

Appropriation of the Secondary School Project in Cameroon and Optimization of Results According to the "Accessibility-Use-Usage" Model By Kemoko Touré

Armand Bouges ZAMBO ATANGANA¹, Pr. Emmanuel NDJEBAKAL SOUCK², Dr. John Thierry BANEN³

¹Faculté des Sciences de l'Education Université de Yaoundé 1 Cameroun

²Université de Yaoundé 1 Faculté des Sciences de l'Education

³Université de Yaoundé 1 Faculté des Sciences de l'Education (FSE)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to facilitate the appropriation of the school project in secondary schools in Cameroon, in order to optimise its results. It has been observed that those involved in developing, implementing and monitoring the project are reluctant to take ownership of it. This reluctance has harmful consequences, including a drop in learner performance, a low rate of socialisation and a loss of visibility for public schools. The main objective of this research is to propose an approach that will make it easier to appropriate this management tool, which is a major means of optimising results. This approach is based on the 'accessibility-use' model of appropriation developed by Kemoko Touré (2018). The present study was carried out using a mixed-methods approach, and sampling techniques were also employed appropriately. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire and an interview guide, allowing the survey to be conducted in three high schools in the city of Yaoundé: the Ngoa-Ekelle high school, the Nkolmesseng high school and the bilingual high school. The sample studied comprised 32 participants. The study population consisted of members of the school board, administrators, teachers, parents and the students themselves. The data collected was processed using SPSS software, and the hypotheses were then subjected to Pearson correlation analysis.

Key words: Accessibility, Provisional system, School project, Optimisation of results, Use, Usage.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the sustainable development goals, Cameroon, under its National Development Strategy (NDS) for the period 2020-2030, considers its sustainable development as intrinsically linked to the demographic configuration of its population. On the one hand, this development aims to satisfy the needs of populations by providing them with the amenities of modern life, notably employment, health, social and economic well-being, etc. Conversely, this development cannot be achieved without a population with appropriate characteristics, in particular good education, health and social and economic well-being. This dynamic implies a dual approach to the population, considered both in terms of beneficiary of the fruits of development and as a factor of development. Indeed, development should no longer be considered as a variable ex nihilo, but as a primordial resource, constituting the basis on which any action leading to economic growth and endogenous and exogenous development of any nation must rest. Education and training are then of crucial importance.

The State of Cameroon, in this planning order, indeed signed on May 5, 2000, circular N°13/B1/1464, adjusted by that of N°39/13/C/MINESEC/CAB of December 03, 2013 relating to the development, the implementation, validation and evaluation of the general and technical secondary school project, thus marking the implementation of this managerial innovation in all establishments. In the guide for management staff of secondary education institutions in Cameroon, which entered into force since the start of the 2014-2015 school

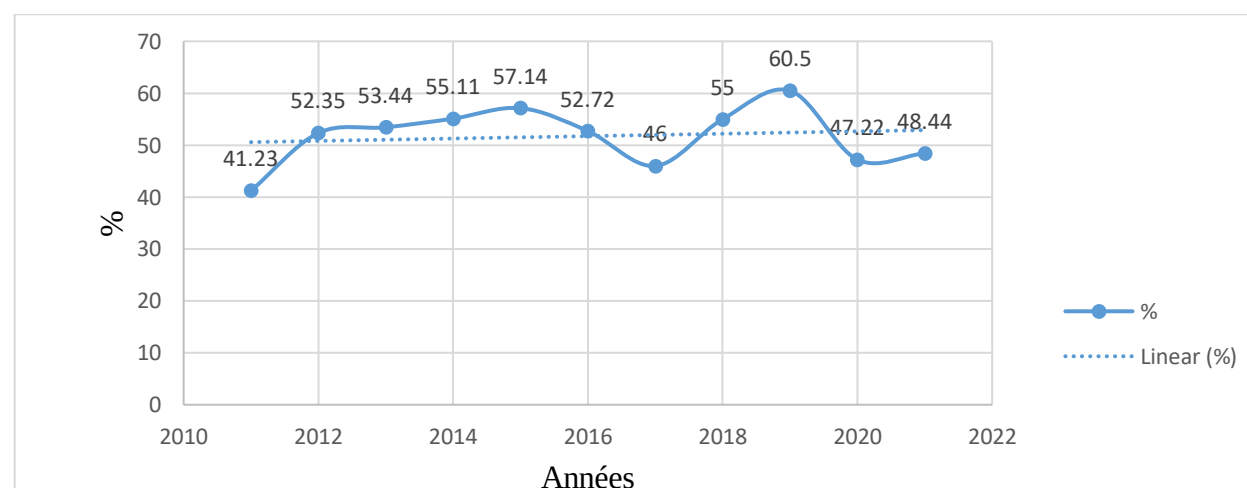
year by decree N°336/14/MINESEC/CAB of September 12, 2014, it is further specified that the establishment project is 'the main tool for managing a school. It is from him that all the other steering tools derive" (p. 25).

For 20 years now, the establishment project has been positioned as the defined strategic tool for managing public schools. The goal being for the State to make public schools, organizations autonomous in terms of contextualizing educational policy and in turn facilitate the inclusion of school in its environment with the perspective of bringing it there to contribute to its proper functioning. It is a compass for managing schools that clearly indicates their priorities, the actions to be taken, the implementation mechanisms, plans and funding sources.

It is important to note that, 23 years after the signing and implementation of the circular on the development, implementation, validation and evaluation of the school project in secondary and technical education, the latter remains invisible, even unknown to the actors of this order of education. Indeed, in the Centre region, for the school year 2021-2022, out of a total of 1,078 establishments listed, only twelve submitted their establishment project to the departmental delegation for secondary education, and among these, only nine were deemed satisfactory. This situation suggests a non-appropriation of the main steering tool, as defined by decree n°336/14/MINESEC/CAB of 12 September 2014. This non-appropriation could be the cause of the limits of the school system, as we will see in the following section.

The decline in learner performance

The quality of results due to learners' performance remains one of the weaknesses of the Cameroonian education system, as revealed by the Strategy Document for the Education and Training Sector (DSSEF 2013). The statistics of the Office du Baccalauréat du Cameroun (OBC), the body responsible for managing English and French-speaking secondary exams, provide us with better information on the extent of this problem. Success rates have rarely exceeded 60%, especially when one is interested in general education only. The observation of overall success rates from 2016 to 2021 in general baccalaureate exams, for example, according to the CBO indicates a jagged evolution with private establishments, particularly denominational ones, at the top of the ranking at the expense of public establishments as illustrated by the graph here-below :



Graphique 1 : Taux de réussite au Baccalauréat entre 2011 et 2021

Source : The author on the basis of the data bank of the OBC

The graph above illustrates, as previously indicated, a jagged evolution of the baccalaureate success rate in Cameroon over the period 2011-2022.

Non-appropriation of the establishment project, cause of low socialization at school

There is a drastic increase in the rate of violence in public secondary schools in our country. Between 2018 and 2022, eleven major incidents of violence were recorded in schools in Cameroon according to the Ministry of

Secondary Education (MINESEC). Stabbing here, fighting there, traumatic verbal exchanges, the educational community has been besieged by violence for several years. Despite the security efforts made by the heads of schools supported by law enforcement forces, the list of victims, teachers and students is growing. The last case is that of the Yona School Complex, where the student stabbed his principal on Wednesday, April 6, 2022, putting his days at risk. The incident occurs nine days after an assault on a female supervisor by a student at Nkol-Eton Bilingual High School (Monday, March 28, 2022).

Even more recent, the assault of a police officer at the General Leclerc High School on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 by an individual during the official physical exams. In her presentation, during the two-day conference held in Yaoundé from 20 to 21 December 2022, Mrs. Bernadette Mbiah Sansi, Director of Guidance, Life and School Assistance at MINESEC, presented the forms and faces of this phenomenon. At first glance, an observation of some facts shows the recurrence of acts of violence and drug use in the months of February and March. Then, the analysis of all these cases of violence revealed that 70% come from general secondary education and 30% from technical secondary education, adds the presentation regarding the physical geography of violence.

This presentation highlights the inexistence of these latter in rural areas and their marginality in semi-urban areas, while urban areas are the main centers of deployment of school violence. These acts of violence contribute to significantly reducing the attractiveness of parents for public institutions. Moreover, the lack of involvement of parents in school life cannot explain the low rate of inclusion observed in secondary schools. Indeed, there is a significant disparity between the different layers of the population, which translates into lasting inequalities of inclusion. According to the report of the Central Office of Censuses and Population Studies (BUCREP) of Cameroon on World Population Day 2022, the school enrolment rate for girls reached 42.45% during the 2018/2019 academic year. This increase is particularly noticeable because it occurs despite the decrease observed between 2015 and 2019 in the enrollment of secondary students. The analysis highlights a persistent disparity between gross and net enrolment rates for boys and girls, with the former remaining systematically higher than the latter, regardless of the school year considered.

Within the framework of educational policies put in place by the government of Cameroon, several framework documents serve as references in terms of educational strategies. These include the Education Sector Strategy Paper (DSSEF), as well as the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (DSCE). An analysis of these documents reveals a relatively timid, if not absent, approach to the integration of the necessary means for the effective implementation of this steering instrument within schools. In other words, if the strategy aims to promote social inclusion and prevent violence, with a focus on improving learner performance, it often overlooks, even rarely, to place at the heart of his concerns the question of the effective management of schools. The objective constraint that is the establishment project, the main tool for managing establishments in this field of education, a guarantee of internal and external productivity, is rarely, if ever, taken into account by educational systems. This strategic and operational negligence could lead to the rejection of this planning tool in context, which could justify the failure to achieve performance optimization objectives by general education secondary schools in Cameroon. Hence the meaning of this study, which proposes an approach facilitating easier appropriation of this management tool, a major axis for optimizing results based on the "accessibility-use-usage" model of appropriation developed by the Guinean author and writer Kemoko Toure. (2018).

METHODOLOGY

As part of this study, we conducted an analysis of resource availability, identified as the main determinant of the accessibility variable. We then examined the profile of the actors, considered as a determining factor for use. Finally, for the usage variable, we studied the strategic followed modality. Our methodological approach combined different types of approaches including qualitative and quantitative. To do this, we designed an ad hoc questionnaire and an interview guide, which were used to collect data from a sample of 32 actors in the educational chain, from three high schools located in the city of Yaoundé: the high school of Ngoa-ekelle, the high school of Nkolmesseng and the bilingual high school. These are the parents who are members of the management committees, the principals, the censors, the general supervisors, the students' parents and the teachers. Field data was processed using the latest version of SPSS and hypotheses were visualized using the Pearson correlation test.

Study Resultats

This section is devoted to the testing of research hypotheses that we have formulated. These are three hypotheses that concern the variables of the actors' profiles, resource availability, and strategic monitoring is related to the optimization of educational results..

Stakeholder profile and optimization of results Correlation table between the profile of the actors and optimization of the results

Corrélations			
		Actors Profil	optimization of results
PA	Pearson Corrélacion	1	,460**
	Sig. (bilatérale)		,008
	N	32	32
OR	Pearson Corrélacion	,460**	1
	Sig. (bilatérale)	,008	
	N	32	32
**. The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilatéral).			

The table above deals with the correlations of the first variable. It shows that there is a positive and moderate link between the profile of actors and the optimization of results. The Pearson correlation presents the following results: ($r = 0.460$, $p = 0.008$ 0.05). We conclude that the link between the profile of the actors and the optimization of the results is average, namely 46%. One can deduce that there is a link between the profile of the actors and the optimization of results in general education high schools.

Availability of resources and optimization of results

Correlation table between resource availability and results optimization

Corrélations			
		Disponibility of ressources	optimization of results
DR	Pearson Corrélacion	1	,449**
	Sig. (bilatérale)		,010
	N	32	32
OR	Pearson Corrélacion	,449**	1
	Sig. (bilatérale)	,010	
	N	32	32
**. The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilatéral).			

The table above deals with the correlations of the second variable. It shows that there is a positive and average link between the availability of resources and the optimization of results. The Pearson correlation present the following results: ($r = 0.449$, $p = 0.010$ 0.05). It is concluded that the link between resource availability and performance optimization is average, at 44%. We can deduce that there is a link between resource availability and performance optimization in general education high schools.l.

Strategic monitoring and optimization of results Correlation table between strategic monitoring and results optimization

Corrélations			
		strategic monitoring	optimization of results
SS	Pearson Correlation	1	,478**
	Sig. (bilatérale)		,006
	N	32	32
OR	Pearson Corrélacion	,478**	1
	Sig. (bilatérale)	,006	
	N	32	32
**. The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilatéral).			

The table above deals with the correlations of the last variable. It shows that there is a positive and moderate link between strategic monitoring and the optimization of results. The Pearson correlation presents the following results: ($r = 0.478$, $p = 0.006$ 0.05). It is concluded that the connection between strategic monitoring and result optimization is average, at 47%. We can deduce that there is a link between strategic monitoring and result optimization in general education high schools..

DISCUSSION

The question that guided our research was as follows: how to get school heads to appropriate the school project as a steering tool, according to the 'accessibility-use-usage' approach, in order to optimize their results? The main hypothesis put forward is that the triptych "accessibility-use-usage" plays a decisive role in the appropriation of the establishment project by the actors, and that it constitutes a key factor for optimizing results. Our engagement in this research has been driven, in part, by external factors. This methodological approach focused on the analysis of published results statistics, the evaluation of the quality of documents related to the establishment project produced by the target establishments, and finally, pre-surveys conducted among the establishments of the city of Yaoundé, capital of the Central Region of Cameroon. In addition, the endogenous approach focused on the level of socialization at school, measured through indicators of violence and inclusion. However, it seems that the added value of this management instrument is underestimated, which, as field observations have revealed, is capable of creating an environment in a school conducive to optimizing results in terms of performance, of teaching and socialization (prevention of violence, inclusion and school appeal for public institutions). The creation of this favorable environment requires the adoption of this management tool by the main stakeholders. This adoption can be facilitated by following the accessibility, use and usage approach proposed by Kemoko Touré.

The level of knowledge and skills of the actors likely to develop and manage this management tool must be taken into account at all stages of the process. Indeed, according to the results of the analysis of data collected in the field, there is a positive and moderate correlation between the profile of actors and ownership. It emerges from the Pearson analysis ($r=0.460$; $p=0.008$ less than 0.05); which allows validating the alternative hypothesis at the expense of the null hypothesis.

Indeed, the appropriation of the establishment project is linked to the level of training of the actors. This training must be perceived both on the initial plan and in the continuous. The possession of a secondary diploma is important for each actor in order to facilitate understanding of primary data such as reading invitations to work sessions related to the establishment project. The need for a university degree is based on an understanding of the technical (financial and managerial) aspects required to manage such a planning instrument. The mastery and manipulation of planning instruments such as specialized software, evaluation matrices, such as reading and/or writing activity reports, require a university degree and even continuous added

value. The authors Drucker, Waterman and Peters following Kurt, through the theory of planned change, validated the significant effect that the profile of actors has on the success of a project in the education sector. From our interviews with the heads of the establishments, it appears that the various actions of the establishment project were entrusted to actors whose skills were proven in specific areas, which led to limiting time losses, to work efficiently in order to optimize the results, a guarantee of ownership.

We have made a second hypothesis: The appropriation of the establishment project involves the accessibility of the resources necessary for the project. Indeed, according to the results of data analysis, there is a positive and moderate correlation between the availability of resources and the optimization of results that guarantees appropriation. The Pearson analysis shows the following coefficients $r = 0.449$; $p = 0.010 < 0.05$; which allows us to validate our hypothesis.

These results prove that resources have an important role in the success of the ownership process of the establishment project, which guarantees optimization of results. They are necessary to complete the tasks and achieve the project's objectives. Resources include material, financial and informational resources. The authors Lewis and Pinto (1996), having worked on the theory of the impact of resources in a project whose premise is that resources are one of the key factors determining the success or failure of a project, already set the milestones of the significant importance of resources for the project, ensuring its ownership. Indeed, for these authors, resources can be limiting or facilitating factors for the achievement of project objectives. They allow to finance the different activities of the project, to respect deadlines, to ensure the quality of work and to minimize risks. Without sufficient financial, material and informational resources, a project may be delayed, poorly executed or even abandoned leading to the rejection of its appropriation by the actors.

Finally, our last hypothesis was that the appropriation of the establishment project, a guarantee of results optimization, requires quality strategic monitoring. Indeed, according to the results of the analysis of data collected in the field, there is a positive and moderate correlation between strategic monitoring and optimization of results. The results of the Pearson correlation present the following data: ($r = 0.478$, $p = 0.006$ 0.05), thus validating our hypothesis because the Pearson correlation coefficient is less than 0.05. These analysis results highlight the fact that the strategic monitoring of a project is crucial for its ownership because it allows to monitor the progress of the project, identify problems and take corrective measures in a timely manner. By regularly tracking KPIs, project stakeholders can assess whether the project is going as planned, meeting deadlines, budget and expected quality. These different activities contribute effectively to the appropriation of the establishment project because a local support and a thorough knowledge of the different aspects of the project.

CONCLUSION

For more than twenty years, since the establishment project has been positioned as the main tool for managing secondary schools in Cameroon, its appropriation remains very weak or even almost non-existent in the establishments. From this observation, we came out with the following main question: How to get the heads of establishments to appropriate the establishment project as planning tools in order to optimize their results? To answer this question, we relied on the determinants of each variable of the "accessibility-use-usage" model developed by Kemoko Touré. From this main question arose three hypotheses related to the three modalities of our triptych. The analysis of field data by the SPSS software validated our three secondary hypotheses and indeed our main hypothesis. We can thus conclude that, in order to optimize their results, the actors of the establishment project can use the "Accessibility-Use-Usage" model developed by Kemoko to facilitate its appropriation and make its development and implementation easier..

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