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Article

Global Trends in Educational Policy Implementation and The Complexity of Quality in Education: A Cameroonian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Cameroon is an example of an education system that has over the years developed very important policies in the hope of raising the quality of knowledge that students learn in schools. The country's education sector strategy for 2020/2030 has a good number of policies which are aimed at developing skills and promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship in the learners from the primary through the secondary to higher levels. This article argues that effective policy implementation strategies based on the concepts of equity, flexibility, accountability, creativity and innovation can raise students' learning and bring about a significant economic and social development. The reviewed existing literature is the method in this article, on how different educational systems from different countries go about the implementation of policies in their diverse contexts, the challenges which they encounter and why these challenges arise and how these countries grappled with these challenges, to achieve their set objectives. However, most of these policies have either failed or have taken a far longer time to attain their set objectives. The result of this study shows that Cameroonians still depend a lot on the government for employment, which in most cases, even when these jobs are available, the wages and salaries are low. Based on the case study of Cameroon, the study comes up with a number of factors of failures in most systems. It is built on the idea that challenges are always part of the process of education, and success can only be achieved by braving them.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the key success of a country. Educational systems and institutions all over the world are on a constant strive to develop and implement reforms that will bring about effective transformation in their economies. This transformation is expected to come through the quality of education which they are able to attain. In doing so, they develop and implement policies that cut across the global education network in order to be able to build transnational and transcontinental economies. Education policy processes are complex and often contradictory, (Gopinathan, 2007) and educational reform has been a key component in

the national development strategies among most rapidly developing nations Hallinger (2010). While some of these systems are struggling to achieve the level of education that can be considered quality (Ball, 2009), others have attained this quality and are striving at sustaining it through more practical and effective policies (Pasi Sahlberg, 2007). Be it at the system or at the institutional levels, these transformations are always trapped by some challenges and it is in the strength of these systems or institutions to overcome the challenges, in order to attain their goals. These challenges are in some cases very difficult to handle, especially for some developing economies. While pressures on education systems develop to convey great training and the quantity of changes increment, policymakers don't really allow a lot of thoughtfulness regarding their execution. Instruction strategy execution is a complex, developing cycle that includes numerous partners and can bring about disappointment if not very much focused on. It is subsequently essential to get it, explain its determinants and investigate manners by which it can be more straightforward and viable.

In Korea, the state introduced a sequential expansion policy which was effectively managed to ensure that educational reforms were well integrated into the developmental vision of the country. Although education expands in general from the lowest level to the highest level sequentially in most countries, it did so concurrently in South Korea. In there the secondary education started its expansion after primary education had been universalized and primary school graduates rapidly increased. Similarly, higher education started expanding after high school graduates rapidly increased and competition for college entrance became intensified (Kim Y.H, 2000). This policy was effectively monitored by the government, especially under the Park Chung-Hee regime in the 1960s and 1970s, and in the 1980s Korea Republic emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The education system developed the skills that were required for economic take off in a developing state that Korea was at that time. In Finland, one of the recent tributes to the success of Finnish educational system has been given to their excellent teachers and high-quality teacher education. As Hannu Simola (2005) puts it, this high teacher quality was achieved as a result of some of the socio-cultural and historical factors that characterize the Finnish society. Finnish teachers enjoy the trust of the general public and also of the political and even economic elite, which is rare in many countries. This is proof of the fact that their education system is productive and relevant to the Finnish society. Also discussing about the Finnish educational prowess, Pasi Sahlberg (2007) holds that system-wide excellence in student learning is attainable at reasonable cost, using education policies differing from conventional market-oriented reform strategies prevalent in many other countries. In other words, to achieve success in educational policy, the system needs to go beyond the traditional market-oriented reforms and embrace principles such as equity, flexibility, creativity, teacher professionalism and trust. Analyzing the Australian education system with its challenges, Call, K. (2018) argues that a system wide success in education policy achieving begins by raising the standards of teachers in the system, which in turn, in turn raise student outcomes.

Cameroon falls within the group of those countries that are still struggling to make meaningful progress in their educational policy achievements. As a developing nation and like many other developing nations all over the world, Cameroon has over the years engaged in following the global trends of events about educational policies for economic transformation and development. Since the nature and processes of educational reform in turn do not offer any clear guidelines on how states should proceed (Gopinathan, 2007). Cameroon has employed a wide variety of strategies from more industrialized and educationally reliable nations, in a bid to follow their footsteps in the hope of achieving educational quality. There is an ongoing policy of professionalization of education which is termed: "professionalization for graduate employability (MINESUP)", aimed at ensuring the harmonization of higher education and an increased student mobility and employability

(Theresa B. & Doh P., 2016). Since its inception more than ten years ago, this professionalization policy is still to create a significant impact in the Cameroonian society. In the same light, ICT integration in learning is being implemented throughout the country without any masterplan on how to effectively do it and this has caused a lot of problems of mismanagement of the resources set aside for that purpose. Also, during the revision of the education and training sector strategy document for the period 2020-2030, Cameroon's Ministry of the Economy and Regional Development acknowledged the failure of this sector to achieve its set objectives for 2010/2020 (MINEPAT, 2020). Many other educational policies in Cameroon have failed or have delayed to produce the results for which they were initiated. Elizabeth Agbor *et al*, (2017) liken this slow pace and failures in the process to the complexities and tensions associated with introducing a borrowed model to a dual system of education such as in Cameroon.

With its bilingual and bi-cultural heritage from Britain and France, coupled with the existence of over 250 indigenous languages, Cameroon presents a very complex environment for policy implementation. Cameroon has been operating two systems of education since its independence and reunification in 1961: the British system in the English-speaking regions and the French system in the French-speaking regions of the country (Echu, 2010). The dual system of education in Cameroon has made it more difficult to implement and achieve expected goals in educational policies. However, Cameroon is not a unique case in terms of cultural and linguistic diversities. Discussing about multilingualism and education policy in Singapore (Tupas, 2015) holds that it is challenging but possible. Large economies like Canada and the U.S, are managing more complicated cases of diversity. Hallinger (2010) have braved, some rapidly developing economies of Southeast Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand), facing some challenges including multicultural and linguistic complexities to emerge. It is therefore a question of understanding how educational systems approach the challenges which they face, in order to attain their set goals. The study is therefore carried out in view of examining the causes of delays or failures in some educational policy reforms, and how these delays and failures can be transformed into far-reaching achievements in educational systems.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the causes of some of the challenges to educational quality, and how these challenges can be better approached to facilitate the process of attaining quality in education at a system level. Therefore, the study aimed at answering the following questions. First, why do some educational reforms fail to achieve their set goals?. Second, how can educational policy challenges be better approached to ensure quality in education.

METHODS

This study reviewed existing literature on how different educational systems from different countries go about the implementation of policies in their diverse contexts, the challenges which they encounter and why these challenges arise and how these countries grappled with these challenges, to achieve their set objectives. From their limitations we were able to establish the reasons for their failures and how to approach these failures. In order to effectively do this, we carried out a survey of educational reforms in Cameroon. We examined educational policy challenges basing specifically on the educational policy implementation realities in Cameroon, which are representative of the realities of so many other countries in Africa and the world at large.

Since independence and re-unification in 1961, the Cameroon government has made a number of educational reforms to develop and make the education system more productive. In doing so, the state of Cameroon has over the years employed a wide variety of strategies which, though very pertinent, in most cases have either failed to produce the expected results

or have taken a far longer time than expected. The most recent approaches to bringing change in the educational system include: decentralization of power for effective governance, benchmarking, change in instructional approaches, teacher training and professional development, and monitoring and evaluation strategies. We therefore explored existing literature to learn how education systems in countries such as Finland, South Korea, Australia, Canada and Kenya have dealt with some of these aspects of education reforms, in their struggle to emerge or to bring substantive change to their systems. For each of these aspects, we studied two or more related articles from diverse backgrounds and with different orientations. Our focus here was on those countries that have been experiencing a rapid economic growth in recent times, as a result of their effective educational policy implementation

RESULTS

The result of this analyzation revealed that in each of the above-mentioned case studies, quality is attained as a result of consistent and substantial efforts. It made in the governance system to ensure that every policy works for the common good of the entire system, rather than to please the political ambitions of a particular regime. The stakeholders were made to understand that for success to be achieved, they had to work with the ultimate goal of bringing change in the system at all costs.

The complexities of change in educational policy implementation:

Policy development and implementation constitute is the main activity of the various stakeholders in the process of education in every human society, and it is always geared towards the achievement of set objectives of the particular educational system. That is why if there are debates, conferences, training and reforms about education policy, they are held in the hope of causing positive changes in the system and obviously better performance and achievement. Be it at the system or at the school or classroom levels, education reforms and how they are implemented are the major indicators of progress or failure in every community, and this plays a very important role in the economic development of communities. Change is therefore the driving force of these reforms, the outcome of which depends on the effectiveness of the mechanism put in place to closely follow it up. However, depending on the education system or institution concerned and how it is implemented, this change can be interpreted from two different perspectives.

Change in educational reform and implementation can either refer to a conscious struggle by an educational system or institution to achieve quality as the outcome of their policies, or can be seen as measures taken to sustain quality which has been achieved. Thus, while some systems are struggling to attain quality in their educational standards, others who have attained this quality are striving to maintain it. This study seeks to critically examine these two cases of change as a result of educational policy implementation, and the lessons which educational systems and stakeholders should learn from them.

The focus here was on how educational policy is implemented both at the system and school or classroom levels, and the impact of these policies on the progress or development of these systems and institutions. These articles were explored and classified into three groups as follows:

- those that are showing how policy implementation is helping systems and institutions to move towards the achievement of quality;
- those that show how policy implementation is helping the systems and institutions to maintain or sustain their quality and;
- those that will discuss the problems that come with change both at the system and at the school levels

Change towards quality

This refers to policy implementation that is geared towards the achievement of quality. It is most common with those educational systems and institutions that are still struggling to raise their educational standards to an internationally acceptable level and to be able to transform their economies through education. Stephen (2009), presents privatization of education as a reliable key strategy in education reform at the system level, which should not be an end in itself, but rather part of a political strategy to ensure progress in education. He advocates for the transfer of power from the states to the local educational authorities in what he refers to as:

“The development of a set of complex relationships between: (1) organizational changes in public sector institutions (recalibration); (2) new state forms and modalities (governance, networks and performance management); and (3) the privatization of the state itself and the interests of capital (public services as a profit opportunity and ‘effective’ public service provision”. This implies that the transfer of power from the central to the local authorities, if skillfully associated with organizational governance qualities such as flexibility, innovation, accountability and commitment, will help create partnership in the education business, as Stephen, (2009) puts it, “It makes it possible to set local rhetoric, such as ‘partnership’, within the context of corporate logics of expansion, diversification, integration and profit, and to relate these commercial developments to changes in the state.”

The state needs to take a comfortable position to coordinate the interdependencies among different sites and spheres of action in policy and service delivery which are generated by diverse privatizations and as Jessop (2002; 2003) puts it: ‘the state retains an important role precisely because of the development of such regimes’ of governance. This means that there should be a well-coordinated synergy between the state and its educational partners, in order to attain the change towards quality in this collective business of education.

Hallinger (2010) examines the process of educational reform in five of Southeast Asia’s most rapidly developing nations over the past decade, and poses a rhetoric on whether there is anything uniquely peculiar to Asia in their success in education reform. These nations (Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand) as he presents, have undergone rapid transformations in their economies thanks to the effective implementation of similar educational reforms. A survey was conducted in which a total of 40 education policymakers and scholars evenly divided across these countries gave their perceptions of the reform strategies that were made in their various countries over the past decade. It turned out from the analysis of the data that there were some similarities in their approaches, as he puts it: “Although regional education forums exist, the nations of Southeast Asia have traditionally looked more to the economically developed nations of North America, Europe, ANZ and Japan for policy consultation than to one another”. Even though the article proposes that these nations stand to gain a lot from one another, the findings show that they all used benchmarking of the educational policies of the more advanced and industrialized countries from all over the world as a strategy to attain quality in their own systems.

In the same vein of change towards quality, Hannu Simola (2005) analyses the socio-historical factors behind the Finnish success in educational policy. He argues that Finland’s comprehensive educational success is as a result of two things; their authoritarian, obedient and collectivist mentality which is part of their culture, and the relatively high status of their teachers. “Schooling is not confined to pedagogy, didactics or subject matter, and that it also, even mainly, incorporates social, cultural, institutional and historical issues.” Here, the findings from the historical analysis of their rise to educational glory shows that Finland distinguished itself in education policy implementation by including some key aspects of their culture and background, and investing very much on raising the quality of their teachers.

Change to sustain quality

Educational systems, even those that are considered to have achieved quality, are still involved in a continuous strive for more quality. In fact, they are fighting hard to maintain and diversify their quality, by seeking for better and more efficient ways or approaches of implementing their policies in a rapidly changing world. Those are the countries which this study considers their efforts as a struggle to sustain the quality which they have already achieved.

While most growing educational systems and institutions have the preparation of their students for the very competitive global economic market as target for their educational quality, others who are already in this market, are now looking for more horizons. Pasi Sahlberg (2007), states that, “system-wide excellence in student learning is attainable at reasonable cost, using education policies differing from conventional market-oriented reform strategies prevalent in many other countries”. Finland is presented here as an example, having moved from an agrarian through an industrial and today a model knowledge economy, through their effective educational policies. A careful exploration of the Finnish education policies for innovation and change shows that, “The success of Finland as a small, relatively poor nation has been built upon flexibility and creativity in all aspects of society. In its education system, these principles have enabled schools to experiment with creativity, and teachers and students to assume risks, while seeking to reach their goals, whether these goals represent effective teaching or productive learning.”

Kairen (2018), make a critical analysis of current literature in the domain of professional standards for teachers, with focus on the Australian context. A review of literature that is highly relevant to both the past and present developments of this topic, show that Australia is experiencing a decline in PISA results and research has also proved that distinction in this exam is achieved by placing a lot of importance on the quality of teachers. From the research findings this article concludes that, “The global education community strives to improve outcomes for students and look to PISA results to vindicate their efforts. However, if the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are to be adopted as an integral part of professional development practices of pre-service teachers in Australia, it is essential that pre-service teachers connect them with their own practices and experiences.” As a way of maintaining the quality of their teachers and bouncing back to the top ranks of PISA, the article proposes a review of the professional standards of teachers in Australia.

Harm *et al.* (2004), presents the competence-based vocational education training in the Netherlands as a system measure to take the country’s educational quality to another level. Being one of the renowned educational systems in the world, the Dutch educational stakeholders are struggling to develop their vocational education and training through the effective implementation of the competence-based approach. “The underlying idea is that vocational education should enable students to acquire the competencies needed in their future professions and in society as a whole. Additionally, while working as professionals, they should continue to develop their competencies so that they are able to react to and anticipate future developments in their work and outside (Jenewein *et al.*, 2002).” This article provides a critical reflection on the usefulness of the competence movement for the development of Dutch Vocational education training. It concludes that “a knowledge-based economy requires more than knowledge from professionals”. This means that in order to take their quality to another level, they need to go beyond just the acquisition of knowledge, and learn competences.

Problems that arise in the process of change

There is always a price to pay for any meaningful change to occur in every human endeavor. Change should not only be measured in terms of what we stand to gain from it, but the measurement should also include the risk factors and problems involved in it. For an

educational policy to go through the process of implementation to attain its set objectives, systems should be ready to take the risk and brave the problems that will arise during the process.

Theresa Shanahan & Glen A. Jones (2007) present a critical analysis of the change to system-level governance in Canadian post-secondary education over a period of ten years-1995 to 2006, and the complications that came as a result of this change. It examines the major government policy initiatives in a bid to decentralize power and play a supportive role to the autonomous provinces in Canada. The terms of this transfer of power clearly stated that the federal government will make some cash and sponsor certain projects in these provinces, but because of some constraints, the government failed to fully respect its engagements. This led to some adjustments at the regional levels, which greatly affected the smooth functioning of the post-secondary education in Canada. Also, immediately after the implementation process of these reforms, the provinces faced a lot of pressure from the federal government, which slowed down their activities.

Ingrid Helgoy *et al.* (2007), shows a typical conflict situation in the process of the transfer of power, over deregulation which is the transfer of power to local authorities and re-regulation which refers to the reclamation of already transferred power by the state. This article is a case study of Scandinavia where, “traditionally education in Scandinavia has been subject to rigorous central regulation. Yet during the last two decades it has undergone processes of decentralization and deregulation and, more recently – since the beginning of this century – signs of re-regulation have appeared”. Similarly, Britain’s educational reforms recently followed a different direction, “moving away from local governance towards a system of stronger central regulation and increased marketization”. There are a lot of contradictions in the manner in which New Public Management of educational reforms is carried out and that is why this article questions whether there exist any real local autonomy of authorities, schools and professionals.

In the same line of reasoning, Christopher Day *et al.* (2007), describes the effects of recent educational policies on teachers’ sense of professionalism in Portugal and Britain. It explores the Portuguese reform context with a lot of flexibility, imposed autonomy and increasing accountability, which has caused Portuguese schools to be considered as educational centers with new ways of approaching school curricula. Also based on the national curriculum, the teachers have been granted autonomy to construct their own curriculum projects, based on the students’ needs. To evaluate the impact of these policies on teachers’ sense of professionalism, a total of 240 teachers participated in a survey. The participants were from the two countries. A qualitative data analysis was done and the findings were that “the increase in bureaucracy linked to increase in workload; change of expectations of professionals and reduced job satisfaction and commitment”.

Paul Morris & Ian Scott (2010), analyses the relationship between educational reform and the changing political system in Hong Kong. It looks at how the implementation theory may contribute to an understanding of difficulties of achieving educational reform, why this process was used in the colonial era, how these policies were formulated and implemented and the analysis of the policy implementation environment. It concludes that educational reform like any other, is very difficult to describe. “The focus of the literature is principally on the constraints that face policy-makers, not on the overall design and problems of implementation inherent in the political system and the processes of policy-making within that system. This article suggests that there are indeed problems in the relationship between policy-makers and implementers that have obstructed meaningful educational reform in Hong Kong”.

Challenges to education quality in Cameroon

As it is the case in most developing economies in the world and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, education in Cameroon is facing several challenges which over the years, have slowed down the process of attaining an acceptable degree of quality. Despite the efforts that have been made so far, there are still a lot of loopholes in the country's education system which mar the productivity of the workforce, in the move towards economic growth. These challenges range from the low level of innovation, through the lack of a national Master plan for ICT in education, the limited opportunities for Teacher professional development, the two different systems of evaluation, to some difficulties in governance.

Innovation in education

The education sector strategy 2013 – 2020 of the National Strategy Document for Growth and Employment (Government of Cameroon 2009), targeted inclusive foundational skills development in basic education in Cameroon. As far as skills formation quality is concerned, the government has made few attempts to foster relevance in public training programs through encouraging links between training institutions, industry and research institutions or setting standards for the recruitment and training of heads and instructors in training institutions. However, there is not enough evidence to whether these industries and training providers do participate in curriculum design and development in the country. The skills development agenda is very much driven by general education, instead of technical and vocational training which is supposed to produce the necessary skills required for the effective attainment of the country's emergence vision by 2035. This is why despite the promising strategic framework for skills and workforce development, Cameroon's performance is still very low in terms of service delivery (World Bank, 2016).

The challenge in educational innovation in Cameroon is also evident in the slow take-off of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) use in the teaching and learning process in the country. The Law of Orientation of Basic and Secondary Education (Law No. 98/004 of April 14, 1998) which is based on the recommendations of the National Education acknowledges in general terms the potential contributions of ICT in education. This Law states in Section 25 (Part III) that: "The education provided in schools shall take into account scientific and technological advancement and shall be tailored in terms of content and method, to national and international economic, scientific, technological, social and cultural trends".

The use of ICTs was officially introduced into the Cameroon secondary education system in 2001, following a Presidential Decree. As a result, computers were introduced into many General Secondary and Technical/Vocational schools, and most of these computers were provided in the form of presidential grants of multimedia centers connected to the internet. Since then, a lot of research has been carried out on how to better implement ICT as a policy in Cameroon's education, but very little progress has been made in the process. Shaibou et al (2017 p.148) blame this slow pace of ICT implementation on the lack of "a national strategic plan for the integration of modern technology within the school curricula and pedagogical activities." ICT being globally recognized as an indispensable tool for the enhancement of the teaching and learning must be given the place it deserves in Cameroon's education system to facilitate access to quality in education.

Teachers' professional development

The limited access to further training, seminars, workshops, and follow-up for capacity building in-service training programs is a significant barrier to education quality in Cameroon. If we go by the popular saying that: "the quality of any educational system can never rise above the quality of its teachers", then Cameroon still has a lot of work to do to ensure this quality. Most teachers teach for so many years without taking any referential courses and with limited access to capacity building seminars. The government has recently made an effort to introduce Open and Distance Learning programs for nursery and primary school

teachers in some state universities (Wirsiy H.M, 2013) but the implementation and access to these courses is still a problem for many teachers. This is especially because a majority of them are not versed in the use of it. The only capacity-building forum which to which teachers of the secondary education have access throughout the year is a one-day pedagogic seminar that is organized within every academic year. The challenges involved in the organization of this annual seminar have made many teachers consider this day as an administrative formality, the reason why most of them do not even prepare before attending these sessions. The question here is whether quality can be attained in education without proper capacity building in-service seminars for teachers?

The complex education system

Another very challenging issue in Cameroon's education is the co-existence of two education systems; the Anglo-Saxon education system and the French education systems. These two systems are a heritage from the country's colonial experiences under Britain and France and operate together in the different schools under the two systems. The major challenges here, as Ngalim (2017, p.840) puts it, are that there are profound differences in the curricular contents and the teaching and evaluation methods of the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon. This researcher makes use of a common "academic myth" which holds that students from the French sub-system do well in Mathematics and Physics than those from the English sub-system, who on the other hand, outperform them in other subjects like Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History, and Geology. This is a pointer to the fact that the teaching of Mathematics and Physics in the francophone sub-system is favorable to the interests of the learners than in the Anglo-Saxon sub-system. Also, there are two educational evaluation boards in the country, which operate under the two different sub-systems. These examples and many other differences that exist between these two systems are a great hindrance to quality in Cameroon's education, and attempts towards the harmonization of these two sub-systems have often been jeopardized by the unwillingness of both parties to surrender aspects of their sub-system to embrace those of the other.

Infrastructural development, monitoring, and evaluation system and policy governance constitute some of the major challenges to education quality in Cameroon today. Like most developing economies in the world, Cameroon's education system is plagued by difficulties relating to budgetary and managerial inconsistencies. The various Ministries that are in charge of education in the country depend on budgetary allocations which are approved by the legislature and these budgets are often insufficient to effectively address the numerous problems in the country's education system. As a result of these budgetary limitations, the Ministries are not able to sponsor impact evaluation and skills-related data collection and reporting, and as a result, they rarely use data to monitor and evaluate to improve on system performance, (World Bank, 2016 p.83). Infrastructural development is also carried out in a very selective manner and as a result of the financial limitations, a greater number of schools still lack infrastructure and basic facilities needed to ensure that learners study in conducive environments.

Technical and vocational education in Cameroon is placed under two different government Ministries; technical education is managed by the Ministry of Secondary education while vocational training is the responsibility of the Ministry in charge of Employment and Professional Training. The government has, in recent years, made efforts that have led to a significant increase in Technical education enrollment rates. The creation of three more Government Higher Technical Teachers Training Colleges in the country in recent years is a great booster to Technical education expansion in the country. The Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training has equally opened a National Training Centre to future trainers of the vocational training centers in the country. These examples and many other government efforts are indicative of the government's will to improve on the quality of learning in

Cameroon, particularly as far as technical and vocational education are concerned. However, due to some constraints, the results of these efforts are not fast coming. Also, there is still no Masterplan to ensure that the policies applied in these schools are effective enough to respond to the developmental needs of the country.

General government expenditure on education (current, capital, and transfers) is expressed as a percentage of total general government expenditure on all sectors (including health, education, social services, etc.). It includes expenditure funded by transfers from international sources to the government. The general government expenditure usually refers to local, regional and central governments, (World Bank, 2017). As illustrated in the clustered columns below, government expenditure on education in Cameroon rose from 11.68% in 2000 up to 21.56% in 2007 and has dropped significantly to only 15.46% in 2017. This implies that the government has shifted its interest away from the business of education. General government expenditure on education (current, capital, and transfers) is expressed here as a percentage of GDP. It includes expenditure funded by transfers from international sources to the government.

Total government expenditure on education in Cameroon from 2000 to 2017.

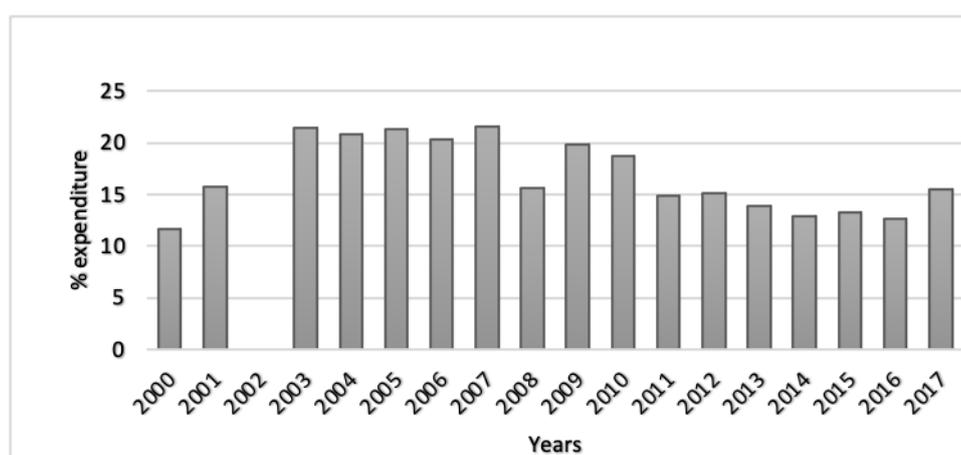


Figure 1. Total government expenditure on education in Cameroon

Graduate unemployment has also been one of the major pre-occupations of the government of Cameroon in recent years, with measures taken to provide jobs to the increasing number of graduates from secondary and higher institutions of learning in and out of the country. Unemployment refers to the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment (ILO statistics, 2017). The creation of more academic and training institutions in Cameroon since 2010, has led to a constant increase in the enrollment rates and a corresponding increase in the number of graduates who are looking for jobs in the country. In response to this rising demand for employment, the government has, in recent years, embarked on an employment plan to provide jobs for these young Cameroonians. However, due to financial limitations, a majority of these graduates are still unemployed and even those who are employed, are not satisfied with their incomes.

The trend of Total Unemployment rates in Cameroon, 2000 to 2018 (% of the total labor force).

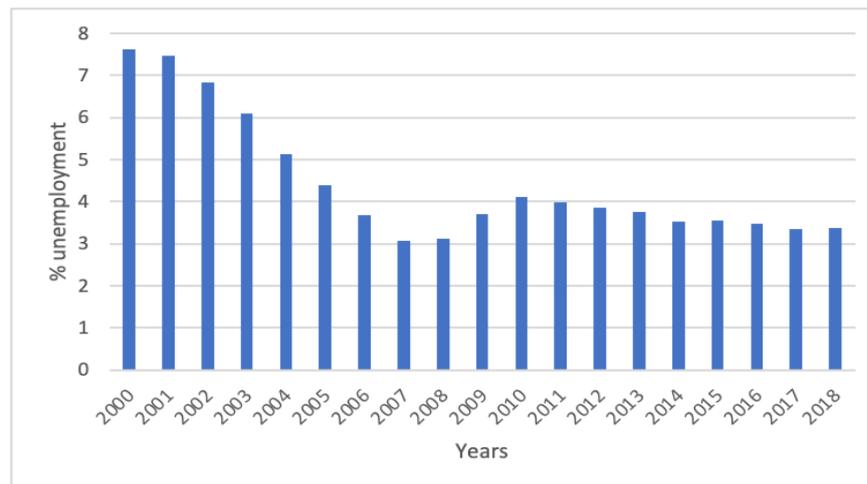


Figure 2. Unemployment rates in Cameroon from 2000-2018
(Source: World Bank ,2018)

Cameroon's labor force is one of the most important assets for the country's development. This total labour force has been on a steady growth, from 6,987,754 in 2000 through 8,697,713 in 2010, to 11,032,181 in 2018, (ILO Statistics, 2018). Labor force comprises people ages 15 and older who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period. It includes people who are currently employed and people who are unemployed but seeking work as well as first-time job-seekers. Not everyone who works is included here. Unpaid workers, family workers, and students are often omitted, and some countries do not count members of the armed forces. Labor force size tends to vary during the year as seasonal workers enter and leave. The total labor force in expansion in Cameroon from 2000 to 2018.

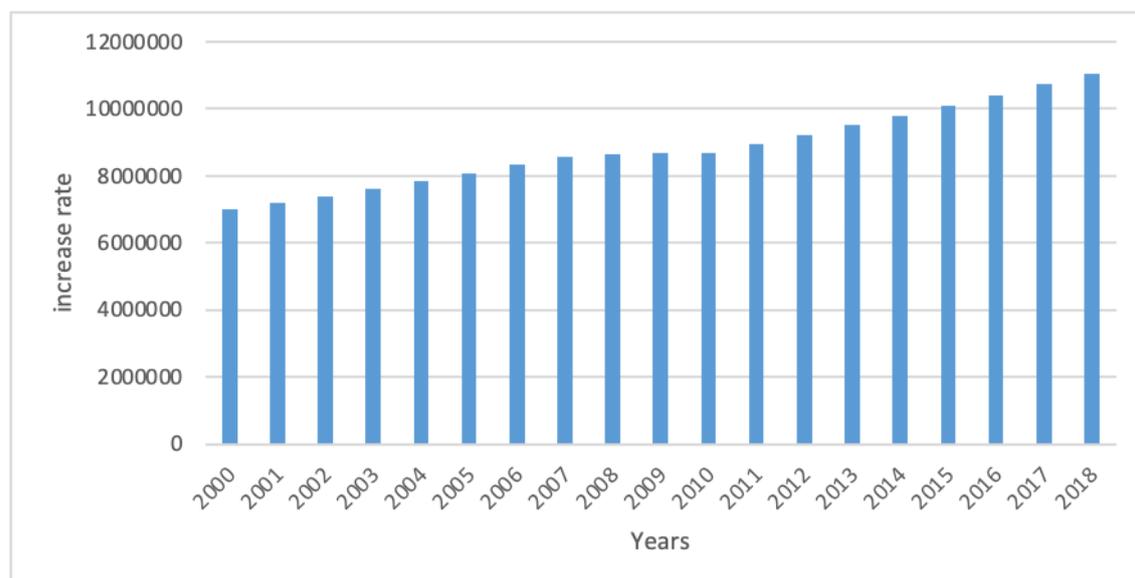


Figure 3. Total labour force in Cameroon
(Source: World Bank, 2018)

When educational reform or policies are initiated, the expected result is always an improvement in schools and students' achievement. This improvement can be interpreted in two ways, depending on the situation of the educational system concerned. A lot of research has been carried out on how educational systems and institutions are struggling in their

various ways with the main goal of attaining substantial improvement in the quality of their education (Stephen J. Ball(2009); Hallinger(2010); Hannu Simola(2005). Much has also been published on how educational systems that have already attained quality, are trying to diversify and sustain their quality (Pasi Sahlberg(2007); Kairen(2018); Harm *et al.* (2004)). Most research publications on educational policy implementation both at the system and school levels, have tried to bring out the problems that come with change in educational reforms (Christopher Day *et al.*, (2007); Ingrid Helgoy *et al.*, (2007); Shanahan & Jones (2007); Morris & Scott (2010)). The improvement, therefore, does not come without difficulties. systems brave challenges to bring about reasonable change. There is no educational system that has no challenges, rather all those systems that have succeeded, had to overcome the storm of challenges to attain their set goals. Therefore, it is important to understand the causes of some of these problems, in order to work out ways through which they can be overcome, to reach set goals in educational policy reforms.

CONCLUSION

As the World Bank, (2016) report puts it, “Cameroon’s education system has a rich potential in workforce development, which can be a springboard for the country’s economic development vision”. Unlike the case in many other developing countries in Africa, technical and vocational education in Cameroon is clearly defined and effectively managed alongside general education. However, the education system is still highly dominated by Generalized rather than the specialized technical and vocational education, which the country needs to effectively pursue its emergence plan. Cameroonians still depend a lot on the government for employment, which in most cases, even when these jobs are available, the wages and salaries are low. With consistent and more productive policies skillfully implemented following evidence-based methods and strategies, Cameroon will be able to attain the quality that is needed in its education to drive the country to emergence by 2035.

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