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PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN EVENING SCHOOLS

Bipoupout^{1*} Ernest Ukumadam Anji²

^{*12}University of Yaoundé

***Corresponding Author:-**

Email: bebey1260@yahoo.fr

Abstract:-

This study aimed at investigating the effect of professional training of teachers on the academic performance of students in evening schools. The working hypothesis which guided this study read thus; “the quality of the professional training of teachers influences the academic performance of students in evening schools”. The survey design was used in this study. As a result, 64 teachers were randomly selected from three Anglophone evening schools in Yaoundé to form the sample. The statistical tool that was used to verify the hypotheses was the chi-square. The results confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the level of a teacher’s training and the academic performance of students in evening schools. Based on these findings, some suggestions were made to holders of the education community in order to increase the professional competences of evening school teachers.

Key terms:-Teacher’s training, academic performance, students, evening schools.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between Teacher's training and academic performance of students in evening schools. The need of improving the level of education is becoming more and more important in the society; Evening Schools also have become an essential sector in the Educational Land scape. This is particularly true when we consider their number in our major towns. This importance can be seen not only from their number but also in the role they play in the preparation of a good number of Cameroonians in Certificate examinations. These include: BEPC, Probatoire, BAC, GCE Ordinary and Advanced Levels. This is further confirmed by a study that was carried out by Docgne as cited by Kipupu (1991, p.3) "Les cours du soir sont devenus les collèges du soir" [Evening schools have become Evening secondary schools]. In reality, Evening Schools now perform the role or activities of the normal educational institutions that function during the day.

According to Tissot (1976) as cited by kipupu the functioning of evening schools is an old practice in Europe. This started with the notion of adult education in France in 1794. It was made official in 1819, by a royal ordinance. This ordinance made the national conservatory of arts the first institution for the promotion of evening classes for adults who desired to enrich their knowledge and acquire more skills in their professions. From the point of view of Gal (1971, p.9) "evening schools from the beginning were considered as structures meant for continuous education, they were seen as opportunities that allowed for people to develop their professional and intellectual aptitudes so as to live a fulfilling life." It is therefore difficult to find a nation that does not possess evening schools. Brunell as cited by kipupu (1991) says that Sweden has 30% of its active population pursuing education in evening schools. Courses range from lessons in Economics to music. The present state of affairs imposes a development of new pedagogic approaches that will accommodate present day evening schools. This is so because it is glaring that the present function of evening schools in Cameroon are slightly different from what were their original roles in the past. According to Law number 76/15 of 18th July 1976 as cited by Kipupu (1991, p.6) "Evening schools were considered school structures that functioned after official working hours. They started at 6pm and closed at 10pm". Their objectives were principally for (i) classes to promote literacy; (ii) classes to ameliorate and perfect professional skills; (iii) classes for the primary, secondary or university studies. These classes were meant especially for persons whose ages were above the school going ages in primary and secondary schools. It was for such a reason that a majority of those who attended such schools were adults.

However, the situation now is different because the government grants authorization for evening schools to function largely in the secondary education sector. As a result, we find young children of school going age attending evening schools starting from 6^e and form one in both the francophone and Anglophone sub systems respectively. It is worth mentioning that evening schools are largely owned and administered by private operators. There are few evening schools that are owned by churches, it is for this reason that it is the secretariat for lay private education that is first consulted for the creation of an evening school. From there, documents are forwarded to the regional delegation for secondary education. The delegation after verification then transmits them to the minister for final approval.

The proliferation of evening schools and their near total dependence on private initiatives attracts or calls for investigation on how these academic structures are administered. This is pertinent because information obtained from preliminary investigations at the secretariat of lay private education for the Center and East regions are disturbing. According to information obtained from Madam Amagab Else, head of general secretariat for lay private education on the 13th of October 2009, there is no organ in the secretariat of lay private education that controls or inspects evening schools once they are authorized to operate. In addition, the secretariat does not have an inventory as to the number of evening schools that really exist, be them legal or illegal.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

An evening school could be defined as all teaching activities that take place after official working hours; as a result, evening schools take place in the evening between 6 pm to 10 pm. Evening schools have as objectives (i) to promote literacy especially amongst adults; (ii) to ameliorate and perfect professional skills; (iii) teaching at the primary, secondary and the university levels. The objective of this study is related to academic performance in secondary and high schools levels of evening classes. These schools are largely owned and administered by private operators.

Concerning teachers 'training, the concept of trained teachers refers to teachers who have acquired training at a teachers training college. According to special rules and regulations of the corps of national Education civil servants Secondary school teachers are recruited on the basis of qualification from among ex –students from the advanced teachers training college. This means first cycle for secondary school teachers and second cycle for high school teachers. Therefore a trained teacher has knowledge first of all in his discipline of choice and also knows how to exercise the skills of learning and teaching. According to Farrant (1980), a trained teacher is equipped with the pedagogic skills on how to transmit knowledge onto learners.

Professional training of teachers: trained teachers and teachers' professional competences

Perrenoud (1999) regards competence in terms of a teacher's mastery of subject matter, his aptitude to teach, to manage the class and to evaluate. Bipoupout and al (2006) define competence as a 'know-how' to act which consists of the mobilisation of a set of resources (Knowledge, Know-how, attitudes...), to solve meaningful problem situations (Roegiers, 2006). One of the different aspects of a teachers' professional competence is related to the pedagogic competence of the teacher.

Perrenoud (1999) considers teacher's pedagogic competence as his abilities and aptitudes to organise and animate learning situations, to manage the progression or continuation of learning, to implicate the learners in the learning process, to organise group work, to manage his personal continuous training and also, to inform and implicate parents in issues relating to their children's education.

Uche (2001) holds that teaching in a classroom requires effective demonstration of a repertoire of general and specific skills which enable pupils to learn effectively. According to him, a teacher should not efficiently teach without being competent. A competent teacher is an effective facilitator, fully prepared in his subject; showing a broad general knowledge and understanding of the role of the school in the society; getting an adequate concept of himself; mastering basic principles of the learning process; efficiently handling management of the classroom. Tchombe (2004) stated that for one to embark on teaching, he must be competent in many domains such as lesson planning, teaching techniques and evaluation techniques. She also confirms that student's participation and involvement in the teaching-learning is a major determinant of an efficient teaching-learning process. The quality of education in any school depends also on the teacher's competence in teaching.

Regarding academic performance, according to Lavin and Manjong (1991) as cited in Anjesi (2005), academic performance refers to some methods of expressing a student's scholastic standing. In this work we shall consider academic performance as the rate of success that students obtain firstly in the different academic disciplines, secondly in promotion exams and lastly in certificate or official exams.

Evening schools as institutions for school drop outs

According to Kakmeni (1999, p.1) evening schools are playing a strategic role in Cameroon. These academic institutions admit as students mainly those who have dropped out from ordinary day schools. Kakmeni (1999) started off with five research hypothesis. To him; evening school students are largely those who for one reason or the other abandoned the ordinary day schools. Some of the reasons according to him why most students in evening schools drop out of ordinary schools are:

(i) The reasons related to poor academic performance. Information obtained from an interview with 156 students showed that 70 were dismissed from day schools for academic reasons. This stood at a percentage of 44.87 %.

(ii) Reasons related to financial difficulties. According to Kakmeni (1999) out of 186 students that he interviewed; 64 declared that their parents or sponsors were incapable of paying their school fees and provide for other school needs like books and uniform. This percentage stood at 41.02 %.

(iii) Reasons related to advancement in age. Out of the 156 students interviewed in the evening schools, 59 of them declared that they dropped out of school because they had gone beyond the official age prescribed by the ministerial text. As a result, the ordinary day schools could no longer contain them as students. This percentage stood at 37.82 %.

(iv) Reasons related to extra-curricular activities; out of the 64 students who dropped out due to financial difficulties; 64 of them were involved in businesses and other income generating activities. As a result; it was not possible for them to attend school normally in the ordinary day schools. This percentage stood at 80 %.

(v) Reasons related to the amelioration of socio-professional status. According to the declaration of 51 students interviewed in evening schools; out of 156; evening schools gave them the opportunity to further their studies and ameliorate socio-professional status. They also declared that it wasn't possible to continue studies in an ordinary day school. This percentage stood at 32.05 %.

From the above five principal reasons; it can be concluded that evening schools according to findings of Kakmeni (1999) are composed largely of students who had once studied in the ordinary day schools. However for one reason or the other they were obliged to drop out and continue their studies in an evening school. It is worth mentioning that these studies have greatly highlighted the principal role that evening schools play and are expected to play in the Cameroonian society: that of offering education to those who cannot make it in the ordinary day schools. This study will investigate on how evening schools are administered in the domain of teachers' training; this with the intention to see how this element affects the academic performance of students in evening schools.

The effectiveness of schooling

According to Ndiva (2003) some studies have been carried out on the effectiveness of schooling in developed countries and in developing countries. Schools have inputs and outputs. One of their purposes is to take children (inputs) and convert them into something more valuable that is educated skilled and employable persons (output). Generally, effectiveness and quality are directly related to schools. This is what we generally call performance. Outputs of schools are a function of the interaction of structure, individuals, culture and politics of education as constrained by environmental forces (Ukumadam Anji, 2010).

Issues of organisational effectiveness and quality represent fundamental challenges to practice in school administration. "School output are the performance of students, teachers and educational administrators" Ndiva (2003, p.470) It is worth knowing that, teacher quality, internal harmony, effort, student achievement, job satisfaction and overall performance quality are examples of indicators of organisational effectiveness and quality This positively leads to internal efficiency. On the other hand, there is internal inefficiency of the educational system which is the wastage rate or educational wastage that includes dropping out of school, repeating classes and others. These are all things that can be reversed by all the above mentioned elements and especially by the quality of the teachers in a school. This quality

can only be assured by the level of professional training acquired by a teacher (Bih, 2007). This makes it necessary for the notion of professional training to be duly considered.

Vygotsky's social constructivist theory

As a constructivist, Vygotsky emphasized as cited in Sandrock (2004) that individuals learn best when they actively construct knowledge and understanding. This theory takes into account the social context of learning and upholds that knowledge is mutually built and constructed (Bearison and Dorval, 2002 cited by Bipouput and Nguefo, 2011). This means that involvement with others creates opportunities for students to evaluate and refine their understanding. Their exposition to the thinking of others and their participation in creating shared understanding further enhance the construction of their knowledge. In this way experiences in social contexts provide an important mechanism for the development of student's thinking. Vygotsky also stresses the importance of what he called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); the ZPD refers to the various tasks that are too difficult for children to master alone but that can be learned with guidance assistance from adults or more skilled peers. The ZPD is made up of two limits: (i) the lower limit is the level of problem solving reached by the child working independently; and (ii) the upper limit is the level of additional responsibility that a child can attain with the assistance of an adult or more skilled child.

Vygotsky's emphasis on the ZPD is the concept of scaffolding. This is a technique that involves changing the level of support of learning. This technique demands that during the teaching-learning process, the more-skilled person adjust the amount of guidance to fit the learner's current performance level.

From the analysis of Vygotsky's Theory a set of implications could be drawn. First of all, it is very necessary for a teacher of Evening schools to be able to identify his student's ZPD, so as to be able to select the guidance and assistance to bring to the learner. The second one is that, the guidance and assistance given to the learner come from more skilled persons. These point to the level of competence of the teacher or learner's peer group. A teacher should first of all master his subject before he can pretend to teach. It therefore implies that teachers' training is vital for effective teaching. Finally, a well-trained teacher will be able to make efficient use of scaffolding in the process of teaching and learning in Evening schools.

This theory shows that an efficient teaching-learning process will not be possible in Evening schools without well-trained or competent teachers. In other words, when investigating on students' academic performance in Evening schools, one of the pertinent tracks consists on analysing teachers' professional training.

The quality of the professional training of evening schools' teachers in question

As observed, Evening Schools have become an essential sector in the Educational Landscape a society where the need of improving the level of education is becoming higher and higher amongst people (Docgne as cited by Kipupu (1991) In reality, Evening Schools now perform the role or activities of the normal educational institutions that function during the day. On the other hand, students' academic performance in evening schools is low. In brief, this piece of research on teachers' training and students' academic performance in evening schools deals with the problem of the efficiency or the quality of the teaching-learning process in these specific schools.

Research question

Given the fact that most students from evening schools are not producing the expected results; repetitions in class and promotion examinations are quite high; there are many occasions where students who dropped out of ordinary day schools, dropped out of evening schools, no matter their level of maturity and interest geared toward studies (Amagab, 2009 as cited by Ukumadam Anji, 2010). This mediocrity in academic performance in some of the evening schools has left most parents, educational partners, educational experts, administrators and even students with some questions that deserve concrete answers. The main question was raised: 'to what extend do elements of school administration influence the academic performance of students in evening schools?' In other words and to specify the question: 'to what extend does the degree of training of teachers influence the academic performance of students in evening schools?'

The hypothesis of a very determinant effect of teachers' professional training

From these questions was stated the general hypothesis that 'Elements of school administration influence the academic performance of students in evening schools'. The research hypothesis suggested the existence of a significant relationship between the level of a teacher's professional training and the academic performance of students in evening schools.

Objective and significance of the Study

The study intended to find if there exist a significant relationship between school administration and the academic performance of students in evening schools. Specifically, the objective of this piece of research was to investigate if students in evening schools taught by better trained teachers can perform better than those taught by untrained teachers.

This research is directed towards examining irregularities in school administration that negatively affect academic performance in evening schools. It will drum up awareness in teachers, school administrators and educational authorities. Each in his or her own domain depending on the results, this study will help school administrators to recruit better trained and experienced teachers or competent teachers so as to improve academic performance in the

evening schools. Additionally, this will awaken educational authorities to accord more importance to students in evening schools that have become a vital component in our educational system.

Academic performance as earlier mentioned is the principal objective of any academic institution. This can be influenced by several factors which could include; Parental status, Psychological state of students, Environment, administrative and others. This study will be limited to the influences that some elements of school administration have on academic performance of students in evening schools. Some of the elements of school administration include the training of teachers, pedagogic inspections, teachers' motivation and school discipline. Regarding the training of teachers, three indicators were selected: the level of education, the professional training, the in-service training.

A three part analysis

After introduction, the methodological aspect is presented, then results and finally tracks for an increased level of teachers' professional competences to improve the quality of students' academic performance in evening schools.

A verification method of the hypothesis of a very determinant effect of teachers' professional raining

Subjects of the study. The study was carried out in Yaoundé. The research design used was a survey design. Concerning the subjects, they were selected from a population made up of all the functional Anglophone evening schools in Yaoundé, using 133 teachers and 1543 students. The word function has been employed because some evening schools that were not having administrative organs or structures were visited. There were some that were very unstable functionally such that obtaining relevant data was impossible. The simple random technique was used to select three Anglophone evening schools, using a total of 64 teachers that is 57 male and 7 female. Below is a list of the selected functional Anglophone evening schools.

Table:-1: Summary of sample selected

Evening school	Teachers	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
English	18	16	88.88	2	11.12
Harvard	20	17	85	3	15
Oxford	26	24	92.30	2	7.70
Total	64	57		07	

Instrument for data collection. The instrument used for this study was the questionnaire designed for teachers. This instrument was made up of preliminary questions that were meant to identify the teacher in terms of sex, the school in which he or she teaches and the discipline. The questions were aimed at soliciting responses that were precise and required for testing the research hypothesis. The last section dwelt on questions related to the performances of students at different levels, like in promotion exams, sequential tests, end of term and even official exams.

Validation of instruments, procedure for data collection and analysis

Validity and reliability of the instrument. To determine its validity or "the extent to which a research instrument measures what it was designed to measure", and its reliability, the questionnaire was constructed respecting the congruence between the objective and the content (Luma, 1999, p.81). Next specialists in construction of instrument and in measurement also appreciated them. In addition, a pilot test was conducted on two small groups of teachers who were not among the sample but have the same characteristic as those included in the sample. The different results have been correlated.

Data Analysis. The collected data was analysed using comparing percentages and the Pearson product correlation was used to measure the degree of relationship between the two variables. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the information contained in the questionnaires. The degree of relationship was described in terms of small correlation, moderate correlation and strong correlation.

Table 2: Basis for the classification of correlation coefficient magnitude

Range of magnitude	Degree of magnitude
0.00-0.272	Low magnitude
0.272-0.544	Moderate magnitude
0.544-0.816	High magnitude

As can be noticed above, magnitudes falling between 0.000-.0272 shall be considered low while those falling between 0.272-0.544 shall be considered moderate while magnitude falling between 0.544-0.816 shall be taken to be high.

Main variables. As far as the main variables are concerned, the independent variable was "school administration". From it, the working variable derived was "teachers' training" made up of the Level of education, the professional training and the in-service training. The dependent variable was "students' academic performance" made up of the Promotion Exams, the Sequential Exams, the End of term Exams and the Certificate Exams.

Table 3: Synopsis of hypothesis, variables, indicators and modalities

Research hypothesis	Variables	Indicators	Modalities
The more trained teachers are, the better the academic performance of the students.	IV The degree of teachers' training	-Level of education. -professional training. -in-service training.	-BACC -Degree -DIPESI or II.
	DV The rate of students' academic performance	-Promotion Exams. -Sequential Exams. -End of term Exams. -Certificate Exams.	-0 -49 % -50 -69% -70 % and above.

IV: Independent variable

DV: dependent variable

Results of the study

The set of data collected is presented in a descriptive manner. This first step is followed by the second one that consists of verifying the research hypothesis.

Presentation of the results on teachers' training and students' performance

Table 4: Distribution of teachers according to academic and professional training

Qualification	Frequency	Frequency percentage
Advanced level or BAC	4	8.16
Bachelors degree	17	34.47
DIPES I	8	16.33
DIPES II	16	32.65
Masters degree and others	4	8.16
Total	49	100%

From table four, 48.98 of the teachers have gotten a professional training. 34.47% have a bachelors degree, 8,16 % have the Advanced level and 8.16% have a masters degree and other certificates. The professional training includes the holders of DIPES 1 (Diploma for secondary schools teachers) and of DIPES 2 (Diploma for High schools teachers).

The hypothesis of a very determinant effect of teachers' professional training

The stated research hypothesis was 'The quality of the professional training of teachers influences the academic performance of students in evening schools'

The Pearson correlations were used to test the research hypothesis. The statistical processing of the data was done through the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software (SPSS 11.0 for Windows®) as shown in the tables below.

After verification, the following results were obtained: $\chi^2_{cal} = 16.6 > \chi^2_{critical} = 15.51$. The alternative hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis rejected. To conclude, the results suggest that there is a significant relationship between a teacher's training and the academic performance of students. The summary of results related to the verification of the research hypothesis is below presented.

Table 5: Summary of findings resulting from the verification of hypothesis

Hypothesis	Level of significance	Degree of freedom	$\chi^2_{critical}$	$\chi^2_{calculated}$	Findings	Conclusion on Findings	Correlation coefficient	Range of magnitude	Decision on relationship and magnitude
Hr	0.05	8	15.51	16.6	$\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{crit}$	H_0 is rejected while H_a is retained	0.5	0.5-0.6	A positive relationship and a moderate magnitude

Discussion of the results on professional training of teachers and students' performance

The main objective of this research was to find out how teachers 'training affects the academic performance of students in evening schools. The major assumption was that the quality of the professional training of teachers will positively influence the academic performance of students. Consequently, the working hypothesis stated at the beginning was developed and tested. The results of the findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between the level of teachers' training and the rate of academic performance of students. This finding was arrived at when following the description and inference of data collected. From teachers, students taught by trained teachers perform better than those taught by untrained teachers in evening schools. In other words, the more trained teachers are, the better the academic performance of students in evening schools.

These results are in line with the findings of Bih (2007) who carried out a study on students' academic performance and the level of professional training of teachers. Result show that 70% of students taught by trained teachers performed better than those taught by untrained teachers. 12 teachers out of 16 who have DIPES II(the Diploma for

teachers of High schools) taught students who scored marks above 70 %. This stood at a percentage of 75 %. This is opposed to 5.88 % of teachers who have a Bachelor degree. Just one of them taught students who scored above 70 %. There was just 1 out of 17 teachers who taught students who scored marks above 70 % in his discipline. The performance of students taught by advanced level holders and BACC is worst. The analysis shows that no teacher who is a holder of Advanced level or BACC taught a student who scored marks above 70 %. It is therefore important to recruit trained teachers to teach in evening schools, they are those who master the different pedagogic approaches and methods. This is true because even teachers of DIPES I level (the Diploma for teachers of secondary schools) according to data collected taught students who scored marks from 50 % and above.

Conclusion

School administration is very significant in influencing the academic performance of students (Ukumadam Anji, 2010). The objective of this study was to investigate on the relationships that exist between professional training of teachers and academic performance of students in evening schools. The research started off with three aspects of professional training of teachers which were the Level of education, the professional training and the in-service training. Data was collected using a questionnaire from 49 teachers in 3 Anglophone evening schools in Yaoundé that fell in the sample. The data collected were analyzed using the chi-square test independence. The research hypothesis was confirmed revealing that a significant relationship exists between school administration and the academic performance of students in evening schools in general, in particular between the quality of the professional training of teachers and the academic performance of students in evening school.

This implies that the ministry should work hand in glove with the secretariat of lay private education. This will enhance a putting in place of an organ that can ensure the regular and effectiveness of teachers' professional training in evening schools. Findings show that students taught by trained teachers perform better. It's a sheer waste of time and efforts when proprietors employ teachers who cannot deliver the goods. In addition, teachers in evening schools should be conscious that they have the destiny of students in their hands. Most of these students are coming from problematic socio-economic backgrounds. Evening schools to them remain the only opportunity to catch up with their future aspirations. Teachers need to manifest the highest degree of professionalism. This has to be seen in the way they prepare their lessons, teach in the classrooms, their relationship with students as well as in the way they keep on increasing the quality of their professional competences. This conclusion harmonized with the study realized by Mahulo (2012) who reminded that teachers should be professionally trained to enhance their productivity. After all, training remains one of the key determinants to change the school (Bipoupout, Boulhan, Diallo, Manda Kizabi, Roegiers, Zida Traore, 2008).

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