Socio Cultural Practices and the Level of Implementation of Policies for Universal Primary Education: The Case of the Mbororo Community of the North West Region of Cameroon

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Abstract: The study was to find out the extent to which cultural practices amongst Mbororos affects the implementation of policies for universal primary education in the Mbororo community of the North West Region of Cameroon”. This study was guided by Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital. The target population was 3500, and sample was 308 respondents, Snow ball, purposive and convenience sampling technique was used, questionnaire and interview guide was used to collect data, and data were analyzed using thematic content analysis, frequencies, proportions and chi-square. The results indicated that: There is a significant influence of culture, religion on the implementation of UPE. Lack of finance, family support, early marriages, inadequate school facilities, nomadic life style, poor infrastructure, cultural values like drum beating, isolated settlement, limited Islamic schools, high illiteracy, are some of the factors that hinder the implementation of UPE in the Mbororo Community of the North-West region of Cameroon. The study recommends that Ardors or chiefs should be sensitized to disseminate educational talks to their local communities. The content of the curriculum should be relevant to Mbororo children, should also responds to cultural diversity. Parents and the entire community should be schooled on the importance of education to both the child and the community in general. Suggestions were made for this study to be replicated in the North-West Region of Cameroon using a larger sample.

Keywords: Cultural Practices, Education, Mbororos Community

Introduction
Cultural practice is a subject of discussion in questions of cultural survival. If an ethnic group retains its formal ethnic identity but loses its core cultural values or the knowledge, resources, or ability to continue them, questions arise as to whether the culture is able to actually survive at all (Barbara, 2007). International bodies such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) continually work on these issues, which are increasingly at the forefront of globalization questions. Examples of socio cultural practices include: religious and spiritual practices, cultural institutions, medical treatment practices, traditional practices, dietary preferences and culinary practices, dressing, housing and construction, child care practices, governance, leadership and conflict resolution, and everyday life practices. In the changing world of today, socio cultural practices move hand in glove with education, though with a lot of modernization in place.

International organizations like UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP give a lot of preference to the socio cultural practices of any community. The Cameroon government recognizes the importance of socio cultural practices in education, and has included it in its educational policy documents law N° 98/004 of 14th April 1998 (Tambo, 2000). Social and cultural practices
could better be practiced if everybody is educated. The fact that certain socio cultural practices by some ethnic groups hinder education in developing countries, international organizations, as well as governments, are not indifferent, and have struggled to include education in their priority developmental objectives. The World Education Forum (Dakar Senegal, April 2000) adopted the Dakar Framework for Action reaffirming the commitment of nations to achieving Education for All by the year 2015 and entrusted UNESCO with the overall responsibility of coordinating and playing a significant role in the achievement of the goal (EFA Report, 2000).

Education is an important component of development. Primary education is considered as minimum level of essential education for a child as a fulfillment of their right to education (UNICEF, 2000). Primary education is priority for many nations today, the UN, civil society organizations and NGOs included. Denying children access to quality education increases their vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and diseases. Girls, more than boys, are at greater risk of such abuse when they are not in school. For many villages, a school provides a safe haven for children, a place where they can find companionship, adult supervision, latrines, clean water and possibly meals and health care. Yet, these basics are beyond reach for hundreds of millions of children across the world. These children are deprived of their right to education because some of their cultural values are not in line with formal education, or their families cannot afford school fees and other related costs, or because their communities are too poor or remote to have school facilities and supplies, or because they have to work to put food on the table. Children of indigenous ethnic minorities often face discrimination and are often excluded from education, as are children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2010). For the Education goal to be met, actions need to address both human and material needs, buildings, relevant curriculum, teachers and the organic requirements of getting all children into school and ensuring they complete a quality primary education course. These include gender equality in society, good health and nutrition, and the strong backing of governments and communities (UNICEF, 2010). Achieving universal primary education (UPE) by 2015 is the target of most nations (MDGs Report, 2010).

Primary education is seen as the first step in laying the foundation for future educational opportunities and lifelong skills. Through the skills and knowledge imbued, primary education enables people to participate in the social, economic and political activities of their communities to their fullest potential. It is also seen as a basic human right which frees human beings from a state of ignorance and helps to reduce the negative effects of poverty, relating in particular to health and nutrition. In the competitive global economy of today, a well educated high quality workforce is seen as vital to a country, in order to attract foreign investments that generate jobs and create wealth. Hence, good quality primary education is increasingly recognized as an important foundation for economic growth and seen as instrumental in the attainment of other development objectives (GESP, 2010). Its pursuit as a goal by development agencies acknowledges its dual function as a factor in economic growth and in reducing the incidence of poverty (World Bank, 1990a and 1995a). The humanistic and liberation goals of primary education have been given attention by most development agencies. The Cameroon government through the ministry of basic education and support from donor agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and NGOs like Plan International embarked on the creation and support of primary education especially in rural areas and among the minority marginalized ethnic groups (MINEDUB, 2002).

BACKGROUND
The question about the origin of the Mbororos remains unanswered in the annals of history although the bulk of the speculations are similar. Several scholars have shown interest in the identity of the Mbororo. However, a satisfactory conclusion has not yet been reached. Despite this seeming loophole, various theories have been exposed relating to the origin of the Mbororo. Delafosse (1912, as cited in Mboscuda.org, 2005) attributed the origin of the Mbororo to the Syrians of Semitic (Aramaic) speech which explains that, the fruits of the marriage between Oukba and Bajo Mango were four children, Deita, Woya, Roroba and Nasi? He claims that they are the actual ancestors of the Mbororos who started speaking Fulfude, Arnott (1970:8), agreeing
with the above view, further notes that after some time ago the ancestors separated and one of the groups moved to Futa Toro (Senegal Basin). This was further confirmed by Murdock (1959:415 as cited in Mboscuda.org, 2005), who linked the Mbororos to the Tukular tribe who still inhabit the middle region of Senegal.

In another work by St. Croix (1945: 9 cited in Mboscuda.org, 2005), he narrates a legend which explains the origin of the nomadic Mbororos. The narration indicates that the Mbororos are descendants of a baby who was left in the bush by the mother due to a quarrel between her and her husband. A spirit found the baby and promised him that, he would roam continuously in the bush but would be rewarded with a lot of wealth. The boy was advised to go to a river wherein a line of cattle would emerge. He was counseled by the spirit to lead the line of emerging cattle and not to glance behind. The boy failed to obey the instruction and looked behind. He did so and the emerging cattle from the river stopped when the most beautiful beast was emerging.

The various opinions and narrations presented above point to the fact that the question of Mbororo origin and identity is yet to be answered. St. Croix recounts that the Mbororos are the descendants of a hybrid between Jews and some local tribes in North Africa. Palmer (1967) supports the aforementioned perspective and further recounts that the hybrid and Arabs, who eventually penetrated into the Maghrib in North Africa about 650-750 A.D. mixed with another group of people, “Duradae”. Meek (1913 as cited in Mboscuda.org, 2005), links the Mbororos with proto Egyptians and an ancient Libyan tribe. He arrived at this proposition by studying the physique of the Mbororos. Furthermore, many writers have traced and attributed the origin of the Mbororos to the Arabs as in the case of St. Croix (1945) and Mohammad (1976: 29-33). One of the legends narrated from the latter, explains that the Mbororos are descendants of one of the five offspring of Oukba- an Arab, and Bajo Mango, and Sarakoule. He further narrated that the Mbororos did not remain or settle permanently along the Senegal River as some of them moved eastward to other parts of Africa, as indicated by Mohammad (1959:226–227). The migration of the Mbororos from Futa Toro into Ferlo in the south and Karto in the East is confirmed by Murdock (1959:417 as cited in Mboscuda.org, 2005). The Mbororos arrived in Masina through Sonika and Bambara in the 14th century, while a vanguard of them infiltrated into FutaJalon from Senegal. Further migration took them into Hausa land around Sokoto and in Bauchi in Northern Nigeria. Muhammad (1976: 153) explains that the eastward movement was due to the following reasons: the large ocean, which lies to the West; in the North, the Sahara Desert is a hindrance and to the South, the thick forest, which breeds the tsetse fly, made the eastward movement the best option.”

The Mbororos arrived Cameroon in the early eighteen century, entering through the Adamawa and Northern Regions. They later migrated and settled in eight of Cameroon’s ten Regions with the exception of the South and Littoral Regions, which are not suitable for cattle rearing (Azarya, 1999). The Mbororos share a number of characteristics with the other pastoralist Fulani tribal groups including the Fulfulde language, ‘racial’ origin, Islam, and a cultural code of conduct known as ‘Pulaaku’. However, the Mbororos exhibit several distinct socio economic and political features to the extent that they constitute a distinct ethnic category. The critical difference is their pastoral livelihood, which, in spite of the changing political economy, cattle rearing is still closely aligned to Mbororo identity (Azarya 1999: xiii- xix).

The Mbororos can be divided into three major ethnic groups identified by the colour of their cattle, style of decoration of their bowls, and migratory movements. These are the ‘Aku-en’, Bodaabe and the ‘Jafun-en’ (mboscuda.org, 2005-2014). In Cameroon, Mbororos are found all over the national territory under four Lamidats (the paramount traditional institution), under whom are community leaders called Ardos. The four Lamidats are found in Fuigil in the North Region, Lompta in the Adamawa Region, Sabga in the North West Region and Didango in the West Region. The economy of the Mbororos in the early 19th century was exceedingly simple. Cattle had little economic significance and the number a man owned was an index of his wealth and importance (mboscuda.org, 2005-2014). The economy was very simple. Women were responsible for milking and they carried the milk in large shallow gourds to local markets, where
it was exchanged for food grown by cultivators. Expenditure was on food, purchase of cloth and household goods. Mbororos were very reluctant to sell their cattle. The highest expenditures were those relating to the payments of annual cattle tax to the councils.

Yaya (2014) holds that the Mbororos in Cameroon migrated from Mali in the 19th century, and came to Cameroon. When they arrived in Cameroon, they were scattered all over the national territory, apart from the Littoral and the South Region, which are found in the heart of the equatorial rain forest, that bread tsetse fly which causes diseases and death of animals (MBOSCUDA, 2005). He explains that the Mbororos in Cameroon have over 200 migratory groups, based on the direction they took during the great migratory period. The Mbororos are highly concentrated in the Western Highlands, particularly at the fringes because of abundant pasture for their animals. The Mbororos are found mostly in Adamawa and Western grass fields, especially in the North- West and Western Regions of Cameroon, and are considered a minority in these Regions. They are perceived as strangers and migrants by local grass field groups who consider themselves the hosts and landlords.

**Mbororo Culture**

Culture is the traditional modes of conducts practiced by a given group of people and transmitted from one generation to another as a body of traditions either by writing or by oral transmission. Therefore, the sum total of the traditions of people makes up a part of what is called culture. Graham Wallas conceives culture to be an accumulation of thoughts, values and objects. Culture to him is the social heritage acquired by a people from preceding generations, through learning, which is distinguished from the biological heritage that is passed on automatically through the genes (Aletum, 2008). Culture is the way of life of a particular group of people at a particular time. It involves the custom, values, beliefs, and way of thinking and behaviour of the people. Issa, a Fulani pastoralist describes a respectabe Mbororo as one who lives on the hills and owns cows and a family; he said that Mbororo cows are a source of life and wealth from God, and anyone who abandons the hills for town life is a sinner (Kaddo). He feels that the teachings of Koran are good and the teaching of the “white man” is not good for their children. In the field of culture, we also have another word, ‘cultured’ which refers to the education standard in a given civilization. Thus, people are often referred to as being “cultured” or “uncultured”. This means that if they conform to the approved norms of behaviour within a specifically defined social system, they are considered “cultured”; while if they fail to behave according to the accepted norms of a given society, they are considered “uncultured”. Hoebel (n.d) describes culture as an integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristics of the members of a society and which are not a result of biological inheritance.

The main socio cultural code for Mbororo group is known as “pulaaku”, a code of behaviour and ethos believed to be peculiar to and distinctive of the pastoral Mbororos (Kirk-Greene 1986). ‘Pulaaku’ provides both a moral framework and a code of conduct to the pastoral Mbororo. This code of conduct is intimately bound up with nomadic husbandry. It is also bounded by the fulfilment of duties to elders, wives and the lineage group, and the proper arrangement of marriages (MBOSCUDA, 2014). The four dominant strands of ‘pulaaku’ have been identified as fortitude in adversity and the ability to accept misfortune (munyal); sound common sense and manners (hakkiilo); reserve and modesty in personal relations (semteende); and dignity (neddaaku). To the Mbororo, ‘pulaaku’ makes them unique and different. It is about dignity and hiding problems. Pulaaku’ functions as a means of maintaining an ethnic boundary around the Mbororo category, such that it describes an ideology of racial and cultural distinctiveness and superiority that ranks the Mbororo above all other ethnic groups (Burnham, 1996:106). The Mbororos equate their distinctive pastoral way of life with their ethnic origin, to the extent that “there is a strong attachment to the idea of ethnic exclusiveness” (Steening 1959:388) as evidenced by the existence and use) of disparaging Fullfulde terms for sedentary farmers (e.g. haabe). There is also a continued tendency to marry within migratory groups, often with close cousins, as a means of preserving ‘pulaaku’. Mbororo culture can, therefore, be seen as exclusivist in orientation, a factor that has sometimes
exacerbated inter-ethnic tension between the Mbororos and their farming neighbours’. Thus cultural conflict is stereotypically expressed as such.

On the one hand, city dwellers see the Mbororo as uneducated, primitive and having a wrong religion and on the other hand, the Mbororo in the rural areas look down on the city dwellers as “haabe”, meaning people who are poor, and feel racially superior. As with all cultural codes, “pulaaku” is not interpreted uniformly amongst the different ethnic groups and more broadly remains subject to local interpretation and variations between different Fulani groups across West Africa (Azarya, 1999). This explains why some Mbororos, despite their socio cultural beliefs, send their children to school at early ages, while others keep children in homes to teach them the culture before sending them to school. Some end up not going to school; this makes the acquisition of basic education and the achievement of universal primary education difficult.

Bouba (2012) state that the Mbororo tradition gives very little regard to a woman, and as such they are subjected to early marriages (12-13) years, which affect their education. According to Aeiatsu, a Mbororo pastoralist, the illiteracy rate of Mbororo women is around 98% according to data collected in 2011 by the Cameroonian Indigenous Women Forum. The Mbororos practice Islam, a religion whose doctrine states that “Allah” is the one true God and Muhammad is his prophet (Emma, 2011). People who practice Islam are also required to perform the five pillars of Islam, which are:

1. The testimony of faith (Kalima)
2. Praying five times daily (Salat)
3. Giving alms (Zakat)
4. Fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (Sawm)
5. Performing pilgrimage to Mecca. (Hajj)

Among the Mbororos, there are faithful Muslims and unfaithful Muslims. The faithful’s are those who strictly follow the religion and respect all the five pillars of Islam as stated in the Koran. The unfaithful are those who don’t respect the laws of Islam. The Muslims pay particular attention to their faith, and teach their children the religion first before they enroll into formal education, a practice which retards the children’s education. In the urban areas, there are Islamic primary schools where children are enrolled in formal education, but are taught in Arabic up to a certain level before English and French are introduced as teaching languages. The Mbororos are different from the town Hausas and a majority of them live in the suburbs where the level of illiteracy within them is too high. They keep their children beside them to teach them their religion before sending them to the outside world. The few wealthy parents in the suburbs hire an Arabic teacher to come and teach their children Arabic. Many of the Mbororos keep their children in the house because of the fear that their religion can be eradicated by education. However, the few educated parents send their children to school, even when they are living in the suburbs; they make sure their children go to school. They send them to live with relatives where school is accessible (Mohammed, 2014). In Mbororo neighbourhoods where few children go to school, the rate of school attendance in that neighbourhood is high and possibly high completion. Children imitate their friends who go to school as role models to them.

Many Mbororos’ live in isolated remote communities and come to conflict with neighbouring majority communities who despise them as illegal immigrants or land-grabbing invaders (Pelican, 2004). Many Mbororos are illiterate and have little access to basic services such as schools, hospitals, clean water and electricity because of their hill top location. Central to the Mbororo lifestyle are their cows, much-prized and signifiers’ family's wealth and standing. Their cattle- grazing lifestyle however means that they are frequently at odds with the school calendar, and this affects children education as they move along with them (Emma, 2011).

The Mbororos depend on cattle rearing for funding of their children’s education, which is fading out because of the reduction in the number of herds of cattle. For the entire family to depend
solely on cattle rearing is not good for the changing economy of today with respect to President Paul Biya vision 2035 of Cameroon becoming an emerging country (Emma, 2011). However, a few of them are involved in business and many youths are drivers, bike riders and hawkers in the major towns and cities of Cameroon. The fortunate few educated are involved in white collar jobs. This poses a problem to education among the Mbororos as many of them lack the finances to properly educate their children. However, the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Organization (MBOSCUDA), along other non-governmental organizations such as Cameroon Indigenous Women Forum (CIWF), are becoming actively involved in financing the education of the Mbororos, especially that of the females (Emma, 2011). The Mbororo women in the urban centres are actively involved in the education of their children, especially that of the girls. Many of the Mbororo women in towns are involved in small businesses, like frying and selling of dough balls (puff-puff), creative arts like “tattooing”, tailoring, and hair dressing. These are initiatives for better living conditions and source of wealth for the acquisition of basic education by their children.

**Education**

Education is the sum total of a person’s learning experiences during his or her life time. It helps the individuals understand themselves, other people and their environment (Tambo, 2012). To Good (1973), education is the aggregate of all the processes by means of which people develop abilities, attitudes, and forms of behaviour that are of positive value to themselves and to the society in which they live. Another definition state that education is the process by which persons develop their intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical powers and so become more fully participating members of the community to which they belong (Tambo, 2012). Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of others, but may also be autodidactic. Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. Education is commonly divided into stages such as pre-school, primary school, secondary school, college, university, apprenticeship.

**Brief History of Education in Cameroon**

Education in Cameroon started with indigenous education. Pre-colonial Cameroon had a system of educating her offspring, and the major objective was to train the young ones for adulthood (MacOjong, 2008). Specifically, the child was trained to develop latent physical skills, character, intellectual skills, to acquire vocational training and to promote cultural heritage in order to assume adult responsibilities in the family and the society at large (Fonkeng, 2006). The method of teaching was through participation in ceremonies, rituals, imitation, recitation and demonstration. Children were involved in farming, fishing, weaving, cooking, and carving, knitting. Indigenous Cameroonian education was interrupted by the Missionaries and colonial administrators who introduce the European system of education. The first school was created in Cameroon in 1844 in Bimbia, by Rev Joseph Merrick which marked the beginning of formal education in Cameroon (Fonkeng, 2006).

The colonialists who ruled Cameroon during the colonial era had different educational policies, which were to a large extent intended to promote their culture and civilization in Cameroon. Education during the early colonial period was largely limited to the coastal areas because of lack of accessibility into the interior. The colonial powers were interested in promoting their culture, rather than educating Cameroonians. It was thanks to the Phelps-Stokes investigation, which points out that the curriculum for Africa and Cameroon in particular should be tailored to develop character training, promote agriculture, family life and health recreation such that attention was given to adapt education to the needs of Cameroonians. From 1844-1914, there were only Four German government schools in Cameroon. They were in Douala, Victoria, Garoua and Yaounde (MacOjong, 2008). At the outbreak of the First World War, every educational endeavour’s came to a standstill. Educational activities started booming in Cameroon from the Mandate period and the trusteeship, giving way to independence in 1960.
From independence right up to the holding of the 1995 education forum and the passing of the 1998 education law in Cameroon. Continued attempts have been made to improve on the number and quality of primary schools. With the launching of UPE in 2000, the Cameroon primary education sector witnessed a boom in the number of schools and pupils enrolment (Tambo, 2000). The launching of UPE was a transition period in the history of basic education in Cameroon. Despite this boom, some ethnic minority groups were still reluctant to send their children to school, and the Government abolished school fees and created more schools in the villages to encourage primary education. Still, some minority ethnic groups like the Mbororos in the North-West Region of Cameroon are still not taking advantage of this initiative.

A right to education has been recognized by many nations, following the conventions on the rights of children. Article 13 of the United Nations' 1966 International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights recognizes the right of everyone to education. Since the initiation of UPE, and pressure from educational donor agencies like UNESCO, UNICEF and Civil society Organizations, many countries have included education as a top priority in their developmental plan, and many have declared primary education free and compulsory. Despite this move, the socio cultural beliefs of some marginalized ethnic groups, like the case of Mbororos in the North-West Region of Cameroon, still poses as a challenge to the attainment of the goal. In most countries today, primary education is compulsory. The proliferation of compulsory primary education combined with population growth is an indication that in the next 30 years, more children would have received formal education more than ever in all of human history (UNESCO, 2014). Primary education consists of the first 5–7 years of formal structured education. In general, primary education consists of six or eight years of schooling starting at the age of five or six, although this varies between communities. Globally, around 89% of primary aged children are enrolled in primary education and this proportion is rising. Under the Education For All (EFA) programs driven by UNESCO, Countries are struggling to achieve universal enrolment in primary school by 2015. With less than 120 days to go for the target date of 2015 for UPE, UNICEF statistics are showing that about 77 million children of primary school ages are still out of school (UNICEF, 2014).

The situation has always been that the culture of the Mbororos has always negatively affected their education, and with the coming of UPE, it was expected that this attitude would be eliminated. It is against this backdrop that the researcher wants to carry out this study on the socio cultural practices and the level of implementation of policies for UPE in the Mbororos community of the North-West Region of Cameroon, to assess the extent to which socio cultural practices influences the implementation of UPE.

Policy Implementation
After the EFA conference in 1990, and the Dakar Framework of Action 2000, many countries across the world, have re-strategized their educational policies towards the attainment of objectives and UPE goals. Policy makers across the world have come out with policies in their respective countries or region that would aid the achievement and sustainability of global primary education. Many of these policies follow the provisions of the international Organizations to which they are signatories’ to. The 1986 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Right (ICESCR), The Universal Declaration of Human Right, Convention on the Right of a Child, convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, The Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child, provides for the right to education which should be directed to the full development of the human personality and sense of its dignity and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Kaneko, 2012). Article 13 of the ICESCR Provides for compulsory and free primary education for all, it also provides for fundamental education for those who have not received or complete a whole period of primary schooling. The same article provides for the continuous improvement in material conditions of teaching staff, and ensures the moral development of children in both public and private schools. The article also alludes to the liberty of individuals and bodies to established and direct educational institutions (Kaneko, 2012). The Organization of African...
Unity Chatter on Human and People’s Rights state that; State parties are obliged to take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of dropout rate. It also obliged state parties to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the Childs human dignity and in conformity with the convention itself.

For countries that need help, UNICEF provides sustained multi support beyond funding. This includes being actively involved in day-to-day decision making, without being obtrusive or trying to dictate terms, while respecting the vision that a country has set out for its own development and setting cooperation within wider development assistance frameworks. More and more countries, for example, are adopting sector- wide approaches to educational development, with UNICEF participating along with other key development partners in policy and planning processes (UNICEF, 2014). UNICEF provides key support in collecting and sharing data on children’s educational status, helps establish stronger educational information and management systems, and shares good policy making practices and innovations. UNICEF also advocates bold initiatives that can boost enrolments and participation, like abolishing school fees and reducing other costs, and devising an ‘essential learning package’ that can be used in emergency situations (UNICEF Report, 2014).

From independence, education has always been a priority to the Cameroonian government. Government support and international aids to education, drops during the economic crises era. With rejuvenation in 2000, following the global campaign on EFA, primary education receive a boom never witness in the history of education in Cameroon (MINEDUB, 2001). Aids from donor agencies and finances from the government treasury, led to the construction of many more classrooms, and more teachers were trained and recruited. This resulted to a significant access to primary education, shown by high enrolment but sadly low internal efficiency.

Growth in economic collective national thought, and question of efficiency set in, in the achievement of UPE. Some stake holders attempt to answer the question of quality, by opening private nursery and primary schools. These schools flourished across the national territory with quality teachers and infrastructures. The government on it part stepped up the quality of education in public primary schools by recruiting more teachers and improving infrastructure, though with challenges (Tchombe, 2000). Despite this moves, many more children are still out of schools. Public primary education is free in Cameroon, though it seems to be free only in theory. Many parents still finds it difficult to send children to primary school, because of financial constraints cause by annual change of books on the official book list, P.T.A levy and other forms of payments requested by some scrupulous school administrators (Cameroon Calling CRTV, 7th Sept, 2014). Very few special centres are constructed for children with special needs, and as a result, only a few privilege ones would go to school. A majority of these children remain in their houses, putting the achievement of UPE by 2015 to question. If countries don’t step up their moves towards this goal, by building more classrooms bearing in mind special needs children, proper training and recruitment of teachers, and better supervision to ensure that government teachers do not receive payment while in the Diaspora and answering present to salaries in their home nation (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2013).

In addressing these challenges, the Government is determined to increase both financial and other requisite resources to continue to improve the education system in the country. However, it is evident that, given our economic base, it is not possible to resolve these ourselves without international support. The Government and the people of Cameroon appeal to its development partners to keep on supporting their development agenda so that the EFA targets and the MDGs are realized.

To address the challenges that threaten the country's goals of achieving universal primary education, the Cameroon Government has put in place a number of policies and committees to follow up the achievements made so far in education, to ensure that the reform of primary education will be sustainable. The 1996 constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, Law No 98/004 of 14th April 1998, the decentralization law of July 22nd, 2004, make provisions on how
the government shall provide education to all citizens, by making it free and accessible. These policies and committees would check enrolment expansion, with focus on ensuring access and equity at pre-primary and primary education levels; quality improvement; strengthening capacities; addressing cross-cutting issues; strengthening institutional arrangements; undertaking educational research; and conducting educational monitoring and evaluation.

**Bourdieu’s Theory of Cultural Capital**

Bourdieu (1977), states that cultural capital consists of familiarity with the dominant culture in a society and the ability to understand and use “educated” language. The possession of cultural capital varies with social class, yet the education system assumes the possession of cultural capital. This makes it very difficult for lower class pupils to succeed in the education system.

“If doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture.” (Bourdieu, 1977a: 494).

Bourdieu claims that, since the educational system presupposes the possession of cultural capital which few pupils possess, there is a great deal of inefficiency in “pedagogic transmission”. This is because students simply do not understand what their teachers are trying to get across. For Bourdieu, this is particularly apparent in the school where children are afraid of revealing the extent of their ignorance “... minimize the risks by throwing a smoke-screen of vagueness over the possibility of truth or error.” (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 114).

But despite the fact that lower class pupils are seriously disadvantaged in the competition for educational credentials, the results of this competition are seen as meritocratic and therefore as legitimate. In addition, Bourdieu claims that social inequalities are legitimated by the educational credentials held by those in dominant positions. This means that the educational system has a key role in maintaining the status quo.

“... it [education] is in fact one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a social gift treated as a natural one.” (Bourdieu, 1974: 32)

In sum, Bourdieu’s view is that cultural capital is inculcated in the higher class home, and enables higher class children to gain higher educational credentials than lower class children. This enables higher class individuals to maintain their class position, and dominant position which higher class individuals typically goes on to hold. Of course, some lower class individuals will succeed in the educational system, but, rather than challenging the system, this will strengthen it by contributing to the appearance of meritocracy. Bourdieu can be criticized for not being precise enough about exactly which of the resources associated with the higher class home constitute cultural capital, and how these resources are converted into educational credentials. However, I think that the concept of cultural capital is substantive enough to be operationalized, although Bourdieu does not make it at all obvious how this should be done. The empirical evidence Bourdieu gives for the link between class and cultural capital and cultural capital and educational success is rather weak. Neither does Bourdieu give any evidence for the view that educational credentials serve to legitimate class inequalities. Bourdieu’s emphasis on the non-material resources possessed by the higher class household is to be welcomed. There is evidence (Halsey et al., 1980) that the dramatic fall in the material costs to families of education due to educational reforms, such as the universal provision of free and compulsory primary education, have not diminished the degree of association between class origins and educational attainment. This suggests that the educational advantage which higher class parents pass on to their children may not be entirely caused by economic factors and that the notion of cultural capital is therefore worthy of serious attention. One does not have to accept all the trappings of Bourdieu’s grand theory in order to acknowledge that cultural factors may be important in generating inequalities in educational outcomes, especially between the majoring groups and the
marginalized minorities’ backward groups like the Mbororos in the Case of Cameroon.

**Statement of the Problem**

Educational opportunities in Africa have grown considerably since the 1950s. There has been marked increase in enrolment from primary schools throughout the tertiary level. This increase has followed initiatives at the international level in setting up guiding instruments to ensure equitable education for all. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) address, amongst other issues, the right to education (Juuko and Kabonesa, 2007). These trends, however, have been observed to be less significant in the Mbororo community in the North-West Region of Cameroon. The Mbororos, a minority group in the grassland region of Cameroon even before the implementation of Universal Primary Education programme was launched, was noted for a high rate of illiteracy amongst its people. Poor enrolment and persistent school dropout have been observed among Mbororo children. This trend is still prominent today in the Mbororo community, evidenced by the many Mbororo children of school going age who do not attend primary school. The greater majority of Mbororo children do not know their rights. They are not very aware of educational externalities like birth control, societal interaction. Majority of Mbororo adolescents cannot read or write English or French the official languages of the country. There is also gender discrimination in that many female children are deprived from primary education. These are but a few issues that international organizations seek to address through movements like UPE. To cope with the changing world and to meet up with the President Paul Biya vision 2035, the Mbororos who make up a significant percentage of the population of Cameroon cannot be left out. The UPE was designed for all groups of children of school going age, the Mbororos inclusive. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate whether aspects of the socio cultural practices of the Mbororos serve as a hindrance to the implementation of UPE. Culture, Religion, Economy and Parents’ Educational Status are those socio cultural aspects which this study seeks to investigate and examine if they are a hindrance to the implementation of UPE policies in the Mbororo community.

**Research Question**

To what extent are the cultural practices of the Mbororos still a hindrance to the implementation of universal primary education policies in the Mbororo community in the North-West Region of Cameroon?

**Objective of the Study**

Find out the extent to which cultural practices of the Mbororos are still a hindrance to the implementation of policies for universal primary education in the North-West Region of Cameroon.

**Research Hypothesis**

Ho1: There is no significant influence of the cultural practices of the Mbororos on the implementation of the UPE.

Ha1: There is a significant influence of the cultural practices of the Mbororos on the implementation of the UPE.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study makes use of survey research design which is an investigation of the opinions and behaviour of a particular group of people, usually done by asking questions (Amin, 2005). This study is a quantitative study, which involves the collection of data and weighing of indicators in order to explain, predict and control phenomena, data analysis being mainly statistical.

This study was carried out in the North-West Region of Cameroon.

The target population of this study was made up of all the Mbororos in the North-West Region of Cameroon.

The accessible population of the study was made up of some selected Mbororo neighbourhoods.
in the Mezam and Boyo Divisions of the North-West Region of Cameroon, accessible to the researcher. The sample was drawn from these places, because of the Mbororos population in these Divisions (3500).

The convenience and snow-ball techniques were used because the Mbororos are sparse and have strong social ties or network.

Sample size was estimated using sample calculation table from Krejcie and Morgan (1970), as cited in (Amin, 2005,: 454) which shows that a population of 3500 corresponds to a sample of 346.

Questionnaire and interview guide were used to gather information from subjects involved in the study.

The researcher made use of personal administration. With personal administration, the researcher distributes the questionnaire and waited for the respondents to fill and return them on the spot. This approach ensured delivery and return of questionnaires, though it was uneconomical in terms of resources and time.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF RESEARCH QUESTION

The table below was used to answer research question which was stated thus:

Research Question: To what extent are the cultural practices of the Mbororos still a hindrance to the implementation of universal primary education policies among the Mbororos community of the North-West Region of Cameroon?

Decision level: VGE = 4, GE = 3, LE = 2, and VLE = 1; Mean score,

\[
x = \frac{4 \times 3 + 2 \times 1 + 10 \times 4}{4 + 4} = 2.5
\]

Respondents accept or agree with the opinion expressed in the item if the mean score is 2.5 and above. Otherwise, they reject or disagree.

NB/ VGE- Very Great Extent, GE- Great Extent, LE- Less Extent and VLE - Very Less Extent

Table 1: Cultural Practices and the Implementation of UPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Practices and the Implementation of UPE</th>
<th>VGE</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>LE</th>
<th>VLE</th>
<th>(x)</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The constant movement of the Mbororos hinders the acquisition of the primary education of their children.</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.3279</td>
<td>.93412</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The isolated settlement of the Mbororos hinders their children from going to school.</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.1635</td>
<td>.88696</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Early marriages among the Mbororo women hinder the acquisition of primary education.</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.3734</td>
<td>.90612</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Regular festivities of the Mbororos hinder the acquisition of primary education of their children.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.5921</td>
<td>1.01705</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The child care practice of the Mbororo hinders the acquisition of primary education.</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.8444</td>
<td>.93597</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The cultural practices of the Mbororos are still a hindrance to the implementation of universal primary education policies in the Mbororo community in the North-West Region of Cameroon to a great extent ($x = 2.9004 \ 0.9877$).

Testing Hypothesis 1

The following hypotheses were tested at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Practices and the Implementation of UPE</th>
<th>$x^2$</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The constant movement of the Mbororos hinders the acquisition of the primary education of their children.</td>
<td>197.844</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The isolated settlement of the Mbororos hinders their children from going to school.</td>
<td>119.615</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Early marriages among the Mbororo women hinder the acquisition of primary education.</td>
<td>231.714</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Regular festivities of the Mbororos hinder the acquisition of primary education of their children.</td>
<td>17.053</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The child care practice of the Mbororo hinders the</td>
<td>50.079</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The dialect (fulfulde) of the Mbororos poses a problem to the quest for basic education in secular schools.</td>
<td>10.763</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The dressing style (keeping long hairs, veiling) of the Mbororos hinders children from going to schools.</td>
<td>1.870</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>628.938</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below was used to test hypothesis one which was stated thus:

$H_{01}$: There is no significant influence of the culture of the Mbororos on the implementation of universal primary education.

$H_{a1}$: There is a significant influence of the culture of the Mbororos on the implementation of universal primary education.

Table 2: Cultural Practices and the Implementation of UPE

Since the calculated value ($x^2 = 628.938$) is greater than the table value ($x^2 = 32.67$) with $df = 21$ at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance, we reject $H_{01}$ and state that there is a significant influence of the culture of the Mbororos and the implementation of universal primary education.

Analysis of Interview

Table 3: Interview Questions on the Culture of the Mbororo
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responds option</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you think cultural practices of the Mbororos prevent Mbororo children from going to school?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If yes, what are some of these cultural aspects?</td>
<td>- Drum beating</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Early marriages</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Nomadic lifestyle</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dancing with women during festivals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What can be done to ensure that the Mbororo culture does not hinder children from going to school?</td>
<td>- Promote some of their cultural practices in school</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- more sensitization on the importance of education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Counselling on the advantage girl education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above quantifies the opinions of the respondents gotten from the interview conducted in the field. The frequencies and percentages of the different respond options show that out of the 20 Mbororos that were interviewed, 17 of them answered yes that the cultural practices of the Mbororos hinders many Mbororo children from going to school. Their responses on some of the cultural practices that hinder education were as follows: 35% for early marriages, 25% for drum beating, and 15% for dancing with women during festivals. Their opinions on what should be done to limit the Mbororo culture from hindering education were as follows; 45% said the government should promote some of their cultural practices in schools, 30% for more sensitization on the importance of education, and 25% said more counseling should be done on the advantages of girl education.

Findings from data analysis reveal that cultural practices of the Mbororos are still a great hindrance to the implementation of UPE policies. Analysis of findings reveal that the constant movement of the Mbororos, their isolated settlements, early marriages, regular festivities, child care practices and Fulfulde dialect are still, to a great extent, a hindrance to the implementation of UPE in the Mbororo community in the North-West Region of Cameroon at $x = 2.900498777$. A majority of respondents agree to the fact that the constant movement of the Mbororos (82.5%), their isolated settlements at extreme corners of the build-up area where a school can’t be found (88.9%) even after many kilometres, early marriages among Mbororo women (54.5%) and regular festivities (63.96%) to a greater extent hinder the acquisition of the primary education of their children. The findings of this work tie with that of Sala & Zani (2014) on their study on cultural practices and the implementation of UPE in semi arid areas in Kenya: the case of Garrissa County. They found that a majority of the Garrissa population pay close attention to their culture, and are mostly Muslims, who believe that secular education is a Western tool to spread Christianity among the people in the region. According to the national president of MBOSCUDA, achieving UPE in the Mbororo communities in Cameroon is still a daunting task, as many of the people are still ignorant about education, coupled with the insufficient number of schools in these communities. He however concluded that MBOSCUDA is putting in a lot of effort and resources to get every Mbororo child in school by 2018 (CRTV Cameroon Calling, 7th December, 2014).
Analysis of interviews reveal that there are still some cultural practices of the Mbororos like drum beating, which according to tradition gives privilege to a man if his son or grandson can play the drum well and dance with many women. This has prevented so many Mbororos from going to school. Speaking to a teacher in Meli (Fundong Subdivision in Boyo Division), he pointed out that a serious threat to girl education among the Mbororo community is early marriages. To him, statistics from MBOSCUDA indicates that only 22% of girls go to school in the North-West Region of Cameroon. This is because little girls of 11, 12 and 13 years are sent out for marriage, coupled with the fact that some parents are reluctant to even send their girl child to school. Hoebel (n,d), describes culture as an integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not a result of biological inheritance. This means that the cultural practices of the Mbororos can be modified to help promote education in the Mbororo community. The Mbororos pay much attention to culture, to the extent that it is delaying them to catch up with the changing world of today.

The results show that the number of schools, learning materials, and the number of staff in public primary schools are inadequate for the implementation of UPE by 2015. Due to the ignorance and nomadic lifestyle, the level of participation of pastoral communities in the implementation of UPE is minimal. Lack of awareness on the importance of UPE and mobility problems due to bad roads are some of the factors that hinder the implementation of UPE in the Mbororo community of the North-West Region of Cameroon as well.

CONCLUSION
From the introduction, the problem statement, literature review, theoretical literature, to the analysis of data and discussion of findings, it is clear that the implementation of Universal Primary Education in the Mbororo community of the North-West Region of Cameroon is still a daunting task, due to some of their cultural practices. Better strategies are needed to improve on the implementation of UPE in the Mbororo community in the North-West Region of Cameroon. Elaborate sensitization and motivation has a vital role to play in the school attendance rate of the Mbororo children. Hopefully, the purpose of this study was not just for intellectual discovery but to motivate educational stakeholders to enforce their policies, towards the implementation of UPE in the Mbororo communities. Mbororos needs to be adequately sensitized on the fact that education is no longer a “white man” way to spread Christianity, but the only asset that guarantees survival in the globalized economy. The elitist Mbororos should sensitize their fellow brothers on the fact that culture can better be practiced if the masses are well educated.

Due to ignorance and nomadic lifestyle, the level of participation of pastoral communities in the implementation of Universal Primary Education is minimal. Lack of finance and full family support, early marriages, congested classes, shortage of primary schools, lack of awareness about the importance of UPE, seeking early employment, poor infrastructure, high level of illiteracy among parents, lack of good role models, lack of motivation, are some of the factors that are still hindering the implementation of universal primary education in the Mbororo communities in Mezam and Boyo divisions in the North-West Region of Cameroon. Similarly, extreme poverty in the Region is not helping the implementation of UPE, as it forces parents to send their children to work to end a living.

In addition the prevalence of tropical diseases such as malaria and cough, lack of electricity undermines the development of ICT in the rural schools. Poor roads affect children from going to school, and delivery of materials to schools during the rainy seasons. Limited number of Islamic schools was found to affect the implementation of UPE policies in Mezam and Boyo divisions in the North-West Region of Cameroon.

The findings of this study in Mezam and Boyo division, contradict some aspect in the already existing literature about the Mbororos, which portrays the Mbororos as a backward, illiterate and resistant to change ethnic group. It is true that there are still some cultural practices of the Mbororos that hinder the implementation of UPE to a very large extent, improvement has been made in primary education among the Mbororos. It is not that the Mbororos are adamantly to
change, but that some of their cultural practices are a way of life to them and they can’t do without. The government along other stakeholders needs to carry out an elaborates sensitization campaign about primary education in the Mbororo community, improve the economy of the Mbororos, and above all, adapt education to those socio cultural aspects of the Mbororos that hinder the implementation of UPE in the Mbororo community.

REFERENCES


