that were in strong acceptance, 18.3% (56) disagreed, and 15.4% (47) strongly disagreed.

On the issue of the content of Economics being interesting and attractive to students, 48.7% (149) of the respondents agreed that the content of Economics is quite interesting and attractive to them, while 24.5% (75) strongly agreed, 20.3% (62) disagreed, and 6.5% (20) strongly disagreed.

Regarding student participation in learning activities in class, 51.6% (158) of the respondents agreed that they always try to participate in learning activities in class, while 29.1% (89) strongly agreed, 14.1% (43) disagreed, and 14.1% (43) strongly disagreed.

Table 6: Cognitive Engagement of students

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
What I learn in Economics encourages me to think	136 (44.4%)	126 (41.2%)	29 (9.5%)	15 (4.9%)

I try to connect what I have learnt with my own experience	121 (39.5%)	131 (42.8%)	30 (9.8%)	24 (7.8%)
I usually think of the lesson our Economics teacher is teaching at that moment and not something different from the lesson	51 (16.7%)	135 (44.1%)	69 (22.5%)	51 (16.7%)

Source: Fieldwork 2023

In line with what students learn in Economics encouraging them to think, 41.2% (126) of the respondents concurred to the view that what they learn in economics encourages them to think, while 44.4% (136) strongly agreed, 9.5% (29) disagreed, and 4.9% (15) strongly disagreed.

Based on the issue of students connecting with what they have learnt with their own experiences, 42.8% (131) of the respondents aligned to the view point that they try to connect what they have learned with their own experiences, while 39.5% (121) strongly agreed, 9.8% (30) disagreed, and 7.8% (24) strongly disagreed.

Regarding students thinking of the lesson their economics teacher is teaching them at that moment, 44.1% (135) of the respondents agreed that they usually think of the lesson their Economics teacher is teaching them at that moment, and not something different from the lesson, while 16.7% (51) strongly agreed, 22.5% (69) disagreed, and 16.7% (51) strongly disagreed.

Table 7: Behavioural Engagement of students

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
I listen carefully to the teacher's explanation when the teacher is lecturing	122 (39.9%)	125 (40.8%)	42 (13.7%)	17 (5.6%)
I take notes during the Economics class.	158 (51.6%)	113 (36.9%)	26(8.5%)	9 (2.9%)
I do not cause distractions to my bench mate when Economics lessons are going on	107 (35.0%)	112 (36.6%)	49 (16.0%)	38 (12.4%)

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Regarding students listening carefully to the teacher's explanation when the teacher is lecturing, 40.8% (125) of the respondents agreed that they listen carefully to the teacher's explanation when the teacher is lecturing, while 39.9% (122) strongly agreed, 13.7% (42) disagreed, and 5.6% (17) strongly disagreed.

On the issue of students taking notes during Economics class, 51.6% (158) of the respondents agreed that they take notes during Economics class, while 36.9% (113) strongly agreed, 8.5% (26) disagreed, and 2.9% (9) strongly disagreed.

Regarding students not causing distractions to their bench mate when Economics lessons are going on, 36.6% (112) of the respondents agreed that they do not cause distractions to their bench mate when Economics lessons are going on, while 35.0% (107) strongly agreed, 16.0% (49) disagreed, and 12.4% (38) strongly disagreed.

Table 8: Agentic Engagement of students

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
I will try my best to make the learning of Economics more fun	141 (46.1%)	130 (42.5%)	23 (7.5%)	12 (3.9%)
I won't give up even when the work within Economics lessons is difficult	163 (53.3%)	113 (36.9%)	21 (6.9%)	9 (2.9%)

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Based on students trying their best to make the learning of Economics more fun, 46.1% (141) of the respondents strongly agreed that they will try their best to make the learning of Economics more fun, while 42.5% (130) agreed, 7.5% (23) disagreed, and 3.9% (12) strongly disagreed.

With respect to the issue of students not giving up even when the work within Economics lessons is difficult, 53.3% (163) of the respondents strongly agreed that they won't give up even when the work within Economics lessons is difficult, while 36.9% (113) agreed, 6.9% (21) disagreed, and 2.9% (9) strongly disagreed.

Table 9: Summary of Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis

TSR	30 6	1.47	4.00	2.777 9	.42964	-.224	.186
SC R	30 6	1.00	4.00	2.900 3	.58523	-.387	-.156
SSR	30 6	1.00	4.00	2.600 2	.67773	-.255	-.104
SEE	30 6	1.56	4.00	3.015 6	.45697	-.403	-.029

Source: Fieldwork 2023

The above table presents the descriptive statistics for four variables related to effective teaching in the context of Economics education. The variables are TSR (Teacher-Student Relationship), SCR (Student-Content Relationship), SSR (Student-Student Relationship), and SEE (Student Engagement in Economics). Each variable has a sample size of 306.

The mean value for TSR is 2.7779, with a standard deviation of .42964. The minimum value is 1.47 and the maximum value is 4.00. The skewness value is negative (-.224) which indicates that the distribution is slightly skewed to the left. The kurtosis value is .186, which denotes that the distribution is relatively normal.

For SCR, the mean value is 2.9003, with a standard deviation of .58523. The minimum value is 1.00 and the maximum value is 4.00. The skewness value is negative (-.387), which indicates that the distribution is slightly skewed to the left. The kurtosis value is -.156, which suggests that the distribution is flatter than a normal distribution.

The mean value for SSR is 2.6002, with a standard deviation of .67773. The minimum value is 1.00 and the maximum value is 4.00. The skewness value is negative (-.255), which indicates that the distribution is slightly skewed to the left. The kurtosis value is -.104, which suggests that the distribution is flatter than a normal distribution.

Finally, for SEE, the mean value is 3.0156, with a standard deviation of .45697. The minimum value is 1.56 and the maximum value is 4.00. The skewness value is negative -.029, which indicates that the distribution is slightly skewed to the left. The kurtosis value is -.104, which suggests that the distribution is flatter than a normal distribution.

Overall, these descriptive statistics provide a summary of the distribution and central tendency of the variables under consideration. The findings depicted that Student – Content

Relationship and Student Engagement are relatively higher compared to Student-Student Relationship and Teacher - Student Relationship. However, the negative skewness values for all variables suggest that the distributions are slightly skewed to the left, which indicates that the majority of the responses are clustered towards the higher end of the rating scale (that is agreement with the indicators).

Regression Findings of the relationship between Interactions and Students' Engagement in Economics

Table 10: Model Summary of Interactions

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.547	.299	.292	.38439

a. Predictors: (Constant), TSR, SCR, SSR

Table 11: ANOVA table for Interactions and Students' Engagement in Economics

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	19.068	3	6.356	43.016	.000 ^b
	Residual	44.623	302	.148		
	Total	63.691	305			

a. Dependent Variable: SEE

b. Predictors: (Constant), TSR, SCR, SSR

Table 12: Coefficients^a for Interactions and student Engagement

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
	(Constant)	1.135	.171		6.639	.000		
	TSR	.286	.054	.269	5.263	.000	.891	1.122
	SCR	.276	.038	.354	7.181	.000	.956	1.046
	SSR	.110	.034	.163	3.249	.001	.919	1.088

- a. Dependent Variable: SEE
- b. Predictor Variables: TSR, SCR, SSR

This supports that the model is a good representation of the relationship between interactions and students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school. The study had 3 independent variables; Teacher - Student Relationship (TSR), Student - Content Relationship (SCR) and Student - Student Relationship (SSR) on Students' Engagement in Economics. The model is significant ($F = 43.016$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the predictors jointly explain a significant amount of the variance in Students' Engagement in Economics ($R^2 = 0.299$). The adjusted R^2 0.292 suggests that the model is good at predicting the outcome variable and that 29.2% variation in Students' Engagement in Economics is accounted for by Teacher – Student Relationship, Student – Content Relationship and Student – Student Relationship, showing a positive relationship between interactions and Student's Engagement in Economics, whereas;

Ho₁: There is no significant effect of Teacher - Student interaction on students' engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality.

The regression analysis as presented on Table 18 found a significant positive effect of Teacher-Student Relationship (TSR) on learners' Engagement in Economics at the secondary schools in Yaoundé IV ($B = 0.286$, $\beta = 0.269$, $t(203) = 5.263$, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, for every one-unit increase in TSR, there was a corresponding 0.286-unit increase in learners' Engagement in Economics. The standardized coefficient (β) of 0.269 suggests that TSR has a moderate positive effect on learners' Engagement in Economics when compared to the other predictor variable of SCR in the model. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha_1) is supported. The findings concluded that there is a positive relationship and significant influence of Teacher – Student Relationship on students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality. Hence, it is a predictive indicator towards the necessity of improvement on the relationship teachers have with learners in the classroom as they carry on the teaching of Economics at the secondary schools.

Ho₂: There is no significant influence of Student - Content relationship on students' engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality.

Also, the Student – Content Relationship (SCR) has a significant positive effect on Students' Engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality ($B = 0.276$, $\beta = 0.354$, $t(203) = 7.181$, $p < 0.001$). This study found that, for every one-unit increase in SCR, there was a corresponding 0.276-unit increase in Students' Engagement in Economics. This study established a high positive relationship between Student – Content Relationship and Students' Engagement in Economics judging from the standardised coefficient (β) of .354. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_{a2}) is supported. The findings concluded that there is a positive relationship and significant influence of Student-Content Relationship on students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality. This indicates that improving the quality of cohesion between learners and content can enhance Students' Engagement in Economics.

H_{03} : There is no significant influence of Student - Student relationship on how students engage in the study of Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality

The regression analysis results showed that the Student – Student Relationship (SSR) has a significant positive effect on students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality ($B = 0.110$, $\beta = 0.163$, $t(203) = 3.249$, $p = 0.001$). Precisely, for every one-unit increase in Student – Student Relationship, there was a corresponding 0.110-unit increase in students' engagement in Economics. The standardized coefficient (β) of 0.163 suggests that Student-Student Relationship has a small positive influence on students' engagement in Economics. Generally, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_{a3}) is supported. The findings suggest that promoting positive peer relationships can enhance Students' Engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality. These findings have important implications for educators and policymakers who aim to improve the quality of education and enhance student outcomes in Economics.

In sum, following the standardized beta coefficients for the independent variables of TSR, SCR, and SSR in the model, which are 0.269, 0.354, and 0.163 respectively, it is seen that the greatest impact on the dependent variable – Students' Engagement in Economics is SCR, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.354, followed by TSR (0.269) and the least impact on the dependent variable is SSR, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.163.

Qualitative Findings

Observation 1

The researcher visited the Economics teacher's class made up of 27 students on Thursday the 20th of April, 2023. The teacher walked into the classroom and greeted the students. He then asked them *"How are you? And how was your weekend?"* The students responded with the following answers *"fine, not good, boring, I enjoyed myself...."* He then went ahead to ask the reasons for the different state of their weekend in line with their different answers. After receiving a few answers from the students, he proceeded to tell them about how some days can be good while others bad, but what matters is how they handled such days. After saying this, he informed the students that they will be starting with a new module. But before doing so, he asked two volunteers to come in front of the classroom. After hesitations, one student stepped out, while the teacher had to point out to a second student. He told them to imagine as though they were in a physical market. He then removed his Techno Spark 4 mobile phone and gave to one of the students. He asked the student to pretend as though he is a seller, while the other student is a buyer. He requested the "buying student" to get into a conversation with the "selling student" in an attempt to buy the phone. He then stepped aside and watched the two students conversing to the hearing of the whole class. After dragging on their different prices at their respective ends, the phone was finally "bought for 25,000FCFA". The teacher and the whole class applauded the acting skills of the two students, even though one of them seemed shy from the beginning. The teacher then demanded from the rest of the students what they did observe. Answers came in such as; *"the buyer was more interested in getting the phone at his own price; both the buyer and seller had different prices; they were fighting over the price..."* The teacher then explained to the students that, both buyers and sellers have different behaviors in the market, and that the new module will be dealing on how buyers (consumers) and sellers (producers) react in the market when it comes to the buying and selling of goods and services.

He then went ahead to write out the topic on the board and gave them the learning outcomes that were expected to be achieved at the end of the module, as well as the lesson he was to start with. He gave the students notes, while asking them questions and receiving questions from them at same time through probing their minds. The teacher maintained good eye contact and kept a good voice tone. His mastery of the content was also demonstrated with incorporation of recent happenings such as price upsurge of certain goods recently being faced by citizens in the country. A few students' were later on found reading irrelevant material. When the teacher caught them, he noticed the students had a continuous assessment to write at the end of the day for that subject. He had to seize the book to give them back to the students at the end of the class. What was interesting about this class is that interaction was both at the

beginning and at the end. In as much as the teacher interacted with the students through role playing, and questions both from the teacher and students, some students were still distracted as they could be found conversing with each other, irrespective of a visitor – the researcher being in class. This class was more engaged than the other classes.

Observation 2

After obtaining permission from the Economics teacher of another school to carry out observation, the researcher went with the teacher into the Form 4 class on Monday the 24th of April, 2023 with a population of about 30 students. The teacher explained to the students that the researcher will be a part of the class. The students were quite excited to see an elderly person coming to attend their class. However, he didn't disclose the objective of the researcher to the students. He put the topic on the board, the concept of demand. He also gave them other related topics of what will be taught for that day. He went ahead to explain to the learners about the topic. He showed signs of good mastery of his topic, maintained eye contact with the students, and had a good voice tone. He then went ahead to give them notes to copy. While they copied, the researcher went about checking their notebooks and discovered that a few students had jotted some materials of what the teacher was explaining to them at the margin of their notebooks. All the students copied up to a certain level and felt tired. After giving them the notes, he then asked the learners if they had any question for him in relation to the explanation. No student responded. He then said, *"Silence means everything has been understood."* The researcher then asked a question to the teacher; *"what are the key words that must be present in the definition of demand?"* He responded by saying; *"willingness, ability, price, quantity demanded, time, and place."* The researcher then went ahead to emphasize to the students that these key words must be present when defining demand and that when they understand this, they can connect the definition of demand in any form or appearance of the words.

The students were quite surprised when they heard the researcher asking the question and were quite impressed of the emphasis he made. This could be seen with some of them nodding their heads in appreciation. One thing interesting about the class was that, the teacher preferred to finish explaining before giving room for the learners to ask questions concerning the lesson. The class was also engaged, although the students had distractions, but for the fact that a visitor was in class, they were a little extra careful as they kept on looking at the teacher as well as the visitor - researcher, before making any disruptive or disengaged move.

Observation 3

The researcher had talked with another Economics teacher, soliciting for an appointment to carry out observational studies of his class. He showed him his observation guide of which the Economics teacher complied with the researcher's request, for observation to be carried out. On Tuesday the 25th of April, 2023, he accompanied the teacher to class. Once in the class, the teacher greeted the students after receiving greetings from them. He then wrote the topic on the board and then asked the learners questions related to the module on Price and Market, particularly under factors affecting demand. One of the questions asked was; *to your understanding, what do you think are the factors that will cause a change in the demand for a good like garri in Ekounou market?* The students responded to the questions with some of the answers correct, while others were wrong. Also, some of them gave answers that could be merged as one, such as income of consumers and salary of the consumer. The teacher listened attentively to their answers, appreciating one after the other, whether they were wrong or not. After that, he went ahead to clarify some of the answers, pointing out to answers that could be merged as one, as well as answers that missed the target question. While the teacher started dictating the notes, the researcher observed that students around him copied into their notebooks, but many of them didn't jot down important materials on their margin when the teacher was explaining a given point. During his explanation, he used a good voice tone which was audible enough for all learners to hear, even though the class was as large as a class size of 45 students. The teacher also showed signs of good mastery of the subject matter, and gave sufficient time for students to take notes. The students listened attentively, having little or no random conversation. However, it could still be found that some students were talking amongst themselves and technically watching if the teacher was looking at them. Sometimes, they will put their conversation to a pause. The researcher later on discovered that they occasionally halt their conversation because the teacher was near to making eye contact with them. Again, the teacher gave an assignment for learners to come up with the pairs of goods that can be found under the four types of demand. He explained the four types of demand and the students were to come with the answers in the next class.

Certain observations were quite interesting, amongst which were; interactions began at the beginning of the class, the teacher was found repeating sentences to learners who had missed out their lines during the first or second time of dictating a sentence. The teacher redirected the attention of learners through questions. If he noticed a student is not attentive, he pointed out to the student and asked a question on what he had just explained. If the student was not able to

answer, he then explained to the class the importance of being attentive while lectures are on-going.

Narration Analysis of qualitative findings

From the above observations, the researcher was able to identify that interactions took place during lessons in the classroom. However, this varied in extents in the different classes. The three levels of relationships he was interested with were TSR, SCR and SSR. Some teachers implemented all three levels of interaction with at least evidence of an indicator related to that relationship being manifested in the classroom, while some teachers did not.

As concerns STR, all the teachers showed some level of putting the learners in an emotional state that was conducive for learning by greeting them before the start of the class. This is an aspect of show of care towards the needs of the students by the teacher. With the descriptive statistics finding on TSR with respect to emotional connection on item 14, 77 respondents (25.2%) agreed, while 121 respondents (39.5%) strongly disagreed with this. This result matched that of the observation in that, just one teacher went beyond greeting the students and probing into other aspects of their lives in order to emotionally prepare them for the class. Only one teacher also went ahead to give the students advices on life situations and how to handle the ups and downs of life so as to remain focus. This 39.5% disagreement is an indicator that teachers need to connect more with learners emotionally to get them better engaged. All the teachers exhibited good voice tones which is good for every teacher. Some students do complain that the voice tone of some teachers is apt enough to put them to sleep during the teaching - learning process. The content of Economics to be taught was addressed in varied ways which also caused differences to which the learners interacted and perceived the content. This can be compared with the TSR descriptive statistics of item 1 which showed that 189 (59.2%) respondents agreed that their teacher presents lessons in a way that is easy to understand. Real life situation model was a part of some of the classes which created engagement. Some of the teachers asked questions to the learners as an important aspect of STR and SCR. Some of the teachers also listened to the learners complaints as seen in their questions with attentiveness, and provided them with solutions. Patience towards the learners was a virtue for a majority of the teachers observed. As the learners gave their answers to the teachers' questions the teachers listened carefully, as well as appreciating each answer verbally without castigating any, but making humorous gestures out of some in such a way that instead of pain or anger, the learners turned it to laughter. This was a huge step not to discourage anyone from freely participating in question and answer sessions. Teacher's had good mastery of their

materials. This is in line with the TSR descriptive statistics of item 3 which showed that 96 respondents (31.4%) strongly agreed with the confident nature of teachers, while 116 respondents (37.9%) agreed.

With SCR, It was found that, a few students were interested in jotting at the margin of their notebooks. Hence, it was more of a general situation for those who didn't jot other important information at the margin of their books. However, based on the SCR descriptive statistics for item 4, 28.4% strongly agreed, while 11.1% strongly disagreed. Hence, this 11.1% disagreement still shows that some students do not take down jottings on the margin of their notebooks as anything meaningful. Some students who copied note to the point of getting tired revealed that the notes were bulky in nature. This was justified by the SCR descriptive statistics finding of item 3 for students who strongly agreed that Economics notes are bulky in nature 96 (31.4%), while 116 respondents (37.9%) agreed to this view.

With SSR, by causing the learners to act in front of the classroom, acting learners felt more engaged. However, group work was less carried out in all the classes. When this is compared with the SSR descriptive statistics of item3, it shows that 47 respondents (15.4%) strongly agreed that teachers do give group work to them in class, as against 107 respondents (35.0%) who strongly disagreed of group work being given to them. This hinders the SSR amongst students. It could also be observed that the teaching style of the teachers was a factor to cause the students to be engaged. For example, there was more engagement in the first classroom observation than in the others, as the teacher engaged the learners more through role playing. However, this depends on the lesson treated at hand and the ability of the teacher to infer learning experiences to engage learners.

From the observations, finding shows that teachers have more work to do in engaging all the three levels of classroom interactions in order to foster engagement. From the first observation where all levels of interactions were engaged, there was found to be high level of engagement in the lesson. However, the fact that some learners were still disengaged, is only prove that there is more to be uncovered other than just Interactions, with respect to Students' Engagement in Economics.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, PROPOSALS, AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the discussion of the findings which were done with respect to the specific hypothesis and objectives evoked, as well as the related literature review of concepts and theories. In addition to these, the chapter draws conclusions about the implications of the findings for theory and practice, and offers recommendations for future research and practice. By presenting the key findings of the study, this chapter aims to contribute to the understanding of effective pedagogy and positive classroom interactions in promoting student engagement in Economics. It also provides guides or suggestions for future research in this area.

Discussion of the Findings

The Role of Teacher - Student Relationship on Students' Engagement in Economics

This study found out that Teacher-Student Relationship has a significant and positive influence on learners' engagement in Economics. Quantitatively, the study precisely revealed that for every one-unit increase in TSR, students' engagement in Economics lessons increases by 0.286-unit. The findings of this study align with the broader objective of promoting student engagement in learning. This finding further collaborated with the works of Li and Liu (2016) who also found that student-teacher interactions was positively related to student engagement in classes. More precisely, the study found that teachers who fostered positive relationships with their students, communicated effectively, and created a safe and supportive learning environment tended to have more engaged students. The observation carried out also revealed this reality that the level at which the students interact was based on the tune to which the teacher made it possible. In some classes, the teacher went beyond the academic needs of the learners to prepare them emotionally for the class. And after doing such, the students had a

relaxed atmosphere and free mind to study, seeing that they had a teacher who cared about their state of being.

This finding is also consistent with previous research that has shown the importance of TSR in promoting students' engagement and achievement (Pianta et al., 2012). The literature suggests that positive TSR is essential for promoting development and creating engaging learning environments. As noted by Ajongakoh (2021), teacher-student relationships reflect a classroom's capacity to promote development, and relationships, and interactions are keys to understanding students' engagement in learning. In line with Hattie's (2012) 7th mind frame, teachers need to believe that it is their role to develop positive relationships in classrooms. This means establishing positive interpersonal interactions with each student, creating a safe, fair, and compassionate learning environment. This aligns with the specific objective of this study, which was to examine the impact of TSR on students' engagement in Economics. This finding is in line with my personal findings of building a positive TSR as a teacher of Economics over 9 years of teaching.

In my personal studies of interaction with students as a teacher, I developed a model to build a strong TSR in and out of the classroom. It has been of great help to me as I have seen a marked increase in relating with my students and their classroom interactions, as they approached me with academic and social problems they faced, which were impediments to their engagement in their studies not only in Economics. They later on overcame those problems and increased their engagement in the classroom as well as in their academic performance as a result of this model which I employed in my interaction with them. This model is called the ***LYF – Model***. That is, “***Learner-Younger one-Friend Model***” (Tekum, 2022). This means that as a teacher, you interact or create relationship with a student with the mind set of that student being a Learner, a younger one, and Friend to you, in order to build trust between you and the learner, and the learner's engagement in not only your subject, but in all other subjects. A highlight of the components of this model can be seen below;

1. Learner: Teachers should not just see students; they should also see learners. They should see them as vessels that have contents in them to be harnessed for effective utilisation, as well as vessels that are in need of contents from teachers. When teachers see students as learners, it helps the teachers to first of all have a good mastery of the content to be taught, and to seek better ways of passing on the content to the learners for better understanding. This is because a teacher is first of all an advanced learner. Again, some learners require time to absorb certain

knowledge. When they are viewed as learners, it gives teachers that patience to assist the learners slowly through to the point of understanding of the knowledge intended to be inculcated in them. This point is backed by the study carried out with SEL, 2022, cited by (Coristine et al, 2022) on 6 ways to build stronger TSR. One of the findings was that teachers should see students as learners with varied learning styles such as visual and auditory, and make adequate provision to respond to these needs for effective engagement and learning.

2. Younger One: Teachers should teach their students from the view point of a younger one. Teachers are elders to the learners not only in the content of their subject (knowledge aspect), but also age and experience-wise. There are things they have experienced in life, and as such they can comfortably give advices to the learners as they take to heart the welfare of these learners. This is an aspect of the hidden curriculum – the passing on of salient information that will help to build the moral, social, and cultural values of learners as they are being taught in the classroom. This is in line with Richard & Rodgers (2011) who noted that the teacher can play the role of a counsellor and effective communicator in the classroom. Again, this is in line with (Aultman, Williams-Jonson, & Schutz, 2009) as they noted that a teacher is endowed with skills, attitude, and knowledge which can play a significant role in students' academic performance and how to make a meaningful life after school. By so doing, the teachers are actually making themselves as instruments that can be used towards facilitating the success of their students in different facets of life. In the same vein, they help to build higher expectations for the learners and earn more trust from them.

3. Friend: Interacting with the learners as a friend eases the atmosphere of learning as people usually learn and understand more in a stress-free environment. Friendship is a powerful tool to making your subject understood by learners as it makes them relate with you, feel free to ask you questions relating to the subject without any fear of being embarrassed or scolded at. A friend is someone who shows care for another. This friendship nature is what will trigger a teacher to ask a student what is wrong with him or her, should the teacher notice an unusual behaviour with that student during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. This is in line with (Ajongakoh 2021) who asserts that if students realize their teacher is not friendly, learning would not take place effectively. An effective teacher-student relationship may be the keystone that allows the other aspects to work well, Ajongakoh, (2021, cites Marzano 2003). Learners must be able to feel some connection with their teachers in the community of the classroom (Ryan and Deci, 2009).

Again, the study supports the SCT which shows that teachers need to bring learners to the zone of proximal development by bridging the gap between what they know and what they need to know. When teachers probe the mind of learners about a given topic they are to teach, they are building a relationship with them to find out what they already know about that concept, so that they will know where to queue in and make adjustments.

More so, when students are given the opportunity to ask or answer to questions, they develop a sense of autonomy, being able to have freedom in contributing towards discussions in class the classroom. This aspect supports the SDT.

Moreover, the literature review on parasitic and symbiotic TSR is relevant in this context. Parasitic TSR occurs when only one-party benefits from the teaching-learning process, in this case, the teacher, usually due to the survival stage of teaching. In contrast, symbiotic TSR occurs when the teacher is focused on effectively and efficiently carrying out his or her job, thereby helping the learners to become engaged and meeting their academic and other needs. The findings of this study suggest that teachers who exhibit symbiotic TSR tend to have more engaged students, which supports the importance of positive TSR in promoting engagement in Economics.

The role of Student – Content Relationship on Students’ Engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV

The objective of this study is to examine the factors that influence student engagement in learning Economics in the secondary schools in Yaoundé IV. One important factor that has been identified in the related literature is the Student-Content Relationship (SCR). The SCR refers to the interaction between the student and the content, which is crucial for effective learning to take place.

Specifically, this study uncovered that the student-Content Relationship has a significant and positive role on Students' Engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality. The study deduced that for every one-unit increase in SCR, there was a corresponding 0.276-unit increase in Students' Engagement in Economics. With its standardised coefficient of 0.354, it significantly revealed to have the greatest impact on Student’s Engagement in Economics. This highlights the relevance of effective interaction with the content in promoting student engagement in learning. As noted by Moore (1989), SCR is the heart of all learning experiences. This places a greater responsibility to teachers to always ensure that the content of Economics is presented in a manner that will capture the learners’

interest. Teachers must take it upon themselves to devise better means to help students understand the subject's content.

In another study, Anderson and Walberg (2009) found that the quality of the SCR was an essential factor in promoting student engagement in learning. The review revealed that students are more likely to be engaged when the content is relevant, challenging, and interesting to them. The observation showed that learners became more focused when the content is being delivered by the teachers through note copying. Also, they are actively engaged in learning the content through the teaching styles of the teacher. A style which permits teachers to identify gaps in knowledge can better help the learners get a good hold of the content, especially when the teacher asks questions to the learners. This is supported by (Tanner, 2012) who talked about confusion areas which the teacher can identify and clear doubts on them by asking questions around those difficult areas of the content.

Therefore, to promote student engagement in learning, teachers and curriculum designers should carefully select and treat the content to ensure that it is of high quality, relevant, challenging, and interesting to students. This will facilitate effective interaction between the students and the content, thereby ultimately promoting student engagement in learning. Teachers should also see how to invent better methods or strategies to effectively communicate the content to the learners in an engaging manner.

Another aspect is to motivate them to jot down important materials at the margin of their notebooks which can easily help them for reminders. Motivation to learn should be enhanced by a supportive class community that will connect the students to learn (Alderman, 2008). The SCR is crucial for effective teaching and learning practices that enhance student engagement and achievement.

The role of Student - Student Relationship on the Engagement of Students in Economics

This study also studied the role of Student - Student Relationship on the Engagement of Students in Economics. It revealed that there is a significant positive role of the SSR on Students' Engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality. This is consistent with previous research on the importance of peer interactions for promoting student engagement. The positive effect of SSR on SEE suggests that students who have positive relationships with their peers in the classroom are more likely to be engaged in the learning process and show interest in learning Economics. This finding is coherent with the view of Harmer (2007) who stated that students tend to participate more actively when they are in pairs or groups. Again, this study is consistent with some previous studies on peer

interactions for promoting engagement and learning. According to Kramarski and Michalsky (2010), peer interactions can promote engagement by providing opportunities for students to learn from one another, to receive feedback on their work, and to engage in collaborative problem-solving. Peer interactions can also promote a sense of belonging and community, which can help students feel more connected to the learning process, and subsequently to the broader society.

This finding is also supported by the social learning theory of Bandura, where students learn by observation and modeling. It is possible for learners to codify dramatized actions into their memory and reproduce them during periods when they are needed, such as examination periods. Hence, role playing doesn't only help learners to become engaged in the classroom, but also for them to retrieve the information they have studied when it is needed, given that the purpose for learning is usability of information when it is needed.

Role playing is an act of competence. As learners perform, they see themselves confident in not only performing and learning new skills, but also to transfer what they have performed as knowledge into their studies. This is in line with one of the components of SDT which is Competence – the ability to perform a given task confidently. Hence, (Ryan & Deci, 2002) puts it this way, when students feel competent, they recognize that they can perform and complete a task successfully.

The finding that promoting positive peer relationships can enhance SSE has important implications for educators and policymakers who aim to improve the quality of education and enhance student outcomes in Economics. Teachers can promote positive peer relationships by creating opportunities for students to work together in pairs or small groups, by encouraging students to provide feedback to one another, and by promoting a sense of community in the classroom. Learners should be able to have some degree of relatedness – to feel some connection with their peers in the community of the classroom (Ryan and Deci, 2009).

Policymakers can support these efforts by providing resources and training for teachers to promote positive peer relationships, and by implementing policies that encourage collaboration and community-building in the classroom.

Thus, the finding that there is a significant positive effect of SSR on students' engagement in Economics at the secondary school in Yaoundé IV municipality highlights the importance of peer interactions for promoting engagement and interest in learning. Teachers and policymakers should prioritize efforts to promote positive peer relationships in the classroom to enhance student outcomes and improve the quality of education.

Proposals of the Study

Haven successfully conducted this study, and ensuring the objectives of this study, the following proposals are made:

- Teachers should be provided with training and professional development programs that focus on building strong teacher-student relationships, and creating engaging learning environments in Economics classrooms. This can help improve student engagement and achievement in the subject.
- Teachers should also take special consideration on the content of Economics and try to simplify it for the understanding of learners, seeing that it constitutes a greater factor for either the engagement or disengagement of the learners towards its study.
- The LYF – Model should also be adopted by teachers in order to build a strong TSR, giving that teachers are still at the center of enforcing the different levels of interactions amongst learners and content.
- Teachers should learn ways of customising their classes as secondary school teachers in a manner that will facilitate the students to interact amongst themselves, with the teachers, as well as the content. In other words, teachers should not be stereotyped in their teaching. They should seek better ways of enhancing interactions and engagement in the classroom. What works for one class of students, might not work for the other. Hence, it is left to the teachers to be innovative on how to spur interaction and engagement per time.
- Schools should prioritize the use of active learning strategies and collaborative learning environments in Economics classrooms. This can be achieved through the use of group activities, discussions, and problem-solving tasks that encourage students to work together and share their ideas.
- This study revealed that SCR had the greatest impact on students' engagement in Economics. Teachers should develop their abilities by all means to ensure that content is adequately grasped by learners.
- The use of real-world examples and applications of Economics concepts should be encouraged in Economics classrooms. This can help students see the relevance of Economics in their everyday lives and improve their motivation to learn the subject.
- Teachers should personalize their teaching approaches to meet the needs and abilities of individual learners. This can be achieved through personalized learning support, one-on-one conversations with students, and additional resources for struggling students.

- Schools and policymakers should invest in the development of inclusive learning environments that foster positive relationships between teachers and students, and among students themselves. This can help create a safe and supportive learning environment that encourages students to take risks in their learning and engage more deeply with the subject matter.
- Teachers should continually build themselves in pedagogy as well as personal development, in order to effectively build a strong relationship with learners, and to help develop better ways of passing the content of Economics to them.
- Teachers should encourage learners to make use of different color pens in copying their notes, so as to be able to write and recall key words that are given during the note-taking or explanations.
- Technology in education should be applied to keep the students engaged with modern technological facilities in learning.

Conclusion of the Study

This study investigated the influence of Teacher-Student Relationship (TSR), Student-Content Relationship (SCR), and Student-Student Relationship (SSR) on Students' Engagement in the study of Economics at the secondary schools in Yaoundé IV municipality. The findings revealed that all three relationships have significant positive influence on students' engagement in Economics.

Generally, it was evident that classroom interactions play a crucial role in students' engagement in Economics. The Teacher-Student Relationship was found to have a significant positive impact on students' engagement, as teachers who present lessons in an easy-to-understand manner, communicate confidently, listen attentively to students, acknowledge their efforts, and engage them in meaningful activities create a positive learning environment that fosters students' interest and engagement in the subject and subject matter.

The study further concluded that the Student-Content Relationship was the major significant predictor of students' engagement in Economics, as students who find the subject important and interesting, and who plan to continue their study of Economics, tend to be more engaged in their learning.

Lastly, the Student-Student Relationship was also found to have a significant positive impact on students' engagement, as students who work collaboratively with their peers and engage in group activities tend to have a better understanding of the subject matter and a deeper engagement in their learning. Hence, it highlighted the need of peer interactions in promoting

engagement and interest in the learning economics. Teachers and policymakers should prioritize efforts to promote positive peer relationships in the classroom to enhance student outcomes and improve the quality of education.

Overall, the regression analysis on Interactions and Student Engagement in Economics shows that the greatest impact on Students' Engagement in Economics was from SCR, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.354, followed by TSR (0.269) and the least impact on the dependent variable is SSR, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.163. Looking through the findings from the observation, it is seen that, all the teachers paid more attention in ensuring that the content is being delivered to the students. This is actually what is needed at the level of the examination. From the SCR descriptive findings of items 1 and 2 respectively, given that 59.2% of the students agreed that what they learn in Economics is important to them, while only 29.1% are planning on continuing with Economics in the high school, this should give a reasonable push to teachers to create more interest and engagement in the 59.2% learners who consider the content relevant at the secondary school level. This will make them to be able to learn the subject at this level and prepare for their own quota of economic contribution towards the growth to the nation, even when they turn to specialize in a different field other than Economics.

Implications of the research

The findings of this study have several practical pedagogical implications for teachers seeking to improve students' engagement in Economics. Some of these implications include:

- **Use of Active Learning Strategies:** Teachers should incorporate active learning strategies such as group discussions, project-based learning, and problem-solving tasks to enhance Students' Engagement in Economics. These strategies facilitate student-centered learning, which helps students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **Incorporate Real-World Examples:** Teachers should incorporate real-world examples and applications of Economics concepts to help students connect what they learn in the classroom to their everyday lives. This will help students see the relevance of Economics in their lives and improve their motivation to learn the subject.
- **Encourage Collaborative Learning:** Teachers should encourage collaborative learning by providing opportunities for students to work in groups. This will help students learn from each other, share their ideas, and support each other's learning.

- **Offer Personalized Learning Support:** Teachers should offer personalized learning support to students who need it. This can be achieved through one-on-one conversations with students, providing extra resources for struggling students, and offering additional support outside of class time.
- **Create a Positive Learning Environment:** Teachers should create a positive learning environment that fosters positive teacher-student relationships and encourages students to take risks in their learning. This can be achieved by providing positive feedback, recognizing student achievements, and creating a safe and inclusive classroom environment.
- **Personal development:** Teachers should keep on seeking knowledge in their field or career. This will help them become better in effecting their duties.

Suggestions for future studies

Despite the findings from this study, there is need for further studies, given some of the limitations of this study. Some of them include the sample size which was 306, specific geographical area to Yaoundé IV, and the non-enclosure of control variables, moderated and mediators. Again, given the researcher's qualitative findings of learners still being disengaged in the classroom, there is need for deeper qualitative research to be done with respect to students' engagement in the subject. Hence, the researcher suggests studies in the future to consider areas such as:

- The role of digitalizing Economics content on Students' engagement in Economics.
- Investigate the impact of technology integration on student engagement and learning outcomes in Economics education. With the increasing availability of educational technology tools, it would be interesting to explore how teachers can leverage these tools to enhance their teaching practices and improve student outcomes.
- Examine the effectiveness of different teaching strategies in Economics education, such as problem-based learning, flipped classrooms, and cooperative learning. By comparing the effectiveness of different pedagogical approaches, educators can identify the most effective strategies for different learning contexts and student populations.
- Explore the relationship between teacher qualifications, experience, and effectiveness in teaching Economics. By examining the characteristics of effective Economics teachers, policymakers and educators can develop strategies to attract and retain high-quality teachers in the field.

- Investigate the impact of cultural and socio-economic factors on student learning outcomes in Economics education. By examining the influence of cultural and socio-economic factors, educators can develop teaching strategies that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse student populations.
- The effect of school timetables on the engagement of students. This probing into how schools organize their timetables for learning, it will be necessary to know how certain learners are affected when certain subjects are put within certain given periods of the day as well as the activities included on that time table.
- Examining the causes of students' disengagement in the study of Economics. This can be done in an exploratory form, in order to gather a wide variety of factors that might cause learners to become disengaged in learning Economics.

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APPENDIXES

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix – Travail – Patrie

UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I

FACULTE DES SCIENCES DE
L'EDUCATION

DEPARTEMENT DE
CURRICULA ET EVALUATION



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace – Work – Fatherland

THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM
AND EVALUATION

The Dean

N° _____/23/UYI/FSE/VDSSE

AUTORISATION FOR RESEARCH

I the undersigned, **Professor BELA Cyrille Bienvenu**, Dean of the Faculty of Education of the University of Yaoundé I, hereby certify that **MBAH Kingsley TEKUM**, Matricule **21V3696**, is a student in Masters II in the Faculty of Education, Department: **CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION**, Specialty: **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION**.

The concerned is carrying out a research work in view of preparing a Master's Degree, under the supervision of **Pr. MAINGARI Daouda**. His work is titled: « *The role of interaction on the engagement of students in Economics at the secondary school in Mfou Division* ».

I will be very grateful if you provide him all the information that can be helpful in the realization of his research work.

This Authorization is to serve the concerned for whatever purpose it is intended for

Done in Yaoundé, le

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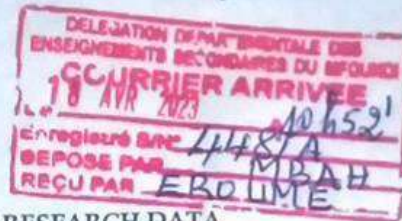
For the dean, by order

Dr. Michel Eddy Ganyu

Mbah Kingsley Tekum,
679-392-840/657-781-740
mkingsleytekum@gmail.com
Economics Teacher,
Baptist High School -
Yaoundé
17th April, 2023.

The Divisional Delegate of Education,
Mfoundi Division,
Yaounde IV.

Sir/Madam,



A REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA

I write to your office in order to request for the opportunity to obtain data. I am an Economics teacher and a Master II research student at the university of Yaoundé I under the faculty of Science of Education and in the department of Curriculum and Evaluations. The purpose of this data is purely academic, to enable me carry out a research in partial fulfillment for the award of a master degree in curriculum and evaluation, in the speciality of Curriculum developer and evaluator. The topic of the research is the role of interactions on the engagement of students in Economics in secondary schools in Mfoundi Division. This data will help me towards knowing the population and sample size of my study in order to effectively administer questionnaires.

The nature of this data include;

- the number of secondary schools in Mfoundi division
- the number of private, public and mission schools in the division.

This will be of great help towards this research as it will enhance the rich study of Economics based on the findings of the research. It will be my utmost joy if this request is granted favourably.

Yours faithful teacher,

M. Kingsley Tekum

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Dix - Trois - Paris
MINISTRE DES ENSEIGNEMENTS SECONDAIRES
DELEGATION REGIONALE POUR LE CENTRE
DELEGATION DEPARTEMENTALE DU MFOUNDI
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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
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MINISTRY OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
CENTRE REGIONAL DELEGATION
MFOUNDI DIVISIONAL DELEGATION
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N⁴⁵⁹ 23/L/MINESEC/DRES-CE/DDES-MF/CPEN

YAOUNDE LE 26 AVR 2022

The Divisional Delegate

TO
MBAH Kingsley TEKUM
Matriculation: 20V3696.

SUBJECT: Authorisation to access the Divisional Delegation for Mfoundi.

I admit reception of your application demanding to carry out research in the Divisional Delegation for Mfoundi and I equally use this same occasion to authorize you to meet my Chief of Service for Teacher Education (CP/EN), who will lead you to see the SCSOS.

Yours faithfully:

The Divisional Delegate

Jean Louis N. Nana Essomba
Vice-Président
PLET - H

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE 1
FACULTE DES SCIENCES DE
L'EDUCATION
DEPARTEMENT DE CURRICULU
ET EVALUATION



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE 1
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM
AND EVALUATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent, my name is **MBAH Kingsley TEKUM**, Matricule **21V3696**, a student in the University of Yaoundé I, Faculty of the **SCIENCE OF EDUCATION**, department of **CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION**, speciality of **CURRICULUM DEVELOPER AND EVALUATOR**. I am carrying out a research on the topic; **THE ROLE OF INTERACTIONS ON STUDENTS ENGAGEMENT IN ECONOMICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN YAOUNDE IV - MFOUNDI DIVISION**, with the view to obtain a master degree. I will love you to kindly answer the following questions to help me achieve the purpose of this study. Be assured that the information you give shall be confidential as it is meant only for the purpose of this study. Put a tick in the box that corresponds to your chosen answer.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is your gender? Male ☐ Female ☐
2. What is your age range? 13-14 ☐ 15-16 ☐ 17-18 ☐ 19-20 ☐
3. Which category of school do you attend? Private ☐ Public ☐

Codes: **SA** = Strongly Agree; **A** = Agree; **D** = Disagree **SD**; Strongly Disagree

SECTION B: INDEPENDENT VARIABLE (CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS)					
SN		SA	A	D	SD
I. Teacher Student Relationship (TSR)					
4.	My teacher presents Economics lessons in a manner that is easy to understand				
5.	When my teacher moves around the classroom teaching, I understand better than when he or she sits more often on the teacher's seat.				

6.	My teacher communicates confidently with signs of mastery of the content of Economics.				
7.	My teacher listens attentively to the suggestions of students with respect to their answers of questions asked.				
8.	My teacher acknowledges student's efforts through ways such as recognitions and praises.				
9.	My teacher consistently engages students in meaningful classroom activities or brings examples that relates to real-world experiences				
10.	My teacher is approachable even when he has finished from teaching his lessons in the classroom				
11	My teacher corrects me on my errors even on aspects outside of the classroom				
12	My teacher sacrifices personal time to assist individual students that need help academically				
13	I see my teacher as someone who is a coach or mentor				
14	My teacher views me as an important part of the class in the classroom				
15	I am able to take risks in answering questions in the classroom without feeling embarrassed by my teacher.				
16	I enjoy coming to my teacher's classroom				
17	My teacher connects emotionally with the students				
18	My teacher is patient with students when directing them to learn appropriate behaviors during classroom learning.				
II. Student - Content Relationship (SCR)					
19	What I learn in Economics is important to me				
20	I plan to continue my Economics study when I do my A Levels				
21	Economics notes are too bulky but understanding them is easy				
22	When my economics teacher is explaining the notes, I usually jot down some notes at the margin of my notebook.				
II. Student - Student Relationship (SSR)					
23	I usually solve Economics assignments with my classmates				

24	When I study Economics with my classmates, I understand better.				
25	Our Economics teacher usually gives us group work in Economics to carry out through different means such as discussions and presentations.				
SECTION C: DEPENDENT VARIABLE (STUDENT'S ENGAGEMENT IN ECONOMICS)					
I. Affective Engagement					
26	Learning Economics makes me happy.				
27	The content of Economics is quite interesting and attractive to me				
28	I always try to participate in learning activities in class				
II. Cognitive Engagement					
29	What I learn in Economics encourages me to think				
30	I try to connect what I have learnt with my own experience				
31	I usually think of the lesson my Economics teacher is teaching me at that moment and not something different from the lesson				
III. Behavioural Engagement					
32	I listen carefully to the teacher's explanation when he is lecturing				
33	I take notes during the Economics class.				
34	I do not cause distractions to my bench mate when Economics lessons are going on				
IV. Agentic Engagement					
35	I will try my best to make the learning of Economics more fun				
36	I won't give up even when the work within Economics lessons is difficult				

Dear respondent, thank you for taking out time to respond to these questions. Your responses are confidential and purposely to serve the goal of this research work. It will go a long way to contribute to the better study of Economics for the benefit of both the learners and teachers.

OBSERVATION GUIDE

Sir/Madam, my name is **MBAH Kingsley TEKUM**, Matricule **21V3696**, a student in the University of Yaoundé I, Faculty of the **SCIENCE OF EDUCATION**, department of **CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION**, specialty of **CURRICULUM DEVELOPER AND EVALUATOR**. I am carrying out research on the topic; **THE ROLE OF INTERACTIONS ON STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN ECONOMICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN YAOUNDE IV - MFOUNDI DIVISION**, with the view to obtain a master degree. I will love to observe your Economics class in order to gather data that will help towards this research.

Components	Comments/Notes
1. Teacher-student Interaction: Initiation of discussion, purpose or objectives of the lesson, encouragement of questions from students, use of centering questions to refocus students' attention, probing questions, redirecting questions, trust for students, affectionate towards students, receiving questions politely or enthusiastically, use of verbal or non-verbal reinforcement, receptiveness of instructor to students' suggestions contrary to his, teachers' care for students' needs,	
2. Student-Content Interaction: Learners' passion in copying notes, jottings done in their note books, understanding of what students are learning)	
3. Student-Student Interaction (are learners given the opportunity to brainstorm on a question, group work in class, group work out of normal classroom period)	
4. Presentation and Enthusiasm: teacher's enthusiasm towards the subject, towards teaching, raise or lower voice tone for variety and emphasis, rate of speech for note-taking, eye contact of teacher with students, movements in class,	
5. Knowledge of Subject matter (mastery of content, incorporate recent development in the discipline, emphasizes certain key concepts)	
6. Students' engagement: note-taking patterns of students, students listening attentively, sit back on the desks, heads on hands, random conversations amongst students, reading of materials not relevant to class, students conversing during explanation of lesson.	

7. What was interesting about this class?	
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