The influence of human resources on the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion in public primary schools in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon

Original Research Article

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The policy of automatic class promotion was introduced in Cameroon primary schools in response to very high repetition rate of pupils in these schools. Statistics reveal that this policy is ineffectively implemented (MINEDUB, 2016). This study intends to show the extent to which the human resource capacity of these schools with respect to the quantity and quality of teachers account for the level of effective implementation of this policy. A survey was carried out wherein a questionnaire and an interview guide were used for data collection. Four hundred and fifteen (415) teachers returned completed copies of the questionnaire while 25 basic education stakeholders were interviewed. The data analysis reveals that the quantity of teachers in schools understudy is grossly inadequate. Although the teachers have adequate academic and professional certificates and perceive that they have acquired competencies for the implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion, they are not adequately qualified with respect to longevity in service and their attitudes. It is recommended that the government should recruit the adequate number of teachers and appropriately deploy them, as well as equip the teachers with competencies on the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion through in-service training.

Keywords: Human resources, educational resources, quantity and quality of teachers, automatic class promotion, policy implementation, effective policy implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the principal instrument for the development of any country. Primary education is the foundation of all higher levels of education that provide highly skilled professionals required by every country for development. The quality of an educational system depends on the formulation of appropriate educational policies, and more importantly on the effective implementation of these policies. Educational resources need to be put in place to ensure effective policy implementation. Most models of policy implementation identify resources as one of the determinant of effective policy implementation. They include Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980); Van Meter and Van Horn (1975); Chandarasom (1983, 1984) and Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) models. The effective implementation of educational policies is influenced by the availability of educational resources, particularly human resources. An important component of human resources needed for effective implementation of an educational
policy is the quantity and quality of teachers. No nation can rise above the quality of its educational system and no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (Okoli, 2011).

Cameroon primary education system was experiencing inefficiency characterised by high repetition rate of pupils; a rate as high as 40% (UNICEF, 2001; Amin, 1999). In response to the high repetition rate in Cameroon primary schools, in February 2006, a ministerial order № 315/B1/1464/MINEDUB enacted a text to lay down the modalities on the promotion of pupils in primary schools (MINEDUB, 2006). Part four of this policy document consists of articles 9 and 10 which amongst others prescribe guidelines on the assessment and promotion of pupils as follows:

- Use active teaching methods (pedagogic)
- Assessment should measure pupils’ learning progression, acquisition and mastery of competences (pedagogic prescription, implying the use of competence based teaching).
- Assessment should be diagnostic, formative or criterion-referenced within levels (pedagogic prescription necessitating the use of remedial instruction).
- A pupil who passes his/her assessment at the end of one level is admitted to the next level while the promotion of pupils within a level should be automatic, except the parents of such pupil request that he/she should repeat (administrative prescription).

From the administrative prescription of the policy, within each level or cycle of the primary school (level one consisting classes 1 and 2; level two consisting classes 3 and 4, and level three consisting classes 5 and 6), all pupils are promoted to the next class at the end of the school year. That is, there is automatic promotion from classes one to two, three to four, and five to six. Class repetition is allowed only in classes two and four. However, a pupil can be authorized to exceptionally repeat upon request from the parent of the concerned pupil. The first three prescriptions are pedagogic which according to this author should supplement and complement the fourth prescription which is administrative.

Statistics show that while the policy of automatic promotion is being implemented, repetition rate is still significant in classes where automatic promotion of pupils is expected (MINEDUB 2016) coupled with learning achievement gap (SOFROCO-MINEDUB, 2011; PASEC 2015). The successful implementation of the pedagogic prescriptions mandates the availability of human resources, particularly the quantity and quality of teachers. However, cross-sectional analysis of statistics on human resource capacity (specifically quantity and quality of teachers) of Cameroon primary schools shows inadequacies as described in Table 1.

**Statement of the Problem**

There is ineffectiveness in the implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion in Cameroon primary schools wherein repetition rate is still significant in classes where repetition is prohibited (MINEDUB, 2016). Effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion like any policy is influenced by resource availability as evidenced by most implementation models. In the domain of education, these resources are referred to as educational resources and can be classified into human, material, and financial resources. Data relating to human resource capacity of Cameroon primary schools with respect to quantity and quality of teachers show inadequacies (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2018). This raises the question of to what extent does the teacher factor which is an integral component of human resources account for the observed level of effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion in Cameroon public primary schools?

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the extent to which the quantity of teachers accounts for the level of effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion of pupils in public primary schools in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon.
2. To find out the extent to which the quality of teachers accounts for the level of effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion of pupils in public primary schools in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extent does the quantity of teachers account for the level of effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion in public primary schools in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon?
2. To what extent does the quality of teachers account for the level of effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion in public primary schools in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon?

This study was also guided by the following research hypothesis: "There is a significant relationship between human resources and the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion".

**Theoretical Framework**

There are three main groups of policy implementation theories namely; top-down, bottom-up, and contingency. Advocates of top-down theory of policy implementation include Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), Bardach (1977), and Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979; 1980) theories. The top-down theories of policy implementation stipulate that policy implementation begins at top or centre with clear policy decisions of government officials and proceeds through a sequence of increasing more specific steps to define what is
Key proponents of bottom-up theories of policy implementation comprise Lipsky (1980; 2010), Elmore (1979), and Hjern and Hull (1982). Bottom-up theories of policy implementation stipulate that policy formulation and implementation should begin with identifying network of actors involved in service delivery in one or more local areas, and then inquiring about their goals, strategies and activities as well as contacts from which local, regional and national actors involved in a policy are identified. This provides a mechanism for moving from street-level bureaucrats to the top policy makers. That is, policy implementation begins with actors’ perceived problems of the society and the strategies developed for dealing with such problems. The implementation works its way upward to discover the goals and strategies required in executing the programmes (Howlett and Ramesh, 1998). The bottom-up theories of policy implementation enables a better understanding of what happens with the implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion at the level of the schools.

As a result of the conflict between the top-bottom and bottom-up theories of policy implementation, hybrid or synthesis theories of policy implementation were put forward. Hybrid or contingency theories overcome the divide between the top-down and bottom-up theories of policy implementation by combining elements of top-down, bottom-up, and other theoretical models (Püzl and Treib, 2007). Proponents of synthesis theories of policy implementation are O’Toole (1988), Palumbo and Callista (1996), and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993). Contingency theories suggest that neither the top-down or bottom-up theories are inherently correct but that the specific characteristics of the policy context can determine the optimal approach (deLeon and deLeon, 2002). From this perspective, there is a need to work with central actors to influence implementation success through allocation of resources and incentives and the need to involve teachers who are the frontline implementers of the policy of automatic class promotion policy.

Several models of policy implementation have been developed based on the theories of policy implementation. The model which incorporates human resources as one of the variable for effective policy implementation is Chandarasom’s integrative model of policy implementation. The integrative model incorporates all the elements of Voradej Chandarasom’s five models (the rational, management, organization development, bureaucratic processes, and political models). The independent variables derived from the key independent variables of the five models are the capability of implementers; efficiency in planning and control; leadership and cooperation, politics and external environmental management. The dependent variable is the success of policy implementation, which is studied in three dimensions. The first dimension involves reflecting on the output, outcome and net outcome while the second dimension involves the impacts of implementing the policy. The third dimension involves the overall benefits of implementing the policy in the nation (Chompucot 2011). From the Chandarasom integrative model, it is evident that the implementers need to be capable of implementing the policy.

### Conceptual Framework

Key concepts used in this article needs to be operationally defined to enhance understanding. They are educational resources, human resources, policy, implementation, effective policy implementation and automatic class promotion. Educational resources refer to all human, material, non-material audio-visual school environment and community materials available in an academic environment to facilitate school administration and simplify teaching-learning process (NTI, 2006 cited in Usman, 2016). In this article, educational resources refer to human, material and financial resources that can be used to facilitate teaching-learning process and school administration such that educational objectives and goals are attained. A human
resource is a single person or employee within an organization (Tracey, 2003). According to Leon (1977), human resource refers to the knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents, and aptitudes obtained in the population. Human resources as an educational resource include knowledge, skills, experience, attitude, and aptitudes of teachers, school administrators, learners and parents as well as resource persons in the community. Excluding learners, parents and community resource persons, human resources or educational personnel consists of three groups of persons namely teaching staff, pedagogic and administrative personnel, and support staff. In this article, human resource refers to the number of teachers and their pedagogic knowledge, skills, commitment and attitude required for the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion.

UNESCO (2013) defines policy as a broad statement that sets out the government’s main goals and priorities in line with the constitution. Policy is the proposed course of actions intended to be implemented by the government in respect of a given problem or situation it confronts (Ezeani, 2006, Hussein, 2018). In this paper, the concept of policy is in line with the definitions of Ezeani and Hussein because the policy of automatic class promotion was formulated by the Cameroonian government to confront the problem of high repetition rates in primary schools. Policy implementation involves translating the goals and objectives of a policy into action (Khan and Khandaker, 2016). In the same vein, Howlette and Yamesh (2003) defines policy as the stage in the policy cycle which involves the processes whereby programmes and policies are put into action. Concerning the concept of effective policy implementation, it is defined by Ikechukwu and Chuksuemeka (2013) as the act of implementing a policy such that the goals and objectives of the policy are attained. In this article, effective policy implementation involves complying with policy prescriptions such that policy objectives are attained. The concept of effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion in this article is operationalized as complying with all the following prescriptions: using active teaching methods (pedagogic); assessment within levels should be diagnostic, formative or criterion reference (pedagogic); promotion of pupils within levels is automatic, although a pupil can exceptionally be authorised to repeat upon request from the parent (administrative) as spelled out in the text on the promotion of pupils in Cameroon primary schools. That is, complying with both the pedagogic and administrative prescriptions of the text on automatic class promotion of pupils.

Automatic promotion refers to the practice in primary and secondary schools wherein pupils are advanced from one grade to the next at the end of the school year regardless of their educational attainment (Mehndiratta, 2000, p.38 as cited in Chohan, 2011). In this article, automatic class promotion is the practice wherein within each level of the primary school (level one consisting classes 1 and 2; level two consisting of classes 3 and 4 and level three consisting of classes 5 and 6), all pupils are promoted to the next class at the end of the school year, except the parent requests otherwise (MINEDUB, 2006).

Review of Literature

Several scholars have identified amongst other factors the availability of resources as an important determinant of effective policy implementation. These scholars include Van Horns, (1975); Sabatier and Mazmanian, (1980); Chandarasom, (1983); Edwards III, (1980); Cheema and Rondinelli, (1983), and Tongbai, (1993). Concerning human resources, Chandarasom (1983) management model identifies amongst others organisational capacity and personnel as factors which influence effective policy implementation. Chandarasom (2005) stresses that successful policy implementation evolves from a strong implementation agency, which has a good decision making system, communication system, and sufficient human resources as well as leadership skills of using rewards to create good teamwork amongst members of an organization. Montjoy and O’Toole (1979) proposed that to prevent failure of policy implementation there should be availability of motivating activities to encourage implementers to carry out the policy implementation. As regards specific empirical studies on the factors influencing the implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion, none was found for Cameroon while one was found in Kenya. Ochieng (2012) conducted a research on the identification of factors that influence the implementation of no forced class repetition policy in all schools in Kenya. This study was conducted in Ugenga District of Siaya County, and adopted the descriptive survey research design in which questionnaires and document analysis guides were used to collect data. Simple random sampling was used to obtain a sample size of 420 individuals comprising 20 head teachers and 400 pupils. This study revealed that the non-compliance with the policy was not due to head teachers’ opposition but mainly due to factors which affected the delivery of adequate and effective learning in schools such as pupils’ teacher ratio in schools.

In response to the existence of limited empirical studies on the influence of human resources on the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion, in this article studies on factors influencing the implementation of other educational policies in other context are reviewed as follows. Okoroma (2003) assessed the effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UPE) in Nigeria. He identified amongst others inadequate number of qualified teachers; poor motivation of teachers, and lack of guidance and counselling services as constraints that impede effective implementation of UPE in Nigeria. Similarly, a survey was conducted by Ado, Akinbobola and Inyang (2010) on the status of human resources and its implication for the implementation of Upper Basic Universal Education (UBE) in Bayelsa state of Nigeria. The population consisted of all the 427 upper basic
school teachers of English Language, Mathematics, and Integrated Science in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. A stratified sampling technique was used to select 181 teachers from 60 upper basic schools from 12 educational zones in Bayelsa State. The result of the study indicated that there are qualified human resources for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme in Bayelsa State; however, these resources are inadequate in all the three basic subjects.

A survey was conducted by Yusuf (2014) on assessing the availability of human and material resources for the implementation of the new basic education English Language curriculum in Kaduna State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select twenty teachers from ten randomly selected Junior Secondary Schools from Kadauna North Local Government Area. From the results of the study, 65% of the English Language teachers used for the study were unqualified while 35% were qualified. Sixty-five per cent of teachers indicated that the number of available English Language teachers is inadequate while 35% indicated that the available English Language teachers are unqualified.

Stofile (2008) conducted a study on factors that facilitate or constrain the implementation of inclusive education policy in South Africa. Qualitative case study approach, a documentary analysis as well as unstructured and semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. The major finding of the study was that the implementation of inclusive education policy has been facilitated by the school communities’ beliefs, values, and norms relating to the inclusion of learners with disabilities and hindered by the lack of capacity to implement the policy.

Chompucot (2011) conducted a study on factors affecting educational policy implementation effectiveness in three Southernmost Provinces of Thailand. It was a mailed survey wherein questionnaires and an in-depth interview were used to collect data from 300 directors and deputy directors of both private and public schools. The findings of this study showed that implementing agency’s capacity, incentives, student family background, economic condition, cultural factors and concerns for safety affected educational policy implementation.

Alan and Ping (2012) conducted a survey in 150 primary and 120 secondary schools. A total of 7,869 key stakeholders comprising principals, curriculum leaders, teachers, and students participated in the study. The data were collected by questionnaires and in-depth interviews. From the findings, the recent curriculum reform in Hong Kong was still facing several key obstacles and challenges in the implementation stage, such as teachers’ heavy workloads, learning diversity in class, and teachers’ inadequate understanding of the reform.

**METHODOLOGY**

This survey was delimited to public primary schools in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon. The target population of this study consists of 12,603 public primary schools in Cameroon while the accessible population consists of 2,139 public primary schools in the Northwest and South West Regions having 10,255 teachers (MINEDUB, 2016).

Guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, a sample of 450 individuals comprising classroom teachers and head teachers was targeted as the sample size of this study. The population is distributed in clusters namely region, divisions, subdivisions, and schools and therefore multistage sampling technique was used. Stage one involved selecting the subdivisions. For each division of the two Regions, as a function of the number of Sub-Divisions per Division, a determined number of pieces of papers of the same shape, size and colour were obtained. On each of this piece of paper, the name of a Sub-Division was written and then folded. This procedure was repeated until the names of all the Sub-Divisions of a given Division were written and folded. All the folded pieces of paper were put in a container, shuffled, and one randomly selected. At the end of this stage, thirteen (13) Sub-Divisions were selected. Stage two involved selecting schools within each sampled Sub-Division. The sampling frame for the distribution of public primary schools in the thirteen selected Subdivisions was constructed. To select the schools per Subdivision, proportionate random sampling technique was used. In stage three, after selecting the schools per each sampled Subdivisions, it was adopted that three teachers, each per level per school, was to be selected. This sampling gave a 450 sample size comprising teachers and head teachers distributed in 150 schools. Based on the administrative structure of the Ministry of Basic Education and on having expertise and in-depth knowledge of educational practices, senior basic education officials were purposely sampled for interview.

The research instruments consisted of a questionnaire addressed to classroom teachers and head teachers and an interview guide. The validity and reliability of these instruments were established. The objectives of the study were made known to the respondent and they were assured that their responses will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. The questionnaire items were structural and were based on the research questions and objectives. After constructing the questionnaire, it was reviewed and pilot tested. Regarding the reliability of the questionnaire, test-retest reliability method was used. The pilot tested version of questionnaire was administered to five head teachers and five classroom teachers. After a period of one month, the questionnaire was re-administered to the same persons. The results of the first and second administrations were analysed using Pearson Moment Correlation (PPMC). A reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. Similar methods used for ensuring the validity and reliability of questionnaire items were employed for the interview guide.

The questionnaires were administered either personally by the researcher or research assistants. Prior to the actual
administration of the question, permission was sought from the head teachers of the selected schools by the administrator who visited the schools. In each sampled school, the researcher or research assistant administered a copy of the questionnaire randomly to one teacher of each level during break time or after closing hours. The researcher or his assistants then booked appointment with the teachers when to come back for the completed questionnaire copies. The return rate was 93.56 % and 415 completely filled questionnaire copies were obtained from 150 head teachers and 265 classroom teachers. Of the 415 respondents, 200 were from schools in the South West Region while 215 were from the North West Region. Majority of respondents (68.2%) are teaching in schools located in rural areas whereas the 31.8% are teaching in schools located either in semi-urban or urban areas. These respondents comprised 238 classroom teachers and 177 head teachers. Furthermore, there were more female respondents (50.84%) than male.

Senior education officials of the External Services and the Central Service of the Ministry of Basic Education were contacted. The researcher took appointment with those willing to participate in the interview. During the interviews, brief notes were taken or audio notes depending on the opinion of the interviewee. Later on the same day, the notes were rewritten in details and the tapes transcribed. Twenty five (25) educational stakeholders comprising three officials working in the Central Service, three Divisional Delegates, five Regional Pedagogic Inspectors, and seven Sub-divisional Inspectors of Basic Education were interviewed.

Using content analysis technique, information from interview transcripts was assembled, coded, and sorted into categories or themes. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 for Windows software was used to analyse the quantitative data collected using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**FINDINGS**

The findings are presented in two dimensions as follows.

**Findings relating to the quantity of teachers**

Analysis of data reveals that the number of teachers available in public primary schools is insufficient. A significant number of teachers (65 teachers representing 15.66% of the sample) are teaching in two or three classrooms in schools located in rural areas. Of this number, 10 respondents are teaching in three classrooms. Also, some teachers teach classes within a level while others teach classes across levels. On the other hand, 21 respondents (5.06%) are not teaching in any particular class and are probably head teachers of schools with adequate number of teachers. All these data on the distribution of teachers reveal that there is an acute shortage of teachers in schools under study, and this problem is compounded by inappropriate deployment of teachers.

Concerning enrolment, majority of the teachers teach in classrooms with enrolment between 21 and 40 pupils. In relation to data on the class(es) a teacher is currently teaching where a significant number of these teachers teach in more than one classroom, it can be asserted that if only the supply of teachers is considered with respect to teacher-pupil ratio, the result will be erroneous. The situation is that there are fewer teachers for many classrooms with few pupils in schools under study. This is probably because while trying to improve universal access of basic education to Cameroonians, the government has created schools in areas with few school-age children. Thus, creating more schools in areas where there are few children of school attending age further compounds the problem of teachers supply to schools. Additional data were collected as regards the quantity of teachers from responses of respondents to three closed ended Likert scale questionnaire item as shown in Table 2.

From Table 2, for all the items the percentage of disagree option is greater than that of agree option. This further indicates that the number of teachers available in primary schools under study is inadequate for the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion.

**Findings relating to the quality of teachers**

The profile of teachers who participated in this study shows that majority of the respondents (59%) have General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced level or its equivalent as their highest academic qualifications, while 18 respondents have First Degree or its equivalent as their highest academic qualification. Only 9 respondents (2.2%) have First School Leaving Certificate (FLSC) as the highest academic qualification. In terms of professional certificate, almost all the respondents (95.9%) have Grade I as their highest professional qualification. A very small proportion, 2.7% and 0.7%, respectively have Grade II and Grade III as their highest professional qualification. This indicates that majority of teachers and head teachers teaching in public schools have the required academic and professional certificates.

Teachers’ responses to items relating to the acquisition of competencies on the implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion are presented in Table 3. The table results reveal that majority of teachers perceive that they have acquired competences on the implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion through seminars and workshop. Findings on the working experience of teachers are presented in Table 4.

As shown in Table 4, the longevity of majority of the teachers (37.1%) falls between 6 and 10 years. This implies that majority of the teachers have been teaching for not more than ten years, indicating that very few experienced teachers are found in the schools under study and this is not a favourable situation with respect to the quality of teaching staff. On the other hand, most of the head teachers...
Table 2. Responses to questionnaire items relating to quantity of teachers

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Response Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD D A</td>
<td>SD A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In your school every class has a teacher</td>
<td>28.9% 17.6% 8.4% 16.1%</td>
<td>28.9% 46.5% 45.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(120) (73) (35) (67)</td>
<td>(120) (193) (187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The workload of teachers in your school can permit them to assist failed but promoted pupils outside regular school hours (morning, afternoon, evening, weekend, holiday classes).</td>
<td>20.5% 22.7% 16.4% 25.3% 15.2%</td>
<td>43.1% 40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(85) (94) (68) (105) (63)</td>
<td>(193) (187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In your school, teacher - pupil ratio facilitate the implementation of policy of automatic class promotion.</td>
<td>16.4% 34.2% 14.5% 22.4% 12.5%</td>
<td>50.6% 34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(68) (142) (60) (93) (52)</td>
<td>(193) (187)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 3. Acquisition of competencies on the implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>Collapsed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD D A</td>
<td>SD A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>You have been attending seminars/workshops on the implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion.</td>
<td>10.4% 18.6% 8.4% 39.3% 23.4%</td>
<td>28.9% 62.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(43) (77) (35) (163) (97)</td>
<td>(120) (260)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>You have been attending seminars/workshops on continuous assessment or sequence testing.</td>
<td>4.6% 9.4% 5.1% 46.7% 34.2%</td>
<td>14.0% 81.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(19) (39) (21) (194) (142)</td>
<td>(58) (336)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>You have been attending seminars/workshops on active teaching methods such as Competence Based Approach (CBA)</td>
<td>1.7% 3.4% 0.7% 34.7% 59.5%</td>
<td>5.1% 94.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7) (14) (3) (144) (247)</td>
<td>(21) (391)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Working experience as classroom teacher and head teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Longevity</th>
<th>Classroom Teacher</th>
<th>Head teacher</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 to 5) Years</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6 to 10) Years</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11 to 15) Years</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16 to 20) Years</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21 to 25) Years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 25 Years</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(46.33%) have longevity between one and five years whereas very few (1.7%) have longevity between 26 and 30 years. This implies that out of the total number of respondents who are head teachers, majority are inexperienced based on longevity as head teacher. This situation is not favourable to the implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion wherein instructional leadership skills are needed to supervise, monitor and train teachers. In addition to this finding from respondents’ profile, 50.4% and 40.2% of respondents, respectively, agreed that in their schools all teachers are adequately trained and experienced. These findings relating to the quality of teachers are consistent with those collected from the interview.

Although 94.2% of the teachers agreed to be interested in teaching pupils with low learning achievement who failed but were promoted, most interviewees indicated that majority of teachers have negative attitude towards the
policy of automatic class promotion. Also, some interviewees pointed out that Cameroon Primary Education Teacher Training Colleges do not equip their graduates with competencies to implement innovations. Verification of the research hypothesis reveals that there is a positive relationship between the availability of human resources and the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion in public primary schools under investigation.

DISCUSSION

The major findings of this study are as follows:

1. The quantity of teachers in public primary schools under study is inadequate for the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion.
2. Teachers in the public primary schools understudy are not adequately qualified for the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion.

Furthermore, Khan and Khandaker proposes Bureaucratic organizational development model of policy implementation which shows that adequate human resources such as effective leadership, engagement of people and more committed and fruitful team have a positive impact on policy implementation performance.

The most important component of human resources in education is the quantity and quality of teachers. This study reveals that there is inadequate number of teachers in primary schools in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. This finding is consistent with that of Okoroma (2003) which identified inadequate number of qualified teachers amongst other factors as an element which influences the effective implementation of the Universal Primary Education policy in Nigeria. PASEC (2015, p. 95) report agreed with this finding by indicating that in Cameroon, 22.9% of pupils at the beginning of primary cycle and 16.3 % at the end of primary cycle are taught in multi grade classes.

This study shows that adequate qualified teachers in terms of experience are not available for the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion. This finding is consistent with that of Ado Akinbobola and Inyang (2010). Weaver (2009) also identifies good health and human capital as factors which can influence the degree of compliance with a policy. Concerning the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers and school administrators, Coombs (1980) stipulates that if implementing the dictates or prescriptions of a policy demands unavailable talents, the probability of compliance will be low.

Furthermore, this study indicates that most teachers have negative attitudes towards the policy of automatic class promotion. This probably negatively influences the level of effective implementation of the policy. Fullan (2007) stipulates that educational change depends on what teachers do and think. Thus, if teachers resist the implementation of any policy or change, the success of such process will be difficult.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study on human resources and the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion in Cameroon primary schools has implications for educational practice. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- The government through the Ministry of Basic Education should carry out need assessment on the demand and supply of teachers in Cameroon primary schools in the light of implementing the policy of automatic class promotion and other educational policies. This will enable the government to train and recruit adequate and qualified number of teachers.
- The creation of more public schools without corresponding recruitment of more teachers should be discouraged.
- The Ministry of Basic Education should ensure teachers are equipped with competencies on the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion through seminars, workshops, conferences and pedagogic days. This training should emphasize on the use of active teaching methods, competence based teaching and remedial or compensatory teaching, diagnostic and formative assessment as well as inclusive education in the light of effectively implementing the policy of automatic class promotion.

In conclusion, the human resource factor in terms of quantity and quality of teachers in public primary schools of Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon accounts for the observed level of effective implementation of the policy of automatic promotion in these schools. Determinants of quality of teachers include academic and professional qualification (pre-service and in-service
training) and teaching experience. Thus, improving on the quality and quantity of teachers through training and recruitment of more teachers will probably ensure the effective implementation of the policy of automatic class promotion in public primary schools in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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