



## Review Article

# The place of libraries in the acquisition of reading practices of adolescents in Cameroon: A case study

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Reading is the base of academic performances. This study addresses the place of school libraries first and public libraries secondly in the acquisition and stabilization of reading practices of adolescents between 12-16 in Yaoundé. This age group is constituted by teenagers in secondary high schools. Interviews have been conducted with school and public librarians. Visits were made to libraries, as well as exchanges with the relevant service in charge of school libraries in the Ministry of Secondary Education. In addition, 164 questionnaires with open and closed questions have been filled out by the teenagers through a random sample, sometimes with the school staff. Our findings indicate that adolescents generally enjoy discovering various genres of literature, which are sufficiently diversified, with regard to the national production. But most of the students do not attend schools or public libraries. To fill this gap, offer should be improved, particularly at the level of the quality of the youth literature which attracts them. This is a necessary step in order to build effective libraries for students. The electronic medium is an excellent tool to attract those users, who are also in quest for new realities which are not part of their local environment. The study explores also and suggests the means to bring closer school librarians, teachers, the administrative staff and publishers. The objective is to help develop the impact and visibility of the library in the school. Public libraries can also find here a useful tool for the offer that meets the expectations of the adolescents. The article also raises up other specific actions, which can be taken to bring teenagers closer to the school libraries, and public libraries, in terms of animation.

Keywords: Reading practices; Adolescents; Libraries; Youth literacy

## I. Introduction

School libraries are greatly instrumental in the school success. That is why the opportunity was given to each secondary education school in Cameroon to have one. Their actions are completed by public libraries. Moreover, speaking about their difficulty of letting their production known, the cameroonian authors and publishers affirm that, one of the main solution is particularly to develop school libraries. Indeed, these institutions can make the books available to teenagers, and get them to be astute readers. However, we deplore the low number of young adult in libraries in Yaoundé, whether school or public libraries. But what is reading? In the middle age, reading indicated an activity exclusively reserved for an elite. Thereafter, the term is used when reading liturgical texts. Although the elitist connotation is still perceptible in a certain context, reading, which is today a very widespread practice in the world, refers to an activity that consists in becoming acquainted with the content of a text. All the meanings given to this word so far combine the notion of technique with that of discovery.

In this regard, Jacques Fijalkow and Eliane Fijalkow show that the two senses remain today: on the one hand that of a technique, independent of the meaning of the text on which it is exercised; on the other hand that of discovery (Fijalkow, 2003, p.5). However, we are not interested in techniques that use concepts such as selective, diagonal or active reading. We are talking about the library's access; and how it helps to provide access to the written word and allows teenagers to acquire and engage in more stable reading practices.

The objective of reading can be learning, training, that is reading for information; but it can also be for leisure or pleasure. In the first case reading is utilitarian. Collections for school support, and a better understanding of the curriculum subjects meet this need, particularly in school libraries. This aspect is very important for

students. It is in this sense that Carol Kuhlthau states "reading to learn involves the process of constructing personal knowledge from this wide range of sources of information", so as "constructing personal meaning from this variety of sources" available in the information age (Kuhlthau, 2013, para.6 &7). In the second case, reading for leisure meets a need for relaxation and culture. This implies that libraries acquire collections that meet these needs, through youth literature.

The image often associated with reading in popular imagery in Cameroon was that of the printed book. But in the 21st century, with the development of Information and Communication Technologies, this activity implies an evolution in the types of media. a change to which the Cameroonian libraries must adapt in order to be able to satisfy an increasingly existing demand, by a public that is open to the national and international environment. Indeed, Cameroon's Internet penetration rate is increasing steadily and in a fairly significant way. It increased from 11% in 2015 to 21% in 2016, an increase of 10%. In 2018 the rate is 35.43%, and it is about a real boom (Statistical yearbook Minpostel, 2019, News para.3). In addition, 28% of Cameroonians use smartphones in 2016, it is estimated that they will be 55% in 2020. Cameroonian teenagers are becoming more accustomed to screen-reading, as many parents offer these tools to their children. They go to libraries to get the e-book they need as part of their school work or to relax. They are therefore trained more and more out of the usual educational circuits.

If we want to train diligent users of libraries, and consequently readers who can reproduce in future generations, more work is needed at the base. This explains the choice of the age bracket of young people aged 12-16, that we selected for our study. Adolescence may correspond to periods that vary slightly from one culture to another, as specified by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). This international organization states that « each library can set their own age range for what they consider to be young adult, which can vary by cultural background and country" (Muller, 2015, pp.3-4). It adds, however, that generally speaking, the period between 12 and 18 years is often used as a range for young adults. IFLA also speaks about Children's libraries, concerning the age group 0-18 in public libraries (Ranking, 2018).

Adolescence is this period of life where practices, and reading habits are being formed. Not surprisingly, a number of companies have been building for several years their marketing strategies with a particular focus on the behaviors and needs of this age group. It has often proven to be instrumental in the success of several projects and the launching of products. Library professionals have understood these principles well, so IFLA recommends the implementation of a number of principles to encourage the reception, learning and training of teenagers in libraries. Indeed, « Young adults need and deserve services that address their educational, informational, cultural and leisure needs» (Muller, 2015,p.3).

Reading practices and behaviors may depend on the environment, including family, social, school and editorial, to name a few. We will therefore try to analyze these various factors, so as to try to come up with proposals that will enable these needs to be better met. Reading scenarios for teenagers are not complete or final. In our study, this is an overview, in the context of emerging practices, to try to identify needs as well, and to analyze the response to them.

A need is defined as a potential demand that can be expressed at one time or another. Furthermore, if there are needs that are expressed, a response to this need must be organized through the establishment of well-equipped libraries that meet the needs of adolescents. The city of Yaoundé, because of its strategic role and the diversity of actors in the field of books (publishers, booksellers, cultural associations, etc.) will allow us to highlight elements of a reflection that will contribute to the organization and direction of the documentary policy, developed towards the segment of the population we are interested in.

How is the response to this reading need organized? More specifically, one of the priorities of the Cameroonian government in the area of youth libraries is a good knowledge of their socio-cultural environment. Is the production of youth literature by Cameroonian authors able to meet this need? Finally, in a context where almost all households are equipped with a television set, is this cultural tool not a formidable competitor for libraries? What is the contribution of libraries to reading practices?

Our study is conducted following a scheme of work including several points in two main articulations: We will first present an evaluation of literary production for children literature. The aim is to measure the dynamism of Cameroonian authors and Cameroonian publishing in this field. The next step will highlight the reading

practices of teenagers and their reading needs, particularly through the study of their relationship with school libraries, and public libraries. These institutions represent the place where documents are usually and often procured. To this end, we carried out a study using the questionnaires for adolescents. The ultimate objective is to enable the stakeholders concerned to develop a policy for the development of libraries and collections adapted to their needs. In fact, reading is the base of the school success.

### 1.1. The Cameroonian production of children and adolescents literature

#### 1.1.1. Historical and General considerations

Independent since 1960, Cameroon has in 2017 is 23,248,044 inhabitants divided among ten administrative regions. This population, like that of several countries in the South-Saharan African Countries, has a very broad base, meaning that a large proportion of this population is young. Half the population is under the age of 18. Both official languages are English and French.

The city of Yaoundé is located in the central region, in the Mfoundi's division. It has seven councils. It covers 304 square km and has an estimated population of 1,299,369 inhabitants. Its average growth is estimated at 2.8% per year. The population of Yaoundé, like that of Cameroon, is characterized by an enlarged pyramid at its base, it means that there is an important readership that can discover, read, and make the literature for adolescents live.

The literature for teenagers appeared since the end of the seventeenth century. But it is in the 19th century with massive literacy and improvement of printing techniques that this production will develop. If the central element of this literature is the wonderful, scientific reflections have been more and more present there since the nineteenth century. This literature has long been neglected, but the institutions now realize its importance in the formation of identity. In fact, this literature enables young people to understand the world in which they live or evolve, and to place themselves in relation to the other. The content of these books generally describes situations in which young readers recognize themselves, even if events take place under other colors. In recent years the teaching practices in the field of learning new foreign languages, even at the University advise the reading of these works, which are greatly involved in the construction of a national culture. The beginnings of youth literature in Cameroon is usually situated in the first half of the 20th century, with a publication of Yerima Johannes in 1932, *la rate et quatre ratons*. Subsequently, there were periods of more or less long, more or less full of inactivity.

One may ask whether a novel that depicts characters in a war situation can be intended for youth. Kidi Bebey, who is a fairly prolific Cameroonian author in this field, she answers in the affirmative. She states « la seule différence entre un roman jeunesse et un roman d'adulte est que dans le premier, les héros ont l'âge des lecteurs » (Kidi Bebey, 2016, para.3). To illustrate her point, she gives the example of two famous novels that teenagers willingly read with great interest, and that staged two teenagers in a context of violence, and in difficult situations, but which are not strictly speaking novels for teenagers. These are *Allah n'est pas obligé* by Ahmadou Kourouma and *L'ainé des orphelins* by Tierno Monenembo. In order for a teenager to borrow a book, he should be interested in the story told, so that he can identify with the characters. For example, the observation of loans made to the library of the French Institute of Yaoundé shows that adolescent readers borrow books that are allowed to be read in the all publics space from time to time. Indeed, from 24 January 2014 to March 2014, fifty-one loans were made in the all publics books sector by adolescents (Statistics of the library, 2014). In addition, some books considered to be intended for adults can then be recommended to adolescents, such as *l'intérieur de la nuit* by Léonora Miano in Cameroon.

Finally, it is up to the librarian to remember in the selection, the titles that seem to him the most likely to meet the needs of teenagers, to encourage them to read. It is in this institution that many famous known authors witnessed the birth of their vocation. Djaili Amadou Amal the Cameroonian winner of the panafrican literature price in 2019, said she has been interested to the literature since the day she read a novel borrowed from the library, when she was still a little girl.

Expert teachers under close and democratic supervision can therefore prepare the optimal classroom climate by following the error and giving feedback, scan the classroom behaviour effectively and monitoring learning. Expert teachers should be able to monitor students' problems and assess their understanding whilst providing feedback at the same time; they can see the difficulties facing the students and build strategies and hypotheses and examine or test these strategies (Hattie, 2002).

### 1.1.2. Literature for children and adolescents produced by Cameroonians: Authors, genres and themes

As shown in a study by Nielen and Bus, youth literature often attracts students to school libraries, and thereby increases their reading and academic performance, compared to those from structures where collections are not attractive (Nielen & Bus, 2015). This literature has grown in Cameroon since the 2000s, with a profusion of authors. Among the published genres we can mention the novel, the theater, the poetry, the albums, the comics, the tales or the fables that captivate teenagers, because they enable them to translate their environment and their daily experience into an imaginary world while learning. Our aim is less to count the number of books, than to show the diversity of the themes.

The authors deal with social problems such as excision, unemployment, rural exodus, including political problems that are barely emerging. As far as tales and fables are particularly concerned, these genres have always conveyed fundamental values such as peace, solidarity, obedience, but also love, cunning, betrayal, etc... With regard to the tale, we can mention names like Denis Djouldé, or François Essindi with *la lance du cafard*, Jessica Reuss-Nliba who published *Contes et légendes du Cameroun*. Obstinance and generosity are highlighted in *Moundi et la cuillère magique* of Emmanuel Mateteyou. The tale can also be explanatory, like Denis Djouldé's *Lézaré et Caméléon*.

As for the comic strip, from a historical point of view, the Cameroonian Yohanes Yérima is considered as one of the precursors of the Cameroonian and even African comic strip with *la rate et les quatre ratons* cited above. After this first attempt, it will take decades for this genre to be sufficiently rooted in editorial productions in Cameroon. Since the 2000s, significant progress has also been made. There are well-known authors of the Cameroonian diaspora in this sector who have a well-established international reputation such as Christophe Ngalle Edimo and Pierre Mbumbo who heads the publishing house «Toom comics». His ambition is to promote African values.

The collective «trait noir» in the years 2005 published some titles and broke up. It was followed by collective A3, which published *Bitchakala*. This group has encountered for some years difficulties that have not allowed it to continue its publications; it also had the ambition to train young authors in this field.

The Cameroonian comic strip also showcases personalities whose history serves as emulation to young people, such as Joelle Esso's *Eto'o fils naissance d'un champion* which should be a series of nine. The year 2015 was marked by *la vie d'Ebène duta* by Elyon which tells the adventures of a young Cameroonian girl in Belgium.

It has been deplored the fact that Cameroonian comic script authors do not address topical issues (Tchoutouo, 2016). That is why an initiative such as that of Felix Fonkoua and Eitel Issoukou should be encouraged. In 2018, the young authors discuss thorny issues related to the organization and conduct of presidential elections in Cameroon in an online comic book entitled *J'ai vendu mon vote* which is also for adults. But the authors say, they had a special thought for youth « Cette année 2018 est une année spéciale. Tout le monde s'intéresse à la chose publique, plus encore les jeunes », They said in an interview (Fonkoua and Issoukou, 2018, para. 2). In addition, in *Secteur 4<sup>e</sup> stade*, they do a painting of customs in an imaginary neighborhood of Yaoundé. Otherwise, the *100% jeunes a* young magazine's main objective is to raise awareness among young people against the spread of HIV/AIDS, part of it is a *comic book*.

This panorama of comic books has only scratched the surface and outline a very intense activity that has been manifested by many initiatives. These have been more or less successful and have allowed additional milestones to be laid in this vast undertaking which is far from being completed. It is also in this capacity that Cassiau-Haurie was able to assert that this history is a unique phenomenon in Africa, and concludes that the country is full of initiatives, « le 9<sup>e</sup> art camerounais ne manque ni de talents graphiques, ni de potentialités littéraires » (Cassiau-Haurie, 2012, para.30)

For the short story, we can quote as precursor Francis Bebey with the *trois petits circeurs* published and *Un enfant comme les autres* by Pabé Mongo where the authors are staging children, published in 1972. We can cite among the young generation who published from the 2000s, among others, authors such as Marie Félicité Ebokéa, Alain Serge Dzotap, Anselme Djeukam, Christian Epanya and kidi Bebey, Didier Reuss-Nliba and Jessica Reuss-Nliba is one of the most prolific. Published genres and topics are diverse. Katrin Tchana has published *sense pass King : a story from Cameroon* which raises the problem of jealousy and conflict of generations. We can also quote *Snow flower and the panther* of Fleurie Leclercq. She wants to encourage particularly young children to tell their stories, and be proud of their origins. The title *Advices to children from a*

*child* was published by Nehla N. Nambouh in 2009, when she was fifteen years old. It is a plaidoyer for disadvantages children dealing with war, poverty, etc., but also a sum of councils for youth to help them to stay in the right paths.

Christian Epanya has published about twenty titles in which he deals among other things with the difficult daily life of the populations, following the example of *Taxi-brousse* by Papa Diop taking place in Senegal, or extravagant clothing as in *les Rois de la sape*. He is also the illustrator of several albums, for instance *Toussaint Louverture le défenseur des noirs d'Haïti* by Anne Sophie-Chillard, or *Abebe Bikila le champion aux pieds nus*. Didier Reuss Nliba and Jessica Reuss-Nliba discuss topics related to family, happiness or problems related to cultural uprooting and the encounter of cultures. They've published about 20 titles. With "*Ma famille du Cameroun de Paris à Yaoundé*", the main characters are two teenagers who live in two different cultural contexts. Alain Serge Dzotap who is the author of *Djou et son épouvantail magique* points out in this album problems related to environmental protection.

As for François Kammo Melachi and Katia Castanie, in *la fête de l'arachide*, they allow the young reader to discover the peanut culture, and its place in food and the economic sector. But the book is also an exaltation of the relations between grandparents and grandchildren since it is by visiting them that the young boy learns a lot about this legume. Kidi Bebey, who has been the editor-in-chief of the journal « planète jeunes » for over a decade, has published a series called "Sai Sai" in the Buzz Collection, in addition to a few other publications. She has also published documentary albums about famous characters in the Lucy collection, which is published in the editions Cauris livres in Mali. We can also cite *Miriam Makeba. La reine de la chanson africaine*, *Aimé Césaire, le poète-prophète* and *Modibo Keita : le premier président du Mali*. Evelyne Pélérin Ngo Maa also published among others in the same register *Dis mamie qui est Martin Luther King ?* or *Dis Mamie qui est Aimé Césaire?* Finally, let's add to this list Heaven R.W. who has just published in 2018 an album titled *Violet lion : searching for my origins*, which presents the adventures of the main character who speaks English and learns French through exciting adventures. This is the promotion of bilingualism through playful means.

#### 1.1.3. Initiatives of the Ministry of Arts and Culture to promote literature of interest to young people

Poetry and short story are two genres that are promoted by the Ministry of Arts and Culture through a national literary competition of young English and French speaking authors. This is an annual competition. Its aim is to stimulate creativity and reward literary quality. Twenty manuscripts are awarded each year from hundreds received. In 2017, the theme "Cultural heritage and development in Cameroun" revealed *Dilema* by Niba Fanton and *Poverty* by Avellino Laura Chifon in poetry. With regard to the short story, *Maimouna ou la fatalité* of Edouard Bengono Essola, or *Not while I live* by Awasume Yvette have been awarded. The theme for 2018 was "la diversité culturelle, identité et unité nationales". The first prize in poetry was won by Musi Seth Pie with *Unity: songs from our triangle* followed by Samuel Babila Bengala's *chansons douces*. Regarding the short story, *Kuma Ndumbe* by Choumkeu Bandi Karel won the first prize, followed by Ngong Walla Willfried's *Kenfack and Edimo* and *I am, because we are* by Ngang Godwill's Ndeh. The national retrospective bibliography 2000-2010 of Cameroon presents 45 titles in the fiction section. Many of these titles are consulted by teenagers.

#### 1.1.4. The introduction of vernacular languages: a promising future

National languages are being taught in secondary schools to teenagers in Cameroon for some years. It is important to make available to them a literature in vernacular languages, which, although not yet abundant in Cameroon, does exist. We can quote Angèle Kingué's « *Qui est dans la lune?* » who was translated into Bassa, Douala, Bamiléké. Similarly, François Essindi's *le chasseur et le porc-épic* was translated into Bulu to name but a few. This could even encourage more parents to enrol their children in libraries.

Cameroon National Bibliography 2000-2010 presents 249 titles in vernacular languages that may be of interest to youth. They cover areas such as storytelling, short story, catechism, AIDS prevention, epics, grammar or vocabulary, etc..

This literature will enable adolescents not to be disconnected from their environmental milieu. If you add African foreign authors and those from other continents, the Cameroonian teenager may have the opportunity to acquire stable reading habits and to indulge in library attendance. Indeed, the themes are varied and are likely to hang young readers, who often find themselves in what is described or will discover other cultures.

The consolidation of the intergenerational bonds so dear to African families is very present in the youth literature produced by Cameroonians. It initiates by means of vernacular languages a certain return to one's indispensable roots in this context of globalization where the individual also tries not to drown in the masses by affirming his identity. In addition, several selection guides give Cameroon's young teen literature a certain fame that can no longer be ignored (Takam Tikou, 2016).

Concerning publishing houses in Cameroon which publish in the field of Children and young adult literature in Cameroon. We can cite Editions lupeppo; Book collection Unity; Afredit; Africavenir; Editions Cosmos, white house publications, Ebène etc... Some have been particularly illustrated in recent years in the production of youth literature. These are the following publishing houses, Akoma Mba, Tropics, Ifrikiya, CLE, Centre d'études et de recherches sur la documentation, les traditions orales et la littérature africaine (CERDOTOLA). As a distributor of young teen literature, we will mention the Dinimber house. Akoma Mba has recently create in 2019 a site named "Muna kalati , le livre une vivre pour enfants ", where one can find many titles and reflexion on literature for youth. The creator says this site is born from the desire to make books and reading, a fun activity that fits naturally into everyday practices in Cameroon and Africa. The editor wants to bring, by this mean, an answer to the questions that the African child asks himself as he gets more involved in the life of the universe, and also in the society of which he is a part.

As a partial conclusion, the Cameroonian literature added to foreign authors can constitute satisfying collections for the young users in school and public libraries. It is important to allow the adolescents to get closer to these institutions.

## **1.2. Adolescents, libraries and reading: Which relationship?**

We hereby essentially give the results of our survey. We assembled a random sample of teenagers from secondary schools and high schools in Yaoundé of both sexes, aged 12 to 16. Initially, 150 questionnaires were prepared, but finally 164 were finally filled out, because a higher number of adolescents wanted to express themselves on the subject. Open and closed questions were proposed. They were proposed to students, sometimes with the help of school staff or people we trained in this regard. Headings covering the following topics are as follows: Information on respondents (age, sex, school attended, profession of parents, residence); the attendance at the school or public library; reading practices, we also looked at the use of ICT's as the computer and television. In a society where those tools become increasingly important between cultural practices; school libraries should take that into account in order to increase the level of library attendance and meet reading needs (see Appendix 1). The results/findings of our study are submitted according to the different axes of our analysis below. The sample consists of a porpotion of 55% male and 45% female. The students are reported attending 38 French-speaking or English-speaking schools. General and technical education are represented.

### *1.2.1. School libraries*

Alongside an entertainment literature specific to young people in Cameroon, there is a literature consulted in the context of utilitarian reading in school curricula and that represents the response to a need. It must constitute an important offer in school libraries, besides the so-called youth literature itself. It supports training and helps young people succeed in their studies. The UNESCO manifesto on school libraries highlights the role of school libraries. "The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge-based society. The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens" (IFLA, 1999).

All secondary schools in Cameroon are supposed to have libraries, even if most of them are often embryonic. The national policy in this area is to involve families financially in the enrollment of their children into school library at the beginning of the school year. For example, Circular No. 21/A/135/MINEDUC/CAB of September 20, in 2001 concerning the implementation of the budget of public schools provides for a library heading. Below are the amounts collected by institutions for the establishment and operation of libraries. The rates were set based on a need assessment.

Table 1.  
*Rates of required payments by type of institution*

Type of education	Participation per student
General lower secondary education	400 FCFA
General upper secondary education	500 FCFA
Technical Education first cycle	700 FCFA
Technical education second cycle	700 FCFA

The sums thus collected were not fully returned to the sector concerned and were partly used for other budgetary items in the different schools. However, the Ministry of Secondary Education has been working on improvements since two years, notably through the implementation of control tools. This will enable those libraries to properly accomplish their mission.

All teenagers of the survey are aware of the existence of their school library. The more or less regular attendance of this structure, is usually dependent on the policy put in place by the school to ensure its visibility among pupils. Accordingly, to the question of whether their institution has a library, 152 of the 164 surveyed, or 92.68% said yes. But most of them do not attend it very much, either because the school does not have a policy to attract pupils, or because the premises are narrow, only pupils in classes preparing exams sometimes have access to them. This is evident from our discussions with some of the principals of these schools.

Not surprisingly, 90 out of 164 students, that is 54.87, do not borrow books from their libraries. This is also due to the fact that collections are not attractive or important. As a result, several institutions encourage loans only for examination classes. Schools would benefit from reminding pupils at predetermined intervals to go to the library, as well as the opening hours of the library. We witnessed this kind of successful experience in a high school in the suburb of Yaoundé, where this reminder is made every Monday morning when the colors are lifted. This has resulted in an increase in library attendance. Gaps in both the collections and the visibility of the structure at school level generally do not provide pupils with an informative culture and create stable reading practices.

Allmost all the school libraries has no personnel trained in specialized schools. They are managed by teachers who are sometimes trained during seminars often organized by diplomatic representations or an association like the Cameroonian Association of Librarians, Documentalists ,Archivists, Museographers and Institutions (CALADOM).The IFLA/Unesco school libraries guide states that " To ensure the currency and vitality of a school library's instructional and information base, the library needs an appropriate budget allocation, taking in account local reality" (Schultz-Jones & Oberg, 2015).

The same guidelines states that a reasonable collection must have ten book per student.This level is reached by the Vogt Catholic secondary school, that strives to make the library play its full role.The library has a documentary collection of 11000 books in 2019 for 2882 students, that is a rate of 3,81 per student. It is the most furnished school library in Yaoundé. The fields represented in the collections are essentially: books in the school curricula, youth novels, storytelling, science, the comic book. The animations around the book are regularly organized to get students to read. Games such as the Ludo, the scrabble; the Cluedo, the chess game, the Monopoly, the Lobo cards, the power 4 or even trivial pursuit are put in place as to give better visibility to the library. A cybercafé with online games is also used by the school to attract young people to the library and enhance collections. An "excellent connection to internet", to use Christophe Tadjia's words, the Chief Librarian, generated an increase in attendance and loans. As a result, the number of students has increased from 90 to 150 per day and more than 400 loans some months (statistics of the library, 2018/2019). This growing interest among the pupils necessitated an increase in staff from one to three librarians.The table below shows the loans from September 2018 to May 2019.It corresponds to the period where loans ara allowed.From April to June, the end of the school year, the library has made the choice to take back the borrowed books.

Table 2.  
School library book Loans Collège Vogt September 2018 - March 2019

Months	Number of loans
September	87
October	349
November	427
December	139
January	478
February	211
March	272
Total	1963

The good results usually obtained by these secondary schools are also attributed to the proper functioning of the school libraries. For example in 2019, 100 % of the students who sat for the national examination taken at the end of the fourth form school year (BEPC) passed. The same year 99.70% of the students are received at the baccalaureate in the same school, the national rate is 60.18 % (statistics of the school exams, 2019). Although an important work has been done, the staff is aware that sustained and constant efforts are still needed, to improve these figures.

### 1.2.2. The place of the public library

If the school library is generally not the reservoir where they often find what they need for their readings, we wanted to know their relationships with other types of libraries, such as public reading. We have therefore tried to find out whether this disaffection towards the school library is compensated by the attendance of other libraries in the city.

Table 3.  
Attendance of other libraries

Attendance of other libraries	Number	Percentages
Go to another library	33	20.12%
Wish to attend a library other than that of the school	117	71.34%
Wish to open a local library	138	84.14%

The results show that this is not the case for the majority of them. However, the majority of respondents wish to register in public libraries to borrow various documents and read more. Newspapers are not subject to loans. There are many who wish to attend a library other than that of the school, preferably the opening of local libraries in their councils because of the distance that would then be very small between their home and the library. Sung Joe Park in a study shows that some users or social groups are distance sensitive and will only attend a library if it is close to their home. He says, "Distance is an important factor for library use and is frequently cited in library location research." He added, "The registrants use the library nearest to their home, and that travel distance is an important factor for their choice of library"<sup>4</sup> (Park, 2012,p.17). It is therefore reasonable to assume that the construction of public reading libraries would increase the number of users, therefore, of readers in this age group.

Entertainment and school work are the two motivations of adolescents. For example, they say that local libraries would provide more motivation to do research or long studies. Indeed the utilitarian reading occupies an important place in their needs since all mention their concern to succeed in their studies. It is in this sense that Perier states:

It is interesting to note that they summarize in their entirety the functions that have so far been attributed to libraries. Both place of training; learning, discoveries, but also a source of development and even a place for therapy and meeting place. In fact, fourteen of them say that the library would help them fight isolation, boredom, or juvenile delinquency. It is in this sense that Christine Detrezstates:



« L'enquête menée avec la bibliothèque publique d'information auprès des collégiens et lycéens lecteurs de mangas montre qu'à l'ère d'internet et des réseaux sociaux, lire permet encore et toujours de tisser des sociabilités avec les pairs, par le jeu des échanges et des discussions, de création de pages spécialisées et de blogs » (Detrez, 2011, p.5) .

If the library of proximity is a project to which many teenagers interviewed therefore adhere, it means that although living in an environment where the book is not usually very present, they can see the role of a library and the various benefits it could bring. They are aware of their need to have at their disposal a tool that would contribute to their training or their "blossoming", a term that sometimes comes up in their remarks. The creation of libraries for youth is one of the priorities in the framework of the cultural policy of Cameroon, as evidenced by our interviews with the Book and Reading Directorate of the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

Cameroon, aware of these issues, had initiated a project in the 1990s to bring the population closer to books and libraries. The Book and Reading Department has a bookmobile that serves the suburbs and sometimes the localities around Yaoundé. We can also cite The library Lucioles and the library Centre de lecture et d'Animation Culturelle (CLAC) in Yaoundé.

The low number of library visits by teenagers can be found in the insufficient number of these institutions, collections that are not very attractive. an insufficient mobilization of parents, who are for the majority, intellectual workers. As a result, 151 students, or 92.07% have at least one parent who is an intellectual worker, which generally allows them to know what a library is and to register their children.

Holidays are the most common time for teenagers to visit the library for obvious reasons. The CLAC received during the month of June 2018 an average of 51 per day (CLAC Statistics). This figure is lower during solar periods. Adolescents make up 17.08% of the 603 registrants in the structure. The French Cultural Centre's media library states that it pays particular attention to adolescents because the dynamism of loans for this category of users is remarkable. Thus, between January 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, and December 31<sup>st</sup> 2018, the media library recorded 31,265 loans from youth books, out of the 92,585 all books borrowed by public or 25.44% of the loans (Statistics IFC library).

### *1.2.3. Use of Information and Communication Technologies: reading on another medium*

Florence Loussier introducing the results of the second colloquium on « les métamorphoses numériques du livre » in France writes : « Première génération à maîtriser avec acuité les possibilités du numérique, les **teenagers** sont en effet devenus **leaders** d'opinion et dictent les stratégies **marketing** des entreprises de produits de consommation comme la mode » (Loussier, 2015). Cameroonian teenagers, as in other circles, are evolving in the multimedia era, where there are more solicitations competing with paper reading. It is therefore important to know how much of this practice is in their daily lives. How they interact with Information and Communication Technologies, including the computer.

Television sets are present in almost every home. For example, 145 teenagers, that is 88.41% say they have at least one at home. Only four respondents say they do not have a television set at home. Five others do not give an answer. Ninety-six of them, or 58.53% say they watch it almost every day. And 46 of them at least twice a week. Access to television is highly regulated in some households during the school period, so that three teenagers claim to have access to it only three times a month. One of the adolescents says, whenever he looks at an interesting documentary, he looks for a book dealing with the same subject, because he knows that by reading it he will know more. He adds books and Télévision are complementary.

The computer is also present in a large number of households, 119 in total or 72.56% of households are reported having at least one at home. In addition to that, if 130 of them have access to it, that is 79.27% of the respondents, it is mainly through the existence of the Cybers that are more and more numerous in the neighborhoods. The recent distribution of computers to higher education students will increase the presence in homes. Public reading libraries also provide access to books or various online materials. Libraries should therefore make this tool available to these users if they want to retain them and satisfy their reading needs. The following results on the use of the computer tool show us the essential place of information and communication technologies in the acquisition of knowledge. These percentages are almost the same as those produced in developed countries like Canada, Australia (Bowler, 2010, p.28). The use of this tool is

varied as shown in the table below. The games come in first place, followed by the internet consultation which also includes reading in one way or another.

Table 3.

*Activities with the computer.*

Games	Consultation of the internet	Capture of school work	Viewing	Reading of documents
68.46%	63.84	56.92%	35.38%	30.76%

These results indicate that screen reading -Internet and reading documents- is well present and practiced by teenagers. The computer tool, without replacing the traditional book, is a complement to the print. This dimension of reading must be taken into account in Cameroon's youth libraries. Students in other circles are being introduced to the use of this tool early. As for frequency of use, it varies for most of them between one and several times a week. This is the case for 98 of them, that is 59, 75%. For the others, the uses are sporadic, but still quite regular, that is, several times a month. Two among them assert that they often practice creating softwares.

The vision of the young Cameroonian reader in the multimedia era should no longer only be linked to a single medium, namely the book or print. Librarians understand it in Cameroon as in other circles. Libraries should be staffed with knowledgeable staff, trained in the use of these tools, and especially able to take initiatives to attract aspiring readers. What can we say about their reading needs and practices in light of all the results of our survey?

#### *1.2.4. Reading needs and practices of adolescents*

The need for information starts with a gap, that needs to be filled. In the words of Brigitte Simonnot, "un besoin d'information serait donc une sensation qui porterait l'individu à s'engager dans une activité de recherche d'information » 13. So, there is an endorsement that corresponds to awareness, and an upstream, which corresponds to research and meeting of the need.

We tried to highlight the general and latent needs of the investigators. The results presented above show that these are expressed sporadically, depending on the circumstances and opportunities. In general, the pupils interviewed claim to make the utilitarian reading necessary to pass their exams during the school year and the leisure reading during holidays, on weekends or to relax when they have an opportunity.

These are needs captured outside a concrete context of information retrieval and intended to serve as a guide for school or youth libraries in the search for greater satisfaction for the user. Analysis and observation of the reading needs of the respondents fall within the scope of the types of the following needs, namely:

- Discover, develop and inform a context.
- Knowing a topic well.
- Getting a little distracted.
- Develop relationships, ensure personal fulfillment.

At the question "what kind of documents do you borrow or would you like to borrow from the library, we get the following answers:

Table 5.

*Needs of the students*

Preferences in terms of content	Number of student	Percentage
Novels	92	56.09%
Comic Strips	85	51.82 %
Poetry	66	40.24%
Theater	64	39.02 %
Periodicals	44	26.82 %

Comic strips are the most popular category after the novel. But it is not widely available in school libraries and in the majority of households. Public reading libraries provided are not widely available. Most of the libraries which belong to associations provide very little visibility and do not have very well-provided youth sectors. Poetry often regarded as a fairly hermetic genre occupies a significant place in the list of solicited content.

We tried to assess the relationship between utility reading and leisure reading. A significant proportion of these teenagers practice leisure reading, although not always with the desired regularity. Thus, in addition to reading books on the program, 93 or 56.70% claim to practice leisure reading; that is to say the one that is done outside the school constraints. The two who report reading more than 15 books per semester, including school books and Children literature, are enrolled in a public library, and students of the College Vogt. The library staff asserts that 80 % of the loans concern youth novels. This enthusiasm is also due to the introduction of animation round the youth literature for the three first level of the school. There is a reading club where each Student has to read rapidly during an hour or two every week, a book and share the content with their classmates. Generally speaking, these percentages are an indicator of adolescents, who wants to read at least from time to time other than textbooks.

The following statistics show the loans made by teenagers to the French Institute's media library in the first half of 2014/2015 confirm that the leisure has an important place.

Table 6. Loans made by adolescents French Institute media Library.

Rubrics	Number of loans
Youth books	81
All public books	50
Comics	36
Youth Album	29
Youth novels	27
Tales	4
TOTAL	227

The novel is still included in all-public books, but also grammar, history, language mathematics, physics, etc.....

#### 1.2.5. Some actions and innovations to implement

There is a special need for adequate buildings. Rarely is the space sufficient as in General Leclerc Government High School, which has 2 rooms with 80 seats each.

Otherwise, it is important to remind students of visiting the library during the raising of the flag at the beginning of each week. The implementation of these measures was a success with very good results in the level of attendance in the Government (classical) High School Mfou, in a suburb of Yaoundé.

With regard to financial means, some secondary high school libraries just like "College Vogt", or the technical high school Charles Atangana can get one million or more per year in order to constitute the collections. Unesco itself is sometimes offers various support as is the case of Mendong High School.

The tale sector for example is not well provided generally in libraries as many librarians have complained about. Therefore, it is an area that allows cultural rooting. This is, either because of the selected documentary policy, or because books consist essentially of donations that contain very little of this category of content. The school librarians wish the publishers/editors and the authors often contacted them through the school authorities.

It is important for the publishers to regularly meet the school administrators/authorities to present albums, comics, tale book and so on. This experience has been successfully made by the Cameroonian association of illustrators and authors of Children literature, in the 90s. School administrators became then more interested in buying books. But the association encountered himself some difficulties.

Considering the number of books per pupil IFLA says 15 sounds satisfying. This number is not yet reached by school libraries considered in Yaoundé. Special seminars must be held to show the administrators regularly the necessity of having good school libraries in order to increase the success in school or national exams. They

need to master for example the Unesco/IFLA guidelines on school libraries and to know their responsibilities. The personnel of school libraries need to be trained regularly on how to attract students to the library. It is already made from time to time by some cultural services of the diplomatic representations, the Cameroonian Association of Librarians Archivists, Documentalists, and Museographers and the Solidarity for Environment and sustainable development (SEDD). This last association gathers 75 high school librarians, only 2 are trained in a school of librarians in 2019. However this lack, they try to compensate it by seminars of training. The school librarian must be taught how to work with teachers whose contribution is to direct students to the library. It is in this sense that Carol Collier Kuhlthau asserts, "school librarians are vital partners in creating schools that enable students to learn through vast resources and multiple communication channels. Teachers cannot do this alone" (Kuhlthau, C.C., 2010).

Finally, the Ministry of Arts and culture (MINAC), would also benefit from a close collaboration with the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC), with the goal of informing schools of its activities in the field of book and reading, for example the international Book Fair of Yaoundé.

## 2. Conclusions

Based on our analysis of the reading needs of teenagers in Yaoundé, it emerges from our survey that the national production in the context of youth literature has enjoyed some dynamism for two decades. It is able to give the Cameroonian teenager the knowledge he needs to take root in his cultural environment. Access to other documents accessible through the ICTs has mushroomed. Our surveys show that, far from being hostile to reading, adolescents are generally interested. They need to be more accompanied in order to better place this practice in their daily lives. Parents do not always constitute the necessary initial support because of the mentalities, which are not always imbued with this practice outside the utilitarian reading, that often decreases after the various trainings. The School in the generic sense of the term is to be incriminated here. It does not always play its key role in the process of acquiring this information's culture. School libraries still have sensitive efforts to make. Targeted animation activities can be used to increase the interest of this type of user. Authors, editors and librarians they have to get closer to the school librarians and their managers in order to let their production known and to encourage them to acquire those documents. Rigorous methods need to be put in place regarding the monitoring of the results obtained. In the 21st century in developed countries, the publishing of youth literature is a very flourishing market for editors and bookshops, because the needs of adolescents are more taken into account. This is the influence of the thinking that has emerged on the education and psychology of this category of users. The secondary high schools will be the major beneficiaries in Cameroon, if they acquire this literature, because of the increase in the success rate of various exams. In fact, reading is the foundation of academic achievement.

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## Appendix I. Survey Questions

This questionnaire is intended to understand the practices of adolescents (12-16 years) in the field of reading and to meet their needs. The results obtained will contribute to the establishment of libraries that meet their needs.

### I-Information on the respondent

1-Age

2-sex

3-Residential area

4- School attended

5-Occupation of the parents

-Father

-Mother

II- Library attendance.

1-Is there any library in your school? (Tick the corresponding box).

Yes

No

2-Do you attend it?

Yes

No

3-Do you borrow books from this library? (Tick the corresponding box)

Yes

No

4-Do you attend other or public libraries in the city? ( Tick the corresponding box)

Yes

No

5-If yes, how often do you go there per month?

a)Once b)Twice c)three times d)Other (Tick the corresponding box).

6- If you do not attend a library, do you want to register in a library? (Tick the corresponding box).

Yes

No

7-Do you wish to have a library in your residential area? (Tick the corresponding box)

Yes

No

### III- Reading habits

1-What do you usually read?

a) - Books b) – Newspapers c)magazines d)Other ( Tick the corresponding box).

2- What kind of books do you read? (Tick the corresponding box)

a) - Books included in the curriculum

b) – Extra-curricula books

5-What kinds of documents do you borrow or would you like to borrow from a library? (Tick the corresponding boxes).

a) -Novel b) –Theater/Drama c) Poetry d) -Comics.

e) -Periodicals f) - Others.

### IV-Other cultural practices.

1-Do you have a television set at home?

Yes

No

2- If so, how often do you watch TV per week? (Tick the corresponding box)

a) - Every day or almost

b) - One, two, three times a week

c) -one, two, three times a month

e) - Other

3-Do you have a computer at home? (Tick the corresponding box).

Yes

No

4- How often do you use the computer? (Tick the corresponding box)

a) -1, 2, 3 time(s)a week.

b) -1, 2, 3 time(s) a month.

c) - Every day or almost.

5-What activities do you practise with the computer?

a) -Reading documents (books, newspapers, etc ....).

b) -Consultation of the internet (books, newspapers etc ....)

b) - Writing homework

c) -Games

d) – Others