

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Higher Education Curriculum Implementation and Employability in Cameroon: The Case of The University of Yaounde 1

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**Abstract :-**This research was conducted by using the content analysis technique in connection with document analysis, which is one of the qualitative research methods widely used today in writing articles. How can universities ensure that they are preparing their students for today's highly competitive job market? Employability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century presents some burning issues which Higher education realize as lacking behind through Curriculum planning and implementation. In this Era of a global village, the higher education system is also facing a lot of challenges which must be overcome through innovations in the Curriculum planning and implementation. The employment prospect for most higher education graduates worldwide are bleak for a number of reasons which include rapid technological change, inability of governments and partners to anticipate for young graduates, low level of professional training, low level of economic situation, all these makes it difficult for new graduates to have skilled knowledge. These employability skills include presentation and communication of ideas, project identification and development, project planning and execution, planning and problem solving, social development and interaction.

**Key words:** initiative, skills, project planning and execution, employability, innovation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Did you know that about 4.20% ( National Survey)of young graduates in Cameroon are unemployed? Higher education and employability makes it a crucial contribution to the current reassessment of higher education in Cameroon. When focusing on how graduates from colleges and universities struggle to find themselves into the job market and be recruited. About half of masters and PhD graduates now go into jobs outside academia immediately upon graduation as a result of certificates inflation and inadequate skills for easy employment. Unemployment (David Bogle) says huge improvements in the training of doctoral graduates deserve more attention from employers. Enhancing employability skills within our colleges and universities becomes of paramount importance. The growth and employment strategy paper (GESP) which covers the first ten years aimed at reducing poverty and increasing the annual growth rate to 5.5 per cent over the period 2010-2020, reducing the under employment rate from 75.8 per cent to less than 50 per cent by 2020 with the creation of thousands of formal and informal jobs per annum over the next ten

years. It also aim at reducing the income poverty rate from 39.9 percent in 2007 to 28.7 per cent in 2020. With the implementation of the LMD system, under graduate years are fixed at three years and masters at two years while PhD at three years.

Despite the introduction of these professional courses, unemployment rates still remain high due to insufficient skills acquired by graduates, like communication skills, creativity, and inadequate reinforcement of research efforts that stands out to be capital. However, the Cameroon government is making some efforts to narrow the gap between graduates and employment in order to meet up with the objectives of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The population of students at the higher levels of education in Cameroon are increasing at a geometric rate thus making it a major challenge for the government to assimilate all the graduates in the already saturated job market. Therefore the state continue to encounter the problem of, "unemployment of young graduates".

### *The statement of the research problem*

The GESp, developed in 2008, aims to reduce the poverty ratio from 39.9% in 2007 to 28.7% in 2020. As the annual Growth rate of net domestic product was 7% on average during recent years, it is possible to achieve the target poverty ratio. It is crucial to implement policies to reallocate wealth so that the poor could also benefit and to add values to agricultural and industrial products by the development of agriculture and agro-Industry. It is also necessary to promote quality employment by implementing policies that would benefit youth and graduates.

Unemployment here means a person is willing to work but unable to find a qualified job. Cameroon is facing many problems but one of the major problems is that of unemployment of young graduates. The professionalization of courses in institute of higher learning, equally come with an increase in school fees for instance in the university of Yaoundé 1 a professional course cost at least 600.000 franc cfa and Yaoundé 2, cost 800.000 franc cfa and above and those of private universities like the Catholic university of central Africa ranges from 1.2 million, making it equally difficult for many students to afford, some even drop out without completion. The governments have not been in plain consultation with stakeholders in the design and

implementation of curriculum geared toward training of skills required by the formal and informal sectors. The reason why many engineers and scientist are unemployed or underemployed with some working under worst conditions. Due to inadequate planning our human resources are being wasted and rates of brain drain remain high, with our industries facing the problem of inadequate skilled workers for their companies.

In Cameroon, many employers both national and international organizations like the united nation agencies give preference only to experienced candidates and not to fresher's, where then will these fresher's gain experience from and be employed ? Couple with the advanced technology, only one person can do many peoples' work with the use of machines. Unemployment is bound to persist in our economy.

The objectives of the study is to analyze the impacts of curriculum implementation on life learning skills acquired by graduates from higher institutes in Cameroon, to investigate the teaching of employability skills to under graduates through it curriculum, to also shed more light on the employability skills needed by education graduates to fully succeed in job market and to investigate the major challenges face by education graduate to enter the job market.

To guide the study, the following research questions are posed Does curriculum implementation directly affect the employability of young graduates from our higher institutes in Cameroon? Are the universities in the country currently teaching transferable skills, technical skills and systemic skills to our students? How does vocational and technical training of graduates influence employability? And lastly, what are the major challenges that young graduates encounter in other to be employed?

In other to carry out an investigation on 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum implementation and employability of young graduates in Cameroon, the following premises are considered, Education graduates who have not been taught technical skills, transferable skills and systemic skills always find it uneasy to enter into the job market. Most of the graduates have not been given professional training.

Vocational and technical training is not enough to guarantee employment of education graduates and ignorance about jobs is one of the major problem educational graduates encounter upon graduation.

#### *Scope of the study*

The study aims to cover some of higher education institutions that train professional graduates and identify some practical options as part of the higher education training. Examining the factors that affect qualitative implementation of curriculum in the higher education in Cameroon. Therefore we focus the study on curriculum implementation and the employability of its new education graduates.

#### *Significance of the study*

Findings of the study will be of great significance to all the stakeholders among which are:

##### *To the government*

This piece of work will help the government to identify loop – holes and re-orientate her policies and programs in curriculum implementation and various actions being taken to reduce the rate of unemployment of young educational graduates and know what corrective measures are necessary to improve on the situation.

##### *To students*

The study provides a framework for subsequent studies in this area as reference work for researchers who intend to carry out similar studies.

The research equally serve as an eye opener to graduates who are not informed about the skills they are supposed to possess.

##### *To Employers*

The finding of this work is of vital importance to employers of labor as it affords them the opportunity to know the area of weaknesses of our graduates and how to possibly organize training of new recruits to address these challenges.

##### *To Teachers*

This study will help teachers to identify the gaps that exist in the knowledge transfer to students and where to improve training techniques that will meet up with required skills by employers.

#### *Limitations of the study*

This research is not concerned with the employability of present or existing graduates in the labor market, but is focusing on addressing the needs of new graduates.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The 21<sup>st</sup> century and employability advocates for gender equality with the policy document of UN Women on planet 50/50 by 2030. According to the Deputy Director this is aimed at addressing the gender gaps in leadership, entrepreneurship, equal access to education and at the work place.

Emma Saloranta in 2016 in preparation for the celebration of the international women's day came up with the theme building a planet 50-50 by 2030 with reference to the sustainable development goals.

The international community after a review of the millennium development Goals in 2014 realized that some points were being neglected by the MDGs and the SDGs were to address the key systemic barriers to sustainable development like, inequality, unsustainable consumption pattern, weak institutional capacity, and environmental degradation.

According to Christine Steven and Stephen Fallows, higher educational institutions must recognized that for many students the transition from education to employment have not been a straight forward matter and students have been ill-equipped for this transition. The situation keeps exacerbating due to the expansion in the number of graduates.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted secondary data analysis as a research method using qualitative research sources, the method allowed for the collection of particular literature for an in-depth understanding of the main objective of the research and to answer the research questions. The research involved a review of circulating articles, observation and interview on 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum implementation and employability of young graduates.

#### *Operational concepts:*

Here, we are operationalizing some important terms such as:

#### *Curriculum*

Curriculum is a program or plan of all experiences which the learner encounters under the direction of institutions (tanner and tanner, 1995, 158). Curriculum also refers to the programme of activities run by the university to transfer desirable skills to their graduates for the labor market. According to Gatawa (1990), it is the totality of experiences which universities are responsible. This is in agreement with Sergiovanni and Starrat (1983), who argue that a curriculum is what the student is supposed to study; practice, and master, curriculum is what the student learn. Curriculum is an outline of courses a student supposed to take within the academic year.

#### *Employability*

Employability is a set of personal attributes, skills, achievements, and understanding that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen fields. Booth, (2003). It is the qualities that enable a worker fit into the world of work.

#### *Curriculum implementation*

This means putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects. This process involves helping the learner acquire knowledge or skills that will prepare the graduate for better future. The learner is the central figure in the curriculum implementation process. Curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner. Implementation takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society (university of Zimbabwe,(1995). Curriculum implementation is how the university is able to meet the requirements on the policy of education at the higher level and have easy access to the job market.

#### *Consequences of unemployment*

Unemployment and poverty are closely related. The problem of unemployment gives rise to the problem of poverty; young graduates after a long time of unemployment find the wrong way to earn money. Some Unemployed young graduates accept suicide as the last option of their life and to get rid of the unemployment stress, they take alcohol and drugs as a result there is increase in crime waves, they start doing robbery, murder and all forms of gender based violence thus are refers to social cases.

### IV. RESULTS

Based on secondary sources, the researcher realized that about 70 to 80 percent of young graduates from higher institutions and universities who did general education are unemployed due to lack of professional skills required by entrepreneurs, this is due to the fact that they are not consulted when designing the curriculum. It is also realized that upon registering into first year in the university, the students are well orientated, even when they are orientated, they still end up unemployed, after graduation an insignificant number get into professional schools like ENS and ENSTS with direct recruitment by the state and about 60% of these graduates still go for professional training at HND levels which still does not guaranteed employment due to the already saturated job markets.

### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cameroon government should keep improving on the current educational system as it is not up to the level graduates could easily find jobs for themselves. The government should watch keenly on the educational system and try to implement new ways to generate new skilled labor force ready for the job market. A committee should be formed by the government to look after universities on the implementation of curriculum. The syllabuses taught should be orientated toward or to fulfill the requirement of the industries.

- Young graduates should join the institutes where proper training is given and the course is as per the current industrial requirements. They should take courses with brighter future.
- Rapid industrialization should be created which will provide jobs to young graduates.
- The government should develop the agriculture based industries in rural areas so that rural exodus is discouraged. More employment should be generated in the rural areas for the seasonal unemployment people.
- The government should encourage industrialization from young entrepreneurs by creating a conducive atmosphere like reducing taxes, permitting and encouraging those in Diasporas to come back for their business investment.

## VI. CONCLUSION

To sum it all, it will be very important that the government through the Ministry of higher education supervise monitor and follow up the design and implementation of 21<sup>ST</sup> Century. education so to bridge the gaps that exist between young graduates and job market curbing unemployment rates.

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