

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE AND THE CAMEROONIAN LABOUR AND INDUSTRIAL MARKET

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ABSTRACT: *Education in Cameroon has come under serious criticisms for failing to deliver in accordance with its promises as stipulated in the education law. With the improving situation of democracy and freedom in Cameroon entrepreneurship becomes a major prerequisite for the rapid economic development of the nation. It is for this reason that these researchers elected to carry out a study on curriculum structure and the Cameroonian labour and industrial market. The curriculum of the English speaking educational subsystem was evaluated. The study revealed that the present curriculum no longer meets the demands of the society. A curriculum revision was recommended*

KEYWORDS: Education Law, Entrepreneurship, Curriculum Structure, Labour Market, Industrial Market

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum according to Onwuka (1981) is a structured series of intended learning experiences. It is the means by which educational institutions endeavour to realise the hopes of the society. Through this process schools set out to determine and pursue the objectives and goals of the society in which the schools are and serve. Thus the curriculum embraces purposeful experiences provided and directed by educational institutions to achieve predetermined societal goals. Curriculum is therefore the offering of socially valued knowledge, skills and attitudes made available to students through a variety of arrangements during the time they are at school, college or university.

Planning a curriculum involves making choices as to the learning experiences which are appropriate and desirable for the learners in a given society. In Part 11 section 11 of Law No 98/004 of 14 April 1998 Biya stipulates that « the state shall ensure the constant adaptation of the educational system to the national and sociocultural realities, and also to the international environment, especially through the promotion of bilingualism and the teaching of national languages ». Curriculum planners have therefore set themselves to a task of achieving this and other tasks that are enshrined in the policy statements made in that law since it came to being in 1998.

Many school or college subjects now taught tilt towards their relation to their utilitarian aspect of the curriculum. One therefore has to bear in mind this utilitarian aspect of the curriculum before examining the curriculum structure and the Cameroonian Labour and industrial market as a contemporary education crisis in Cameroon in the 21st century.

Cookey Gam (1980) outlines the pre-requisites of a good utilitarian curriculum as:

- Development of the moral and spiritual growth of the learner
- Development of skills and tools of education

- Development of clear thinking
- Development of civic responsibility
- Development of appreciation of cultural heritage
- Preparation for earning a living
- Development of worthwhile leisure pursuits and of creative expression

The law laying down guidelines for education in Cameroon states amongst others in part 1 section 4 that the general purpose of education shall be to train children for their intellectual, physical, civic and moral development and their smooth integration onto society bearing in mind prevailing economic, socio-cultural, political and moral factors. One of the means to attain this as stipulated in section 5 article 7 is that the learner should be able to develop creativity, a sense of initiative and the spirit of enterprise. The quality of instruction should therefore be oriented towards attaining this objective at all levels of the educational system.

On the Supply Side of Labour

The National Employment Fund (NEF) and some major employers like the Cameroon Public service, Cameron Development Corporation (CDC) and the National Oil Refinery (SO.NA.RA) were contacted to find out the availability of jobs in the Cameroonian labour and industrial market. Record from the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (2010) reveal that the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms in Cameroon is the biggest employer. They carry out employment and organise vocational training through competitive examinations (concours). Thousands of graduates as job seekers write these competitive examinations to look for jobs or training in various disciplines, their areas of specialisation notwithstanding. The other employers do direct recruitment but most of the time the vacancies are advertised at short notice and recruitments done impromptu. This is also the case with the other smaller employers.



Harvesters in a CDC Tea Estate



Weighing of Harvested Tea at the CDC Plantation



Transportation of Tea from the CDC Farm to the Processing Station

On the demand side of labour: Those involved with the training for capacity building

Schools and colleges do train for local consumption. More attention has apparently been given to technical and vocational training. According to Ngundam and Tanyi (2000), this attention however is more on questions about adequacy in terms of numbers than quality and relevance of the system of training to our economic needs and restructuring and funding that are needed. They emphasised that without an objective to base technical and vocational education on, no clear training objectives are possible.

A comprehensive list of the subjects taught in the industrial and commercial sections in Technical and Vocational colleges in Cameroon.

Table 1: Subjects taught in Secondary Schools in Cameroon

Technical Training <u>Industrial</u>	<u>Commercial</u>	Secondary General <u>General Education</u>
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
English	English	English
French	French	French
History	History	History
Geography	Geography	Geography
Civics	Civics	Civics
Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education
Hygiene	Hygiene	Biology
Accounting/Administration	Accounting	Physics
Science	Science	Chemistry
Agriculture	Agriculture	English Literature
Legislation	Legislation	Economics
Workshop Practice	Correspondence	Home Economics
Professional Calculation	Filing	Computer
Professional Technology	Typing	
General Technology	Commerce	Commerce
Drawing	Home Economics	
	Office Accounting	
	Commercial	
	Arithmetic	
	Home Economics	
	Office Practice	
	Office Equipment	
	Rapid Reckoning	

Whatever the structure, it should not only consider training for training alone. The main issue is economic development and employment. It is on the basis of this that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is forecast and estimates made on the required turn out of manpower. Recent scholarships advertised by the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training in Cameroon requested places for: Accounting Clerks, Hotel management, Agro pastoral training, Photography, auditors, banking, beauty care, hairdressing, computer application, Customs clearing agents etc.

The Problem

The educational system in Cameroon and indeed in most part of Africa at one time or the other has come under serious criticisms for failing to deliver in accordance with its promises as stipulated in the various education policies/laws. As a consequence much pressure primarily driven by principles of economic rationalism and cooperate managerialism from Government and other interest stakeholders in the education enterprise is increasingly becoming incense. The state and education stakeholders have become targets/victims of such education

malfunctions. Studies in our schools are in most cases not sufficiently responsive to the needs of individuals, society, industry and commerce. Secondary school leavers and graduates continue to find themselves alienated in front of government offices requesting jobs from government, showing signs of being inadequately prepared for adult life generally. The supply of education to the thousands that graduate from schools and colleges in our education system each year has resulted instead in fear, frustration and despair rather than a net increase in social satisfaction of the society. This situation poses a problem to parents, government and the society at large and causes them to wonder why this ugly trend is persisting. Government has offered facilities for many more Cameroonians to be educated. Instead of these graduates becoming job creators they become job seekers. It is for this reason that these researchers set out to carry a study on Curriculum Structure and the Cameroonian Labour and Industrial Market”

Purpose of the Study

The demand for labour in Cameroon is very high. Many students who graduate from Universities and colleges in the country remain in towns with the hope that they may get employment in the industries while waiting for the rare job opportunities from the Government. This has caused the pressure of graduates who are demanding for labour to become very high in the cities. The main purpose of this study was to investigate into the Curriculum Structure and the Cameroonian Labour and Industrial Market. Specifically the study set out to find out how

- i. Gender stereotypes affect current entrepreneurial practices amongst university graduates in Cameroon.
- ii. Curriculum outcomes affect current entrepreneurial practices amongst university graduates in Cameroon.

Research Questions

- i. How does gender stereotype affect current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon?
- ii. How curriculum outcomes affect current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon?

Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant effect of gender stereotype on current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon
- ii. Curriculum outcomes do not significantly affect current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Kolawole & Arikpo (2008) in their study on predictors of self-employment efforts among Nigerian graduates looked into gender stereotypes as predictors of self-employment. Using a gender job creation behaviour inventory developed by Jones and Jones (1990) with a Cronbach alpha coefficient value of 0.92, they found a significant difference in self employment efforts between male and female graduates among Nigerian graduates. They concluded that male

graduates have a higher self employment effort than their female counterparts. Lewis, Wolins and Yelshma (1967) in a similar study associated such difference to different educational goals and reactions between men and women and sex-difference inherent in human work behaviour. Kolawole and Arikpo (2008) cited Nyerere (1968) who noted that education is an instrument for effecting economic and technological change, change in ideas and personality and laid so much emphasis on education as a means of transformation in his country Tanzania through his 'Ujama' revolution

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study was a survey. This study that looked into the contemporary education crises focused on the curriculum structure and the Cameroonian labour and industrial market. The incidence of this focus cuts across many sociological and psychological variables hence the survey research.

The area of the research is the Republic of Cameroon. The Republic of Cameroon lies between latitudes 2⁰ North to 14⁰ North of the equator and latitudes 8⁰ East to 17⁰ East of the Greenwich meridian. The country is bound to the North by The Republic of Chad, to the West by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to the East by the Central African Republic and to the South by Equatorial Guinea, Congo and the Atlantic Ocean. The Republic of Cameroon is a bilingual country with French and English being used as official languages. The country is divided into ten (10) regions two of which are English speaking and the other eight are French speaking. The country has many tertiary institutions. There are many other professional and vocational centres that train the youths in various professions like nursing, craft and others. The country is rich in natural resources like Crude oil, Timber, cocoa, coffee, oil palm, gold, bauxite etc. Government is the main employer of labour with the private sector not very developed.

Presentation of Study Population

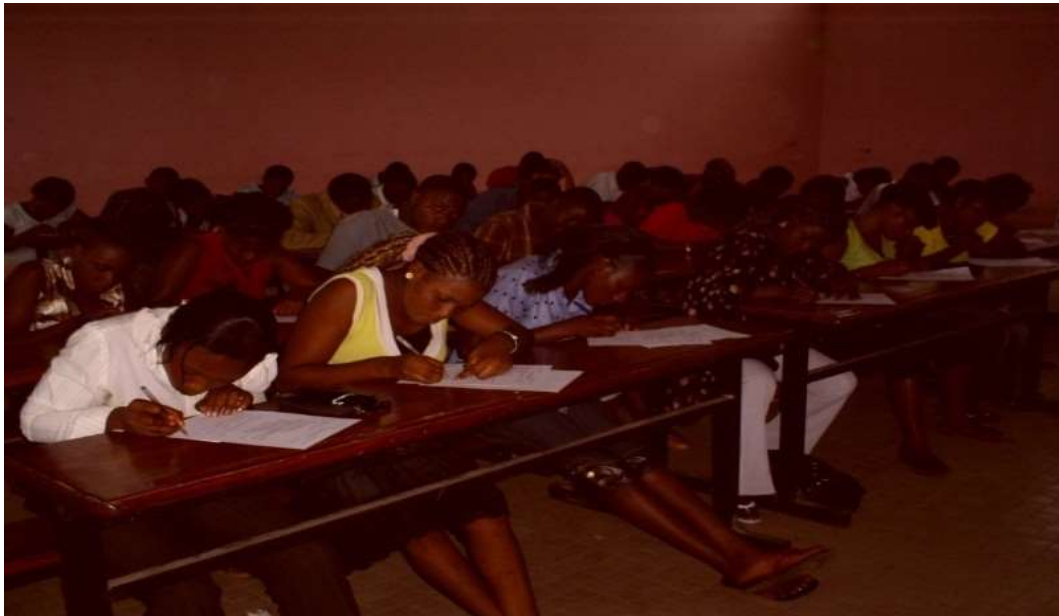
The Republic of Cameroon has a population of Eighteen million five hundred thousand (19.4) million inhabitants using the current census figures. More than seventy percent (70%) of this population is made up of youths where most of them are job seekers. The population of this study was the final year students in Universities. This population was selected because they were doing their last semester in the University and were therefore going to be available in the labour market. Also they are well placed to appreciate what is going on the method of instruction.

The Study Sample

The study sample was made up of final year students of the Universities of Buea in the South West Region, Yaoundé 1 in the Centre Region, Dschang in the Western Region and the National Polytechnique in Bambui in the North West Region. Two (02) faculties were selected from each University by using purposive sampling. Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample according to sex in each Faculty.

Table 2: Distribution of sample on the demand side according to sex in the Regions

University	Faculty	Female	Male	Total
Dschang	Law and	10	10	20
	Agriculture	10	10	20
	Education	10	10	20
Buea	Science	10	10	20
	School of Engineering	10	10	20
Yaounde 1	Arts and the Social Sciences	10	10	20
National	Computer Science	10	10	20
Polytechnique Bambui	Surveyors	10	10	20
Total		80	80	160

**Students of the Faculty of Education of the University of Buea**

In this part of the study the researchers decided to investigate into the school programmes of some Universities and colleges with the aim of evaluating how their programmes are adapted to the demands of the industrial and labour market.

Instrumentation

A Self Efficacy and Curriculum Outcome questionnaire (SECO) for students, Interview guides for Labour suppliers and focus group discussion guides for students and employers were constructed by the researchers and trial tested to ensure reliability of the instruments. Using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, the reliability ranged between 0.81 and 0.90 for all the research instruments used.

Data Analysis and Results

In this section the responses to the various questions addressed the interview guides and the focus group discussion were treated.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant effect of gender stereotype on current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon

To verify this hypothesis the independent t-test analysis was used. the results are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of the effect of gender stereotype on current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon

Gender Stereotype	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Male	80	19.52	2.41	2.68*
Female	80	18.52	2.31	
Total	160	19.02	2.33	

* $p < 0.05$; $df = 158$; Critical t-value = 1.98

From Table 2 the calculated t-value 2.68 shows significance hence there is a significant effect of gender stereotype on current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon. Male graduates have higher entrepreneurial tendencies (mean = 19.52) than the female counterparts (mean = 18.52)

Hypothesis Two

Curriculum outcomes do not significantly affect current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon

The curriculum outcomes were divided into three components. These are the cognitive, affective and psychomotor curriculum outcomes. These sub variables were crossed with the Self efficacy section of the questionnaire which measured entrepreneurial tendencies. The data was analysed using the One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: One Way Analysis of Variance of the effect of Curriculum outcomes on current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon

Curriculum outcomes	N	Mean	SD		
Cognitive	60	18.19	2.14		
Affective	51	18.91	2.3		
Psychomotor	49	20.15	2.95		
Total	160	19.02	2.33		
Sources of variation	df	SS	MS	F	
Between Group	2	104.45	52.23	7.49*	
Within Group	157	1094.24	6.97		
Total	159	1198.69			

* $p < 0.05$; $F_{2,157} = 3.06$

The F-ratio of 7.49 is higher than 3.06 indicating that Curriculum outcomes significantly affect current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon. Using the Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) Multiple Comparison Analysis the following trends were observed.

Table 4: Fisher's LSD Multiple Comparison Analysis of the effect of Curriculum outcomes on current entrepreneurial tendencies amongst university graduates in Cameroon

N	60	51	49
cog	18.19^a	-0.72 ^b	-1.96
affect	-1.43294 ^c	18.91	-1.24
psych	-3.85844*	-2.34963*	20.15
MSW	6.97		

a = Group means are placed along the diagonals

b = Differences among group means are placed above the diagonals

c = Fisher's t-values are placed below the diagonals

*= Significant at 0.05 level (critical t = 1.98)

From Table 4 reveals that graduates with cognitive curriculum outcomes do not differ significantly from those with affective curriculum outcomes with respect to their current entrepreneurial tendencies. However graduates with psychomotor curriculum outcomes (mean = 20.15) have significantly higher entrepreneurial tendencies than those with cognitive curriculum outcomes (mean = 18.19) and affective curriculum outcomes (Mean = 18.91).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Recommendations

Study the wide range of content in the informal sector

The aspect of educational reform in Cameroon that is not yet been well exploited is that of vocationally training which centres on the development of psychomotor skills. Most children sent to vocational and technical schools are there because they are not bright enough for academic courses in the secondary general education sector or they have been a complete failure in that sector. This then presupposes that intellect has a very small role to play in the acquisition of vocational and technical skills. This has led to the situation where only the socially, economically and intellectually disadvantaged get into vocational programmes most of the time as unwilling and disgruntled learners. This results in the students in vocational programs being despised by their counterparts in the secondary general education sector. Therefore policy makers should study the informal sector in Cameroon very closely, to learn from its wide range of labour demands, and design appropriate curricula that will make vocational education attractive to the rich parents and intelligent students.

Restructuring the Education System

Time has come for the development of an economy with a mixed base in education. In this case an inventory of the kind of manpower needed is made and curriculum experts called up on regular basis to tailor education towards these demands beginning at the base.

Exploitation of policy documents in education

There has been a lot of emphasis in the maintenance of the status-quos in that stakeholders tend to continuously defend the inherited colonial system of education which emphasised more on the cognitive development. Educational reform in Cameroon has begun with the 1995 education forum which came up with the Law of April 14th 1998 laying down guidelines for education in Cameroon. Twelve years after, when that law should have been revised, the implementation of the law has been slow in many areas. The situation is such that many teachers even those in teacher training colleges or those being trained have not yet started exploiting the document. Hence at the application of such significant policy documents, enough effort should be directed on the retraining of teachers and education stakeholders on the exploitation of policy documents for them to make meaning in the society for which they were conceived. The exploitation of such policy documents will constantly change the focus of education as being mere schooling to its functional role in the society.

Retraining of teachers to meet contemporary demands

Well as many new teachers are being trained to replace the aging ones the need to retrain teachers in the field should increase as new policies are being designed. The event where pupils spent seven years in primary schools has given way to the six year program in primary schools. This significant change in policy requires an accompanying training program that will be different from seminars so as to acquaint the teachers with the structure of the curriculum and the redesign of content such that psychomotor curriculum outcomes are emphasised. For the mean time most teachers have compressed the content of the seven year program to fit the six year program while waiting for further instructions. This tendency stretches up to all other levels in the education ladder to the point where vocational education cannot shift from the traditional woodwork and building to the modern wood technology and architecture. The big ship industries have not provoked the creation of mining, welding or ship building schools or programs in the curriculum structure of our secondary or tertiary institutions.

Create a Cameroon National Curriculum Council (CNCC)

In English Speaking Subsystem of Education in Africa, one of the most immediate results of post-independence educational reform was the creation of national curriculum development centres. These centres go by different names in different countries.

- Nigeria: Nigerian Education Research Council (NERC) now called Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC)
- Ghana: Curriculum Division of the Ghana Service
- Sierra Leone: Curriculum Department, Institute of Education University of Sierra Leone
- The Gambia: National Curriculum and Research Development Centre
- Liberia: Curriculum unit, Ministry of Education.

Whatever the appellations or organisational pattern, these centres brought in new dynamisms to systematic curriculum development. Each of them organised periodic conferences to develop national curriculum goals. They developed curriculum guidelines in various school disciplines. They were all grouped under the aegis of the African Curriculum Organisation (ACO). Here the institutions were able to establish mechanisms for the exchange of knowledge and experience through intensive staff training in various aspects of curriculum development.

In Francophone countries in the sub-region many far reaching attempts to institutionalize curriculum development in a systematic manner were not made. Post independence educational reforms led to the setting up of structures like “Institute Pédagogique Nationaux” IPN in most countries, the mandate of which included curriculum development within a general framework of “implementation of educational reforms”. There came such structures like

- Togo: DIFOP (Direction de la Formation Professionnelle)
- Benin: INFRE (Institut National de Formation)
- Cameroon: CNE (Centre National D’Education)

Obanya (2004) observes that though regional seminars on systematic curriculum development were organised for these countries, no follow up action in the form of institutionalising curriculum development has taken off in the Francophone world. There is then the need to institutionalise curriculum development in Cameroon by forming a structure like the CNCC (Cameroon National Curriculum Council). This council will directly address issues of national curriculum reforms amongst other issues in Cameroon in order to face appropriately the contemporary education crises.

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