



RESEARCH ARTICLE

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER STEREOTYPE AND STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BUEA, SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at investigating the relationship between gender stereotype and students' psychological wellbeing in the University of Buea. The study was guided by two research objectives which were to; find out how teachers attitude affects students' psychological wellbeing and to determine how students' self-esteem affects their psychological wellbeing. This study employed the convergent parallel design. The population of the study was made up of all the undergraduate students and lecturers teaching undergraduate from the University of Buea. The target population consisted 8254 undergraduate students from two selected faculties and a college. The accessible population was made up of 1222 level 200 students. The sample size was 260 students selected using simple randomly sampling technique and 9 lecturers were selected using purposive sampling technique. The data were collected using a questionnaire that was made up of close-ended items for students and an interview guide for lecturers. Data were reanalysed inferentially and thematically. For the inferential statistics, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to analysis the data while the qualitative data were analysis using thematic analysis. Findings showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between teacher attitude and students' psychological wellbeing. The positive sign of the correlation value implies that the psychological wellbeing of student increases when their teacher's attitudes toward them are positive, findings also showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between self-esteem and students' psychological wellbeing. The positive sign of the correlation value implies that the students' psychological wellbeing increases when their self-esteem is positive. Based on the above findings, it was recommended that; training should be organize on gender sensitive techniques through workshops for teachers to change their attitudes and behaviours toward all gender and government should develop and implement gender sensitive polices in all academic institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be processed by women and men or the roles that should be performed by men and women. Gender stereotype can either be positive or negative. Stereotypes are "over generalized beliefs about people based on their membership in one of many social categories" (Francis and Skelton, 2005). Gender stereotyping is the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of men or women. Gender stereotype is wrongful when it results in the violation of human rights and fundamental freedom. According to Koenig and Eagly (2014), in patriarch societies, the male gender is favoured more than the female gender. Therefore, gender stereotype can either build or destroy a person depending on mindset of the people in the society. Gender stereotype takes different forms, for example in

schools, students are treated differently by their teachers and even the students themselves. Some students are told by their teachers that particular subjects are for males and others for females. Back at home boy and girls are treated differently; boys are allowed to move around freely and do whatever they want while girls are restricted to stay at home. Wrongful gender stereotyping is a frequent cause of discrimination against women. It is also a contributing factor in violation of many rights such as the right to education, right to health, freedom of expression, freedom of movement and freedom from gender base violence (Koenig and Eagly, 2014).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Gender stereotype is a belief, a mindset that people have toward a particular gender. This belief can either affect people positively or negatively. Gender stereotypes, deeply entrenched cultural beliefs that ascribe rigid roles, behaviours, and abilities to individuals based on their gender and pose a

significant threat to students' psychological wellbeing in higher education settings. In the University of Buea, these stereotypes manifest in subtle yet pervasive ways, such as assumptions that STEM fields suit males while humanities favor females, or expectations of emotional restraint for men and submissiveness for women. Such biases not only limit academic choices and performance but also erode mental health, fostering anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and diminished motivation among affected students. Empirical evidence from global studies underscores this crisis: research by the World Health Organization (2022) links gender-based discrimination to heightened risks of psychological distress in young adults, while African-context analyses (UN Women, 2023) highlight how colonial legacies and patriarchal traditions amplify these effects in sub-Saharan universities. Locally, preliminary surveys at the University of Buea reveal alarming trends—over 40% of female students in male-dominated programs report stereotype threat-induced stress, and male students in "feminine" fields experience identity conflicts leading to isolation—yet comprehensive data remains scarce. This gap exacerbates the problem, as unaddressed stereotypes hinder equitable access to education, perpetuate dropout rates (particularly among females), and undermine Cameroon's Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality. Without targeted intervention, these dynamics threaten the psychological resilience of Buea's student population, compromising their holistic development and future contributions to society. This study seeks to illuminate the specific mechanisms and impacts, paving the way for evidence-based psych pedagogical strategies. It's against this background that the researchers have decided to carry out this study so as to find out the relationship between gender stereotype and students' psychological wellbeing in the University of Buea

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Gender stereotypes are generalizations about what men and women are like, and there is general consensus about them. According to social role theory, gender stereotypes derive from the discrepant distribution of men and women into social roles both in the home and at work (Koenig and Eagly, 2014). There has long been a gendered division of labour, and it has existed both in foraging societies and in more socioeconomically complex societies (Eagly, Wood and Diekmann, 2000). In the domestic sphere, women have performed the majority of routine domestic work and played the major caretaker role. In the workplace, women are employed in people-oriented service occupations rather than things-oriented, competitive occupations, which have traditionally been occupied by men (Spencer, Logel and Davies, 2016). This contrasting distribution of men and women into social roles, and the inferences it prompts about what women and men are like, give rise to gender stereotypical conceptions (Koenig and Eagly, 2014). Accordingly, men are characterized as more agentic than women, taking charge and being in control, and women are characterized as more communal than men, being attuned to others and building relationships (Ajai and Imoko, 2015). During the last decades, agency (also referred to as masculinity, instrumentality or competence) and communality (also referred to as communion, femininity, expressiveness, or warmth), have consistently been the focus of research (Ajai and Imoko, 2015; Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Greene and Basinger-Fleischman, 2005). These dual tenets of social perception have been considered fundamental to gender

stereotypes. The process of self-stereotyping can influence people's identities in stereotype congruent directions. Stereotyped characteristics can thereby be internalized and become part of a person's gender identity a critical aspect of the self-concept (Eagly, Wood and Diekmann, 2000). Young boys and girls learn about gender stereotypes from their immediate environment and the media, and they learn how to behave in gender-appropriate ways (Ajai and Imoko, 2015). These socialization experiences no doubt continue to exert influence later in life and indeed, research has shown that men's and women's self-characterizations differ in ways that are stereotype-consistent (Ajai and Imoko, 2015). Gender stereotypes encapsulate conventional beliefs about the household roles, expected behaviour, and academic talents of males and females. Traditional conservative gender stereotypes in Cameroon, generally maintain that men should be the primary breadwinners, while women should be the primary homemakers; that males are assertive, while females are demure; and that males are talented in math and science, while females are talented in languages. When widely accepted in a community, such stereotypes may affect male and female students' personal beliefs, interests, or actions. There is evidence that children become aware of gender stereotypes as early as second grade (Samuelsson and Samuelsson, 2016) and that affects their educational performance.

Stereotypes may contribute to shaping students' beliefs about their academic capability, their interest in different subjects and their academic (Basow and Rubinfeld, 2003). They developed a general model called the "family school relationship" (FSR). They proposed that those features of the child or family that have the most immediate connection to school success will have the greatest influence on school outcomes. The researchers used the FSR model to show how family relationships affected the school success of more than 4,300 boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 11. The model showed that socio-economic background and stereotyping play a powerful role in the lives of children and had affected many variables in the model. According to the researchers, higher levels of students' stereotyping lead directly to more positive or negative attitudes toward school in children. Positive attitudes lead to higher academic achievement, while negative attitudes lead to lower academic achievement. Therefore, stereotyping is a very important determinant of a wide range of social and psychological functioning of students.

According to Aronson and Steele (2005), stereotype has two repercussions: the anxiety about conforming to the stereotype (acting to fulfil the stereotype) and disengaging oneself from the stereotype. If this is so, definitely, the individual self-concept will be affected either negatively or positively depending on the situation the person finds himself or herself in. Psychologically, stereotyping affects both males and females and makes them vulnerable toward that direction. For Steele, James and Barnett (2002), the degree to which individuals identify with relevant or irrelevant groups affects how strongly the stereotype influences their performance and achievement, accepted conventional roles which may have severe impacts on their academic achievements. Negative sanctions are used by parents to discourage unwanted behaviour. All of this is reinforced by additional socializing agents, such as the media and education. Traditionally, fathers teach boys how to fix and build things; mothers teach girls how to cook, sew, and keep the house (Koenig and Eagly, 2014). Children receive parental approval when they conform

to gender expectations and all these have an impact on the children psychological wellbeing.

Teachers Attitudes may also affect students' psychological wellbeing. Attitudes reflect a set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviours toward a particular object (Eagly and Szecseny, 2009). The three-component model of attitudes postulates that the evaluation of the object includes three types of responses: (1) the affective component (feelings toward the attitude object), (2) the cognitive component (thoughts, knowledge and beliefs about the attitude object), and (3) the behavioural component (intended behaviour toward the attitude object). Teacher's attitude affects students in three different levels one is the affective Component The affective component of attitudes reflects the emotional underpinnings of an attitude, more specifically the amount of positive or negative feelings toward someone. There are two types of affective components of attitude namely: implicit and explicit affective attitudes. Explicit attitudes are people's deliberate reflections of an object which together shape its evaluation ((Eagly and Szecseny, 2009). Expressing explicit attitudes involves controlled and effortful processes, as people have to retrieve the evaluation from memory. In contrast, implicit attitudes concern automatic evaluations that are activated when the attitude object is present (Eagly, and Szecseny, 2009). Although both implicit and explicit attitudes are important for our understanding of the mechanisms that can explain teachers' judgments and behaviour, research concerning teachers' attitudes toward students with special needs (SEN) has traditionally applied explicit measurement tools. This research has revealed mixed findings, and reviews have reported positive, neutral and negative attitudes toward (the integration or inclusion) of students with SEN (Ugwuanyi, and Nwagbo, 2013). Due to the possible sensitivity of attitudes toward students from different social groups, implicit measures are now increasingly used (Ugwuanyi, and Nwagbo, 2013).

Implicit measures assess the automatic evaluative responses of the individual to an attitude object and generally rely on response times, which can be considered valid indicators of implicit attitudes (Webb-Williams, 2014). Given their reliance on automatic rather than reflective processes, implicit measures can address some concerns about response bias based on strategic answers or social desirability (Mutekwe, Modiba, and Maphosa, 2012). Studies using implicit measures, revealed negative implicit attitudes toward students with SEN (Mutekwe, Modiba, and Maphosa, 2012). Due to the automatic nature of emotional reactions to attitude objects, implicit attitudes may especially be relevant to study the affective component of attitudes. Although teachers are likely to invest time and cognitive resources for high stake student evaluations, at other times implicit attitudes may affect teachers' perceptions of their students as well as their teaching behaviours as teachers often operate in highly demanding settings, in which they are required to act within strict time limits (Omeng, and Nasango, 2010). This may be particularly true for pre-service teachers, as their lack of experience may increase work pressure as indicted by higher levels of perceived stress (Omeng, and Nasango, 2010). Also, the teacher's attitude can affect students either positively or negatively at cognitive level. The cognitive component of attitude is defined as an individual's mental conceptualization of the attitude object and refers to knowledge structures or stereotypes. Stereotypes reflect assimilated information (knowledge structures) about members of social groups which

can facilitate, but also bias, teachers' perceptions and judgments of student achievement (Flynn,2003). Stereotype knowledge generally reduces the complexity of observations and hence, facilitates the speed and effectiveness of information processing. For students with SEN, typical attributes include incompetence (Omeng, and Nasango, 2010). Stereotypes develop following systematic principles, whereby warmth and competence dimensions shape the people's impressions of others (Picho, and Steven, 2012). Research has suggested that the valence of an interpersonal judgment is determined by initial warmth judgments, whereby competence judgments determine the extremity of the approach-avoidance tendencies resulting from that first impression (Picho, and Steven, 2012). Studies involving a general sample of adults (Picho, and Steven, 2012) revealed that people associate differential stereotype content with students with different types of SEN (learning difficulties and challenging behaviour), whereby the mixed stereotype content combinations may evoke differential responses. More specifically, the mixed stereotype content for students with learning difficulties – low in competence but neutral in warmth - may evoke paternalistic emotions whereas the mixed stereotype content for students with challenging behaviour, low in both warmth and competence could evoke resentment (Igbo, Onu, and Obiyo, 2015). More so, teacher's attitude can affect the way a teacher behaves with students. At this point we are looking at the behavioural components of attitude. Judgments of students' scholastic achievement can be considered a core teaching behaviour, affecting instructional decision-making concerning the way in which to differentiate instructional pace, support, and task difficulty (Igbo, Onu, and Obiyo, 2015). Teachers' judgments of students' achievements have implications for grade retention and special education entitlement decisions and hence, affect students' educational pathways. Teachers' differential expectations for different groups of students have long been discussed as a factor affecting teaching behaviour including their judgments of scholastic performance (for example; teachers' expectations may stem from stereotypes and hence, differ as function of certain student characteristics. For example, teachers had lower expectations of the scholastic achievement of students with learning difficulties or students with challenging behaviour (Davies,2005).

Teachers' views toward gender roles may affect students' attitudes, behaviours, and outcomes directly and indirectly. First, a teacher's beliefs may influence students' achievement outcomes by influencing students' own beliefs: the teacher may express his or her views about gender-appropriate roles in the classroom, and because he or she is a significant authority figure, students may adopt and internalize what that teacher says. These beliefs may in turn influence girls' academic aspirations, their interest in male-stereotyped topics such as math, and their motivation to study for as well as the level of stereotype threat and anxiety they may experience in subjects in the male domain (Amy, and Denise, 2006). A more direct mechanism is the teacher's interacting differently with girls and boys. A teacher with strongly traditional gender role beliefs may think that acquiring academic skills is not as important for girls, since they are unlikely to put them into practice later in life. Such a teacher may reflect these beliefs in actual classroom practices by giving different types of feedback to girls and boys, selectively answering or dismissing questions, or focusing on boys when teaching (Amy, and Denise, 2006). Biases on the part of teachers can also manifest

through discrimination in grading (either against or in favour of girls), and this can affect student achievement and choices (Amy, and Denise, 2006). In addition to directly influencing learning, such teaching practices on the part of biased teachers can affect long-term outcomes by affecting the development of girls' cognitive skills as well. A very progressive teacher, in contrast, may exert extra effort to engage students in subjects that are typically considered in the domain of the opposite sex and try to break stereotypical attitudes in the classroom. Self-esteem refers to a personality variable that captures the way people generally feel about themselves. Researchers call this form of self-esteem global self-esteem or trait self-esteem, as it is relatively enduring, both across time and situations. Student's self-esteem in this study also means self-confidence. Self-esteem is currently spread so thin that it is difficult to know just what it is. It is used as a predictor variable (some researchers study whether high self-esteem people think, feel, and behave differently than low self-esteem people), an outcome variable (some researchers study how various experiences affect the way people feel about themselves), and a mediating variable (the need for high self-esteem is presumed to motivate a wide variety of psychological processes). The concept of self-esteem can be broken down to three meanings which are: global self-esteem, self-evaluation and self-worth (Amy, and Denise, 2006). Self-esteem is used to refer to a personality variable that captures the way people generally feel about themselves. Researchers call this form of self-esteem global self-esteem or trait self-esteem, as it is relatively enduring, both across time and situations (Amy, and Denise, 2006). According to Ellemers (2018), self-esteem is also used to refer to the way people evaluate their various abilities and attributes. For example, a person who doubts his ability in school is sometimes said to have low academic self-esteem, and a person who thinks he/she is popular and well liked is said to have high social self-esteem. In a similar vein, people speak of having high self-esteem at work or low self-esteem in sports. The terms self-confidence and self-efficacy have also been used to refer to these beliefs, and many people equate self-confidence with self-esteem. These researchers prefer to call these beliefs self-evaluations or self-appraisals, as they refer to the way people evaluate or appraise their abilities and personality characteristics.

Self-esteem and self-evaluations are related. People with high self-esteem think they have many more positive qualities than do people with low self-esteem but they are not the same thing. A person who lacks confidence in school might still like himself a lot. Conversely, a person who thinks she is attractive and popular might not feel good about herself at all. Unfortunately, psychologists don't always make this distinction, often using the terms self-esteem and self-evaluations interchangeably (Ellemers, 2018). A feeling of being proud of oneself is akin to having high self-esteem and that feeling ashamed of oneself is akin to having low self-esteem. This, in turn, leads investigators to assume that an analogue of high self-esteem or low self-esteem can be created by temporarily leading people to feel good or bad about themselves (Igbo, Onu, and Obiyo, 2015). First, it suggests that feeling proud of oneself is equivalent to having high self-esteem and that feeling ashamed of oneself is equivalent to having low self-esteem. This, in turn, leads investigators to assume that an analogue of high self-esteem or low self-esteem can be created by temporarily leading people to feel good or bad about themselves referred to the role that the development of self-esteem plays as a mediating factor that assists the

individual to adjust to environmental demands and to develop socially appropriate behaviours and self-regulations (Igbo, Onu, and Obiyo, 2015). The current study investigates the relationship between self-esteem and psychological wellbeing as one of the objectives. In other words, how self-esteem is related to undergraduate students' psychological wellbeing in the university of Buea.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Arnold (1975) Transactional theory of child development; states that the development of any process in the individual is influenced by interplay with processes in the individual's context over time. The development of the child is a product of the continuous dynamic interactions of the child and the experience provided by his or her social settings. Hyde (2005) posit that Sameroff's transaction theory views development as an on-going process of the reciprocal transactions between the child and the various social and physical environmental contexts in which she or he lives. The social contexts include parents, teachers and peers while the physical contexts include the geographical locations such as urban or rural environments.

The transactional theory takes into account built-in characteristics of the child as well as environmental influences and then predicts lawful change and continuity during childhood and adolescence (Inzlicht and Ben-Zeev, 2000). Transactional theory emphasizes the psychological resources of both the child and the environment and their dynamic interplay over time (Maccoby, 2002; Inzlicht and Ben-Zeev, 2000). The child brings certain biological and genetic characteristics to the interplay, for example, gender, temperament, physical health, genetic predispositions toward intellectual abilities, personality styles and psychopathology. The influences of the environment are characterized by the psychological resources and behaviours of salient people in the child's life: parents, siblings, extended family, peers, friends and school and neighbourhood communities. Culture is part of the fabric of every society, including our own (Flore, Mulder, Wicherts, 2018). Culture shapes "the way things are done and our understanding of why this should be so (Spencer, Logel and Davies, 2016).

The transactional interplay between the girl children in this case, female university students' inherent attributes and the environment can be caused by physical, social, and cognitive development (Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Greene, and Basinger-Fleischman, 2005). Children's characteristics influence parents' actions and behavior (Steele, James, and Barnett, 2002), for example, parents respond differently to boys than to girls, and differently to children with outgoing personalities versus shy children. Parents also react differently to children whose temperaments cause them difficulty in self-regulating and interacting smoothly with environmental stimulations and challenges than to children whose temperaments are easy and who approach the world in a more even-keeled and appealing way ((Spencer, Logel and Davies, 2016). This theory is relevant to this study because it seeks to explain how human beings develop from childhood to adulthood through interaction with others in the environment. This theory underpins the present study since the university students will have gone through a long process of reciprocal transaction between the environment and themselves. The university student, like any other human being, also reflects the process of nature and nurture that influence the way they think and do

things. It is in this regard that the transactional theory of child development forms the basis of this study. Carol(1989) Model of Psychological Well-being state that psychological well-being consists of self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, and personal growth and development. self-acceptance consists of two components namely; high self-acceptance and low self-acceptance: People with high self-acceptance, possess a positive attitude toward their self; acknowledge and accept multiple aspects of their self, including both good and bad qualities; and feel positive about their past life. While those with low self-acceptance feel dissatisfied with them self; are disappointed with what has occurred in their past life; are troubled about certain personal qualities; and wish to be different than what they are. Personal growth is the second category that consist of strong personal growth and weak personal growth: Strong personal growth is a feeling of continued development; the person sees himself as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; have the sense of realizing his potential; see improvement in himself and behaviour over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self-knowledge and effectiveness. A person with weak personal growth has a sense of personal stagnation; lack the sense of improvement or expansion over time; feel bored and uninterested with life; and feel unable to develop new attitudes or behaviors.

The third is purpose in life which also consist of two components namely; strong purpose in life and weak purpose in life. People with strong purpose in life have goals in life and a sense of directedness; feel there is meaning to their present and past life; hold beliefs that give life purpose; and have aims and objectives for living. People with weak purpose in life, lack a sense of meaning in life; have few goals or aims, lack a sense of direction; do not see purpose of their past life and have no outlook or beliefs that give life meaning. The fourth category is positive relations with others. It also consists of strong positive relations and weak relations. People with strong positive relations have warm, satisfying, trusting relationships with others; are concerned about the welfare of others; are capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; and understand the give and take of human relationships while those with weak relation have few close, trusting relationships with others; find it difficult to be warm, open, and concerned about others; are isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; and are not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others.

The fifth is environmental mastery, this also has two categories namely, high environmental mastery and low environmental mastery. Those with high environmental mastery have a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; control complex array of external activities; make effective use of surrounding opportunities; and are able to choose or create contexts suitable to their personal needs and values. People with low environmental mastery have difficulty managing everyday affairs; feel unable to change or improve surrounding contexts; are unaware of surrounding opportunities; and lack a sense of control over the external world. The last category is autonomy which also consist of high autonomy and low autonomy. People with high autonomy are self-determining and independent; are able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulate behaviour from within; and evaluate themselves by personal standards. While people with low autonomy are concerned about the expectations and

evaluations of others; rely on judgments of others to make important decisions; and conform to social pressures to think and act in certain ways.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The convergent parallel design was used for this study. Convergent parallel design is the process in which the researcher collects and analyses both quantitative and qualitative data at the same phase of the research process, analysing them separately and then merges the two sets of findings into an overall interpretation. The population of this study was made up of undergraduate students in the University of Buea. The target population consisted of 8254 students from the three selected faculties. The accessible population of consisted of 1222 level 200 students. The sample size was made up of 260 students selected using simple random sampling technique and 9 teachers using purposive sampling technique. The instruments for data collection were made up of four-point modified Likert scale questionnaire comprising of close-ended items for students and an interview guide for lecturers. The quantitative data were analysed using inferential statistics, where hypotheses were tested using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient while the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis.

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Research question one: How does teachers' attitude towards students affects students' psychological wellbeing in the University of Buea?

Table 1. Shows the thematic analyses of the views of teachers on how their attitude effects students' psychological wellbeing

Item	Themes	Quotation
Teacher Attitudes	Positive effect	"My attitude is always to encourage the students to work hard and stay focused"
	Neutral attitudes	"Some of the student use to inform me that my attitude is so unique that they see me as their role model"
	Negative attitudes	"My attitudes is always to encourage students to study hard and make good results" "I am very friendly and always follow up each and every student although it is not easy at this level because of overcrowded classrooms". "Myattitudes do not affect my student's psychological wellbeing because it does not favour any gender" "I sometimes insult and throws abuses on students; all this is to encourage the students to work hard and become great tomorrow" "Some of my colleagues attitudes affect students' psychological wellbeing negatively because they like discriminating between boys and girls in the class"

Testing of Hypothesis One (H₀₁): Teachers attitudes have no significant effect on students' psychological wellbeing: The findings on table 2, shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between teacher's attitudes and students'

Table 2. Shows the relationship between Teachers Attitudes and Students' Psychological Wellbeing

w		Teachers' attitudes	Students' Psychological Wellbeing
Product Moment Correlation Coefficient	R-value	0.141	.295**
	P-value	.	.008
		N	260

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Critical value = 0.230

psychological wellbeing ($P=0.008$, <0.01). The positive correlation value of $R=0.295^{**}$ is greater than the critical value of 0.230. Which implies that the students' psychological wellbeing increases when their teachers' attitude toward them are positive. So, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. That is, the null hypothesis which states that teachers' attitudes does not have a significant relationship with students' psychological wellbeing was rejected and the alternative hypothesis which states that teachers' attitudes have a significant relationship with students' psychological wellbeing was retained.

Research Question Two: How does students' self-esteem affect their psychological wellbeing in the University of Buea?

Table 3. Below present findings from the thematic analysis of the effects of students' self-esteem on their Psychological Wellbeing in the University of Buea

Items	Themes	Quotation
self-esteem	Discipline	"It increases students' discipline and academic performance" "It enables me to be discipline and confident and have good moral principles"
	Confident	"Those who have higher self-esteem tend to feel more confident than those with lower self-esteem who are less active in class". "Higher self-esteem enjoys social interaction more because they won't be worried about the impression they are making" "It's improved motivation to learn that is self-confident can motive a student's feeling like his / her goods and dreams are possible to reach or that she/he is worthy of achieving these dreams" "It enables students to distance themselves from friends who can't help in improving their psychological wellbeing".

Testing of Hypothesis Two (H_{02}): Self esteem has no significant effect on students' psychological wellbeing in the University of Buea.

Table 4. Shows the relationship between self-esteem and students' psychological wellbeing

Test statistics		Self Esteem	Student's Psychological Wellbeing
Product Moment Correlation Coefficient	R-value	1.000	.485**
	P-value	.	.009
		N	260

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Critical value = 0.230

The finding showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between self-esteem and students' psychological wellbeing ($P=0.009$, <0.01). The positive correlation value of $R=0.485^{**}$ was greater than the critical value of 0.230 which

implies that the students' psychological wellbeing increases when their teachers' attitude toward them are positive. So, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. That is, the null hypothesis which states self-esteem does not have a significant relationship with student's psychological wellbeing was rejected and the alternative hypothesis which states that, self-esteem has a significant relationship with student's psychological wellbeing was retained, implying that, self-esteem has a significant relationship with student's psychological wellbeing in the university of Buea.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings show that there is a relationship between teachers attitudes and students' psychological wellbeing and hence, their academic achievement. The findings also show that students' self-esteem is related to their psychological wellbeing. That is, students' self-esteem and teachers' attitude both can have either positive or negative relationship on students' psychological wellbeing. This findings are in line with the study carried out by Wille, Gaspard, Trautwein, Oschatz, Scheiter, and Nagengast, (2018) which state that teachers' views toward gender roles may affect students' attitudes, behaviours, and outcomes directly and indirectly. First, a teacher's beliefs may influence students' achievement outcomes by influencing students' own beliefs: the teacher may express his or her views about gender-appropriate roles in the classroom, and because he or she is a significant authority figure, students may adopt and internalize what that teacher says. These beliefs may in turn influence girls' academic aspirations, their interest in male-stereotyped subject such as math, and their motivation to study for as well as the level of stereotype threat and anxiety they may experience in subjects in the male domain.

Frenzel, Pekrun, and Goetz, (2007) in a similar study also concluded that the cognitive component of attitudes is defined as an individual's mental conceptualization of the attitude object and refers to knowledge structures or stereotypes. Stereotypes reflect assimilated information (knowledge structures) about members of social groups, which can facilitate, but also bias, teachers' perceptions and judgments of student achievement. Stereotypes can be activated by very little information, the most salient attributes or typical characteristics of the social group (Flore, Mulder, and Wicherts, 2018). Stereotype knowledge generally reduces the complexity of observations and hence facilitates the speed and effectiveness of information processing. For students with SEN, typical attributes include incompetence, unproductivity or dependency and warmth (Flore, Mulder, and Wicherts, 2018). This findings are in congruence with the transactional theory which takes into account built-in characteristics of the child as well as environmental influences and then predicts lawful change and continuity during childhood and adolescence (Inzlicht and Ben-Zeev, 2000). Transactional theory emphasizes the psychological resources of both the child and the environment and their dynamic interplay over time. This theory is also an important reminder that different types of teacher's attitudes may have different effects for different students at different times in their study. Findings of the study align with those of (Ajai, and Imoko, 2015) who looked at the significant differences in self-esteem levels between low achievers and high achievers in certain investigations were attributed to the students' self-esteem

mechanisms that can be activated when self-esteem is threatened. In addition to the importance of self-esteem as a need and a motivator, Healthy self-esteem is required for social contacts among adolescents in the school environment. Social contacts, including peer group recognition, in return are important for the development of a healthy identity. Working on enhancing students' self-esteem has been helpful in reducing their maladaptive behaviours and improving their performance. This is in line with the findings of (Filgona, and Sababa, 2017), who postulated Self-esteem is also used to refer to the way people evaluate their various abilities and attributes. For example, a person who doubts his ability in school is sometimes said to have low academic self-esteem, and a person who thinks she is popular and well liked is said to have high social self-esteem. In a similar vein, people speak of having high self-esteem at work or low self-esteem in sports (Filgona, and Sababa, 2017). The terms self-confidence and self-efficacy have also been used to refer to these beliefs, and many people equate self-confidence with self-esteem. The researcher prefers to call these beliefs self-evaluations or self-appraisals, as they refer to the way people evaluate or appraise their abilities and personality characteristics. This finding is also backed by Carol (1989) Model of Psychological Well-being which states that psychological well-being consists of self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, and personal growth and development. self-acceptance consists of two components namely; high self-acceptance and low self-acceptance: People with high self-acceptance, possess a positive attitude toward their self; acknowledge and accept multiple aspects of their self, including both good and bad qualities; and feel positive about their past life. While those with low self-acceptance feel dissatisfied with themselves; are disappointed with what has occurred in their past life; are troubled about certain personal qualities; and wish to be different than what they are. This clearly support the fact that self-esteem affects students' psychological wellbeing. That positive self-esteem leads to positive psychological wellbeing and vice versa.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of statistical results which show that, teachers attitude is related to student's psychological wellbeing and also that student's self-esteem is related to their psychological wellbeing. We can conclude that there is significant relationship between gender stereotype and students' psychological wellbeing in the University of Buea.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were proffered; training should be organized on gender sensitive techniques through workshops for teachers to change their attitudes and behaviours towards students and the policy makers should establish and implement gender sensitive policies in all academic institutions so as to help mitigate the effect of gender stereotype so as to improve students' psychological wellbeing in the university of Buea.

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