

# The Implementation of Teaching Methods of the Social Studies Curriculum and Teachers' Effectiveness in Mfoundi Division

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of teaching methods prescribed in the Social Studies curriculum on teachers' effectiveness in public primary schools in Mfoundi Division, Cameroon. The Competence-Based Approach (CBA) promoted by the curriculum encourages the use of Project-Based Learning (PBL), Cooperative Learning (CL), and Integrated Theme Learning (ITL). These methods aim to enhance students' problem-solving abilities, collaboration, and real-world application of knowledge. However, teachers face significant challenges in implementing these methods due to inadequate training, lack of resources, and reluctance to move away from traditional teacher-centred approaches. The research utilized a descriptive design and collected quantitative data from 150 teachers using questionnaires and observed 10 teachers using observation checklists. The findings show that while 77% of teachers are aware of the prescribed methods, only 56% actively incorporate them into their teaching practices. The study reveals a moderate positive correlation ( $r = .429$ ) between the use of these teaching methods and teachers' overall effectiveness. The study concludes that despite familiarity with CBA, many teachers lack the necessary support to fully implement these methods, resulting in a disparity between curriculum goals and classroom practices. To address these challenges, recommendations include targeted teacher training, increased resource allocation, and enhanced pedagogical supervision. By improving the implementation of CBA, teachers can significantly enhance the learning experience and outcomes of their students.

**Keywords:** Competence-Based Approach, Project-Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, Social Studies Curriculum, Teacher Effectiveness.

## INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century is built on four essential pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be, as outlined in the Delors Report (Delors, 2001). These pillars encompass the holistic development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that prepare learners to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. As education shifts towards a focus on lifelong learning, the role of primary education has gained increased importance. Primary education serves as the foundation for a child's future academic and personal success. According to the *Cameroon Primary School Curriculum* (2018), early exposure to learning experiences is essential for shaping a child's character, learning style, and future academic outcomes. By instilling core values, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities at a young age, primary education ensures that children are equipped for the complexities of life in the 21st century.

The landscape of primary education has evolved significantly, reflecting the need to prepare students for a dynamic and interconnected world. UNESCO (2015) emphasizes that modern primary education must focus on fostering critical thinking, technological adaptability, and active citizenship. This requires an educational approach that goes beyond traditional teaching methods, encouraging learners to engage with and apply knowledge to real-world challenges. In line with these global trends, Cameroon's Ministry of Basic Education introduced a revised curriculum in 2018 for the English-speaking subsystem of primary schools.

This curriculum is grounded in the Competence-Based Approach (CBA), which aligns with the broader educational goals of the 21st century.

The Competence-Based Approach (CBA) is a learner-centred educational framework that emphasizes the development of practical skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for problem-solving in real-world contexts (Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2019). In the Cameroonian context, the CBA curriculum aims to empower young learners with the ability to think critically, innovate, and engage with societal issues. By focusing on student potential, CBA shifts the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student, promoting autonomy and active participation. The goal is to foster lifelong learning by equipping students with the skills and mindset needed to navigate an increasingly complex world.

The CBA framework encourages the use of innovative teaching methods, such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), Integrated Theme Learning (ITL), and Cooperative Learning (CL), to achieve its objectives. These methods focus on experiential learning and collaboration, where learners are engaged in projects, thematic integration of subjects, and group-based problem-solving activities (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2020). CBA promotes the idea that learning should be centered on the learner's abilities and needs, rather than the teacher's delivery of content. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of understanding students' unique characteristics to create tailored learning experiences that promote deeper understanding and retention of knowledge (Ngwa & Lawyer, 2020).

However, the implementation of the Competence-Based Approach in Cameroon has faced several challenges, particularly in the context of Social Studies education. Teachers are often reluctant to fully adopt the new methods, which significantly hampers students' achievement of the expected competencies outlined in the curriculum. Okon (2020) notes that this reluctance is primarily due to teachers' lack of mastery of the new content, insufficient use of instructional materials, and inadequate professional training. Many teachers still rely on traditional, teacher-centred approaches, which contradict the principles of CBA and hinder students' development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The Social Studies curriculum in Cameroon, which is expected to be taught using CBA principles, has faced resistance from teachers for several reasons. First, teachers struggle to design and execute effective project-based lessons, an essential component of CBA. They also face difficulties implementing Cooperative Learning (CL), which requires structuring group activities to facilitate peer learning and collaboration. Furthermore, the use of Integrated Theme Learning (ITL), which encourages the connection of Social Studies with other subject areas through a central theme, has been poorly executed in many classrooms due to a lack of practical guidance on how to create interdisciplinary links. Consequently, the overall achievement of curriculum objectives remains far from realized.

These challenges suggest that the success of CBA in Cameroon depends largely on improving teachers' competencies. To address the gap between the curriculum's ambitions and the realities of classroom instruction, it is crucial to provide teachers with the necessary training, resources, and support. The failure to do so not only affects students' learning outcomes but also undermines the government's efforts to contextualize education to local realities, as proposed in Cameroon's National Development Strategy (Cameroon Vision 2035).

Additionally, the Programme Nationale de l'Education Civique (PRONEC), introduced in 2013 as a foundation for the Social Studies curriculum, has not produced the desired results in terms of promoting civic values and reducing uncivil behaviours such as youth violence and drug abuse. The program's ineffectiveness has been attributed to poor implementation of the Social Studies curriculum, further highlighting the need for improvements in teacher effectiveness. Without strong support and effective teaching strategies, the curriculum's potential to instil critical values and prepare students for active citizenship remains unrealized.

Given these concerns, the need to enhance teacher effectiveness in implementing the Social Studies curriculum is more urgent than ever. A key factor influencing the success of the Social Studies curriculum is

the teachers' ability to apply the prescribed teaching methods effectively. However, as observed in Mfoundi Division and other parts of Cameroon, teachers' reluctance to use Project-Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, and Integrated Theme Learning has created a significant gap between the curriculum's goals and actual learning outcomes (Ngwa & Lawyer, 2020). Improving teacher effectiveness requires addressing both the training gap and the resource constraints that hinder the proper implementation of CBA.

This study seeks to examine the extent to which the prescribed teaching methods of the Social Studies curriculum influence teacher effectiveness in Cameroon's primary schools. Specifically, the study focuses on the use of Project-Based Learning (PBL), Cooperative Learning (CL), and Integrated Theme Learning (ITL), and their impact on the ability of teachers to meet curriculum objectives. Through this research, the goal is to determine whether these methods have a significant effect on teacher effectiveness and to identify any barriers to their successful application in classrooms.

Thus, the central research question guiding this study is: What is the effect of teaching methods in Social Studies on teacher effectiveness in primary schools in Cameroon? From this, the following null hypothesis was developed: Social Studies teaching methods do not have a statistically significant effect on teacher effectiveness in primary schools in Mfoundi Division. By testing this hypothesis, the study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the implementation of CBA and enhance teacher effectiveness in primary schools across Cameroon.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Teaching Methods

Teaching methods play a crucial role in determining how educational content is delivered, absorbed, and applied by students. Tambo (2012) defines teaching methods as structured approaches used to present subject matter and manage interactions between teachers and learners. These methods can either be general, applicable across various subjects, or specific, tailored to the needs of individual disciplines. The Cameroon Primary School Curriculum (CPSC, 2018) defines teaching methods as specialized procedures that help achieve educational objectives by organizing activities that foster student engagement and achievement. Al-Rawi (2013) emphasizes that teaching methods are mechanisms that allow teachers to create interactive learning environments, promoting deep understanding and retention of knowledge.

Over the years, Cameroon's education system has undergone significant reforms, shifting from traditional Objective-Based Approaches (OBA) and Inferential Thinking Approaches to the Competence-Based Approach (CBA). These changes reflect a broader effort to align Cameroon's education system with global trends (Ngwa & Lawyer, 2020). CBA, also known as the Behavioural Objective-Based Approach, focuses on developing students' practical skills, values, and attitudes rather than merely delivering content (CPSC, 2018). This shift mirrors international educational reforms, with CBA being adopted in countries like the United States, Zambia, Kuwait, and Australia, where it has been adapted to local contexts (Nodine, 2015; Taiba et al., 2020; Hodge, 2007). The CBA in Cameroon emerged from a regional seminar by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), underscoring the importance of competency-based learning as a means of fostering real-world problem-solving skills (Alemge, 2019).

### Competence-Based Approach (CBA)

The Competence-Based Approach (CBA) is a learner-centred educational model aimed at equipping students with the skills necessary for lifelong learning and adaptability in an ever-changing world. Unlike traditional education models, which often emphasize rote memorization, CBA focuses on developing critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills (Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2019). According to Ali (2016), CBA's strength lies in its ability to organize content around competencies that align with real-world needs, ensuring that students can apply what they have learned in practical contexts. In Cameroon, CBA is

the foundation of the Social Studies curriculum, where its focus on practical skills development extends beyond theoretical knowledge to include real-world applications.

However, despite its potential, the implementation of CBA in Cameroon faces several challenges. A lack of teacher training is a significant barrier, as many educators have not received adequate professional development to apply CBA effectively (Ngwa & Lawyer, 2020). This has led to inconsistent application of learner-centred teaching methods, with some teachers continuing to rely on traditional approaches due to a lack of confidence in using new pedagogical strategies. Additionally, the lack of instructional materials has further complicated CBA implementation, as many schools are not equipped with the necessary resources to support student-centred learning (Alemge, 2019).

### **Project-Based Learning (PBL)**

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is one of the key teaching methods promoted by CBA. As a learner-centred approach, PBL requires students to engage in projects that challenge them to apply interdisciplinary knowledge to solve real-world problems. The roots of PBL trace back to John Dewey's educational philosophy, which emphasized experiential learning (Dewey, 1959). Dewey believed that students learn best when they are actively involved in solving meaningful, real-world problems rather than passively absorbing information. This principle underpins contemporary PBL, which fosters critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2020).

In Cameroon, PBL has been incorporated into the Social Studies curriculum, where it plays a crucial role in helping students connect classroom knowledge to their local and global environments. The Cameroon Primary School Curriculum (CPSC, 2018) emphasizes that PBL is essential for developing problem-solving skills, as it encourages students to tackle real-life challenges. For instance, students might work on community projects addressing environmental or social issues, applying their academic knowledge in practical ways. The CPSC outlines seven steps for PBL implementation: (i) identifying a problem, (ii) breaking down the project into components, (iii) brainstorming solutions, (iv) discussing with learners, (v) assigning roles, (vi) monitoring progress, and (vii) evaluating the project. However, despite the clear benefits, resource constraints and time pressures have limited PBL's effectiveness in Cameroon (Alemge, 2019).

### **Cooperative Learning (CL)**

Cooperative Learning (CL) is another crucial method linked to CBA, emphasizing collaboration between students as they work together in small groups to achieve common learning goals. CL has been shown to improve academic performance, foster social interaction, and promote positive relationships among learners (Gillies, 2016). It also cultivates important skills like teamwork, communication, and shared responsibility (Johnson & Johnson, 1981). In Cameroon's Social Studies curriculum, CL is used to enhance group learning, with students collaborating on projects, sharing ideas, and learning from each other (CPSC, 2018).

The success of CL depends on several principles, such as positive interdependence, which ensures that each group member's success contributes to the group's overall success, and individual accountability, which holds each student responsible for their contribution to the group (Johnson & Johnson, 1981). However, as with PBL, the implementation of CL in Cameroon faces challenges, particularly in classrooms with large student populations and limited resources. Klang et al. (2020) note that many teachers struggle with group management and ensuring equitable participation. Addressing these issues requires adequate teacher training in designing cooperative activities and managing classroom dynamics.

### **Integrated Theme Learning (ITL)**

Integrated Theme Learning (ITL) is a holistic teaching approach that connects various subject areas through a central theme, allowing students to see the relationships between different disciplines and apply their

learning to real-world contexts (McNeil, 1985). ITL encourages interdisciplinary thinking by integrating subjects like Social Studies, Mathematics, Language Arts, and Science under themes such as “The Environment” or “Civic Responsibility.” This method enables students to develop a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues and helps them see the relevance of their learning to the outside world.

In Cameroon, ITL is a key component of the Social Studies curriculum, promoting critical thinking by connecting various subject areas (CPSC, 2018). For example, students might explore environmental issues by studying scientific principles related to ecosystems, analyzing the social impact of deforestation, and developing communication skills through report writing. Despite these benefits, the implementation of ITL has been hindered by inadequate teacher training and insufficient instructional resources (Ngwa & Lawyer, 2020). Many teachers report difficulties in designing interdisciplinary lessons and coordinating thematic content, which limits the effectiveness of ITL in the classroom.

To enhance ITL’s effectiveness, it is essential to provide teachers with clear guidance and practical examples on designing thematic lessons that integrate multiple subjects. Professional development should focus on interdisciplinary teaching strategies and the practical application of ITL in diverse classroom settings.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Robert Gagné’s Hierarchical Learning Theory provides a structured instructional model that aligns well with the Competence-Based Approach (CBA) in Cameroon’s education system. Gagné posits that learning occurs through a hierarchical process where simpler concepts must be mastered before moving on to more complex ones. This is particularly relevant in Social Studies, where intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, and attitudes must be developed progressively (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Gagné’s hierarchy of learning includes eight levels, ranging from basic signal learning to advanced problem-solving, and mirrors the step-by-step progression emphasized in CBA (CPSC, 2018). For instance, students need to understand basic social concepts before engaging in more complex projects like community action plans, making Gagné’s hierarchical approach essential for structuring Social Studies lessons.

Gagné also outlines nine instructional events that guide effective lesson design: gaining attention, stating objectives, recalling prior knowledge, presenting stimuli, eliciting performance, providing feedback, assessing performance, enhancing retention, and facilitating transfer (Gagné, 1985). These events can be applied to Social Studies to ensure that students are not only absorbing information but also applying it critically. This is crucial in methods like Project-Based Learning (PBL), where students transition from knowledge acquisition to real-world problem-solving. By adhering to Gagné’s instructional events, teachers can create lessons that build on prior knowledge and help students progressively develop the competencies required by CBA (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2020).

In addition to Gagné’s model, Constructivism Theory—particularly the works of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky—further supports the development of Social Studies teaching methods. Piaget’s Cognitive Constructivism emphasizes that learners actively construct new knowledge based on their existing understanding, a key aspect of project-based and thematic learning (Phillips, 1995). In Social Studies, students use their prior knowledge of social issues to interpret new information, facilitating a deeper understanding of complex topics like civic responsibility. Piaget’s stages of cognitive development—sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational—are especially relevant in designing age-appropriate learning activities in Social Studies (Gupta & Frake, 2009). For example, primary school students, who are typically in the concrete operational stage, benefit from engaging with tangible, real-world issues through ITL and PBL.

Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism complements Piaget’s theory by emphasizing the role of social interactions in learning. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) suggests that learners can achieve more when guided by a knowledgeable teacher or peer, a concept that aligns with the Cooperative Learning (CL) method promoted in CBA (Vygotsky, 1978). In Social Studies, teachers act as facilitators

who help students progress from what they can do independently to what they can achieve collaboratively. This approach is particularly effective in PBL and CL, where students work together to solve real-world problems. Vygotsky's emphasis on culture and language also supports the role of Social Studies in fostering civic engagement and social awareness, key objectives of the curriculum in Cameroon (CPSC, 2018).

Integrating Gagné's Hierarchical Learning Theory and Constructivist theories provides a robust framework for the effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum in Cameroon. Gagné's structured approach ensures that lessons are designed to help students move from basic to complex knowledge, while Piaget and Vygotsky's constructivist views emphasize active learning and social collaboration. By incorporating these theoretical perspectives into classroom practices, teachers can enhance student engagement, improve learning outcomes, and equip learners with the skills necessary for lifelong success and active citizenship.

## METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was to examine the impact of teaching methods on teachers' effectiveness in implementing the Social Studies curriculum in public primary schools in Mfoundi Division, Cameroon. The research employed a descriptive research design utilizing quantitative methods to gather data. A questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument, complemented by an observation checklist to verify the responses provided by teachers. The researcher personally administered 170 questionnaires to primary school teachers. To cross-validate the questionnaire responses, direct classroom observations were conducted using a structured observation checklist.

The study was conducted in Mfoundi Division in the Centre Region of Cameroon, chosen due to its status as the administrative capital of the country. The selection of this location was purposive, as the researcher aimed to assess the effectiveness of Social Studies curriculum implementation in this key region. Mfoundi Division was selected as a representative area to understand the broader challenges of curriculum implementation in Cameroon's public primary schools.

The population of this study comprised the 4599 teachers in English-speaking primary schools within Mfoundi Division, as detailed in the table below.

Sub-division	Public	Lay Private	Confessional	Total
Yaoundé I	75	832	20	927
Yaoundé II	50	244	6	300
Yaoundé III	43	630	33	706
Yaoundé IV	52	348	12	412
Yaoundé V	37	669	22	728
Yaoundé VI	139	719	36	894
Yaoundé VII	39	587	6	632
Total	435	4029	135	4599

Source: Delegation for Basic Education for Mfoundi (2022).

For this study, the target population was public primary school teachers in Mfoundi. Using the Krejcie & Morgan (1973) table for sample size determination, 170 teachers were selected as the accessible sample size out of the total population of 435 public school teachers. Simple Random Sampling (SRS) was employed, ensuring that each teacher had an equal chance of being selected. This sampling method enabled the inclusion of teachers from all seven subdivisions of Mfoundi.

A total of 170 questionnaire were distributed, and all were returned, yielding a response rate of 100%. Before analysis, 20 questionnaire were excluded due to irregularities, leaving 150 valid responses for the final

analysis. Additionally, 10 teachers were observed using the observation checklist, purposefully selected from seven different schools across the subdivisions. The following table presents the number of teachers who responded to the questionnaire from each subdivision.

Sub-division	Number of Respondents
Yaoundé I	20
Yaoundé II	21
Yaoundé III	22
Yaoundé IV	22
Yaoundé V	19
Yaoundé VI	28
Yaoundé VII	18
Total	150

Source: Fieldwork by researcher 2022/2023.

### Data Collection Instruments

Two instruments were used for data collection: questionnaires and observation checklists. The questionnaire consisted of 16 statements—eight on teaching methods and eight on teachers' effectiveness—using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD). This format was designed to capture respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of various teaching methods in Social Studies. To mitigate bias, an observation checklist adapted from the questionnaire statements was used to assess the real-life application of these methods in classrooms.

A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the instruments. This involved administering the questionnaire to 10 teachers and using the observation checklist with 2 teachers from both private and public schools. Adjustments were made to the instruments based on the feedback from the pilot study to ensure clarity and accuracy. The pilot schools were then included in the final study, but with a different teacher being observed to avoid data duplication.

### Data Analysis Procedure

The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires were analysed using SPSS version 26. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between teaching methods and teachers' effectiveness. The analysis also included Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the significance of the relationship between the variables. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, mean scores, and percentages, were used to present the findings. The results were displayed in tables to allow for easy interpretation and generalization of trends. The observation data were used to cross-check and validate the findings from the questionnaire responses, ensuring that the results reflected actual classroom practices.

## FINDINGS

The data collected from the 150 questionnaires were screened for univariate outliers, and all were retained for analysis. Of the 150 teachers surveyed, 42 were male (28%) and 108 were female (72%), highlighting a female-dominated teaching workforce in the study area. The majority of teachers (58%) taught level 3 (classes 5 and 6), while 25.3% taught level 2 (classes 3 and 4), and 16.7% taught level 1 (classes 1 and 2). This distribution reflects the diverse teaching levels within the sampled population, ensuring comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of Social Studies teaching methods across different grades.

## Distribution of Respondents by Subdivision

The distribution of respondents across the seven subdivisions of Mfoundi Division was relatively balanced, as shown in the table below.

Sub-division	Frequency	Percent
Yaoundé I	20	13.3
Yaoundé II	21	14.0
Yaoundé III	22	14.7
Yaoundé IV	22	14.7
Yaoundé V	19	12.7
Yaoundé VI	28	18.6
Yaoundé VII	18	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This distribution highlights an equal representation across all subdivisions, ensuring that the findings are generalizable to the entire Mfoundi Division.

## Teaching Methods in Social Studies

To examine the impact of teaching methods on teachers' effectiveness, eight items were designed in the questionnaire, each of which had a mean score greater than 2.5, indicating above-average responses. The table below summarizes the responses based on teaching methods:

No	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
1	The curriculum prescribes teaching methods.	38.7	38.7	18.0	4.7	3.11	0.863
2	I always build lessons around Integrated Learning Themes.	56.7	40.7	0.7	2.0	3.52	0.620
3	I plan a project each month.	32.0	46.0	20.7	1.3	3.08	0.759
4	I execute a project every month.	25.3	30.7	31.3	12.7	2.68	0.990
5	I always put learners in groups during lessons.	25.3	48.0	24.0	2.7	2.96	0.776
6	I always use didactic materials to teach all lessons.	29.3	40.7	28.0	2.0	2.97	0.810
7	I always paste charts on the wall for continuous learning.	33.3	44.7	21.3	0.7	3.10	0.752
8	I always do remedial activities to help slow learners.	50.7	46.0	2.7	0.7	3.46	0.586

77.4% of teachers adhered to the prescribed teaching methods in the Social Studies curriculum. 97.4% always integrated learning themes into their lessons, indicating high compliance with the curriculum's guidelines. Although 78% of teachers planned projects each month, only 56% consistently executed them, indicating a gap between planning and implementation. 73.3% of teachers regularly used group work during lessons, and 70% used didactic materials for instruction. A high percentage (96.7%) of teachers engaged in remedial activities to support slow learners, highlighting a commitment to student differentiation. The global mean score of 3.12 indicates that, overall, teachers employed the recommended teaching methods effectively in Social Studies.



## Teachers' Effectiveness in Primary Schools

Teacher effectiveness was assessed using eight items in the questionnaire, all of which had a mean score greater than 2.5. The table below summarizes the responses related to teachers' effectiveness

No	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
1	I am always punctual in school.	72.7	22.7	3.3	1.3	3.66	0.609
2	I always manage my teaching time correctly.	48.0	38.0	14.0	0.0	3.34	0.712
3	I always prepare lesson notes before teaching.	68.7	28.0	2.0	1.3	3.64	0.593
4	I master the subject content.	57.3	38.7	3.3	0.7	3.52	0.598
5	I always consider learners' differences when teaching.	54.7	41.3	1.3	2.7	3.48	0.662
6	I always consider learners' environment when teaching.	44.7	49.3	5.3	0.7	3.38	0.620
7	I always use suitable instructional strategies.	53.3	35.3	11.3	0.0	3.42	0.688
8	I always do research to increase my knowledge and skills.	74.7	22.7	2.0	0.7	3.71	0.535

95.4% of teachers reported being punctual, with a mean score of 3.66, indicating strong time management skills. 86% of teachers effectively managed their teaching time, and 96.7% prepared lesson notes before teaching, showcasing high levels of organizational preparedness. Teachers showed strong content mastery (96%) and consideration for student differences (96%), indicating high pedagogic and content knowledge. 97.4% of teachers actively engaged in continuous professional development through research to improve their knowledge and teaching practices. The global mean score of 3.52 signifies that the teachers in the study demonstrated a high level of effectiveness in teaching Social Studies.

## Correlation and Regression Analyses

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between teaching methods and teacher effectiveness. The results from the correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between the independent variables (teaching methods, content knowledge, teaching materials, and assessment methods) and teacher effectiveness, as shown below:

Variable	Content Knowledge	Teaching Methods	Teaching Materials	Assessment Methods	Teacher Effectiveness
Content Knowledge					
Teaching Methods	0.319**				
Teaching Materials	0.529**	0.413**			
Assessment Methods	0.535**	0.360**	0.466**		
Teacher Effectiveness	0.597**	0.382**	0.428**	0.595**	

Content knowledge, teaching methods, and teaching materials all positively correlate with teacher effectiveness, with content knowledge showing the strongest correlation ( $r = 0.597$ ). The regression model indicated that teaching methods accounted for 17.8% of the variance in teacher effectiveness, with a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.429$ ). The F-test result ( $F(1, 148) = 33.306, p < 0.001$ ) confirms that teaching methods have a statistically significant effect on teacher effectiveness, rejecting the null hypothesis. The

regression model fit the data well and demonstrated that effective use of teaching methods enhances teacher performance in delivering Social Studies.

### Results from Observation Checklist

Observations were conducted with 10 teachers across seven schools to verify the questionnaire responses. The following table presents the results from the observation of teaching methods.

Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)
Used prescribed teaching methods	70	30
Built lessons around the Integrated Learning Themes	50	50
Had a planned project for the month	60	40
Executed a project for the month	10	90
Grouped learners during lessons	10	90
Used didactic materials to teach lessons	100	0
Pasted charts on the wall for continuous learning	50	50
Did remedial activities to help slow learners	60	40

The results showed that, all teachers used didactic materials, and 70% adhered to the prescribed teaching methods. However, only 10% of teachers grouped learners during lessons and executed a project, suggesting that while teachers were planning projects, execution remained a challenge. 60% conducted remedial activities, aligning with their questionnaire responses that indicated a commitment to supporting slow learners. These findings confirm that while teachers are following some aspects of the curriculum, more emphasis is needed on group learning and project execution to maximize the effectiveness of teaching methods in Social Studies.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings from this study highlight a significant relationship between the use of recommended teaching methods and teacher effectiveness in the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum in public primary schools in Mfoundi Division, Cameroon. The global mean score of 3.12 for teaching methods suggests that teachers are generally adhering to the prescribed instructional strategies outlined in the Cameroon Primary School Curriculum (CPSC, 2018). This adherence was further reinforced by the positive linear relationship identified between teaching methods and teacher effectiveness, as indicated by the Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r = .429$ ). The regression analysis demonstrated that teaching methods account for 17.8% of the variance in teacher effectiveness, a statistically significant result ( $F(1, 148) = 33.306, p < .000$ ). These findings provide robust evidence that the effective use of curriculum-recommended teaching methods has a direct and positive influence on teachers' ability to perform their roles effectively.

Despite these positive indicators, a deeper examination of the findings reveals discrepancies between the reported use of teaching methods and their actual implementation in the classroom. For instance, while 70% of teachers reported using prescribed teaching methods, classroom observations indicated that only 10% of teachers successfully executed a project during the month of observation. Similarly, only 10% of teachers grouped learners during lessons, despite the widespread endorsement of cooperative learning in the curriculum. This suggests that while teachers are familiar with and understand the curriculum guidelines, the consistent application of project-based learning (PBL) and cooperative learning in daily classroom practice remains limited. Such inconsistencies call for critical reflection on the barriers preventing full implementation.

One of the key challenges appears to be the gap between planning and execution. While 78% of teachers reported planning a project each month, only 56% successfully executed these projects. This indicates a

disconnect between the theoretical understanding of curriculum expectations and practical classroom implementation. The complexity of managing projects, particularly within resource-constrained environments, may hinder teachers from fully integrating PBL into their teaching practices. Projects often require substantial preparation, materials, and time, all of which are in short supply in many primary schools in Cameroon. As Alemge (2019) notes, the lack of instructional resources and large class sizes are critical obstacles to the effective implementation of innovative teaching methods like PBL.

The underutilization of cooperative learning, where only 10% of observed classes grouped learners, further compounds the problem. Cooperative learning is a core component of the Competence-Based Approach (CBA), which emphasizes collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving through group work. However, large class sizes, inadequate training, and limited experience with managing group dynamics may explain why teachers struggle to incorporate cooperative learning effectively. Ngwa and Lawyer (2020) point out that many teachers continue to rely on traditional, teacher-centered methods because they lack the confidence and expertise to manage learner-centered approaches like cooperative learning. Without sufficient support and training, teachers may find it easier to revert to more familiar, less interactive methods.

The observation results align with the findings of Esongo (2017) and Abdoulaye (2019), who stress that the Competence-Based Approach seeks to eliminate the divide between the classroom and everyday life by encouraging the use of real-life situations to explain concepts. The goal of CBA is to develop learners' abilities to apply skills in real-world contexts, thus preparing them for the complexities of life beyond the classroom. However, the limited execution of real-life projects and the absence of group activities in observed classrooms suggest that the potential of CBA is not being fully realized in Mfoundi Division. The curriculum's focus on practical applications, such as problem-solving through projects and cooperative tasks, is meant to foster deep learning and the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The low implementation of these methods means that learners are missing out on opportunities to practice these essential skills.

The findings also highlight some positive practices. The observation revealed that all teachers used didactic materials in their lessons, and 96.7% of respondents reported conducting remedial activities to support slow learners. This indicates a strong commitment to differentiated instruction, which is critical for ensuring that all students, regardless of their learning pace, have the opportunity to succeed. The use of didactic materials aligns with the curriculum's emphasis on Integrated Theme Learning (ITL), which encourages teachers to use a variety of resources to help learners make connections across subjects. The high percentage of teachers who use remedial activities suggests that teachers are responsive to the diverse needs of their learners, even if other aspects of the curriculum, such as PBL and cooperative learning, are less consistently implemented.

## **Implications**

The findings of this study have several important implications for teachers, school administrators, pedagogic supervisors, and policymakers in Cameroon. First, the inconsistency between teachers' reported practices and observed behaviours points to a need for ongoing professional development. Teachers require additional training and support to effectively implement learner-centred methods like PBL and cooperative learning. Many teachers may lack the practical skills to manage these approaches in large, resource-constrained classrooms. Therefore, targeted training programs that focus on project management, group facilitation, and the use of available resources for interactive learning could help bridge the gap between planning and execution.

Second, schools play a critical role in supporting teachers by providing the necessary resources and creating a conducive environment for innovative teaching methods. Schools should organize in-service training and workshops that address the specific challenges teachers face in implementing the Social Studies curriculum. Bringing in experts to provide hands-on training and solutions for common classroom challenges could significantly improve teachers' confidence and competence. Furthermore, school administrations must

ensure that teachers have access to the didactic materials and other resources they need to implement the curriculum effectively. Without adequate materials, it is difficult for teachers to carry out the hands-on, interactive activities that are central to CBA.

Pedagogic supervisors also have a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of the curriculum. They must go beyond their traditional role of evaluation and assume a more supportive, mentorship-driven approach. Supervisors should work closely with teachers, providing guidance, feedback, and constructive criticism to help them navigate the complexities of the new curriculum. Regular classroom observations, followed by feedback sessions, could help teachers identify areas for improvement and develop practical strategies for enhancing their teaching methods. Additionally, supervisors should undergo training themselves to stay abreast of curriculum changes and new pedagogical techniques, ensuring they are well-equipped to support the teachers they oversee.

The Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB) must also play a more active role in ensuring that teachers receive continuous professional development and that schools are adequately resourced. Increasing the number of supervisors to reduce the supervisor-teacher ratio could improve the quality of oversight and support provided to teachers. Moreover, MINEDUB should consider introducing incentive programs to recognize and reward teachers who excel in curriculum implementation. This could motivate teachers to invest more in their professional development and adopt more innovative teaching methods.

Finally, researchers should take an active interest in further studying the Competence-Based Approach and its implementation in Cameroon. Continued research will provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with the new curriculum, helping stakeholders refine their strategies for successful implementation. Research findings can also inform policy decisions, ensuring that the curriculum evolves to meet the needs of both teachers and learners.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant influence of teaching methods on teacher effectiveness in the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum. While most teachers adhere to the recommended teaching methods, challenges remain in fully implementing learner-centred approaches such as PBL and cooperative learning. The findings suggest that while teachers are familiar with the curriculum guidelines, practical constraints—such as large class sizes, insufficient training, and a lack of resources—hinder their ability to consistently apply these methods in the classroom.

To address these challenges, a concerted effort is needed from all stakeholders in the education system. Teachers must pursue continuous professional development to enhance their pedagogical skills, while school administrations and pedagogic supervisors must provide the necessary support and resources to facilitate curriculum implementation. The government, through MINEDUB, must ensure that teachers and supervisors are well-trained and incentivized to adopt innovative teaching methods. Finally, further research into the Competence-Based Approach will help refine strategies for its effective implementation, ensuring that learners are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the 21st century.

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