

## Power Imbalance and the Psychosocial Maladjustment Among Adolescent Students in Secondary Schools in Cameroon



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### **Abstract**

**Aim:** Nowadays, the rate at which adolescent students victimize others is alarming. This study investigated the relationship between power imbalance and psychosocial maladjustment among adolescents in secondary schools in Cameroon.

**Methods:** A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing purposive and stratified sampling, to recruit 577 students, 12 school counselors, and 12 discipline masters/mistresses from selected secondary schools in four regions of Cameroon. Data were collected via student questionnaires, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using cross-tabulations and correlation tests, while qualitative responses were thematically examined. The instruments used for data collection included a closed-ended questionnaire for students, a focus group discussion with students, and interviews with counsellors and discipline masters/mistresses. Their age was nine to eighteen, from four school types, and four Regions of Cameroon.

**Results:** Findings showed that power imbalance significantly predicts psychosocial maladjustment ( $P < 0.001$ ). The positive sign of the correlation ( $R = 0.581^{**}$ ) implied that adolescents are more likely to suffer psychosocial maladjustments when there is a persistent display of power imbalance in the school environment.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that addressing power imbalance is critical to reducing psychosocial distress among adolescents.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that schools implement structured peer-support systems and provide regular psychosocial training for staff and students.

**Keywords:** *Victimisation, adolescents, power imbalance, psychosocial maladjustment*

## INTRODUCTION

During adolescence, peer groups play a pivotal role in shaping social, emotional, and behavioral development. By early adolescence, approximately 50% of social interactions involve peers, underscoring their centrality in daily life (Ryan, 2000). Peer influence has been linked to a range of developmental outcomes, including academic motivation, problem-solving strategies, and cooperative behavior (Shao *et al.*, 2024; Strom *et al.*, 2019). However, peer dynamics can also contribute to negative trajectories such as school dropout, early pregnancy, substance use, and delinquency (Henneberger *et al.*, 2021; Trompeter *et al.*, 2023).

From a risk perspective, peer interactions may foster exclusion, derision, victimization, and bullying, all of which are associated with adverse psychosocial outcomes including depression, anxiety, and impaired self-concept (Cubillo, 2022; Goemans *et al.*, 2023). Neurobiological research further suggests that peer victimization can alter stress-response systems and emotional regulation, potentially compounding vulnerability to mental health challenges (Ouellet-Morin *et al.*, 2011; Vaillancourt *et al.*, 2015). Thus, peer group interaction remains a critical context for both positive development and psychosocial risk during adolescence. Such negative interactions result in negative outcomes and are referred to as victimization, or peer victimization when it involves peers. These phenomena are widespread during early adolescence and contribute to decrements in youth psychological wellbeing.

Power imbalance refers to one person or a group having more power, influence, or control over another, often resulting in exploitation, oppression, or inequality (Lukes, 2005). Peer-related power imbalance, which is a form of peer victimization, can lead to psychosocial maladjustments in many ways. This could be manifested through low self-esteem, anxiety and stress, depression, aggression and violence, social withdrawal, academic underachievement, and difficulties with intimate relationships.

The term maladjustment refers to a wide range of social, biological, and psychological conditions (Khanfer *et al.*, 2013). Specifically, *psychosocial maladjustment* denotes the inability to respond effectively and satisfactorily to the demands of one's environment (Ranasinghe *et al.*, 2017). Maladjustment in the school environment is manifested in the difficulties students encounter in meeting their expectations in the school context. When an adolescent successfully adapts to the school environment, they psychosocially adjust and their subjective well-being increases (Gutierrez & Goncalves, 2013; Vinas *et al.*, 2015). With the upsurge in psychosocial maladjustments in schools and the increased peer victimization, it becomes imperative to determine how these maladjustments are a function of peer victimization (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). This study, therefore, sought to investigate how power imbalance, which is a form of peer victimization, leads to psychosocial maladjustment among adolescents in secondary schools in Cameroon

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Power imbalance is an indicator of peer victimisation. It is a situation where factors such as age, gender, and ethnicity can give one person or group of people an advantage in any situation. Arguably, the existence of power imbalance in schools may lead to low self-esteem and isolation for students, with the likely consequence of depression and low academic performance. Espelage and Swearer (2003) argued that the existence of an imbalance of power in a peer relationship

could be a factor that increases peer victimisation experiences. This could result from the fact that power imbalance leads to a feeling of inferiority complex among students, with some students feeling superior to others. In this case, the inferior student can be tormented. Similarly, Sulkowski *et al.* (2014) argued that immigrant adolescents are prone to peer victimisation due to their ethnicity, religion, race, family income, socioeconomic status, and other factors associated with their immigrant identity.

Many European researchers such as Olweus *et al.* (1978) studied the effects of peer victimization on its victims' social and psychological well-being. In summary, the studies showed that victimised students are at the risk of developing severe psychosocial maladjustments and emotional problems, which may persist into adulthood. Apart from developing psychosocial adjustment problems, research findings also suggest that many aspects of victimised children's lives may be affected. In a meta-analytic review of cross-sectional studies on peer victimisation and psychosocial maladjustment over 20 years, Hawker and Boulton (2000) concluded that students whose peers victimise suffer various feelings of psychosocial distress. They feel more anxious, depressed, lonely, and worse about themselves than non-victimised students.

The scars of victimization last for a long time and sometimes are permanent if those children are not provided with proper counseling or therapy. The peak of victimization most often is the constant verbal assaults that the child has to bear. A teacher or adult might stop physical abuse, but no one can stop verbal comments and snickers that a child has to face. This is indeed true, but the central dilemma is that many people choose to overlook victimization. Long-term physical and emotional baggage is carried by children who are victimized.

One of the primary factors that influences the development of relationships between friendships is power imbalances. Weber (2009) demonstrates that power is the ability of an individual or group to achieve their own goals or aims despite others trying to prevent them. In addition, power is defined as the ability of humans to exercise control over a social and physical environment. Power imbalances are asymmetrical relations of power among persons, institutions and states. Power is the ability of humans to exercise control over their social and physical environment (Mathie *et al.*, 2017). From the above definitions of power, it is clear that there is always a superior force that rules over the inferior force.

Power imbalances exist in social settings due to existing relationships of power among persons, institutions, or States (Kane, 2014). Most often, victimisation comes into play in the form of power imbalances, which refers to a stronger force inflicting unfavourable conditions on weaker partners (Bishop, 2011). A power imbalance exists when "A" has more control or influence over "B's" behaviour and vice versa. A problem can develop when there is a power imbalance in the relationship. For example, if a person makes more money than their partner, they may begin to feel entitled to make decisions on how the money should be spent rather than speaking their opinion. In a school environment, power imbalance is manifested by numerous factors. Control may be exercised using superior force, economic means, or control over knowledge and information (Sciortino, 2014). Several factors influence power imbalance among peers. These factors include age, qualification, seniority, mental (intelligence), size, experience, gender and knowledge (Murphy, 2017).

Gender can influence power in a relationship. Men have more power in some situations than women, whereas in other situations, women may have more power and intelligence (Fiske &

Ruscher, 1993; Krumhuber, 2022). One person in an argument may have a higher level of intelligence than the other, and may use that intelligence to intimidate the other person (Basti, 2013). Consider an example of a large man towering above a shorter man. The height can be intimidating for the shorter person and therefore empowering for the larger man. Age as a factor might yield power because an older person talking about his/her expertise to a younger person and sharing knowledge can give greater power to the older person. But in other situations, a younger person may have more power (Brightman, 2016). For example, a younger person joining an industry may possess more skills than an older person, creating power imbalance (Murphy, 2017). Experiences in a job or a particular area of life can give us power over another. A person's qualification also counts because it can sometimes give them more power. Knowledge- of a particular topic can create power, as one person may know more than another (Murphy, 2017).

Power imbalance is a frequent happening that exists among adolescents in the school environment. It is the usual control or distribution of power between partners. Yulk (2002) defines power as the capacity one person has to exert influence on others' behaviour and attitudes. He elaborates further that in peers; it consists of three perspectives. Commitment occurs when the dominated person obeys the orders of the leader without any objection. Compliance occurs when the subjected person accepts commands, but follows them apathetically to avoid possible recriminations from the leader (Braganza, 2007). Resistance starts when a subjected person disagrees with and struggles against an authoritarian leader by making excuses, delaying, or refusing to complete orders (Brightman, 2016).

It is important to note that power imbalance is one of the ways adolescents portray their violent nature in school environments. During adolescence, rapid physical, psychological, social and emotional changes occur (Murphy, 2017). Being a period marked by imbalances in the brain, adolescents easily indulge in risky ventures of which power imbalance is one (Nelson *et al.*, 2018). Power imbalance can change over time and in different situations even if it involves the same people (Finkelhor *et al.*, 2012).

Power imbalance is a hallmark in adolescence and it's inevitable. It therefore causes a lot of aggressive and violent behaviour among adolescents. Power imbalance in youths is associated with depressive symptoms, suicidal thoughts, stress, anxiety, lack of self-esteem, and lower school achievement (Ackard *et al.*, 2002). In the school milieu, it is manifested in multiple ways and the factors include age, qualification, seniority, mental (intelligence), size, experience, gender and knowledge (Murphy, 2017).

The voices of adolescents should be heard in their various schools in relation to power imbalance. This could help raise and improve their schooling experience (Mitra, 2004). Typically, students' voice actively involves their facilitation and management of the educational system. Their views and conflicts are given equal weights with those of leaders within the school (Robinson, 2011). Power imbalance is not only between peers but also between teachers and students and student-to-teacher in the school environment (Lodge, 2005). Many teachers understand the importance of students' voice, yet fail to successfully enable students to voice their opinions within the teaching and learning process. Teachers often feel that students' projects and initiatives rival the expectation of school curriculum leaders; thus, they try to avoid fully implementing them (Bourke & Loveridge, 2016).

Power imbalance is another indicator of peer victimisation. Power imbalance is manifested in many forms, but notwithstanding, they all have consequences. Power imbalance is already a dominating connotation of one partner having domination over another. Nelson *et al.* (2018) stated that power imbalances, especially during adolescence, are marked by imbalances in the brain; they mostly get involved in risky ventures, of which power imbalances are one of their inevitable consequences. Given that maladjustment can be attributed to a wide variety of factors, including family environments, personal factors, and related factors (Manichander, 2016), and power imbalances marked by risky ventures, the consequences can be devastating.

Power imbalance in the school environment is specific to age, qualification, seniority, mental (intelligence), size, experience, gender and knowledge (Murphy, 2017). When this is manifested in the school environment, its consequences on the adolescents are evident. Power imbalance in youths is associated with depressive symptoms, suicidal thoughts, stress, anxiety, lack of self-esteem, isolation and lower school achievement (Ackard *et al.*, 2002). When the adolescents go through victimisation in the form of power imbalances, it is manifested in them through the forementioned depressive symptoms. These psychosocial maladjustments, if not addressed, can damage the adolescents.

## METHODS

The study employed a mixed methods research design, specifically utilizing a concurrent nested approach. The primary method of data collection was quantitative, with qualitative elements integrated to provide additional context and depth. Interviews were conducted with selected participants who also completed the questionnaires, thereby enriching the quantitative findings with qualitative insights. The accessible population was made up of 667,308 students and 32,897 administrators/teachers (Ministry of Secondary Education statistics 2019\2020) drawn from four public schools, four mission schools and four lay private schools from the four regions in Cameroon. The sample size was 610, comprising 586 students and 24 school administrators (discipline masters) and counsellors. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the administrators and counsellors who participated as respondents to the qualitative instruments. This was because the researcher wanted to work with those responsible for adolescents' discipline in school.

Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Ethical considerations were taken into account before data was collected. The researcher ensured confidentiality for all participants involved in the study. The data collection instruments did not require respondents to disclose their names. Adolescent students completed questionnaires, with ten of them also participating in a focus group discussion. In addition, school administrators and counselors were interviewed. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to produce counts, percentages, and multiple response sets. The descriptive data were further used to verify the hypothesis that was stated in the study. The Spearman rho correlation test was used to verify the relationship between relational victimization and psychosocial maladjustment among adolescent students in secondary schools in Cameroon. Meanwhile, qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis and emerging themes and their groundings were discerned and presented, and explicated by quotations.



## FINDINGS

**How do power imbalances lead to the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools?**

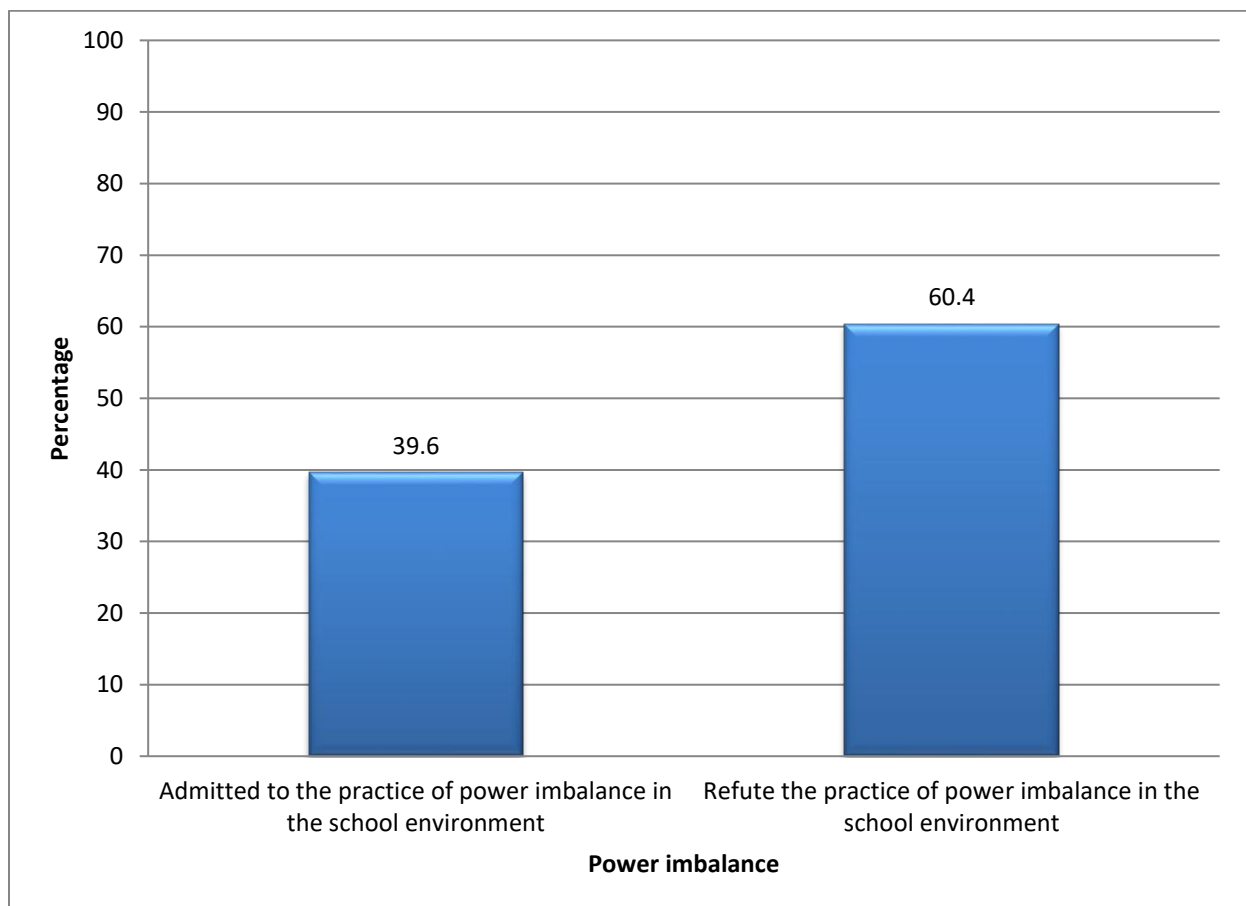
**Table 1:**

*Adolescent Students' Characterisation of Power Imbalance*

Items	Individual Response				Aggregate	
	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	SA/A	D/SD
The leader of my study group in school makes all the decisions without our concern	73 (12.7%)	114 (19.8%)	114 (19.8%)	276 (47.8%)	187 (32.4%)	390 (67.6%)
I like to be assigned to lead in everything in school	79 (13.7%)	135 (23.4%)	193 (33.5%)	169 (29.3%)	214 (37.2%)	362 (62.8%)
Because I am a girl, I am under looked by my peers in school.	91 (15.8%)	123 (21.3%)	142 (24.6%)	221 (38.3%)	214 (37.1%)	363 (62.9%)
Due to my size, I was molested by my peers in school	100 (17.5%)	139 (24.4%)	123 (21.6%)	208 (36.5%)	239 (41.9%)	331 (58.1%)
I oppress those who are younger than me in class.	63 (11.0%)	104 (18.1%)	167 (29.0%)	241 (41.9%)	167 (29.0%)	408 (71.0%)
Brighter peers have more control over knowledge and information	108 (18.9%)	153 (26.8%)	126 (22.1%)	184 (31.9%)	261 (45.7%)	310 (54.3%)
I was molested by peers in my school	82 (14.2%)	95 (16.6%)	152 (26.5%)	245 (42.7%)	177 (30.8%)	397 (69.2%)
In my school, seniority is a qualification for power imbalance	133 (23.2%)	139 (24.2%)	124 (21.6%)	178 (31.0%)	272 (47.4%)	302 (52.6%)
Intelligence in my school is a criterion for power imbalance	114 (19.9%)	137 (24.0%)	134 (23.4%)	187 (32.7%)	251 (43.9%)	321 (56.1%)
More experienced peers concentrate power in their hands	125 (21.8%)	165 (28.8%)	125 (21.8%)	158 (27.6%)	290 (50.6%)	283 (49.4%)
<b>Multiple Response Set (MRS)</b>	<b>968</b> <b>(16.9%)</b>	<b>1304</b> <b>(22.7%)</b>	<b>1400</b> <b>(24.4%)</b>	<b>2067</b> <b>(36.0%)</b>	<b>2272</b> <b>(39.6%)</b>	<b>3467</b> <b>(60.4%)</b>

Based on the adolescents' opinions about power imbalance in their school environment, 32.4% (187) of adolescent students admitted that the leader of their study group makes all the decisions without their concern. The findings also showed that 37.2% (214) of the participants indicated they like to be assigned to lead in everything in school. The findings showed that 37.1% (214) of the adolescent students argued they are overlooked in their school because they are girls. To elucidate, 41.9% (239) of the adolescent students reported that they were molested in school because of their size. In comparison, 29.0% (167) of them argued they looked younger than students in their class.

Furthermore, the findings showed that 45.7% (261) of the adolescent students opined that brighter peers have more control over knowledge and information. While 30.8% (177) of the respondents indicated they molest peers in their school, and 47.4% (272) of respondents opined that seniority is a qualification for a power imbalance in their school. Finally, the findings showed that 50.6% (290) of the adolescents argued that more experienced peers concentrate power in their hands. In aggregate, findings showed that 39.6% of the adolescents admitted to the power imbalance in their school environment, while 60.4% denied it. The overall findings are also presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:**

***Adolescent Students' Characterisation of Power Imbalance***

**Table 2**

***Comparing the Adolescent Students' Opinion on Power Imbalance by Demographic Data***

Demographic data			Power Imbalance		Total	Chi-square test
			Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree		
School type	Government	n (%)	137 (38.8%)	217 (61.2%)	354	$\chi^2=16.96$
	Confessional	n (%)	37 (64.0%)	21 (36.0%)	57	df=2
	Lay Private	n (%)	53 (32.6%)	108 (67.4%)	161	P=0.000
Class	Form one	n (%)	56 (42.0%)	78 (58.0%)	134	$\chi^2=1.00$
	Form two	n (%)	68 (41.2%)	97 (58.8%)	164	df=3
	Form three	n (%)	99 (37.6%)	164 (62.4%)	262	P=0.781
	Form four	n (%)	5 (35.4%)	8 (64.6%)	13	
Age range	9-11	n (%)	50 (36.3%)	88 (63.7%)	138	$\chi^2=1.39$
	12-14	n (%)	140 (41.6%)	197 (58.4%)	337	df=2
	15-17	n (%)	37 (37.2%)	62 (62.8%)	99	P=0.498
Location	Rural	n (%)	79 (42.8%)	105 (57.2%)	184	$\chi^2=1.25$
	Urban	n (%)	148 (38.1%)	241 (61.9%)	390	df=1
						P=0.264
Parental marital status	Married	n (%)	164 (38.3%)	264 (61.7%)	429	$\chi^2=2.06$
	Single	n (%)	43 (41.5%)	61 (58.5%)	105	df=3
	Divorced	n (%)	7(44.0%)	8 (56.0%)	15	P=0.560
	Separated	n (%)	13 (50.4%)	13 (49.6%)	26	

Comparing the adolescent students' opinion on power imbalance by demographic data, findings showed that by school type, a majority of adolescents from Confessional schools (64.0%) attested to the occurrence of power imbalance, followed by those from Government schools (38.8%) and lastly, those from Lay Private schools (32.6%). By class, more adolescent students in form one (42.0%) and form two (41.2%) attested to the practice of power imbalance in their school environment more than those in form three (37.6%) and lastly form four (35.4%).

By age range, findings show that adolescent students between 12-14 (41.6%) agreed to the power imbalance in their school environment more than their counterparts. By school location, adolescents in rural areas (42.8%) admitted existence of power imbalance in their school environment more than those in urban areas (38.1%).



**Table 3:**

***Cross Tabulation between Power Imbalance and Psychosocial Maladjustment***

			Power Imbalance		Total
			Strongly Agree/Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	
Psychosocial maladjustments	Strongly Agree/Agree	n (%)	126 (48.3%)	135 (51.7%)	261
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	n (%)	106 (34.3%)	203 (65.7%)	309
<b>Total</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>570</b>

Using a cross-tabulation technique, findings showed that adolescent students whose school environment was characterized by power imbalance suffered more psychosocial maladjustment 48.3% than those whose school environment was not characterized by power imbalance 34.3%.

**Table 4:**

***Thematic Characterisation of Power Imbalance***

What do you understand by unequal power?	How do you experience it in school?	In your opinion, what are the possible causes?	What do you think could be done to stop it?
‘One party having more power than the other’	Often	‘Jealousy’	‘Report to school authorities’
‘One person superior to the others’	Rarely	‘Intelligence rate/IQ Age difference Over wealth’	‘Discipline Putting in place rules and regulations.

Based on the focus group discussion on power imbalance, some students opined that they understand power imbalance as a situation in which one party has more power than the other. Others understand power imbalance as one person being superior to the others. Furthermore, some of the students understand power imbalance as a process where some people are regarded in our society as minority people based on their poor nature, intelligence, and hierarchy.

To elucidate on the source of power imbalance in their school, some reported that it is often experienced from both teachers and students. In contrast, some said they rarely experience it. Furthermore, findings on the possible causes of power imbalance, some students mentioned jealousy, intelligence rate/IQ, age difference, and overwealth. Finally, based on what can be done to minimize power imbalance, some students said cases of abuse of power should be reported to school authorities. Others added that discipline should be reinforced in schools; while others said rules and regulations must be implemented.

## Verification of Hypothesis

**H0:** Exposure to power imbalances does not predict psychosocial maladjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools.

**Table 5:**

### *Testing the Effect of Power Imbalance on Psychosocial Maladjustment of Adolescent Students*

Test	Statistics	Power imbalance	Psychosocial maladjustment
Spearman's rho	R-value	.193	.581**
	p-value	.	.000
	n	570	570

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Statistically, findings showed that power imbalance significantly predicts the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools ( $R = 0.193$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The positive sign of the correlation ( $R = 0.581^{**}$ ) implied that adolescents were more likely to suffer psychosocial maladjustment when constant or persistent power imbalance exists in the school environment. In addition, descriptive findings showed that adolescent students whose school environment was characterized by power imbalance suffered more psychosocial maladjustment 48.3% than those whose school environment was not characterized by power imbalance 34.3%. Therefore, the null hypothesis that power imbalance does not predict the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis that power imbalance predicts the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools was accepted.

## DISCUSSIONS

Findings showed that power imbalance significantly predicts the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescents in secondary schools. The findings showed that adolescents whose school environment is characterized by power imbalance suffer more from psychosocial maladjustment than those whose school environment is not. The findings of this study showed that indicators like age, gender, seniority, qualification, and intelligence influence power imbalances in school. This is in line with Finkeiher *et al.* (2012), who argued that power imbalances are most often influenced by factors such as age, gender, and intelligence and can change over time and in different situations if it involves the same people.

Concerning the school type, findings showed that more adolescent students from Confessional schools attested to the occurrence of power imbalance, followed by those from Government schools and those from Lay Private schools. This is because of strict hierarchies and the religious buildup in confessional schools. By class, more adolescents in form one and form two attested to the practice of power imbalance in their school environment than those in form three and, lastly, form four. By age range, findings show that adolescents aged 12-14 agreed to the power imbalance in their school environment more than their counterparts. The findings showed that power imbalances manifested in several ways, such as gender, age, longevity, and experience. This supports Murphy (2017), who holds that in the school milieu, it is manifested in multiple

ways; the factors include age, qualification, seniority, mentality (intelligence), size, experience, gender, and knowledge. By school location, adolescents in rural areas experienced power imbalance in their school environment more than those in urban areas.

The findings of this study are contrary to Wemaeli (2021), who stated that adolescent antenatal care seeking is compromised by complex power imbalances that involve financial dependence, lack of choices, and lack of personal autonomy in decision-making experiences of social stigma, judgments, violence, and abuse. Using a cross-tabulation technique, the findings of this study showed that adolescents whose school environment is characterized by power imbalance suffer more from psychosocial maladjustments than adolescents whose school environment is free from it.

The social learning theory by Albert Bandura supports this work in that adolescents easily observe people around them behaving in various ways. This theory outlines four key principles that govern how people learn through observation: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. It goes a long way to highlight the cognitive processes involved in learning from others and the factors that influence the adaptation of a behaviour or not. Worth mentioning is the fact that individuals are more likely to engage or experience victimisation or maladjustments if they have observed those behaviours in others especially those they associate with like family or peers and if they haven't been rewarded (reinforced) for those behaviours. This can be illustrated by the Bobo doll experiment in the individuals who observed that models could be their peers, teachers, or parents of those found in their environment (Bandura, 1961). The models are considered to be the adolescents who observe and emulate the happenings around them. These examples could be either negative or positive; sometimes, most of them cannot distinguish the good from the bad and emulate even the negative aspects of behaviour. Some of these could lead to victimisation.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate how peer victimisation leads to psychosocial maladjustments amongst adolescent students in secondary schools in Cameroon.

The findings showed that power imbalance significantly predicts psychosocial maladjustment of adolescents in secondary schools, which is far less than 0.05. Therefore, adolescents are more likely to suffer from psychosocial maladjustment when there is a constant or persistent occurrence of power imbalance in the school environment. These findings are supported by Nelson *et al.* (2018), who opined that power imbalances, especially during adolescence, are marked by imbalances in the brain and mostly get involved in risky ventures in which power imbalance is one, and the consequences are inevitable. In sum, this study highlights the significant impact of peer-related power imbalances on adolescents' psychological wellbeing. It calls for the implementation of preventive strategies in schools, including peer support systems, inclusive policies, and teacher training, to mitigate psychosocial risks. Future research could explore longitudinal patterns of victimization and protective factors that buffer students against its negative effects.

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