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EVALUATION OF PREPARATORY GROUPS IN THE TRAINING OF CANDIDATES FOR COMPETITIVE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS INTO ADVANCED TRAINING SCHOOLS IN CAMEROON

A PhD thesis submitted and defended on the 16 July in Management of Education (M.E.D)

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that "***Evaluation of preparatory groups in the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon***" is my original work and has never been submitted to any university or institutions of higher learning for an academic award of any kind. The researcher looks into it that all sources and quotations in this work are fully acknowledged in the reference list.

July 2024

Signed……

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this work entitled "***Evaluation of preparatory groups in the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced training schools in Cameroon"*** was carried out by **MOUNCHIKPOU MOUICHE LOUDI** (Registration No: **19Y3395**) under my humble supervision and guidance.

July 2024

Signed…….

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Faculty of Education

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To my parents

Mr. **MOUICHE CHOUAIBOU**

And

Mrs. **MANDOU MARIAMA**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

15th ICLS: Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians

ACT: American College Testing

ACT, Inc.: American College Testing Incorporated

ADB: African Development Bank

AT: Achievement Test

BIR: Rapid Intervention Force

CAT: Common Admission Test

CB: College Board

CEE: College Entrance Examinations

CEEB: College Entrance Examination Board

CIPP model: **C**ontext, Input, Processes And Products

DAEU: Diplome d`Access aux Etudes Universitaires

DCG: Diploma in Accounting and Management

DGSN: General directorate of national security

EMIA: Combined Military Academy

E.N.S: Higher Teachers Training Colleges

ENAM: National Advanced School of Administration and Magistracy

ENSPY: National Advanced School of Engineering, Post and Telecommunication

ETS: Educational Testing Service

ESSTIC: National Advanced School of Mass Communicatio**n**

G.C.E: General Certificate of Education

G.C.E O/ L: General Certificate of Education Ordinary Leve**l**

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GMAT: Graduate Management Admission Test

GRE: Graduate Record Examination

H.S.C.E.E: Higher School Competitive Entrance Examinations

IIM: Indian Institute of Management

IIS: Indian Institute of Science

IIT: Indian Institute of Technology

ILO: International Labour Organisation

IQ: Intelligent Quotient

IRIC: Institute of International Relations of Cameroon

JAMB: Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board

MBA: Masters Business Administration

MINDEF: Ministry of Defence forces

MIS: Management Information System

MOE: Ministry of Education

MEXT: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology

MINESUP: Ministry of Higher Education

MINREX: Ministry of External Relations

MINPOSTEL: Ministry of Post and Telecommunication

MINSANTE: Ministry of Public Health

MINFOPRA: **M**inistry of public service and administrative reforms

MINRESI: Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovations

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

NCEE: National College Entrance Examination

NCUEE: National Centre for University Entrance Examination

NDPC: National Development Planning Commission

NEEA: National Organisation for Educational Examinations

NEPAD: New Partnership for African Development

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations

NIS: National Institute of Statistic

PM: Project Management

PMI: Project Management Institute

RBB: Results Based Budgeting

RBMES: Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

RECs: Regional Economic Communities

SAT: Scholastic Assessment Test

SPSS:	Statistical Package for Service Solution
STS:	Section of Senior Technicians
SweSAT:	Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test
TQM:	Total Quality Management
U.K:	United Kingdom
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF:	United Nations Children Emergency Fund
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US:	United States
USA:	United States of America
UTME:	United Tertiary Matriculation Examination
IUT:	University Institute of Technology
UB:	Universsity of Buea
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SABER:	Systems Approach for Better Education Results

ABSTRACT

The adoption of the competitive entrance examinations as the gate way into professional institutions and advanced schools in both developed and less developed countries has been applauded by many since it provides equal chances to all the social classes to become part of the public service of the country. This has further increase the rate of competition amongst candidates due to the limited number of seats available. As a result, preparatory groups has emerged as number one partners to these candidates leading to the growth of shadow education. This study aimed to analyse the impact of the preparatory groups in the preparation of candidates for higher competitive entrance examinations into advanced training schools in Cameroon. In order to achieve this objective, the researcher adopted a mixed methods approach thereby combining the quantitative and the qualitative methods to better get more insights on the studied phenomenon. To better carry out the mixed approach, an explanatory sequential design was used as research design which began with the quantitative data collection, followed by the qualitative data collection strategies. With regards to the quantitative approach, a close ended questionnaire of 55 questions divided into four parts was administered to 515 participants through the direct delivery method. For the qualitative approach, face-to-face structured interview guide was used as instrument to collect qualitative data from 12 participants. Using the purposeful sampling technique, precisely snowball and convenience sampling techniques, a sample size of 515 participants (males and females), aged from 18 to 50 and above years were retained for this study basing on the inclusion criteria set by the researcher. The validity and reliability of the data collection instruments were tested through internal and external validity and pilot study. To discuss the results, four main theories were convoked for this study such as theory of change, organisational ecology, sustainable leadership and general system theory. Data collected from the field was analysed using the simple liner regression analysis for quantitative data with the help of SPSS version 22 and the content analysis for the qualitative data. The data analysed revealed the following results: in the first hypothesis, it was revealed that there exists a positive and moderate relationship between preparatory group`s effectiveness and the training of candidates (F-(1,513)=83.718,p=0.000); in the second hypothesis, it was revealed that there exists a positive and moderate relationship between the efficiency of preparatory groups and the training of candidates (F-(1,513)=27.657,p=0.000); in the third hypothesis, it was revealed that there exists a positive and very strong relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates (F-(1,513)=145.770,p=0.000); and in the fourth hypothesis, it was revealed that there exists a strong and positive relationship between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates (F-(1,513)=114.683,p=0.000). As such, all the research hypotheses were retained which implies that preparatory group is a strong and positive predictor of the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced training schools in Cameroon. Basing on the above results, a number of recommendations were made to the government, the advanced schools and the promoters amongst which we have: the formalisation of the creation and existence of preparatory groups, development of a regulatory framework, unification of the training programs, creation of preparatory groups within advanced schools, as well as the use of corresponding managerial practices by the promoters of the different preparatory groups so as to facilitate the achievement of the stated goals and objectives.

Keywords: Preparatory groups, Evaluation, Competitive entrance examinations, Professional schools, Project management

RESUME

L`adoption de concours comme moyens d'accès dans les institutions professionnelles et les grandes écoles dans les pays développés et les pays en voie de développement a été applaudie par beaucoup car elle offre des chances égales à toutes les couches sociales de faire partie du corps gouvernant. Cela a encore augmenté le taux de concurrence entre les candidats en raison du nombre limité de sièges. Du coup, les groupes de prépa concours se sont donc imposés comme les premiers partenaires de ces candidats. Cette étude visait à analyser l`impact des groupes de prépas concours dans la formation des candidats aux concours d`entrée dans les grandes écoles au Cameroun. Afin d`atteindre cet objectif, le chercheur a adopté une approche mixte tout en combinant l`approche quantitative et l`approche qualitative pour mieux comprendre le phénomène étudier. Dans le souci de mener à bien l`approche mixte, un devis séquentielle explicative a été utilisée comme devis de recherche qui a commencé par la collecte de données quantitatives, suivi par les stratégies de collecte de données qualitatives. Pour ce qui est de la méthode quantitative, un questionnaire de 55 questions fermés divisées en quatre parties a été administré aux participants de l`étude par la méthode d`administration directe. Quant à l'approche qualitative, un guide d`entretien directive a été utilisé comme instrument de collecte de données. La validité et la fiabilité des instruments de collecte de données ont été testées à travers une étude pilote, ainsi que la validité interne et la validité externe. En utilisant la technique d`échantillonnage raisonné précisément les techniques d`échantillonnage en boule de neige et de commodité, un échantillon de 515 participants (hommes et femmes), âgés de 18 à 50 ans et plus, a été retenu pour cette étude en se basant sur les critères d`inclusion fixés par le chercheur. Pour discuter les résultats issus de cette étude, quatre théories majeures ont été convoquées à savoir ; la théorie de changement, la théorie d`écologie d`organisation, la théorie de leadership durable et la théorie du système ouvert. Les données collectées sur le terrain ont été analysées en utilisant la technique d`analyse statistiques (la régression linéaire simple) pour les données quantitatives à l`aide du SPSS version 22 et l`analyse de contenu pour les données qualitatives. Les données analysées ont révélé les résultats suivants : dans la première hypothèse, il apparait qu`il existe un lien positif et modérée entre l`efficacité des groupes de prépas et la formation des candidats (F-(1-513)=83,718,p=0.000) ; dans la deuxième hypothèse, il apparait qu`il existe une relation positif et modérée entre l`efficience des groupes de prépas et la formation des candidats (F-(1-513)=27,657,p=0.000) ; dans la troisième hypothèse, il apparait qu`il existe un lien positif et fort entre la pertinence des groupes de prépas et la formation des candidats (F-(1-513)=145,770,p=0.000) ; et dans la quatrième hypothèse, il en ressort qu`il existe une relation positif et fort entre la durabilité des groupes de prépas et la formation des candidats(F-(1-513)=114,683,p=0.000). A ce titre, toutes les hypothèses de recherche ont été retenues ce qui implique que le groupe de prépa est un prédicteur positif et fort de la formation des candidats aux concours d`entrée dans les grandes écoles de formation au Cameroun. Sur la base des résultats ci-dessus, un certain nombre de recommandations ont été faites à l`endroit du gouvernement, les grandes écoles et les promoteurs parmi lesquelles ; la formalisation de création et l`existence des groupes de prépas, l`élaboration d`un cadre règlementaire, l`unification des programmes de formation, création de groupes de prépas au sein de grandes écoles, ainsi que l`utilisation de pratiques de gestion correspondantes par les promoteurs des différents centre de prépa afin de faciliter la réalisation des buts et objectifs des groupes.

Mot clés : Groupes de prépas, Evaluation, Grandes écoles, Concours, Gestion des projets

CHPATER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The African Union envisions a "peaceful and prosperous Africa, integrated, led by its own citizens and occupying the place it deserves in the global community and in the knowledge economy". Africa is well posed to shape its own destiny. The promise of the African Renaissance whereby the continent will achieve social cohesion, democracy, economic growth and become a key player in global affairs within a non-distant future is now more than ever within reach in spite of the possible bumpy road ahead. African leaders and policy makers at the highest echelons have over the last two decades spearheaded this ambition through their numerous political discourses and pronouncements at international summits and also at ministerial conferences (CESA 2016/2025, 2015). Most observers and pundits are of the view that Africa is ushering into an era that will determine its destiny as the continent of the future. For this promise to become real, the continent is entitled to come into agreement with its educational and training systems that are yet to fully shed the weight of its colonial legacy as well as its own tribulations as a relatively new political and economic entity as well as player in the world arena. It is in this light that the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) was adopted by the African Union Heads of State and Government at their Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session on January 31st, 2016, in Addis Ababa as the framework for transforming education and training systems in Africa (AUC CESA Journal, 2017). This initiative by African Union Heads of States and policy makers aims to create a new African citizen ready to be an active change agent for the continent`s sustainable development as envisioned by the African Union and its 2063 agenda (CESA 16-25, 2015). The fact that education is seen worldwide as a critical tool in realising sustainable development goals through sustainable actions led to the birth of the CESA 16-25 in 2015, which according to Addaney (2017), was as a result of insufficient human capital on the continent.

The African Union, the embodiment of the collective will of the African people, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and other regional bodies have carried out consultations and brainstorming that have produced visions as well as strategic framework on every facet of the fulfilment of African Renaissance (CESA 16-25). These initiatives are directed towards the desire to set up a

> *qualitative system of education and training to provide African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and therefore capable of achieving the vision and ambitions of the African Union. Those responsible for its implementation are assigned to "reorient Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels* (CESA 16-25, 2015, p. 11).

This may appear to be a difficult task to realise but the optimism among the African people is too high especially with the current rate of economic growth within the continent. According to the African Development Bank (ADB), in its 2011 vision document entitled, Africa in 50 Years' Time, The Road towards Inclusive Growth,

> *Africa has some of the most abundant natural resources in the world, many of which are yet to be tapped. These include not just minerals and oils, but also bountiful possibilities for clean energy. But natural resources are not Africa's only advantage. While Western countries are shouldering the burden of aging populations, Africa is the world`s youngest continent. If it invests in education and training to develop the potential of its youth, Africa could become one of the most dynamic and productive economies* (CESA 16-25, 2015, P. 13).

According to some pundits and commentators, this call has been re-echoed by national governments, sub-regional and regional communities, as well as continental groupings. In the last two decades, African Union heads of states and policy makers have heavily invested in the schooling and training of the younger generation. They have equally developed strategic frameworks and plans so as to achieve accessible, dynamic and relevant educational development.

Over the last decades, educational development in Africa has been characterised by notable gains in the number of children as well as young people enrolled at all levels of education. Higher education in less developed countries have become instrumental in enhancing sustainable development. In the 21st century, higher education plays a vital role in shaping economic development among nations. Higher education in many countries worldwide has seized to be a luxury but an absolute necessity since education is synonymous to sustainable community development. It is believed that for any meaningful and sustainable growth and development to be

realised in both developed and less developed economies, tertiary or higher education must be at the centre of the development agenda of all nations. With the growing importance of the tertiary education, countries worldwide are striving to build the sector either under pressure, as the case of Africa, or as priority in their strategic development plans, as in the case of developed and emerging countries. As such, building a tertiary education system is not more a luxury as it was the case back in those days but a critical imperative for national development and global competitiveness (CESA 16-25, 2015).

Tertiary education thus, is seen as a critical tool for innovation, entrepreneurship, as well as improves competitiveness through knowledge productions in universities and professional training institutions. In this light, policy makers, educationists and development planners has recognised that higher education is at the centre of the production of knowledge and skills which forms the basis for sustainable community development. Higher education through its programmes provide the basis for community development in the world. In China, the number of candidates seeking entrance into the higher education institutions and even the labour market has consistently increases from 2 million in 1997 to about 7.3 million in 2006 (Yao & al, 2010). It is in this light that Mazurek and Winzer (2006), pointed out that "higher education institutions are crucially important, they train high-level personnel capable of competing with the educated elites of other countries" (p. 79).

Cameroon is not left aside in this move. This explain why in the last twenty years, the number of state owned universities has drastically moved from one (1) following the university reform of 1993 (the famous university of Yaoundé) to seven (7) by 2008 coupled with a considerable number of professional schools estimated at about 200 (Tamajong, 2008). Also, the role of higher education as a tool for sustainable community development is once again emphasis through the creation of other state`s own universities and professional training institutions in Bertoua, Garoua, and Ebolowa through the presidential decree signed on 5 January 2022 (Decree No. 2022/003 of 5th January 2022). Even with the increase in the number of state owned institutions and private institutions, the number of aspirants keep on increasing. This has led to the introduction of competitive entrance examinations as a means to select meritorious students from a hundred of thousands of aspirants. Competitive entrance examinations are organised annually by different body in charge of organising the examinations throughout the national territory. These organising

bodies fixed the eligible conditions for nationals and non-nationals to fulfil before being eligible to take part in the entrance examination. This account for the fact that the number of candidates cannot be accommodated instantly by the public sector reason why competitive entrance examinations are used by many countries (developed and less developed) including Cameroon. This is destined to give equal chances to young Cameroonians to make their way into the public service of the country irrespective of their social status.

Elsewhere, the story is not quite different from what we lived in Cameroon. In Ethiopia for example, the introduction of competitive entrance examinations or admissions test as the only way into state owned and some private institutions is as a result of an increase in the number of candidates and also the credibility of the grade system. Telila (2010), made it clear that the Ethiopian ministry of education responsible for the award of certificates as well as student's placement in the universities and professional institutions has been facing criticisms as a result of the fact that university graduates have poor quality. Several professionals and researchers in education has made it clear that gone are the magnificent days of high academic performance and enviable achievement among Ethiopian undergraduates have reach a vanishing point (Telila, 2010). In all these countries, one thing is certain, that is; the introduction of competitive entrance examinations in various educational systems in the world translate the willingness of governments and policy makers to give equal chances to all the aspirants or students willing to make their way in to their dreamt institutions or professions. This has increase the degree of competition among candidates pushing them to organise themselves into learning groups or join preparatory classes so as to boast their level and also to maximise their chances of succeeding. The present study thus seeks to examine the impact of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced training schools in Cameroon.

The present chapter focuses on the backgrounds of the study. Here, the researcher tries to explore the various articulations of chapter one such as the contextual, historical, conceptual and theoretical backgrounds of the study, the justification of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, and research objectives. This part also dwells on the scientific and practical significance of the study, the delimitation of the study as well as the presentation or plan of work. The chapter ends with the clarification of key concepts of the study.

Backgrounds of the study

The backgrounds of the study constitutes the backbone for the studied. It provides the reader with necessary information to understand the object of the study. The backgrounds of the study are divided into four sub-backgrounds. This includes the historical, the conceptual, the theoretical and the contextual backgrounds of the study. It also covers the research problem as well as the research purposes, questions and hypotheses of the study.

Historical background of the study

In the developed and under developed economies, one of the major aims of the tertiary educational sector is to promote sustainable growth and development of the community through identification, selection as well as training quality human resources capable of sparking growth and development in the society. The identification and selection of people basing on their talents as well as abilities is one of the main goals of assessment and evaluation centres (Narges, Mohammadi & Goldasteh, 2019). Many countries worldwide have adopted competitive entrance examinations and admission tests as a means to select meritorious students for university studies, professional training schools and even for job placement in the public service of the country. This is because of the growing number of students' year in and year out aspiring to join some of these universities, private institutions, and professional training institutions. As a result of the incapacity of the government to incorporate all the aspirants into the public service or tertiary institutions, competitive entrance examinations and admission tests are seen as the only way out to ensure equity and equality in the selection of candidates.

Although the history of assessing and evaluating qualified people to be appointed to governmental positions and even for higher education studies in countries such China dates as far back as the second century BC (Mohammadi, Fathabadi, Yadegarzadeh, Mohammadi & Parand, 2012), there is no theoretical agreement on the time, date and place when the first modern examinations for selecting candidates for public service and higher educational studies was conducted. Based on available evidences and literature, the first university entrance examinations in Europe were conducted in Germany and the United Kingdom in the early 19th century (Narges, Mohammadi & Goldasteh, 2019). Kazovik et al. (2014), believes that the history of the competitive entrance examinations into professional schools, universities and public service goes back to Spain. This happens in 1575, when a student in Madrid was proposed to the king. Around the 20th century in the United States of America, standardized tests were modelled on the US Army Alpha Test in a

four choice method entitled “SAT Academic Talent Test” (Kaveh, Khodaei, Mousavi, Moghadamzadeh & Younesi, 2013). The introduction of competitive entrance examinations and admission tests in various educational systems worldwide translated the desire of governments to give equal chances to all the social groups in the society to become part of the public service or a means to join their dream institutions.

In the last decades in both developed and under developed world, tests have been used primarily to qualify for university degrees rather than to enter higher education (Narges, Mohammadi & Goldasteh, 2019). As such, educational assessment and evaluation in these countries are increasingly considered as levers for improvement, accountability, educational planning and policy development in educational systems (Kaveh; Khodaei; Mousavi; Moghadamzadeh & Younesi, 2013). According to Zarrinkoub (2010), in many countries of the world, human resource evaluations due to differences in social, cultural and educational systems have enjoyed great diversity.

In Iran, competitive entrance examinations and admission tests were conducted for the first time in a number of faculties of the University of Tehran in 1963 due to the imbalance between the supply and the demand force. By 1967, following the creation of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the first examination centre for preserving time of candidates for examination was established and as such, entrance competitions for universities and higher education and professional institutions were held through a centralised approach across the national territory (Narges, Mohammadi & Goldasteh, 2019). In 1975, due to a considerable increase in the number of aspirants to higher education institutions, an independent organisation known as the “National Assessment Organisation” with three areas of technical-research, executive and supervisory deputy affairs of universities was approved by the Iran`s parliament (Ibid). The 8th evaluation summit of the Educational Revolution held in 1975 emphasised on the principle of selection of applicants among which were the grade point average of the final exams of the secondary school, the results of public examinations and specific conditions of each university were required for entrance into higher education (Norshahi, 1997). Following the collapse of the monarchy and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, a national examination called “Konkour” which comes from the French word “Concours” has been held annually. According to pundits, the “Konkour” is a

tough examination that has created intense competition among applicants more especially in money-making discipline such as medicine (National Education Evaluation Organisation, 2011).

Competitive entrance examinations and admission tests are very important to the extent that some pundits simply believe that eliminating this method of selecting candidates despite cries from different social groups is simply impossible. According to Khodadadi (2013), the elimination of entrance examination due to unpredictable challenges is simply not possible and different mechanisms should be considered to reduce these challenges. For Zarei & Orangi (2012), in addition to the competitive entrance examination, other factors should be considered in student`s selection and admission process and it should not be limited to one factor. Fathi & Maleki (2012), on their part argues that more emphasis should be laid on conducting entrance examination. Khodaei (2009), believed that student admission should be done through a combination of centralised test and academic records. Samari, Dozei, Omran, & Garainejadnejad, (2017), considers the necessity of using academic records and creating a balance in supply and social demand for disciplines.

In China, students who graduate from high school take a general ability test with many provincial differences. According to OECD (2016), the exam is organised by the National Organisation for Educational Examinations (NEEA), under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (MOE). In England, after graduation from high school, students wishing to further their studies are required to take additional exams, conducted in several different centres, which is run and controlled by the Office of Regulators of Qualifications (Dittrich, & Weck-Hannemann, 2010). According to Paton and Graeme (2012), many students are required to sit for competitive entrance examinations before their admission. In France, the story is not different. Students after high school are obliged to take "Concours" sanctioning entrance into "Grandes Ecoles" and professional schools of the country. In Japan, after the completion of high school, candidates are required to take a national exam at the national level sanctioning entrance into higher education. National Centre for University Entrance Examination (NCUEE) is in charge of organising the exam under the watchful eyes of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MTEX). In Nigeria, students are eligible to enter tertiary education only after completing high school. They must take the United Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) managed by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). In Cameroon, the story is not quite different from what we experienced elsewhere.

Competitive entrance examinations were introduced in the Cameroonian educational system in the early 60s and 70s. This has gone on to become the gateway for the admission of candidates into the public service as well as into some prestigious professional schools. The essence of these competitive entrance examinations is to select the meritorious candidates out of a hundreds of thousands. It equally comes as a result of the inability of the government to incorporate all the aspirants into the public service and professional institutions. This has led to the emergence of preparatory classes or better still preparatory groups.

Preparatory classes or groups are known as informal educational projects initiated by private individuals with the aim of assisting candidates preparing for competitive entrance examinations into the public service or state owned institutions. This activity has gain momentum in both the developed and less developed economies especially to families who sees the public service and the professional institutions as a privilege. In England, this activity is known as the "Preps classes". In France, the phenomenon is known as "Prepa-Concours". In Cameroon, this phenomenon is known as "preparatory groups". These groups are specialised organisations in charge of preparing candidates for different competitive entrance examinations in the country. The phenomenon has greatly gain grounds in Cameroon. Today, it is practically difficult to make some kilometres without seeing a banner talking of preparatory groups. The multiplication of these groups in the main towns and cities of the country has raised the question of the pertinence of these groups.

Theoretical background of the study

The theoretical background provides the reader with the various theories of knowledge which underpins the present study. This constitutes the theoretical foundation of the study from which the research hypotheses are formulated. Here, a total of four theories are retained for the study with the theory of change being the principal theory of the study. These includes; theories of change (Carol Weiss and Kurt Lewin), the general system theory, the theory of organizational ecology and the theory of sustainable leadership.

Theories of change

Theories of change are the evaluative theories which provide the framework for the degree of achievement of the predefined goals and objectives in an organization. The theories of change constitute the principal theories in the present study. The theory of change provides the logical framework for evaluating programs and projects. The theory came to existence through the

discovery of the CIPP model (Context, Input, Processes and Products) by Daniel Stufflebeam. James (2011) argued that a good number of United States writers such as Carol Weiss, Huey Chen, and Patton popularized the theory of change by increasingly highlighting the challenges in evaluating complex social and community projects/programs when it appears that the aim of the programs is not clear. The US based Aspen Institute and its Roundtable on community change brought about the use of theory of change in organizations. In the present study, Carol Weiss (1995) approach of theory of change and Kurt Lewin "Unfreezing, Change and Refreezing" change model was adopted to accompany the researcher.

For Weiss (1972) the purpose of evaluation as a process is "to measure the effects of a program against the goals it set out to accomplish as a means of contributing to subsequent decision making about the program and improving future programing". She argued that the term theory of change is a way to describe a set of assumptions which explain both the mini-steps through which it is possible to achieve long term goals as well as the connections between program activities and outcomes that occur at each step of the way (Weiss, 1995).

Kurt Lewin on his part, through the "unfreeze, change and refreeze" change model insisted that change is one of the shared strand which is experienced in all communities and organizations irrespective of size, age, technology or industry. For him, the ecosphere continues to change, requiring organizations and enterprises of all nature to adapt to the changing nature of the environment (1951). This is why in his approach to the understanding of the change theory, Lewin insisted that for change to take place, the original structure of the institution must be unfreeze. This is follows by the change process which consist of implementing the change. The refreezing stage simply provides the opportunity for the evaluator to check if or not the change is effective. The approaches of Weiss and Lewin of change theory were used in the present study since it provides a better understanding of the evaluation process.

Hannan and Freeman organizational ecology theory (1989)

The ecology of organisations theory was developed by Hannan and Freeman in 1989. The ecology of organisations as advocated by Hannan and Freeman stipulates that the ecology of the organisation largely depends on the context and the environment in which the enterprise and its members operate in question. In this regards, Hannan and Freeman (1989) suggests that the means to sustain the environment, which is favourable for the organisation`s activities and operations

need to be designed. Organizations operates in a more changing and dynamic environment. Managers in an organisation are hereby required to set up a management system capable of enhancing productivity in the organisation and most importantly handling elements which may affect the success of the organisation. Hannan and Freeman in their findings adopted four principles guiding organisational ecology. This include;

- Adaptation principle
- Selection principle
- Inertia principle
- Constraints principle

This theory provides a better understanding of a program/project in this environment. Since the environment is dynamic and unpredictable, it becomes the sole and unique responsibilities of the managers and decision makers to take into consideration the context whenever making a decision. This simply means that organizations are hereby called to develop adaptation strategies, which is the core component of the ecology of organization theory.

Avery`s Sustainable leadership theory (2005)

The theory of sustainable leadership adopted in the present study is that of Avery, developed in 2005. According to Avery (2005) for organisations to ultimately take into account the needs of all the stakeholders, managers are required to establish the concept of sustainable leadership development, integrate it into the organisation and implement sustainable leadership attitude since the leader is key to the transformation of the organisation. This implies that the actions of a leader or manager in an organization largely condition the success of the organization itself. Thus, managers are required to adopt a more positive postures in dealing with organizational matters. Haegreaves and Fink (2004) and Avery (2005) were the first to use the concept of sustainable development with leadership to develop the theory of sustainable leadership. Since then, a number of scholars has explored the field. Avery (2005), cited by Yaohua Liao (2022) was the first to introduce the concept of sustainable leadership into the field of organisational management. He proposed a new concept of sustainable leadership based on comparing the differential impact of the two development models of capitalism, that is; the British American model and the Rhine model on the leadership style of managers. He summarised his approach into 19 elements.

Avery (2005) pointed out that sustainable leadership means having long-term decision-making skills, enhancing systematic innovation, developing a loyal and committed team, and also providing high quality products, services and solutions to all the stakeholders within and outside the organisation. This is intended to balance the relationship between people, profits, and earth and promote the sustainability of the enterprise through corresponding management practices. The sustainable leadership is adopted in this study to help the researcher in understanding how sustainable actions and endeavours can enhance projects/programs effectiveness and efficiency.

General system theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1969)

The general system theory was founded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, born on the 19th of 1901 in Atzgersdorf. He was a biophysicist and discovered the system theory in his effort to appreciate nature's development and system behaviour in biology in the 1920s (Dreck, Apfalta, Purvreau, 2010). The appreciation that an outcome is not explained simply by parts but that the relationships between and among those parts and their environment (context) are important eventually led to the formulation of system theory (Frye & Hemma, 2012). The system theory states that a system is a series of interrelated and interdependent parts interwoven such that any movement or action on one part affects the whole system. This holds on to Aristotle's dictum that "a whole is greater than the sum of its parts". This theory is one of the central theory of this work and it helps to explain how our independent variable (preparatory groups) functions in education as an open system. It holds that no single aspect or part of the system planned to enhance the system's objective is more important than the other. They all function fully to enable each other to achieve the stated objectives.

The general system theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy intervenes in the present in that it helps to better perceive the importance of evaluation in organizations. This theory stipulates that sum of the parts is equal to the whole. This means that for change to take place in an organization, all the aspects of the organization must be checked, since interrelated and interdependent. Thus, what happens to X will automatically affects Y.

Conceptual background of the study

Competitive entrance exams are a way of life; it is the struggle among applicants to secure a seat into top colleges, professional schools, universities or an access into the public service of the country (Mounchikpou, 2021). Competitive entrance examinations are therefore a means put in

place the government permitting her to organise a set of admission tests throughout the country with the main aim of selecting meritorious candidates out of a hundred of thousands. These examinations sanctioning the entrance into professional institutions or into a particular job translates the desire of the government to give equal chances to all the social classes of the society be become part of the governing body. Ruike Zhu (2014) defined entrance examinations as "a general inclusive term, referring to the standardised examination that applicants of the higher education institutions are required to take. To him, these admission exams are either aim at selecting candidates for higher education institutions or job placement into the civil service or simply to join the labour market.

To kumar (2020), competitive entrance examinations are centrally organised all over the country in which thousands of aspirants attain them every year. This exam can either be for admission in to prestigious colleges, professional schools, universities, advanced training schools or for placement in a job in a government funded organisations or private institutions. These exams can either be organised by the governmental organisations or by private institutions under the watchful eyes of the government. In some countries including Cameroon, the majority of these examinations are conducted with three primary purposes in mind;

- It may be to evaluate if a candidate educational level and personality or character are in line with the requirements for the job.
- To rest assure that all the candidates are evaluated uniformly and objectively at the end of which the distinguish ones are admitted in to these schools or professions.
- The third purpose for organising competitive entrance examinations in some countries as a gate way in to a professional schools or a job is based on the assumptions that the grade system used by many countries has lost its credibility meaning that most countries does not rely any more on the grade system.

With the first assumption, it clear that competitive entrance exams aim at evaluating the educational levels of candidates in different exams. The organising body look into it that the behaviour or personality and character of a candidates meets the requirements for a particular profession. They make sure that the behaviour of the candidates seeking admission into a professional school, university or a job matches with the ethics of the institutions or that of his or her dreamt profession.

The second assumption or purpose advocates the idea that candidates should be evaluated uniformly and objectively at the end of which well performed candidates are selected in to a professional school or for placement for a job. This therefore means that the evaluation of candidates should be the same throughout the country so as to avoid a situation whereby this or that social class in the society is favoured to the demerit of others. Also the degree of objectiveness in an exam should be the same all over the country to equally avoid favouritism. This therefore put forward the idea that the organisations or institutions in charge of organising these exams should take into consideration the uniform and objective nature of these examinations whenever they are called upon to administer such exams.

The third assumption or purpose lies in the fact that the grade system used by some counties in those days as a means to select meritorious candidates has gradually lost it credibility making it difficult for candidates to be selected basing on this system. This has made many countries if not all to turn to competitive entrance examinations or admission tests as the only means to select competent candidates. In Ethiopia for example, the Ethiopian ministry of education responsible for the award of certificates as well as student's placement in the universities and professional institutions has been facing criticisms as a result of the fact that university graduates have poor quality. Several professionals and researchers in education has made it clear that gone are the magnificent days of high academic performance and enviable achievement among Ethiopian undergraduates have reach a vanishing point (Telila, 2010). This explain why university entrance scores and high school grade point average are seen as two admission criteria that are presently used for higher education institutions in Ethiopia. In the United Kingdom, the grade system is gradually replaced by competitive or admission examinations. In India, the story is still the same as grade system is abandon in favour of competitive exams or admission tests.

In Europe, the introduction of admission tests and competitive entrance examinations in European tertiary education was the need to ensure equity and access to all the population. Access to higher education institutions has been a recurrent theme going back to the Article 26 (1) of the universal Declaration of Human Rights, which points out that higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the merit and also reaffirmed by the world conference on higher education convened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), in 1998 (Eggins,

2010; stated by Cecile, et al., 2014). This has led to a considerable appreciation throughout Europe on how admission systems and competitive entrance examinations are embedded in the complex dynamics of educational systems in general, laying emphasis on the opportunities and weaknesses of education on offer in the schooling cycle and stretching to eventual graduation from tertiary education. The European educational systems faced difficulty in responding to the growing mass demand for higher education in response to a considerable decline in available resources per students. Also, there is no single trend as a response to the current economic climate. In some European countries, public funding has greatly increased whereas in other countries in Europe, public funding resources have reduced leading to serious consequences for equity in admission to the tertiary education (Cecile, et al. 2014).

The informal sector is one of the principal sectors that participate in sustainable community development in countries worldwide. It was Hart (1971), cited by Chaudhuri and Mukhopadhyay (2010), who first addressed the latter as the "informal sector". To him, the informal sector is seen as part of the urban labour force which takes place out of the organised and well-structured economy. The idea of Hart on the informal sector economy centred on self-employment. Defining the informal sector has always proven to be a challenging task because of the dichotomy which do exists between the two concepts, that is; the formal and the informal sector. This is why in a study conducted by Weeks (1975), provided the distinction between formal and informal sectors on the basis of the organisational characteristics of exchange relationships and the position of economic activities vis-à-vis the state. In the same move, in January 1993, prior to the effort of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (15^{th} ICLS), advocated for an international statistical definition of the informal sector and equally characterised organisations/enterprises to be informal basing on the following criteria:

- The enterprises are private unincorporated, i.e. owned by individuals or households and are not constituted as separate legal entities.
- Their size in terms of employment is below a certain threshold to be determined according to national circumstances.
- They are engaged in non-agricultural activities, including secondary non-agricultural activities of enterprises in the agricultural sector.

- All or at least some of the goods and services produced are meant for sale or for batter, (Chaudhuri and Mukhopadhyay, 2010).

The informal sector even though strongly neglected in some developed and less developed economies, the sector has emerged in the past decades as an important tool of economic development. This sector create employment to those who are unemployed. The idea that this sector epitomises the formal sector has been overcome by a plethora of evidences as it demonstrates the dynamic character and equally its contribution in providing employment out of the formal sector. Chaudhuri and mukhopadhyay, (2010), states that "informal sector usually refers to extra-legal and non-recorded economic activities which can capture a whole array of diverse occupations, productions and services". As the name indicate, the informal sector cut across activities out of the legal framework.

Preparatory group is an aspect of shadow education put in place by an individual or group of individuals, with predefined objectives, pursuing common goals. These groups are aimed at assisting students preparing for competitive entrance examinations. Preparatory groups assist candidates and students in a plethora of domains. These groups are specialised in providing extra academic assistance to candidates willing to prepare themselves so as to have a positive mind set during the approach of the examinations. The groups intervene in a variety of domains including education, administration, engineering, agriculture, international relations, military, as well as medicine.

Elsewhere, this activity although have the same significance, have different appellation. In the United Kingdom, this activity is known as "preps groups". In France, this activity is known as "Prepa-Concours". In Vietnam, this activity has been existing since the 1980s known as private tuitions. Private tuitions or preparatory groups has been existing in Vietnam where students need to attend extra classes ("dic hoc them") to gain new knowledge or prepare themselves for this or that examinations (Hai-Anh Dang, 2006). Preparatory groups as well as private tuitions are not limited to developing countries similar to Cameroon and Vietnam. This activity is widespread and can be found in nearly all the countries be it in the developed and less developed economies. Kwok (2003), cited by Hai-Anh Dang (2006), observed that private tutoring can be found in countries with diverse economic and geographical settings like the United Kingdom, Romania, Egypt,

Kenya, Morocco, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, as well as Cambodia. A similar study by Aurini and Davies (2004), reveals that in Canada, private tutoring has become a profitable business in the past years. In the same light, Kim and lee (2004), observed that parents in South Korea spent an amount approximately equal to 2.9% of the country`s Gross Domestic Product on private tutoring for primary and secondary students. This entails that preparatory groups in these countries does not appear to be important only to candidates preparing for a competitive entrance examination, but equally to students preparing for official examinations like the GCE Advanced Level in England and the Baccalaureate in France.

According to Project Management Institute (2008), fourth edition, "a project is a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result" (p. 6). A project is said to be a temporary initiative because it has a defined beginning and an end. The start of the project marked the kick-off of the project activities. The end on the other hand is reached when the goals and objectives are achieved or in some cases when there is change of orientations. Project are undertaken at all organisational levels. It can involve an individual initiative, a single organisation initiative or even a multiple organisation initiative. A project can create;

- A product that can be either a component of another item or an end item in itself,
- A capability to perform a service (a business function that supports production or distribution),
- A result such as an outcome or document (a research project that develops knowledge that can be used to determine whether a trend is present or a new process will benefit society) (PMI, 2008).

A project is equalling "a unique process consisting of a set of coordinated and controlled activities with start and finish dates, undertaken to achieve an objective conforming to specific requirements, including constraints of time, cost and resources" (BS ISO 10006, 1997, cited by Assem Al-Hajj & Zraunig, 2018). Projects are the mechanism through which organisations, enterprises, business and individuals change as well as adapt so as to take advantage of new and existing opportunities and equally to counter threats or risks (Hobbs, 2009). This is why Peter Hobbs (2009), stated that in a world in which business competitiveness is essentially based on a search for new products as well as ways of doing things, every business enterprise as well as individuals can improve their prospects by always asking the question of "where is the project in my current situation". This is

because there is no domain in life which is not influence by project. Every human being in order to bring about change in his or her life must develop projects permitting them to exploit the existing opportunities so as to bring about the desired change or outcome. A project is an activity designed to bring about accepted beneficial changes within a fixed timeframe using specific resources (human, material, financial). Projects in general necessitate the co-ordination of a number of activities by a number of people to achieve a specific results and is often characterised by elements of risk. According to Peter Hobbs (2009), "a project is a "one off" scope of work defined by three parameters; that is, time, cost and quality" (p. 4). To him, a project defines the means (resources) through a specific result is achieved using specific resources and within a set of timeframe. Peter Hobbs believed that in project, one of the three parameters (time, cost and quality) is fixed, meaning that one should not or cannot change but there is flexibility in at least one of the other two. For example, in a situation where the quality of a product is fixed, cost has a tendency to rise and deadlines to slip if work is more complex that it was first planned.

Larson and Gray (2021), defined project management as a set of tools and techniques that permit project managers to plan, implement, evaluate and manage activities so as to accomplish predefined objectives. Today, business leaders and experts have agreed that project management is very essential for sustainable community development. This is because projects are seen in both developed and less developed countries as a catalyst of change. As such, new jobs and competitive advantage are achieved through constant innovation, developing new products and services and also improving both productivity as well as quality of work. This, according to Larson and Gray (2021) is the world of project management. To them, project management is a goal-oriented management style which places a premium on building collaborative relationships among diverse cast of characters. Project management is therefore a constant scanning of the environment aimed to identify the right opportunity necessary to bring about necessary change in the society. It is based on the vision of the project manager. His ability to innovate and bring about desired changes. Innovations in all it facets are what characterises the world of project management.

Some commentators have make it clear that project management is very critical for career development. It provides employers and employees with skills on career management. It is believed that project management fundamentals are universals. The universality of project management fundamentals lies on the fact that project management provides individuals or group

of individuals with skills which are transferable across most businesses and professions. With skills and knowledge in project management, individuals are liable to succeed in their day to day activities since it calls on individuals to be able to manage complex situations. In this light, Larson and Gray (2021), pointed out that the same project management methodology used to develop a new product can be adapted to create new services, organise events, refurbish aging operations etc. Again, today, it is estimated that individuals are susceptible of experiencing three to four career changes, as such, the management of projects is a talent worthy of development. This further intensify the importance of project management in day today life.

The importance of project management is not over estimated. This can be seen by the rapid expansion of the project management institute (PMI) in the recent years. The Project Management Institute is a professional organisation that brings together project managers across the globe. It is said that the membership of project management institute has grown from 93.000 in 2002 to more than 565,000 in 2019 (Larson & Gray, 2021). It has become very difficult to think of a profession or career path that do not benefit from skills of project management. In some countries, project management is not only seen as a tittle but a job requirement. In some years back, universities and other institutions offered one or two courses in project management and it was primarily for student engineers but nowadays, most universities and professional institutions offer multiple classes on project management with the target not only the student engineers, but also students in marketing, management information system (MIS), finance and also students from other disciplines (Larson & Gray, 2021). This illustrate the importance of project management and how essential it is to individual`s career planning. It becomes very imperative for individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and business enterprises to have a good mastering of project management because there exists no domain in the society which is not influence by project management. Thus, project management conditions the success of individuals, groups and organisations since it brings about changes in the society.

Koffi-Tessio (2002) and Fitzgerald et al., (2009), argues that project monitoring and evaluation systems vary with type, sector, and country of application. Jha et al., (2010), stated that a successful project monitoring and evaluation system must undergo modification in order to specify and allow for flexibility and imagination. It becomes imperative to identify the role of project monitoring and evaluation as well as use of the systems and equally the involvement of stakeholders. This is

so because project monitoring and evaluation has many audiences such as managers, donors, field staff, partners, policy makers and program participants (CARE, 2012). It is therefore the outcomes of continuous project monitoring and evaluation that proves to partners and sponsors that their funds are being used and correctly allocated (Alderman, 2011). The process of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of project appears to be indispensable in the achievements of predefined objectives of the project by a project manager. The project manager thus, need to adopt monitoring and evaluation techniques which best suits the context, the sector of intervention and the type of monitoring and evaluation deem appropriate. This is because a project is goal oriented and it is a one-off activity and as such, project managers and team members must monitor and evaluate project development so as to make sure that the results achieved reflects the predefined objectives of the project. Briceno (2010), argue out that modern day's specialized project oriented organizations should always consider experiences from other organizations when defining a monitoring and evaluation system. According to the United Nations Development Program`s Handbook (2002), on monitoring and evaluation of project success, mentioned that because evaluation is a central tool for monitoring and also that monitoring is a central input for evaluation, it is therefore recommended that both processes be planned and implemented simultaneously.

Monitoring and evaluation tools are seen as vital elements in achieving project success. In Africa for example, most if not all the countries have adopted monitoring and evaluation tools. Ghana for example, created the commission in charge of National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) as a regulatory policy to assimilate the principle of monitoring and evaluation operations. More to this, the NDPC adopted the Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (RBMES) and the Results Based Budgeting (RBB) in the monitoring and evaluation process (Ivy Mukami, N. and Stephen, W. L., 2018). The aim of these initiatives were aimed to ensure cost effectiveness, institutional capacity strengthening, and promotion of good governance, accountability and credibility to the partners and also the government. This is why Aaltonen (2011), thought it wise that in order to give an additional value to the project operations, the monitoring and evaluation team needs adequate training.

According to Ryan Sherman (2013), there is no better and appropriate way project success can be improved if not through a systematic measurement, critics and understanding of the project`s processes, and then apply what has been learned to current and future projects. This initiative

permit project managers and team members to ameliorate their skills in project management and also becomes successful in the future. It is believed organizations nowadays are striving not to commit the same mistake twice. To achieve this ultimate goal, by making use of project monitoring and evaluation, organizations accomplish this goal and as such, gain an advantage over their competitors.

Contextual background of the study

The desire to overcome day today challenges by countries around the world has led to the multiplication of a number of international and national conferences. The education sector, according to the UNESCO (1998) is considered as a vital tool for sustainable community development and growth. Following the United Nations declaration on the right of all persons to receive quality education, countries across the globe has embarked on enacting policies aims at improving quality, equality, equity and inclusive education at all levels of the educational systems. This has been characterised by both national and international conferences such as the Dakar framework of action (2000), the conference of Icheon of 1990s, the National Development Strategy (SND30), just to name a few. In this regards, the UNESCO (1998) argued that in a world characterised by massive, continued and unpredictable social, economic and technological changes, affecting all sector of the society, education, which has become an absolute necessity, more to that has a particular added value as a means to understand and cope with these complexities. This further demonstrate the important place education occupies in the society as it is seen as a catalyst of sustainable growth and development. In 2015, the U.N.O in its 2030 agenda for sustainable development, outlines the importance of improving on the education and training systems of countries around the world. This is intended to ensure a society open to all and free from all social ills.

In order to align with the requirements of the U.N.O, countries across the Saharan desert, including Cameroon have embrace this vision of education propounded by the United Nations Organisations by developing strategies destined to improve the quality of education and training. It is as a results of this that many countries in Africa adopted competitive entrance examinations as a gate way into the public services and professional training schools following the accession to self-government in the early 50s, 60s and 70s. Competitive entrance examinations are a set of written and oral tests intended to select meritorious candidates out of a hundred of thousands. It is believed that the adoption of these examinations to select candidates into the public service and even professional

institutions is as a result of the fact there is inadequacy between the demand and supply force. Thus the need to select the best out of hundreds of thousands. This practice goes in line with the African Union (AU) policies of promoting equality and equity in the recruitment and selection process of candidates.

Over the years, the formal sector in most African countries including Cameroon is capable of absorbing only a smaller fraction of those who enter the labour market in ever-larger numbers. According to Fluitman and Momo (2001) the formal sector is relatively small, and for the meantime, not necessarily a net-creator of jobs. To these authors, the informal sector is not a new phenomenon in Cameroon, but due to the economic crisis and its aftermath, the importance of this sector as the only provider of job and income to a majority of the adult population. The informal sector occupies a disproportionate position in Cameroon. According to the National Institute of Statistics (2010) the informal sector is characterised by independent promoters, absence of administrative registration and no formal accounting. It is basically because of this that estimates were made to demonstrate that the informal sector occupies a vital position in the economy of Cameroon with some 50% GDP in 2005. In 2010, it is believed that 89.1% of the active population was part of the informal sector which amount to 9.2 million people in the sector (NIS, 2010). This same survey reported that in the informal sector, only 5% of the promoters has received higher education, 46% has completed the primary school and 49% has reached secondary education. In a similar survey published by the NIS in 2011, it is said that more than 2.5 million production units of the informal sector can be counted in Cameroon, with 49.5% in rural areas and 33.3% in the Cameroonian main cities of Yaounde and Douala. Due to the inability of the formal sector to absorb all the job seekers, the informal sector turns out to be a better destination for these job seekers. This sector consists of micro and small unincorporated private enterprises, involved in a broad variety of economic activities (Fluitman & Momo, 2001). These activities are very visible in fast growing cities like Yaounde and Douala but are in larger part neglected by the public authorities. This is the case with the preparatory groups and classes which focussed on the preparation of students for high school entrance examination in the country. For many, succeeding in a concours requires one to be in a group.

According to Jean-Paul Kouega (2018), following the independence of French Cameroon in 1960 and that of British Cameroon in 1961 and the subsequent Federation of the two Cameroons, the

country operates under two different education systems inclined to their colonial origins. In 1972, the status of federation was replaced by reunification. During this period, they were a strong anxiety to spark up the development of the country. In the general provisions of the law of orientation of education of 1998 (Law no. 98/00 of 4th April, 1998) education is the top priority of the state. It is provided by the state and the private partners assist the state in providing the educational offer. The government intend to train individuals or citizens who are rooted in their culture but open to the world. Citizens who are able and ready to participate in the economic, social and political development of the country.

Through the National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (NDS30), the government aims to boast the economic, social and political growth of the country. In order to achieve this, the government is focussed on: "promoting an education system at the end of which any young graduates is sociologically integrated, bilingual and competent in a field that is vital for the development of the country and aware of what he must do to contribute to it" (NDS30). In regards to this, the government`s actions are structured around three key components, which are; access and equity, quality and employability and strengthening of the educational system. As such many Cameroonians did not only want to be spectators in the process but equally actors and play an important role in the consolidation of independence and development of the country. More to this, the number of individuals who wish to be part of this process considerably increases. This is because a good number of Cameroonian youths strongly believe that the only way to effectively integrate socio-professionally in the society is by joining the formal sector. As such, faced with the inability to satisfy the desire of everyone, the government of the republic has adopted competitive entrance examinations as the only means through which candidates can be selected either into one of the prestigious professional training institutions of the country or even for job placement into the public service. This is in bit to ensure equity and equality of access to all which are the guiding principles of quality education and training as advocated by the United Nation`s 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

For Tamajong (2008), education is and shall remain a critical factor in addressing critical challenges and issues of growth and development throughout the world. This is because, any significant evolution in the field of education is equivalent to the prosperity of a nation. Education is closely interconnected with issues such as democracy, human rights, globalisation, social

injustice, poverty alleviation, environmental protection, science and technology which requires inclusive partnerships in order to guarantee sustainable community growth and development.

Competitive entrance examinations are a set of written and oral exams organised by a ministerial department, in the case of Cameroon to recruit and select the best students out of a hundred of thousands applicants. A survey conducted by Brenda and published by "Cameroon Tribune" (2019) argues that competitive entrance examination is that period of the year when young Cameroonians organised themselves into learning groups or simply joint some preparatory groups or classes in order to prepare themselves on how to attempt questions and equally to have a positive mind-set before going in for these examinations sanctioning entrance in to a number of prestigious training and learning institutions as well as advanced schools in the country such as ENAM, EMIA, IRIC, HTTC, ASMAC, ENSPY etc.

A similar survey compiled by Olive, Yuri, Enanga, Moussa and Ifumgah, (2009), all journalism students on internship from ASMAC, found out that competitive entrance examinations though originally designed to select meritorious candidates, has gradually lost it value as a result of corruption as well as other ill-fated practices. In their investigation, some of the participants testifies that gone are the glorious days of competitive exams in Cameroon as they insisted that it is full of corruption. Another participant argued that the financial competitiveness in these examinations is too high as money has ironically replaces meritocracy. For some, money determines success and not competition. Another even went further to emphasise that money does not guarantee total success as one also need a "god father" to succeed. Others stated that competitive entrance examination is "just a mafia" and that it is public corruption examination. All of this further highlights the importance of these examinations in the Cameroonians context. Due to the competition which strongly characterised competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon basically because of the limited number of seats available for unlimited number applicants, the degree of development in the country, and the fact that the public sector is seen by many youths as the only source of employment, there is the need for candidates to undergo further training in order to be psychologically and mentally viable for these examinations. These examinations are organised by well recognised government organs such as ministerial departments. These organs define the conditions and modalities for the eligibility of applicants. Some of these conditions are;

- Being a holder of a required certificates;
- Being of Cameroonian nationality for some “concours”;
- Be of good moral;
- Fulfil the required age range;
- Have a good criminal record;
- Be ready to work wherever needs arises; etc.

These governing bodies equally defined the contents of the respective examinations in their respective areas of intervention. For example, the MINSUP, organises and fixes the conditions for competitive entrance examinations for the recruitment and selection of candidates (Degree no 20-00407/MINSUP/SG/DAUQ/SDEAC/SE of May 26, 2020/2021). Similarly, the MINDEF organises and fixes the conditions and requirements to be fulfilled by candidates willing to make career in the arms forces (Degree no 170657/CRP/MINDEF/4 of 14th February 2012, fixing the conditions for entrance exam into EMIA). Also in a joint communique, the degree no 18200230-MNETAT/MINCOM/SG/DAUQ/SDEAC of 17th July 2020, fixed the conditions for entrance examination into ASMAC. All these requirements and conditions are intended to provide equal chances for individuals of different age range, ethnic groups, sex, beliefs, and origins to be selected. The brain behind this is to achieve the sustainable development goals which advocates for equity, equality and inclusiveness in the treatment of individuals of different origins, background and race.

With an eye on the competitive nature of examinations and selective admission system in Cameroon, there is the need for candidates to join preparatory classes or organise themselves into learning groups in order to become acquainted with the required methodology of answering questions in the chosen professional schools. Preparatory groups therefore emerge as partner’s number one for these candidates. For almost two decades now, the phenomenon of preparatory groups has considerably gain ground in Cameroon especially in Yaounde. While these groups are regarded as informal education projects because of the fact that they constitute an aspect of “shadow education”, they turn out to be of great importance for candidates preparing for entrance examinations. They have provided some sort of reliance and assistance to these candidates since they assist them in their quest of succeeding in an entrance examination. Some of these groups have been operating since the late 1990s and the early 2000s. A number of groups considered as

pioneer in the domain of preparing candidates have gradually move to professional training institutions with most noticeable names being the “Intelligentsia Coorperation”, “Group Kalata”, just to name a few, created by medical students of the faculty of medicine and students in administration and engineering.

Today, it has become practically very impossible for candidates to go in for competitive entrance examinations without passing through these groups. This is because these groups provide most needed assistance to these candidates. This can be backed up by a considerable boom in the sector. Nowadays, it is impossible to walk for 20km in Yaounde without coming across a sign board advertising the activity of these groups. Similarly, through Medias such as Facebook, radio, television and other social media platforms this activity has become more viral. The impact of these groups or classes in the training of candidates cannot be neglected anymore. A good number of Cameroonians aspire to join the public service of the country and as such, the government finds it very difficult to satisfy everybody. Thus, these groups provide much needed assistance to both economically advantageous and disadvantageous candidates.

These groups are created for one and unique specific reason, that is, assisting candidates preparing for competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon. For this to be achieved, the promoters and other actors are intended to well manage their structures (teamwork, workforce engagement, organisational climate), ensures workforce performance and productivity (organisation`s culture, value and mission, skills, working environment) by motivating the workers. The groups equally need to ensures accountability and transparency (defined responsibilities, meeting goals, rules, procedures, and clearly define processes, discipline) in the running of the financial operations, ensures employee experience (morale, motivation, commitment, performance) by organising seminars and possible workshops. The groups must also possess organisational strategy (stay competitive, meet the demands of customers, adapt to the changing needs of the market), organisational performance (comparing actual achievements against set goals, balancing expenditures against returns), and ensures effective use of tools and technology (organisational results, workforce experience, business productivity).

Justification of the study

The present study aims to evaluate the impact of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

With little or no literature on shadow education, specifically the preparatory groups, this study will fill the gap in literature on this phenomenon in the Cameroonian context. Preparatory groups constitute an aspect of shadow education. Shadow education is a form of education which take place out of the formal system of education. It provides a framework for extra-academic support for candidates. The Cameroonian society sees this form of education as an opportunity for their peers to easily obtain access into the public service and some of the prestigious professional schools and training institutions of the country. In a period characterized by intense competition among aspirants from different socio-economic background, these preparatory groups, repetition classes or "prepa-concours" appears to be the better destination for these families. Thus, it sounds crucial to understand the impact of these groups in the Cameroonian society. How it helps candidates to cement their places in their respective dreamt professional institutions or job in the public service of the country. Competitive entrance examinations appear to be very important to the extent that many pundits believe that it is simply impossible to eliminate this method as the prime method of selecting candidates for job placement, admission into professional institution or for next educational level. This explains why Khodadadi (2013), argues that the elimination of entrance examination due to unpredictable challenges is simply not possible and different mechanisms should be considered to reduce these challenges. Zarei and Orangi (2012), argues that in addition to the competitive entrance examination, other factors should be considered in student`s selection and admission process and it should not be limited to one factor. Fathi and Maleki (2012), on their part argues that more emphasis should be laid on conducting entrance examinations.

It has been observed that the phenomenon of preparatory groups has gone viral especially in the main cities of Cameroon such as Yaounde, Douala, Bafoussam etc. Today it is very difficult to move some kilometres without seeing banners, flyers and agent of advertisement pointing out the importance of these groups. This phenomenon appears to be more and more visible in Cameroon as from the month of June when the government began launching competitive entrance examinations. This practice deserves to be studied since it constitutes one of the popular activities in the country. Through this study, candidates can visualise the impact of the preparatory groups in the Cameroonian society. This is because families who do not have the means to bribe for their peers to be admitted in to the public service or professional schools simply console themselves by sending their children to these groups for extra-academic preparation. The additional value reserve to this phenomenon in Cameroon have led to the multiplication of these groups across the national

territory. The results of the present study will not only serve as the baseline for evaluating preparatory groups in Cameroon, but will equally appreciate the quality of the training offers by the preparatory groups to the candidates. Therefore, conducting a study on the evaluation of preparatory groups appears to be very pertinent and indispensable in a country where the activity is rapidly gaining momentum.

The Statement of the Problem

Preparatory group is an aspect of shadow education. Shadow education also known as "supplementary education" or private tutoring refers to educational activities and services which take place out of the formal system of education, which often serves as a supplement to regular schooling. Shadow education is said to be prevalent in majority of countries worldwide and plays a significant role in shaping student`s academic experiences and outcomes or results. Shadow education covers a wide range of activities from private tutoring, coaching, online learning platforms, test preparation courses as well as enrichment programs. It serves as a supplement to the formal education or regular schooling as it fills the gap by addressing the drawbacks in curriculum, providing additional support and helping students excel academically and professionally. These practices are visible in countries like Japan, Korea, India, France, England, U.S.A. and many others. Shadow education can take various forms including one-on-one training sessions, group classes, online platforms, and specialised coaching for standardised tests or competitive entrance examinations.

In Cameroon, the creation and existence of associations and organisations of any kind is governed by the law no 90/53 of 19th December 1990, amended and supplemented by laws no 20/009 of 20 July 2020 and 21/022 of 16th December 2021. It is believed that for any association of any magnitude to become operational in the country, it must fulfil the guide lines lay down by this law. This law is divided into two section; that is section one, which is based on the declaration of associations and section two which focuses on the authorisation system. The declaration of associations according to law 90/53 of 19th/12/1990 stipulates that for an association to be declared, the founders of the so-called association must make known to the authorities, the creation and legal existence of the association within its jurisdiction. This entails that the founders of the association should provide a name for the association, abbreviation, the head office, the address and postal box, the objectives, source of finance, as well as the organisational chart and the functionality.

The authorisation of associations according to this law is an authorisation granted by the administration to a person or group of persons to perform a legal act, which in this case is the creation of a group. This authorisation lays down the foundation for the creation and existence of associations in Cameroon. This legal framework provides the provisions for the creation, existence and functionality of associations. Thus, the creation and existence of preparatory groups in Cameroon must meet these requirements.

Similarly, the creation and existence of these type of associations in France and Britain equally passed through an identical procedure like in Cameroon. In France for example, preparatory groups or classes commonly known as "prepa concours" are associations or organisations recognised by legal authorities known under the appellation of "SARL" or "SA" (Chaudron, 2009). For Buisson-Fenet and Draelants (2010) these groups are legalised institutions recognised by the educational system and as a result, ensures their sustainability. In Britain, these groups are legally recognised and are known as "Preps classes" (Paton & Graeme, 2012). These groups prepare the candidates for competitive entrance examinations into professional schools or for job placement. This is because succeeding in a "concours" in France for example is seen as an elitist achievement, as such, families always tends to seek additional follow-up for their children (Chaudron, 2009). Equally, in Britain, the educational stakeholders have considerably lost trust in the grading system which existed before and thus, candidates are required to write an additional test after undergoing one-year intensive training. Preps classes or "prepa concours" therefore appears to be a valuable opportunity for these students.

Over the years, it has been observed that the phenomenon of preparatory classes has gradually gain ground in Cameroon. In Yaounde, the phenomenon has become a must do issue to all the youths aspiring to secure a place in one of the prestigious state own institutions of the country. Basing on the statistics made public by the newspaper "Mutations" of 19th August 2022 (p.5), the preparatory classes or groups are considerably increasing especially in Yaounde. The newspaper continued by indicating that during the period 1990s to 2000s, this activity was still unknown to many people. But in the recent years, the number of these groups have greatly increases making it impossible to remain indifferent to this phenomenon. The statistics revealed by this newspaper make it very clear that these groups are very reliable especially for the candidates some of which are Intelligentsia Coorperation, Kalata Group, Les Majors, Intelligentsia Cognitivist, Education, New Generation,

Intellect group, etc. These groups prepare candidates for entrance examinations such as ENAM, EMIA, IRIC, HTTC, Medicines, Mining, Engineering, ASMAC, ENSPY etc. The mesmeric rise of the preparatory groups has been as a result of a number of factors such as;

The strong believe in the youthful population that the only way to live a sustainable life is by joining the public service. Many Cameroonian youths are of the view that the public sector guarantees better life once one succeed in obtaining a matriculation number. This has led to a considerable increase of applicants for this or that exam. The statistics obtained from "Infosconcours" (2021) and "Kamerpower" (2022) official website, revealed that for a concours where 500 places are available, more than 5000 Cameroonians apply for the exam. Similar statistics obtained from the HTTC database of Yaounde reveals that the number of aspirants has greatly increases over the past years. It is revealed that in in 2019, the HTTC of Yaounde received approximately 10.000 applications for a very limited number of places.

Also, the adoption of competitive entrance exams as the gate way into prestigious professional schools and job placement account for the mesmeric rise of preparatory groups. This is as a result of that there is inadequacy between the demand and the supply force. This means that they are a greater number of youths applying for the exams and in order to ensure equal chances to all the aspirants, these exams provide an opportunity to the government to select meritorious candidates out of a hundred of thousands. This translate the desire of the government of Cameroon to implement the founding principles of the United Nations of equity and equality at all levels of the education system and training.

Again, the degree of competition in these entrance exams equally explain the increase in the number of preparatory groups in Cameroon. These exams are essentially competitive which demands a certain degree of preparation from the candidates so as to be psychologically and mentally prepared for the exams. As such, these groups provide this much needed assistance to the candidates. Furthermore, the absence of a regulatory mechanism to regulate the creation of preparatory groups account for it increase in Yaounde and other parts of the country. These groups are created illegally and operate illegally. This is because, sure the law exists but there is no regulatory mechanism put in place to make sure that the creation, the existence and the functionality of the preparatory groups obeys to the prescribed norms. Most of these groups does

not have the declaration nor the authorisation to operate but simply function in a clandestine manner.

Some countries in both the developed and less developed economies have developed policies and regulatory frameworks aimed at regulating private tutoring, preparatory classes, online platforms, coaching centres, test preparation course, address issues of equity and ensure quality and standards in private tutoring services or shadow education.

Despite the theoretical and legal evidences drawn from the literature as well as the empirical evidences, it is observed that the impact of the preparatory groups in the training of the candidates is far from the expected standard. This accounts for the fact that despite the presence of these groups and their contribution to assist candidates, the success rate in competitive entrance examinations still allows much to be desired. The statistics gotten from majority of the groups proves that the results are not satisfactory. Some participants were of the views that in 50 candidates trained per training session only about 5 candidates succeeds. Also, most of the candidates argues that although the training is important for their success, they don't just rely on the training and preparation but also seek for alternative means to secure their passage into these schools. Also, it was observed that there is no unify program for the preparation of candidates. This means that each group decide on what to give to the candidates. Furthermore, it is observed that though education and training constitutes the top priority of the Government of the Republic, the activity of tutoring candidates is highly neglected. This neglect is as a result of the fact that there exists no regulatory and supervisory framework with the charge of constantly monitoring and evaluating the activities of these groups. This accounts for ineffective training process and thus, the present study seeks to examine the impact of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced training and learning schools in Cameroon.

The Research Objectives of the study

The research aims and objectives in a scientific piece of work describe in a concise and precise manner what the study seek to achieve. They summarise the results the researcher wishes to achieve throughout the study and equally provide the way forward for the study. In the present study, the research objectives are divided into general research objective and the specific research objectives.

The general research objective

- The present study seeks to explore the impact of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for advanced school's competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.

In order to achieve the main research objective, we formulated the following specific research objectives to guide the present study.

The specific research objectives

The following are the specific research objectives formulated for the present study;

- To explore the impact of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for advanced school`s competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.
- To investigate the impact of the efficiency of the preparatory groups in relation to the preparation of candidates for advanced school`s competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.
- To assess the impact of the relevance of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for advanced school`s competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.
- To examine the impact of the sustainability of preparatory groups in relation to the preparation of candidates for advanced school`s competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.

The Research Questions of the study

In every scientific study, there is always a main research question that the study intends to address. The present study proposes to answer the following main and specific research questions.

General research question of the study

- To what extent does the preparatory groups impact the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in to advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon?

In order to answer this research question, the following specific research were posed.

Specific research questions of the study

- To what extent does the effectiveness of the preparatory groups influence the preparation of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon?
- To what extent does the efficiency of the preparatory groups influence the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon?
- To what extend does the relevance of the preparatory groups affects the training of candidates for higher competitive entrance examinations into advanced training schools in Cameroon?
- What is the impact of the sustainability of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced training schools in Cameroon?

Research hypotheses of the study

A research hypothesis is a tentative statement or assumption which need to be verified, accepted or rejected at the end of the study. For the present study, the research hypotheses are divided into two; that is, the general research hypothesis and the specific research hypotheses (the alternative and the null).

General hypothesis of the study

The general research hypothesis of the study goes as follows:

Ha: Preparatory groups has a statistically significantly influence the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

Ho: Preparatory groups does not have a statistically significantly influence the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

Specific research hypotheses of the study

Ha1: The effectiveness of the preparatory groups has a statistically significant influence on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced training schools in Cameroon.

Ha2: The efficiency of the preparatory groups has a statistically significant influence on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

Ha3: The relevance of the preparatory groups has a statistically significant influence on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced training schools in Cameroon.

Ha4: There sustainability of the preparatory groups has a statistically significant influence on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

Significance of the Study

Significance of a study outlines the importance of the study. It provides the contribution of the study to a particular field of study or discipline. For the present study, we have the theoretical or scientific significance and the practical significance of the study.

Scientific implications of the study

In terms of theoretical implications of the study, the present study will continue to enrich the already existing literature on the issue addressed. Preparatory groups in Cameroon in particular and in the world in general is a phenomenon that is fast gaining ground. Those who aspire to join the public service as well as some prestigious professional institutions of learning sees their chances limited because of the limited number of places and a considerable number of candidates aspiring to join these schools. Thus, the preparatory groups have turn out to be a better destination for these candidates as it is the case in Cameroon. The findings of this study will provide an understanding of the phenomenon in the context of Cameroon. It will equally serve as a baseline for future researchers who intend to explore the phenomenon in the future. Since the issue of preparing candidates for competitive entrance examinations is something new, this study will shed more light on it role in a country like Cameroon where all the youths aspire to work in the public

service of the country. Therefore, conducting a study on the evaluation of preparatory groups in the 21st century where every youth is striving to succeed prove to be very pertinent.

This is because preparatory groups constitute part and parcel of shadow education. Shadow education is perceived as a form of education away from the formal educational system which provides much needed support to candidates and applicants preparing for competitive entrance examinations and even students preparing for official examinations for the purpose of certification. With the growing importance of shadow education over the past years in Cameroon, the results of this study intends to outline the importance of shadow education in the Cameroonian context. Also, since it is observed that the current state of literature on shadow education and specifically on the preparatory groups is very mediocre, this study intends to throw more light on shadow education as well as the preparatory groups in the context of Cameroon.

Practical implications of the study

On the practical note, the results of this study will be important to all the actors involve in this activity (preparation of candidates). The study intends to provide practical solutions to the issue of the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. Thus, the results of the study will be of interest to the government, the professional schools, the promoters, the candidates and the educational stakeholders or communities.

Significance of the study to the government

The law of Orientation of education of 1998 (Law no 1998) in article 2, paragraph 1 of the preamble states that education is a top priority of the state. In paragraph 2 of the same article, it states that education is offered by the state. In paragraph 3 of the same article, it states that private partners assist the state in her regalia mission of providing quality education. Basing on this article, it the right and obligation of the state to control all educational and training related activities in the country. The present study intends to provide practical solutions to the government of Cameroon on the necessity of regulating the activities of the preparatory groups. Nelson Mandela once said that to destroy a country, one does not require an atomic bomb but simply to corrupt the educational system. Thus, it is paramount for the government of Cameroon to develop a regulatory framework aim at controlling and supervising the activities of these groups. Considering the importance of

shadow education in countries across the Saharan desert including Cameroon, it thus essential for the state to know what is happening in these groups.

Significance of the study to the promoters

This study will provide a better understanding of the different practices in these groups, how it is done, what has been done so far and what can still be done to ameliorate the practices in these groups. Also, with the principal goal and objective of these groups directed toward preparing candidates going in for competitive entrance examinations, the findings of this study will shed light on the degree of achievement of the so called objective. The findings of this study will provide a framework for improvement for those involve in the management and control of the activities of the groups. With a considerable increase in the number of these groups day in, day out, the result of this study will provide candidates and parents with necessary information which can be taken into account in the choice of a group. Since evaluation is known to be indispensable to every human effort, this study intends to provide a proposed model that can be used in the evaluation of these groups adapted to the Cameroonian in the upcoming future.

Significance of the study to the advanced schools

With the growing number of aspirants willing to join a profession schools in the country, the preparatory groups have for a long time being the partner number one of these countries. These activity is cost effective as it permits the promoters and other members of the groups to earn a living out of it. The results of the findings of this study intends to help the advanced schools to identify problems relating to the training of candidates for entrance examinations. Basing on the results, the advanced schools shall be able to provide sustainable solutions to the training of candidates which might involves the creation of preparatory groups within the various training institutions.

Significance of the study to the candidates

The candidates constitute the principal force behind the creation and existence of the preparatory groups in the context of Cameroon. These candidates provide a host of customers required by the preparatory groups for their survival. Since the purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced

schools of training in Cameroon, the results of the findings of this study intends to guide the choice of the candidates as far as these groups are concern.

Significance of the study to the educational community

It is believed that the training and preparation of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning is seen by many as a complex phenomenon which requires a lot of commitment, engagement and devotion. Similarly, succeeding in entrance examinations in Cameroon and other parts of the world is seen as an elitist achievement. Many families irrespective of their financial background and status turns to the preparatory groups or to shadow education for extra academic follow up of their peers. The results of the present study intend to serve as a baseline for families to choose the best and right preparatory groups for their children.

Delimitation of the study

Delimiting a study consist of defining the framework of the study. The scope of a study outlines the extent to which the study area will be explored in the work and specifies the parameters within which the study will be carried out. It involves delimiting the project in time and space. Delimitation of a scientific study appear to be necessity. The scope has to be narrowed down to a given population and geographical setting. This is because a study can never be for eternity. Scoping a study is equally important because a researcher cannot carry out a project everywhere and at any time. As such, defining the scope of a study is very essential because every study requires a precise time and period when the study will be carried out and equalling need a precise setting since a researcher cannot afford to conduct a study without a define setting. For the present study, we have scientific delimitation, geographical delimitation and temporal delimitation of the study. Thus, the scope describes the boundaries of the study such as the domain or field of research, the population, the setting in which the study takes place, the sample size etc.

Scientific delimitation of the study

Scientific delimitation is also known as disciplinary delimitation of a study. It consists of précising the field of intervention of the study. The present study is in the field of education. The study seeks to evaluate an educational activity which is the phenomenon of preparing candidates for competitive entrance examinations. The field of study addressed in education here is management of education or educational administration bended toward the conception and evaluation of

educational projects. Therefore, the present study falls under the science of education, that is management of education as a discipline. The study adopts an evaluative approach in order to question the studied phenomenon in the Cameroonian context. This study is limited to the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of the preparatory groups in the context of Cameroon. Discussing the effectiveness of the preparatory groups requires us to look after the achievement of the stated objectives of the groups. Also, discussing the efficiency of the preparatory groups demands us to appreciate the use of the available resources in the preparatory groups by different promoters. Again, discussing the relevance of this activity requires us to look at the impact of the activity on the candidates and the society at large. That is, looking after the pertinence of the activity to the candidates and other actors involve. Finally, this study is limited to the sustainability of the preparatory groups which seeks to address the various mechanisms put in place so as to ensure the survival of this activity.

Temporal delimitation of the study

Time factor is said to be very important in every human activity. The temporal delimitation here outlines the timeframe allocated for the realisation of this research project. As such, the present research project is planned to be executed over a period of maximum three years. The timeframe for the realisation of this research piece of work ranges from November 2021 (period of selection into the PhD cycle) to December 2024 (public defence).

Definition of key concepts

a. Competitive entrance examinations: Brenda (2019), published by "Cameroon Tribune", narrates that competitive entrance examinations is that period of the year when young Cameroonians organised themselves into learning groups or join preparatory classes or groups to prepare themselves for these exams into different public higher institutions of learning and training such as the Higher Teachers Training Colleges (E.N.S), National Advanced School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM), National Advanced School of Engineering, Post and Telecommunication (ENSPY), National Advanced School of Mass Communication (ESSTIC), Combined Military Academy (EMIA), just to name a few. Competitive entrance exams are a way of life; it is the struggle among applicants to secure a seat into top colleges, professional schools, universities or an access into the public service of the country (Mounchikpou, 2021, p.14). Competitive entrance examinations are therefore a means put in place the government permitting

her to organise a set of admission tests throughout the country with the main aim of selecting meritorious candidates out of a hundred of thousand. These examinations sanctioning the entrances into professional institutions or into a particular job translate the desire of the government to give equal chances to all the social classes of the society be it poor or rich. Ruike Zhu (December, 2014) defined entrance examinations as "a general inclusive term, referring to the standardised examination that applicants of the higher education institutions are required to take.

b. Preparatory groups: Preparatory groups are informal educational projects put in place by an individual or group of individuals, with predefine objectives, pursuing common goals. These groups are aim at assisting students preparing for competitive entrance examinations. Preparatory groups assist candidates and students in a plethora of domains. These groups are specialised in providing extra academic assistance to candidates willing to prepare themselves so as to have a positive mind set during the approach of the examinations. The groups intervene in a variety of domains including education, administration, engineering, agriculture, international relations, military, as well as medicine. Elsewhere, this activity although have the same significance, have different appellation. In the United Kingdom, this activity is known as "preps groups". In France, this activity is known as "Prepa-Concours". In Vietnam, this activity has been existing since the 1980s known as private tuitions. Private tuitions or preparatory groups has been existing in Vietnam where students need to attend extra classes ("dic hoc them") to gain new knowledge or prepare themselves for this or that examinations (Hai-Anh Dang, 2006, p. 2).

c. Informal sector: The informal sector is one of the principal sectors that participate in sustainable community development in countries worldwide. It was Hart (1971), cited by Chaudhuri and Mukhopadhyay (2010), who first addressed the latter as the "informal sector". To him, the informal sector is seen as part of the urban labour force which takes place out of the organised and well-structured economy. The idea of Hart on the informal sector economy centred on self-employment. Defining the informal sector has always proven to be a challenging task because of the dichotomy which do exist between the two concepts, that is; the formal and the informal sector. This is why in a study conducted by Weeks (1975), provided the distinction between formal and informal sectors on the basis of the organisational characteristics of exchange relationships and the position of economic activities vis-à-vis the state. Chaudhuri and mukhopadhyay, (2010), states that "informal sector usually refers to extra-legal and non-recorded

economic activities which can capture a whole array of diverse occupations, productions and services". As the name indicate, the informal sector cut across activities out of the legal framework.

d. Project: A project is a one-off activity. According to Peter Hobbs (2009), "a project is a "one off" scope of work defined by three parameters; that is, time, cost and quality". To him, a project defines the means (resources) through a specific result is achieved using specific resources and within a set of timeframe. According to Project Management Institute (2008), fourth edition, "a project is a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result". A project is said to be a temporary initiative because it has a defined beginning and an end. The start of the project marked the kick off of the project. The end on the other hand is reached when the goals and objectives is achieved or in some cases when there is change of orientations.

e. Project management: Larson and Gray (2021), defined project management as a set of tools and techniques that permit project managers to plan, implement, evaluate and manage activities so as to accomplish predefined objectives. Today, business leaders and experts have agreed that project management is very essential for sustainable community development. This is because projects as seen in both developed and less developed countries as a catalyst of change. As such, new jobs and competitive advantage are achieved through constant innovation, developing new products and services and also improving both productivity as well as quality of work.

f. Project monitoring and evaluation: Koffi-Tessio (2002) and Fitzgerald et al., (2009), argue that project monitoring and evaluation systems vary with type, sector, and country of application. Jha et al., (2010), stated that a successful project monitoring and evaluation system must undergo modification in order to specify and allow for flexibility and imagination. It becomes imperative to identify the role of project monitoring and evaluation as well as use of the systems and equally the involvement of stakeholders. This is so because project monitoring and evaluation has many audiences such as managers, donors, field staff, partners, policy makers and program participants (CARE, 2012). According to Ryan Sherman (2013), there is no better and appropriate way project success can be improved if not through a systematic measurement, critics and understanding of the project`s processes, and then apply what has been learned to current and future projects. This initiative permit project managers and team members to ameliorate their skills in project management and also becomes successful in the future. It is believed organizations nowadays are striving not to commit the same mistake twice. To achieve this ultimate goal, by making use of

project monitoring and evaluation, organizations accomplish this goal and as such, gain an advantage over their competitors. Project evaluation obeys to a methodology which are known as project evaluation criteria.

g. Project effectiveness: this refers to the degree of achievement of the predefined goals and objectives of the projects. It is the conformity between the results. It is a measure of the relevance of the goal. Project effectiveness has to do with doing the right things in order to ensure the success of the project.

g. Project efficiency: The term project efficiency refers to the rational use of the available resources so as to achieve predefined goals and objectives. It is a ratio used to determine the relationship between the outputs or results from a process against the resources invested in the project. Project efficiency is measured by the degree of outputs achieved in relation to resources or inputs utilized. This simply means that when the outputs of the project are adequate or proportionate to the inputs or resources of the project, then the efficiency of a project is equal 100%.

h. Relevance of a project: project relevance is the benefit provided by a project. They translate the benefits to be generated by the project over a short term period of time as well as over a prolonged of time. It lay emphasis on the successful performance of the project is expected to result into rectifying the explained problematic situation.

i. Project impact: assesses whether the results achieved by the project address the needs, problems and issues of key stakeholders including project investors, sponsors, contractors, customers, and project team. The impact criterion extends beyond the project predefined goals and objectives and even address the long term impacts. This is because project impact criterion is more subjective since it deals with the achievement of strategic goals of the organization and the impact on the project team which at times are hard to be evaluated specifically and quantitatively.

j. Project sustainability: According to Muller and Turner (2007), this criterion is related to the extent to which the project`s results maximizes inter-generational welfare and maintenance of the environment, rather than solely maintenance of the economy productive base (Ngacho & Das, 2014; Ika et al., 2012). Youcef, et al., (2015), stated that sustainability of a project questions whether the benefit of a project will continue once the sponsors and investors ceased to fund the

activity. Ika et al., (2012), on their part argues out that the sustainability criterion is mostly relevant in development projects, that deals with a range of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political concerns, which most of the times happens during the implementation of project as well as after the completion of the project. The sustainability criterion falls under the subjective approach in project evaluation. Sustainability as a criterion of project evaluation permit project practitioners to ask questions such as: to what extent did the benefits of a project continue after the donor funding ceased?

k. Competitive entrance examination: Competitive entrance examinations are a way of life in some countries. It is the struggle among applicants or candidates to secure a seat into the top colleges and professional institutions in some countries. There are a set of tests organized nationally or internationally to select meritorious candidates from a hundred of thousands willing to gain access into some of the prestigious professional learning and training institutions as well as lucrative positions into the public service of the country. Kumar (2020) argue that competitive entrance examinations are centrally organized across the national territory and millions of aspirants attend them every year. These exams are characterized by fierce competition among the candidates. This is as a result of a considerable increase in the number of aspirants, year in year out and a limited number of seats made available by the organizing body.

l. Training of candidates: This is a process which consist of providing intellectual, moral and psychological assistance to candidates preparing for a competitive entrance examination. This involves equipping the candidates with sufficient skills indispensable for the success of an individual in a competitive exam. In Cameroon, preparing the candidates has become the major consent of both trainers, trainees and the parents.

Layout of the study

The study layout provides an overview of the project. It presents the different parts, chapters, and sub-chapters of the study. The project is divided into two broad parts known as the contextual and the theoretical framework and the methodological and empirical framework, preceded by a general conclusion. The overall project consists of five chapters.

Chapter one: backgrounds of the study

This chapter will provide a general overview of the present study. It will give the reader a glimpse of what is discussed in the subsequent chapters. This include a brief introduction, background to the study, justification, problem statement, and various research objectives, questions and research hypotheses. This chapter also include the significance of the study, the delimitation of the study, the definition of key concepts, as well as the layout of the study.

Chapter two: Critical review of the literature

This chapter will outline the existing literature on the topic both national and international. It consist of the conceptual framework which will provide the explanation of key concepts such as competitive entrance examinations, preparatory groups, project management, project monitoring and evaluation, the informal sector, and professional institutions of learning. It will equally provide previous studies on the issue addressed. This chapter will also focus on the theoretical framework by convoking possible theories that will facilitate the discussion of the results of the findings.

Chapter three: Methodological framework of the study

This chapter will describe the overall research methodology. A mixed approach with an explanatory sequential research design will be adopted for the present project. A pilot study will be conducted to test the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments. The procedures and mechanisms of data collection such as setting of the study, population of the study, sampling size and sampling techniques will be discussed in this chapter. The chapter will also involve the background of the participants as well as the selection criteria fixed by the researcher. This chapter will equally discuss the techniques of data analysis and interpretation and the ethical consideration in the study.

Chapter four: Data analysis, presentation and interpretation of results of the findings
This chapter will analyse and present the results of the findings of the study. The presentation of the results will make use of the different research objectives. This chapter will use the statistical data analysis techniques for quantitative data and the content analysis for qualitative data to analyse and present the gathered data. that is, results from participant`s biographical information, hypotheses testing and the results produce from face-to-face structured interviews. The chapter equally will ensure the trustworthiness of the results, which includes transparency, credibility and transferability.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the results, recommendations, perspectives and constraints of the study

This chapter will interpret and discuss the results of the findings of the study. The interpretation will consist of reporting the data. The researcher will use the theories and the existing works to discuss the results of the study. The results of the study will be discussed in respect to the various specific research objectives. This chapter also involves the suggestions, the perspectives for further studies and the constraints.

CHAPTER TWO

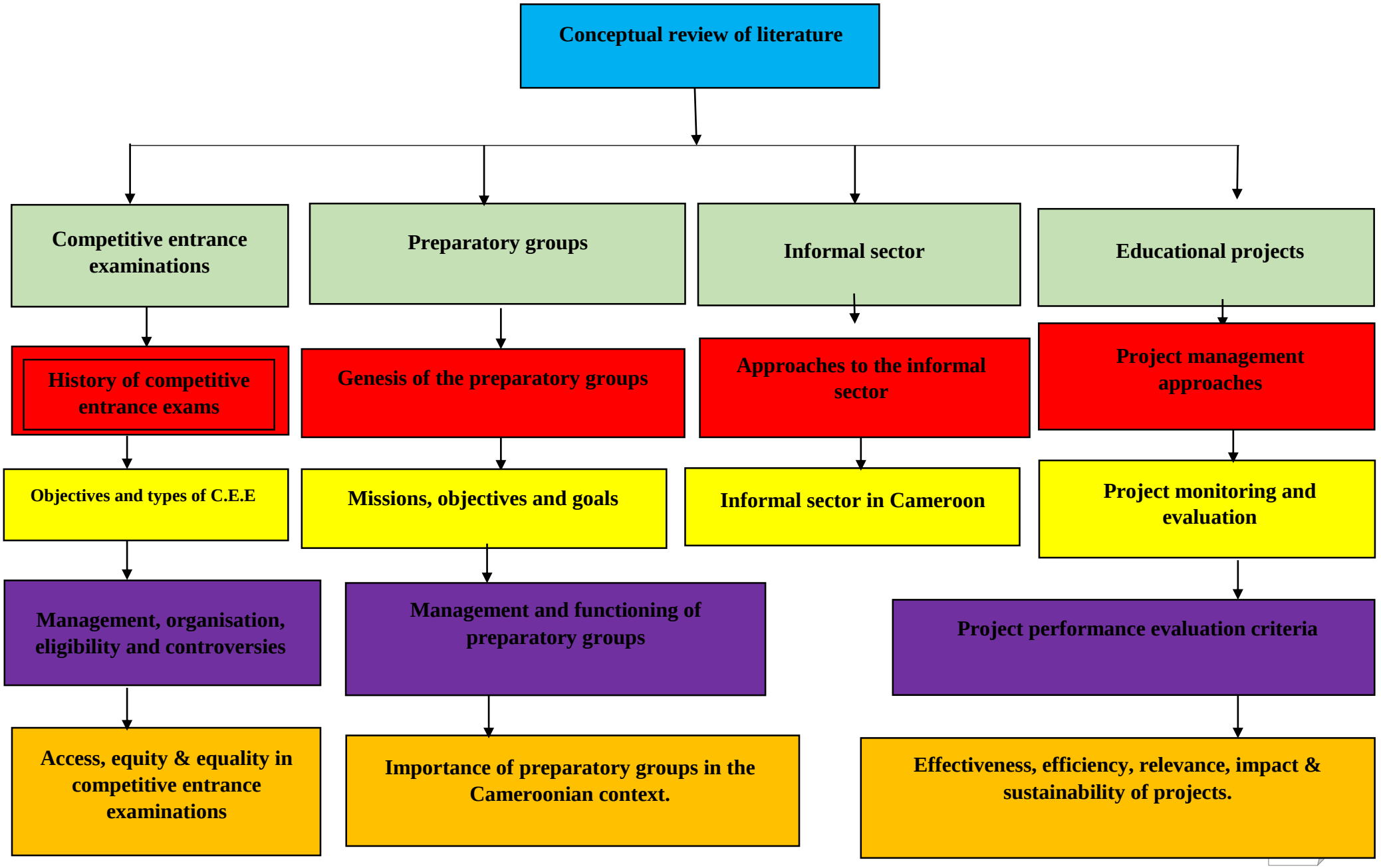
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on reviewing the existing study related to the studied phenomenon. The chapter focusses on the conceptual, the empirical and the theoretical review of the existing literature on the studied phenomenon. The conceptual review focusses on the various concepts such as preparatory groups, competitive entrance examinations, informal sector, project management and evaluation. The empirical review focusses on the various objectives of the study such as the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impacts and sustainability of preparatory groups in Cameroon. The present chapter ends with the theoretical review of literature which focusses on the various theories that will accompany us throughout the study such as the theories of change and the theory-based evaluations.

Conceptual literature review of the study

Over the last decades in the world in general and Cameroon in particular, the desire to realise the sustainable development goals specifically goal number 4 of quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all have become the concern of governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), private stakeholders, policy makers, and individuals in the developed and less developed world. Following the advent of a number of sub-Saharan countries to self-government coupled by the lacklustre nature of the economy, some of these countries including Cameroon adopted competitive entrance examinations as the gate way to the public service as well as some of the prestigious state and private learning and training institutions of the country. This generated some sort of competition among the candidates especially due to the limited number of places available. The conceptual review of the present study focusses on the concepts such as competitive entrance examinations, preparatory groups, project management and evaluation as well as the informal sector. These concepts are explained in details in the subsequent paragraphs.

Figure 1: Conceptual review of literature of the study



Understanding the concept of competitive entrance examinations

The concept of competitive entrance examinations is used by many scholars to describe a set of tests or admission exams organised by special institutions in order to select competent candidates from a hundred of thousands applicants either for entrance into some prestigious professional training institutions or advanced schools or a for a job or a profession. From a global perspective admission examinations are a set of written tests organised by an approve body or organ to select deserved candidates. Jean (2017) in a study entitled "Comparative study of admission system based on Baccalaureat in Cameroon and Gaokao in China" found out that there exist two systems of admission in the world, which are the open system admission and the selective system admission. According to Sergeant et al., (2012), cited by McGrath et al., (2014), in Jean (2017) open system admission is a kind of examination where admission into universities and faculties mostly rely on secondary school certificates. With the open system, students are directly admitted to university faculties without necessarily requiring to undergo further admission test. The selective admission system on the other hand according to Jean (2017) occurs when students are required to undergo extra tests to be admitted into a professional school or the public service of the country. For the selective system of admission, the particularity resides in the fact that not all students who are holders of a secondary leaving certificate are admitted in to these "Grand Ecoles". Students are therefore required to meet the additional criteria to be admitted into these professional schools. This selective test account for the fact that the government in both the developed and less developed countries at times finds it very difficult to accommodate all the under graduates, graduates and post graduates in to these professional institutions or the public service. Basing on this, Helms (2008), cited by Jean (2017) breaks down these two admission systems into five different types which are secondary leaving examinations, entrance examinations, standardised aptitude tests, multiple examinations and no examination.

Cameroun is a bilingual country which consists of two educational sub-systems (French and English) (Ngalim, 2014). For Gonondo and Djiraro (2016) this two sus-systems constitutes the educational system of the country. The higher or tertiary education of the country is divided into university faculties and professional schools or "grands ecaoles". The faculties here refer to open admission which is sanctioned by secondary leaving certificates such as Baccalaureat for the French speaking and Advanced Level (A/L) for the English speaking Cameroonians. The system

equally has a selective system which consists of additional aptitude test that candidates must undergo to be admitted into professional training institutions or the public service of the country. This study therefore focusses on the selective admission system in Cameroon.

Brenda (2019), published by "Cameroon Tribune", narrates that competitive entrance examinations is that period of the year when young Cameroonians organised themselves into learning groups or join preparatory classes or groups to prepare themselves for these exams into different public higher institutions of learning and training such as the Higher Teachers Training Colleges (HTTCs), National Advanced School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM), National Advanced School of Engineering, Post and Telecommunication (Polytechnics), National Advanced School of Mass Communication (ESSTIC), Combined Military Academy (EMIA), just to name a few. During this period, candidates have one thing in mind to succeed. But as they organised themselves into leaning groups or join the different preparatory classes or groups, one thing is certain, they are not sure to succeed in these examinations by only studying hard. This explains why some families, in their relentless effort to secure a seat for their peers, come up or develop different means and admission routes to make sure they gain a seat in to these public higher institutions seen by many as the gate way in to the public service of the country. On the other hand, the story is very different for candidates who study hard and put their trust in God for a sounding success far from bribery, corruption and favouritism. No matter how individuals seek unorthodox means to guarantee their passage into the prestigious professional institutions, with desperate need to make a living out of the public sector, seen by many as the only means to live a quality life, those candidates who put their trust in God make it without necessarily bribing or corrupting people (Mounchikpou, 2021).

The main aim of these exams or admission tests is to sort out meritorious candidates from a larger pool (Mounchikpou, 2021). Some countries in developed countries (U.K, USA, France) and in the less developed countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia), turn to this method so as to give equal chances to all the social classes to become part of the public sector. It is also due to the increase number of candidates or aspirants; that is the demand force completely surpasses the supply force making it practically very difficult for the government to incorporate all the aspirants in the public sector. In Ethiopia for example, higher education has observed a dramatic increase in the last 10 years with a substantial increase in student's enrolment of approximately by 15% each year

(Education abstract, Ministry of education, 2011/12). With the increase in the number of students completing secondary schools, the capacity of post-secondary institutions is still limited and as such, there is a need by Ethiopian policy makers and planners to decide which student is more qualified and apt and also most likely to succeed in these institutions. The introduction of the competitive entrance examinations or admission tests in to the educational system in African countries accounts for a number of factors such;

- The growing number of candidates willing to make their way in to these professional schools or professions;
- The desire by the governments of these countries to give equal chances to all the social classes of the society to become part of the public service;
- The inability of the governments to recruit all the candidates in to the public sector;
- The fact that the demand force (candidates) surpasses the supply force (recruitment);
- The desire to evaluate the educational level and personality or character of individuals if it matches with the requirements of the profession or ethics of the institutions.

These reasons explain why most African countries after independence thought it wise to introduce competitive entrance examinations or admission tests in their respective educational system as it became clear that the government could not accommodate all the post-secondary school graduates into the tertiary institutions.

Worldwide trends influencing admissions and competitive entrance exams has made universities and professional schools to adapt to three main elements in the whole world. First, admission systems and entrance examinations have to moderate the higher education systems capacity to absorb the growing demand for tertiary education throughout the world. The European council thus set an attainment target of 40% of graduates among the population of 30-34 years by 2020, thus continuing the expansionary trend started in the 1960s which is possibly set to go further. Secondly, admission systems have to adjust to the change in higher education landscape as a result of an increase in the population of students and finally, admissions in tertiary education have to adapt to the growing mobility of students (McGrath et al., 2014). This requires policy makers and educational stakeholders to revise their strategies. This is as a result of the growing number of students willing to foster their academic career coupled with the inability of the tertiary institutions to accommodate all the post-secondary school graduates. Thus, the European council seeks

governments and stakeholders to re-adapt their admission strategies to the present educational landscape of their respective countries.

To sum up, these different worldwide trends raise questions which go to the plasma of the relationship between the tertiary educational sector and the society. Higher institutions (universities, professional schools, advanced schools etc.) are not only regarded as instruments of the society but also as the institutions of the society (Olsen, 2007). In some countries in Europe, access to tertiary education has traditionally been considered as a right and as a privilege in other countries, put forward the different ways states have in the past years conceived the role of the universities and professional schools. Many scholars (Gibbons et al., 1994; Delanty, 2002; Kwelk, 2014), points out that the ways by which the tertiary sector relates to the society is seen as a contract. Others describe the university as an organisational instrument aim at achieving preferences and interest predetermined by an "other" which might be the state, stakeholders, or individuals. It is worthy to note that whichever term is used, the nature of an embedded bond, that recognises universities as having rights and responsibilities is engraved in the fundamental documents of European higher education like the Magna Charter Universitatum (1988) and the Bologna Declaration (1999) and also the council of Europe committee of Ministers Recommendation on university freedom and academic autonomy (2006).

With the continuous increase in the number of candidates seeking their way in to some prestigious state owned institutions, professional schools and private institutions coupled with a limited number of seats make available, the government of the Republic has embarked on numerous projects in relation to professionalization of teaching programs. For example, the government of Cameroon through the National Development Strategy for the period 2010-2020, the education and vocational training envisaged a reorganisation of the educational sector through basic education covering primary education and first cycle secondary education open to a greater number of children aged 6 to 15 years, second cycle secondary education based on a dynamic balance between general education and technical education, vocational training oriented towards the production sector demand based on a modernised and considerably reinforced system, a professionalised higher education and extensive retaining coupled with a system meant to enhance experience gained (NDS2020). Thanks to the materialisation of the government`s strategies and

policies, the actions undertaken have contributed to a significant progress in terms of provision of quality education and quality training through the professionalization of higher education (educational reforms of 2008 marked by the introduction of the Bachelor, Master and Doctorate, LMD), construction of capacity buildings. In terms of training, there exist 1,648 government and private vocational training centres and institutions offering up to 240 training specialities to more than 45000 learners each year (NDS20/30).

The educational system of Cameroon is pledge by a number of challenges among which are poor effective promotion of civics education, low contribution to living together and national integration at all educational levels. Add to this is low contribution of research to the economic and social development of the country. At a means to ameliorate the situation and promote quality education, the government is thus focused on promoting an educational system at the end of which any under graduate or post graduate is sociologically integrated, bilingual and competent in a field that is vital for the country's development and aware of what he/she must do to enhance its development (NDS20/30).

Away from Cameroon, the story is practically the same. The desire by policy makers and educational planners to use admission tests or competitive entrance examinations as a means to select meritorious candidates testify the inability of the public service to accommodate all the under graduates and post graduates into the public sector probably due to a considerable number of challenges. This has led to the introduction of the competitive entrance examinations inevitably in to nearly if not all the educational systems worldwide. Keeping in mind that it is very impossible to develop a country by solely relying on the public sector, the initiative of the government to introduce these entrance examinations is intended to shifter the number of candidates so as to select those capable of striving in the formal sector. The idea behind this is for others who are not selected to join the informal sector to become job creators which is highly needed in African countries.

Genesis of competitive entrance examinations: A historical perspective

The origin of the competitive entrance examinations can be traced as far back as 2200 BC, in Eastern Asian countries like Korea, Japan, and China etc. These examinations are probably as old as most social institutions or even older than most social institutions. These examinations existed in China in a variety of forms until it was abolished in 1906. Competitive examinations subsequently extended to Europe and the rest of the world. Knowing the origins of competitive

entrance examinations can help us appreciate the functions and practices associated to public competitive exams. This will equally help policy makers and educationists to learn from different successful as well as unsuccessful reforms initiated worldwide for it is believed that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it", George Santayana.

In Asia**,** most countries have a long legacy of using competitive entrance examinations and admission tests to decide about who gains access to limited opportunities at the next educational level or limited job (Dundar et al., 2014). Eisemon (1990) and Mukerji (1974), reported that as far back as 1857, competitive entrance examinations were already on going in India universities like Bombay, Calcuta and Madras.

In china for example, it is commonly agreed by many scholars that competitive entrance examinations in to universities, professional schools and job placement all began in China (Eckstein & Noah, 1993; Webber, 1989; Du Bois, 1970; Mathews, 1985, Morris, 1961; Teng, 1943). The exact date when the competitive entrance exams was used as a means to select candidates for tertiary education, professional schools or job placement is not clear. But some commentators believed that the use of "test" to select civil servants (keju) goes back as far as 2200 BC (Du Bois, 1970). Wu, (1982), stated that while much that is known about the Western Zhou dynasty (1027-771 BC) is also mythological as rites and records from this period indicate that the origin of a universal system recruiting into the civil service mostly based on merit and also involving examinations can be traced from this era. Elman (2000), argued that the inauguration of a wide spread system of competitive entrance examinations by emperor Wendi around 165 BC in the Western Han dynasty is regarded as forerunner of the elaborate imperial civil service examination set up during later dynasties. To Sven and Yu (2006), 606 AD is regarded as the date of origin of competitive entrance examinations in China. Development during the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) and the Song dynasty (960-1279 AD), were very important as examinations during these periods were moved from a numerically minor method of recruiting civil servants to a major method, at times dominant, means of selecting officials, leading to the breakdown of the early medieval aristocracy monopoly on political power. This breakdown in early aristocracy through the introduction of a major method of recruitment in to the civil service gave room for all to become part of the aristocracy.

Many scholars believed that since the late 1990s, higher education in China has developed consistently as the gross enrolment fate has rose from 7% to 22% in that time (Yao et al., 2010). According to China Education and Research Network (2013), the enrolment rate has steadily increased from 4.8% in 1977 to 74.86% in 2012. With this expansion in higher education, the access into higher education institutions has become much easier than in the past but the work load is still very demanding for candidates willing to be admitted in these institutions. This is thanks to the introduction of the Gaokao or the National College Entrance Examination as a means to select candidates.

In the People`s Republic of China, the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), also referred to as "Gaokao, in the Chinese language) is a competitive entrance examination used by both public and private universities, professional institutions, etc. to determines whether students are qualified for the admission into higher education institutions. Li (2012, p.165), believed that the NCEE or Gaokao in China is "a big issue that concerns the interest of the people of all the classes in the society, it is not only the reallocation of the resources of higher education of one country, but also the reallocation of the whole social interest".

Figure 2: Ancient Chinese public examinations

Source: Kellaghen & Greaney, 2020, p.20.

The figure 1 above provides a sample of a class during the Ancient Chinese public competitive examinations for the admission in to the tertiary education, into a professional school or for the recruitment of civil servants in to the Chinese civil service.

Figure 3: Examination hall with 7,500 cells, Canton, China, 1873

Source: Kellaghen & Greaney, 2020, p. 25.

The figure 2 above provides a view of the Chinese examination hall with a capacity of 7500 cells in Canton, a province in China in 1873.

Figure 3: Examination cells at school in Nanjing, China

Source: Kellaghen & Greaney, 2020, p.31.

The above image provides the reader with an image of the examination cells at a school in Nanjing, a locality in China.

In China, candidates and students who wish to be admitted to full time ordinary institutions of the higher education referred to as "Quanrizhi putong gaoxiao" in Chinese, are required to sit for the Gaokao examination. On the other hand, candidates who enter higher education institutions without writing Gaokao are all consider as part time and non-degree seeking students which in most cases include adult colleges, night universities, and even distance learning. To many, Gaokao is seen as a standardised nationwide exam which aims at attracting graduates from the secondary schools wishing to go to full-time higher education institutions of any kind to seek for a degree that will offer them with greater opportunity to join the labour market. From the 7th to 8th June 2013, it is said that over 9,120,000 students sat for the Gaokao exam (CRI English, 2013). This is because many believed that earning a degree will automatically lead to greater job options and a good living conditions. This go a long way to explain why students, parents and teachers reserve a particular attention to the exam.

It is believed that today`s Gaokao was first introduced in 1952 in China and survived until the cultural revolution began in 1966. Following the end of the ten-year Cultural Revolution (1976), the Gaokao or the CEE system was immediately restored. From this period, the Gaokao is held in china every year. To Pu (2013), the Gaokao has become crusade that even the historical imperial examination cannot be compare to. It is in this light that Ross and Wang (2013) stated that "from 1998 to 2009, the number of college students enrolled in Chinese institutions increased from 1.08 to 5.99 million. Also, from 1977 t0 2012, the number of students who took gaokao considerable increased from 5,700,000 to 9.150,000 and the enrolment rate equally increased from 4.8% to 74.86% (The Ministry of Education, 2013).

In Europe, many scholars believed that the origin of competitive entrance examinations and admission tests or even public examinations comes from the knowledge of the examination system in China. This was thanks to the reports of missionaries and travellers in China in the seventeenth century who provided knowledge about the Chinese examination systems leading to its introduction in European schools (Kellaghen & Greaney, 2020). Even though the tradition of written examinations in this part of the world does not go as far back as in China, there was already a wide spread use of examinations at schools as a means to promote students from one class to another, selecting candidates for this or that professional school or for job placement in the civil service.

In France**,** the system of evaluating students and candidates was introduced around the late fifteenth century at the Montaigne College based on the idea of Johannes Cele (a school master in the city of Hanze, Zwolle at the end of the fourteenth century), who devised and educational system of classes, examinations, and grouping of students on the basis of "mastery" (Meir, 1968). In the liberal arts curriculum put in place by Johannes Stum, of the Brethen of Common Life for a graded school in the town of Strasbourg, each class had a single teacher and formal examinations were introduced and used to determine promotion to the next level or next class (Farrel, 1938; Whitehead, 2007; Kellaghen, & Greaney, 2020). It is equally believed that some 30 years before the arrival of Mateo Ricci in China in 1553, Ignatius Loyola the then founder of the Jesuits order of priests, put in place the Collegium Romanum, based on the Paris program of education, which was to become the laboratory for the development of the school system in Jesuits.

In England, the period 1219 to the eighteenth century saw the introduction of the examination system at the University of Bologna, which was mainly oral consisting of questions and answer, disputation, defence of theses, or delivery of a public lecture (Teng, 1943). Periodic references to the use of writing in Padua around 1400 (Perreiah, 1984), and the written element in Cambridge fellowship examinations in1560 (Stray, 2001). But by the eighteenth century due to an increased in the number of students coupled with difficulty to evaluate orally in other subjects like Mathematic, the move from oral examination to written examination was inevitable. By 1792, a professor in Chemistry and Natural Philosophy at the Cambridge university, William Farish developed the idea of quantitatively grading student`s work (Stray, 2001).

Guy (1963), Teng (1943) and Montgomery (1965), all believed that in 1800, the examination statute of the Oxford University marked the first step in university's examination reforms. The rapid expansion of the idea of examinations was heavily influenced by the universities thanks to the prestige of these institutions and also because those responsible of deciding had experienced it themselves at the universities. William Gladstone and Robert Lowe are some figures that left Oxford and Cambridge universities to spread the idea of competitive examinations throughout public institutions (Montgomery, 1965). Nowadays, public competitive examinations are regarded by many as a key element of the educational system in most if not all the countries in Europe (EURYDICE, 1999; West, Edge & Stokes, 1999). As such, in 2015, OECD (2015, chart D6.1) reported that 31 0f the 38 industrial economies organised national examinations at the upper secondary school level and 14 at the lower secondary school level. This further emphasise the importance of competitive entrance examinations in European educational from its introduction right up to present.

In United States of America, the competitive entrance examinations were introduced around the 1845. This was due to the difficulty faced by Horace Mann in conducting oral examinations for "over 7000 children" in the Boston public school and as a result, written essay examinations were used (Kelleghan & Greaney, 2020). Mann believed that the kingdom of Prussia and Saxony were very eminent in the quantity and quality of education. In the USA, there exist two main types of College Entrance Examinations (CEE) which include the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the American College Testing (ACT) (OECD, 2015). The applicants are required to take either the

SAT or ACT whenever they want to apply for admission into higher education institutions. In the 1900s and 1990s, a "national" examination system similar to that of other countries was proposed for the United States. The introduction of this national examination system in the United States (US) education system was in bit to boast the performance of students in the US. According to Ruike Zhu (December, 2014), the history of CEE system in the USA can be divided into three eras, that is; the colonial period, from the civil war to early 20th century and early 20th century to the present.

- **The colonial period: Oral examination**

The admission requirements in the USA during the 17th century was a reflection of the changes that took place in the entrance conditions at the college of Harvard (Broome, 1902). In the 1700s, the college of Harvard was created because still then, the college of William and Mary were still at the stage of a preparatory school until the following century. Broome (1902) pointed out that the candidates were in most cases from the Grammar school and even students under the mentorship of the clergies. It was mainly oral examination in nature and Latin and Greek were the main contents included in the examination. By 1642, president Dumster of the Harvard institution set the admission standards, thus, applicants who could "read Tully and speak true Latin in verse and prose, Marte, and decline perfectly the paradigms of nouns and verbs in Greek tongue" were qualified for admission to Harvard.

- **From civil war to early 20th century: The Diploma system**

In 1962, following the enactment of the Morrill Act, the numbers and even the sizes of higher institutions in the United States of America (USA) had considerably increased as compared to the colonial era. Yang (2007) mentioned that by the end of the 19th century, more than 200 new colleges and higher institutions existed in the USA and equally, the total number of students in these higher institutions greatly increased. By 1870, the University of Michigan first used the method of certificate to admit students, which implies that students with a diploma from schools in Michigan were not subject to additional examination before being admitted to the university. By 1890, there was an increased in the number of students which was estimated at 157,000, and only less than 2% of students aged, 18-to-24 year-old had access to higher education institutions during this period. The total number of students enrolled fifty years later increased at 1,494,000, and 9% of the 18-to-24-year-old population had access to higher education institutions (Reuben & Perkins, 2007).

- **Early 20th century till present: College entrance examination system**

Early 20th century marked the beginning of the college competitive entrance examinations in the USA. Following the creation of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) in 1900, the first standardised competitive admission exam was administered in 1901 to admit students into the higher educational institutions. This exam was known as the Achievement Test (AT) which included subjects such as Maths, Physics, Chemistry, History and English. In studies carried out by Luo (2009), Yang (2007), Wang and Zhang (2007), they made mention that while the AT appeared to be an objective assessment of student`s qualification for higher education institutions, concerned educators advocated that the AT lay more emphasis on rote learning instead of evaluating student`s aptitude and also ability.

By 1926, the first Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) was conducted by the college board which was composed of 5,900 schools, colleges, universities and other educational organisations in the USA. We have the SAT I, Reasoning Test and SAT II, Subject Test, developed as a tool to democratise access to higher education institutions for all students (Admission History Timeline, 2014).

In less Developing countries, it is reported that many countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean possess public competitive examination systems (Bray et al., 1986; Hill, 2013; Kanjee, 2012; UNESCO Educational Policy and Reform Unit, 2013). In Africa**,** competitive entrance examinations and admission tests have played an important role as far back as the middle of the nineteenth century in controlling the disparities in the educational systems as well as selecting meritorious candidates for limited educational and vocational opportunities (Kellanghen, 1992). The use of examinations to evaluate candidate's performance and also to select candidates for this or that prestigious schools in Africa, the French and Ottoman Turks used it in the early 1800s in the Arab Republic of Egypt to recruit candidates for the army and later by the British to recruit civil servants (Hargreaves, 2001). It is believed that upon achieving independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s and 70s, most of the African countries introduced competitive entrance exams and admission tests to select candidates for job opportunities as well as entrance into some prestigious professional institutions. This act further intensified in the 80s and 90s due to the increase of the number of aspirants into the public sector and lacklustre nature of the economies which made it practically very impossible for the State to accommodate all the graduates and post-graduates.

In Cameroon, the story is not quite different from what we encounter in other counties more specifically sub-Saharan countries. The origin of competitive entrance examinations can be traced as far back as the 18th century but it was intensified in the 19th and 20th century. In the aftermath of independence of Cameroon and due to the inability of the government to incorporate everyone in the civil service favoured the use of selective examinations. Cameroon, being among the African countries which achieved it freedom in the early 1960s, was forced to adopt the competitive exams as the medium for the recruitment of public servants and job placement (Tamajong, 2008). This form of selection was visible in the Federal Government of Cameroon. The years 1970s,1980s, and 1990s characterised by a considerable drop in the prices of raw materials affected the economy and the trend of life of Cameroonians. This forced the government to carry out some readjustment in the public sector. As such, it became apparent that the government alone could not employed all the graduates and undergraduates. In order to ensure equity and equally of chances to all, competitive entrance examinations once again proved to be a vital tool for the recruitment and selection of candidates. Till date, they had never been a single recruitment without the use of competitive entrance exams in the country.

In fact, the adoption of public examinations in most if not all the educational system in China, Europe, Asia, Africa and Caribbean stands as an outstanding feature in the 19th and 20th centuries. In almost all part of the world, these examinations are used to select candidates for the tertiary education, for professional learning and training schools and even for job placement in these countries, as well as also replaced school based assessment. As compared to Gaokao in China, Berger (2012), Li and Chang (2008), Luo (2009), Yang (199), Li (2012), Zeng (2010), and Li (2008), advocated that Gaokao in China is much more knowledge-based whereas the SAT and the ACT in the USA is much more aptitude-based. To them, reading, writing as well as mathematics appear to be the main contents included in the SAT and ACT exam.

Reasons for the introduction of competitive entrance examinations or admission tests

As said before, competitive entrance examinations are a set of tests organised nationwide with the main aim of selecting meritorious candidates out of a hundred of thousands. In both the developed and less developed countries, the used of this method to admit candidates in to the universities, professional training schools and private institutions of learning account for many reasons which

are specific to each country. Different countries have varied reasons for the introduction of competitive entrance examinations in to her educational systems.

In the United Kingdom (U.K), the introduction of the competitive entrance examination as well as admission tests has made access in to higher education very selective. The U.K government due to a fall in the credibility of grade system by colleges and secondary schools has turned to admission tests as the only means to admit candidates in to the tertiary system (Berger, 2012). Therefore, the introduction of the admission tests in the British education system translate the willingness of the actors to ensure equity access to all the social groups of the population. Also, due to an increase in the number of candidates coupled with the difficult to incorporate everyone in the public sector, competitive entrance examinations and admission tests appears to be the unique solution to tackle this problem.

In France, the story is not quite different. The introduction of the "concours" as a to select the meritorious candidates out of a hundred of thousands shows the willingness of the government to give equal chances to all the citizens to be part of the public sector. This is because success in a "concours" or entrance in to "Grandes ecoles" is given an added value. Those who succeed are considered to be enjoying some sort of aristocracy. Thus, the introduction of competitive entrance examinations into the French educational system as a gate way state owned and private institutions of learning and training account for the desire to give equal chances to all the constituents of the population and also as a result of the fact that the public service alone cannot absurd all the under graduates and post graduates.

In the United States of America (USA) and India, the story is not far from that of England and France. The introduction of these examinations in the respective education systems put forward the inability of the government to absurd and incorporate all the under graduates and post graduates in to the public sector.

Elsewhere, in Africa, the story is not quite different. The introduction of the competitive entrance examinations as a means to select meritorious students out of a dozen either for a job or for tertiary education account for some reasons among which we have; a proportional increase of number of aspirants, the inability of the public sector to absurd all the under graduates and post graduates,

low level of economic growth, limited number of seats, the loss of credibility in the grade system used by secondary schools and colleges etc.

In Ethiopia for example, the ministry of Education, which is responsible for the award of certificates and placement students in the universities and for jobs has been facing a lot of criticisms due to the fact that university graduate has poor quality (Telila, 2010; Melaku Tsefa, n.d). Researchers and professionals in the domain has argued that the magnificent days of higher academic performance and enviable achievement among Ethiopian under graduates have reach a vanishing point (Telila, 2010). Graduates from Ethiopian universities who wish to further studies abroad are required to seat further admission tests before being admitted. This has made the Ethiopian minister of education, policy planners and educational experts to seek for the introduction of competitive entrance examinations and admission tests as a means to admit aspirants in to the tertiary education and placement in this or that jobs.

In Cameroon, the story is not far from those of other countries. The government of the Republic has introduced competitive entrance examinations and admission tests as a means to select candidates for some of the prestigious professional schools and training institutions, be it private or public. The reason behind the introduction of these examinations sanctioning entries into these schools is as a result of the growing number of aspirants to make their way into this or that school, the inability of the public sector to absurd all the under graduates and post graduates in to the public, the and the desire to give equal chances and opportunities to all the social groups of the population to become part of the public service (Mounchikpou, 2021). This, coupled with other factors highlights the reasons for the introduction of competitive entrance exams and admission as a means to admit candidates in some of the prestigious state owned and private institutions of learning and training or for job placement.

Types of competitive entrance examinations worldwide

With continuous globalisation and modernisation of the world's economy, the desire to meet up with the challenges of the society and to promote community development as well as sustainable development in developed and less developed countries has become a call for concern. As a result of this couple with a rapid increase of the number candidates willing to make their way into the civil service in both developed and under developed countries, policymakers, educationists and experts has seen competitive entrance examinations as the only means to select candidates for the

tertiary education, professional institutions and even for job placements (Berger, 2012). This has resulted to the introduction of different types of admission tests or competitive entrance examinations basing on each country's educational system and economy. The multiplication of training fields in the developed and under the developed countries and the introduction of different forms of competitive entrance examinations and admission tests point an accusing finger to the inability of the civil service to absurd all the under graduates and the post graduates in to the public sector. This explain why in some countries, upon graduation, some professional schools integrate their graduates in to the public sector. This type is known as direct competitive entrance examinations. In some countries, some professional schools, upon graduation, does not integrate its graduates directly. This type is known as indirect competitive entrance examinations.

In both developed and less developed countries, the purpose of examinations is to evaluate a person's knowledge, ability and skill in a particular domain or domains. This is why we have different types of examinations like the qualifying and the competitive entrance exams. Qualification examinations are conducted to evaluate individual's aptitude on a certain kind of knowledge, ability or skills. This examination type is decided per the course. Competitive entrance examination on the other hand, is conducted either to qualify a candidate for a particular course or to grant entry to individuals into particular institutions. It is also conducted to select individuals for a job and it is nationwide (Li, 2012). This examination helps students to join their dream college, institution or professional school or dream job. Below are the different examinations types in developed and under developed countries.

Examinations conducted for entry into professional courses: In many countries in the world, competitive entrance examinations and even admission tests are considered by many as an integral part for the entry into the prestigious or elite institutions or jobs (Daniel, et al. 2022). These exams are commonly characterised in the developed and under developed countries by a considerable number of aspirants competing for a very limited number of seats, thus making admission tests and entrance exams the unique solution to select deserving candidates for the specific course. These examination type in larger part mainly evaluate verbal reasoning, quantitative aptitude, logical reasoning, intelligent quotient (IQ), and lateral thinking etc. In India, entrance exams are more common to professional courses like Masters Business Administration (MBA) (Kuncel, et al. 2010).

- **Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)**

The Graduate Management Admission Test is a standardised and computer based assessment evaluation conducted throughout the world. This admission test include more than 5,400 courses offered by more than 1,500 state owned universities and private institutions in nearly 83 countries that use the GMAT examination as part of selection requirement for their programs (Kuncel et al. 2010). The GMAT entrance exam permit students and aspirants to get admission into the business schools for the MBA programs, Master of Accountancy and many others. The GMAT entrance exam is conducted throughout the world with the highest security. The GMAT is organised in more than 110 selected centres in different countries. The GMAT exam evaluates skills and aptitude which help students and aspirants to have a mind-set to face the challenges of the programs (Daniel, et al. 2022). The GMAT entrance exam into business schools, MBA programs, Master of Accountancy etc. test aspirants on verbal reasoning, quantitative aptitude, integrated reasoning, as well as analytical writing (Haque Ahmed et al. 2023).

- **Common Admission Test**

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) began the Common Admission Test (CAT) exams for selecting candidates for the business administration programmes (Julian, 2005). The IIM organised the CAT exams every year. The CAT entrance exams into business administration programmes is considered by many as the third toughest test in Asia just behind the UPSCs Indian engineering services and IIT-JEE respectively (Kuncel, et al. 2007). In 2012/2013, institutes in Indian such as the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) as well as the Indian Institute of Science (IIS), used the CAT entrance exams to admit candidates into their management programmes (Mitchell, et al. 2016).

- **Graduate Record Examination (GRE)**

In the United States, the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is consider by many as the basic admission requirement for many graduate schools for the various academic programmes as well as in some of the English speaking countries (Kuncel & Hezlett, 2007). The GRE entrance examination seeks to measure the verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, analytical writing as well as critical thinking skills that have been acquired over a long period of time. This exam is

computer based administered by qualifying testing centres. The Graduate Record Examination is conducted by a specialised testing organ known as the Educational Testing Service (ETS), under the watchful eyes of the Graduate Record Examination Board (Kuncel et al. 2010). The educational testing service is responsible for setting the questions, conducting the test, as well as sending to each candidates the score report.

In order to conduct the graduate record examination abroad, the educational testing service has put in place in those countries testing agencies which serve as branches for the educational testing service. For example, in India, the agency is the "Sylvan Testing Service Pvt Ltd" that conducts the test in 9 centres within the country, that is; Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bangalore, Calcutta, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, New Delhi, and Trivandrum. The GRE entrance exam is organised annually and it is the candidates who chooses the day and timing for the examination Kuncel et al., 2007; Julian, 2005).

Competitive entrance examinations conducted for job placement: In the developed and the under developed countries, competitive entrance examinations are conducted as a means of recruiting aspirants in to the civil service or for jobs placement. The use of the competitive entrance examinations by these countries account for the inability of the government to absurd all the under graduates and post graduates willing to make their way into the civil service. The use of these examinations also account for the rapid increase in the number of aspirants and a limited seat. Different countries (in developed and less developed) use different competitive entrance examination to admit candidates for this or that job. In India for example, the first public service commission in charge of recruiting candidates in to the civil service was set up on 1st October 1926. After the aftermath of independence, there was a growing need to set up an independent organisation responsible for the recruitment in to the public service (Li, 2012). By January 26th 1950, the federal public service commission was set up which became the Union Public Service Commission. This institution conducts examinations for the recruitment of candidates in to the public service of the country.

Beside the Civil Services examinations, the Union Public Service Commission also organise competitive entrance examinations for the entry in to the Defence Services in India. This is done through the National Defence Academy, Indian Military Academy, Naval Academy, Air Force Academy and the Officers Training Academy. We also have the Bank and Insurance competitive examinations organised by different bank and insurance in India to select candidates for different

available jobs (Berger, 2012). The banks are the nationalised banks, cooperative banks and private banks. The development in the Indian economy has led to the growth of the banking sector. This has led to the banking sector recruiting candidates for this of that jobs in India. In the domain of insurance, competitive entrance examinations are equally organised to meet up with the demand of the insurance in human labour. The three main insurance company that recruit candidates for this or that jobs are; Life insurance, General insurance and Postal insurance (OECD, 2015).

In Cameroon like elsewhere, competitive entrance examinations are regarded as a sets of exams or admission tests conducted by a specialised organ or institution to select deserving candidates out of a hundred of thousands. The introduction of these examinations into the educational system resulted from a considerable increase of number of candidates, limited seats, inability of the government to absorb all the under graduates and post graduates from state and private institutions. These exams are divided in to two, which is; the direct competitive entrance examinations and the indirect competitive entrance examinations. This distinction bears its root from the fact some professional permit candidates to join the civil service of the country upon graduation while some professional schools and institutes of learning and training do not. Schools is Cameroon such as the National Advanced School of Engineering Polytechnic (ENSPY), National Advanced School of Mass Communication are example of schools which only provide candidates with necessary skills but those not ensure direct recruitment in to the public service of the country.

On the other hand, there also exist professional training schools and institutes of learning and training which upon graduation, candidates are required to be recruited in to the public service of the country. Some of these professional training schools include; National Advanced School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM), which train students in law and administration, the Higher Teachers Training Colleges (ENS) which trains candidates in the teaching profession, the Institute of International Relations of Cameroon (IRIC) which provide training in diplomacy etc.

Major paradigms in educational assessment

There exist three separate traditions or paradigms that have dominated educational assessment in the developing and less developing countries. Baird and Opposs (2018), has distinguished three major traditions or paradigms in educational assessment which are as follows;

The psychometric paradigm: The origin of this paradigm could be traced from intelligence testing which is concerned with the measurement of a single factor or trait. It equally tends to test

items that are not related to curriculum. It also put more emphasis on item discrimination, students ranking basing on acquired scores and test reliability as well as scores that are normally distributed. According to Michell (2022) “Sir Francis Galton singlehandedly instigated the navigational settings for the discipline of psychometrics by presupposing that mental attributes are measurable”. He further argues that the above presupposition became the founding pillar of the paradigm of psychometric. Sir Galton presupposition was influenced by two main considerations. Firstly, Galton presupposition was instigated by his Pythagorean philosophy of science which perceived measurement as a necessity in human endeavour. The second consideration of Galton was animated by his desire to present eugenics as a science, which, considering his Pythagorean vision, required that eugenics must involve measurement of relevant mental attributes (Michell, 2022). In this light, Browne (2016) made it clear that Galton presupposition of the psychometrics paradigm of assessment is effective for student`s grading. Correspondingly, Coriale (2017) advocated that Sir Galton presupposition of the psychometrics paradigm is used to test items related to intelligence and also those that are not related to curriculum.

The outcomes based paradigm: In educational assessment, the outcomes based paradigm is concerned with competency and mastery of a specific sets of skills and aptitudes. Also, the outcomes paradigm does not assume a normal distribution of scores. It is associated with pass/fail decisions and it is most often linked to vocational or occupational activities. According to Barr and Tagg (1995) learning paradigm is perceived as one in which the purpose of institutions is to learn continuously like learners. For them, learning approaches is holistic, environments ready for students, student discovery and construction of knowledge, as well as active learning. Correspondingly, Driscoll and Wood (2023) argues that the outcomes based assessment paradigm provides permits evaluators to articulate the learning outcomes and evidence of learning which are appropriate for their courses and programs.

The curriculum based assessment paradigm: this paradigm is concerned primarily with testing the extent to which a student has acquired the necessary skills, competencies and aptitudes and knowledge in the official curriculum and possess the potentials to advance to the next level of the educational system or become eligible for a job. This is contrasted to the psychometric paradigm as it lay more emphasis on validity instead of measuring a single trait and does not assume that scores be distributed normally. Michell (2022) argues that curriculum based-assessment paradigm is an approach to evaluation which focuses on assessing the performance of students basing on the

actual curriculum rather than relying only on standardised tests and assessments. Curriculum based-assessment paradigm centres around assessing the progress of learners by focusing on skill and competence mentioned in the defined curriculum. This means that with the curriculum based-assessment paradigm, learners are assessed on what they are being taught in class. This is why Coriale (2017) further argues that it provides a true representation of what learners has actually learned in the classroom in contrast to traditional standardised tests.

With regards to the above definitions which states that psychometric paradigm focuses on measuring psychological phenomena and traits, curriculum based-assessment seen as a holistic approach to assessing student`s outcomes based on what is been taught to them and the outcomes based-assessment paradigm which focuses on defining the desired outcomes and developing strategies to achieve the goals and objectives, the present study adopted the outcomes based-assessment paradigm as the assessment paradigm in this study. This paradigm was deemed appropriate for this study since the researcher wanted to evaluate the impact of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in to advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Characteristics of competitive entrance examinations

According to Eckstein and Noah (1993); Kellaghan and Madaus (2003); Keeves (1994), examinations to which "competitive" and "public" are commonly applied possess a number of characteristics which are non-negligible. The following are some of the essential characteristics of competitive entrance examinations and public examinations in the developed and under developed countries. These characteristics are drawn from the works of Kellaghan and Madaus (2003), Eckstein and Noah (1993) and Keeves (1994).

- Competitive entrance examinations are set and controlled by an agency away from the schools and campus from which the students come. These exams are set by a specialised institutions or organisations under the watchful eyes of the government. In under developed countries (Cameroon) for example, these exams are set and control by the specialised organs of the government.
- The administering authority in most competitive entrance examinations is generally a national organ, state government or agency. These government agencies are in charge of administering

these examinations nationwide. These government agencies play the role of an oversight when the exam is set and control by a private institution.

- The examinations in the developed and under developed countries are based on prescribed syllabi on subject such as national languages and foreign languages, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, information and communication technologies, general knowledge etc. The syllabi in some cases are prescribed by the administering body.
- Competitive entrance examinations involve the application of common test nationwide, administered under defined conditions, during which students are not allow to use books, hand-out or other materials and are equally separated from a normal exam or class room situation. These exams are administered on chosen days nationwide to many students and at the same time.
- Competitive entrance examinations in developing countries (e.g. France) and less developing countries (e.g. Cameroon) have generally been voluntary in that it is up to individuals to decide whether to sit for an examination of this kind or not. Thus, students have the right to participate or not participate in the exam.
- In competitive entrance examinations, students' performance is sanction by the admission into the next educational level, a prestigious training school or job placement in to the civil service. This is an important element that differentiate competitive entrance examinations from other written examinations.

All these characteristics of competitive entrance examinations both in the developing and less developing countries differentiate these exams from other written exams. It put forward the unique nature of competitive entrance examinations.

Functions of competitive entrance exams in developed and less developed world

Competitive entrance examinations and admission tests according to many scholars are a sets of written and oral examinations used by some if not all the educational systems in the world as a means to select deserving candidates or students out of a hundred of thousands. These examinations as earlier said above were introduced in country's educational systems for diverse reasons. The content of the competitive entrance examinations and admission tests might differ from one country to another but the functions or roles of these examinations are the same worldwide.

In some countries around the world, public examinations (be it competitive or not), serve a number of varied functions. According to Kellaghen and Greaney (1992), public examinations act as an incentive for greater effort to teachers and students. They are in most cases seen as an equitable and efficient means of distributing scarce or limited educational resources to the different social class in the society. These examinations to a larger extend provide feedback to both teachers and students as far as their strengths and weaknesses are concern. For a country, public examinations also serve to unify the teaching and learning effort around a sets of goals which need to be achieve by the educational system. Kelleghan and Greaney, (1992), believes that public examinations, whether competitive in nature or not, to students serve as evident of educational achievements (certifications). It also has an accountability role through the offering of evidence of degree of attainment to the country. Again, these examinations provide the government and other employer's basis for the selection of appropriate candidates for the next educational level or for employment. Below are the functions of competitive entrance examinations in developed and the under developed countries.

Selection of candidates for the next educational level: Kellaghen and Greaney (1992), believed that, practically, educational opportunities are very fewer in almost all the countries worldwide. This is because there exist a limited or fewer opportunities for a good number of students. Even the access into some state universities is restricted taught less of professional institutions of learning. To them, while most of the examinations serve a certification functions in many countries, some, most notably the "concours" (competitive entrance examinations), in French speaking countries, are put in place to select students and candidates for the net highest educational level. In Togo, the competitive entrance examinations, "concours", is used at the end of the secondary junior cycle to select students and candidates for the three-year senior cycle program as well as at the end of this cycle to select candidates for professional schools, colleges, universities and also foreign studies (Thomas, & Vincent, 2020).

The lack of schools and even infrastructures is a decisive factor in the selection of candidates or students for the next level of education. To many, the selection of students for the secondary or tertiary level of education in many countries largely depends on the number of the available places at the secondary or tertiary level. This is due to the limited capacity of secondary schools and even universities to absorb all the graduates. In study carried out by Kelleghan and Greaney (1992), in

fourteenth different countries, lack of schools, especially secondary schools, inevitably leads to a severe bottleneck at the end of the primary school completion in most countries. The number of promoted students ultimately depends on the number of the places available. This is case in Rwanda, Uganda, Chad, and Zambia who are oblige to select students taking into consideration the number of the available places at the secondary and tertiary level of education.

In some of the French speaking countries, rigid marking is the order of the day at the end of year grade examinations, conducted for the selection or promotion of students to the next level of education. Among the most severe is the one conducted in Chad secondary schools in which a mean mark of ten and above is required for promotion of students, greater than seven and less than is repetition and seven or below seven average is expulsion (Thomas, & Vincent, 1992).

Certification function of the examinations: Certification is another function of examinations in many countries. Whether public examinations or competitive entrance examinations or admission tests, the end result is to certify student's competences, skills and abilities in different courses or domains. According to Thomas and Vincent (1992), the emphasis on the selective function of competitive entrance examinations is so pervasive that there is danger of losing sight of their certification function. Formal certificates that indicates a person's academic achievements is consider as important credentials for gaining a job or qualifying for further training. In Ethiopia for example, the possession of the Grade 6 and Grade 8 certificates is seen as the minimum requirement for a range of occupations lie drivers, filing clerks (Thomas, & Vincent, 1992).

Performance functions of competitive entrance examinations: Competitive entrance examinations are also used in most if not all the countries in the world the test the performance of students. It is aim at measuring the degree at which the objective of an educational system is achieve. Thomas and Vincent (1992) pointed out that an attempt to summarise and provide comparable figures for examinations performance turn out to be a difficult task. This is because of the failure to take in consideration differences in criteria for the award of grades. This is that comparability problems can occur from the fact that what is meant by a pass grade can vary from examinations to examinations not only between countries but within countries.

Job placement as a function of competitive entrance examinations: Competitive entrance examinations also serve as instruments for the selection of students and candidates for this or that

jobs. In many countries, competitive entrance examinations are used to admit candidates and students to the highest educational level or for the recruitment in to the public service of the country. In Cameroon, competitive entrance examinations permit the government to select deserving candidates for professional schools and training institutions. It also serves as a safer way to give equal chances to all the social class of the society to join the civil service. It gives room for the government to select meritorious candidates among a hundred of thousands for the available limited job opportunities in the country. In fact, competitive entrance examinations are seen by many as the most effective and efficient means of selecting candidates for entry into some of the prestigious state own and private institutions of learning and training as well as for job placement in to the public service.

The organisation and management of competitive entrance examinations

The organisation as well as management of competitive entrance examinations or admission tests in both developed and less developed countries are in the hands of specialised organisations or state owned institutions. These institutions are in charge of defining the require conditions, defining the content of the exams and the period of writing the exams as well as managing applications from different candidates.

Organisation of competitive entrance examinations

The organisation of competitive entrance examinations in the developing countries (England, France, USA, Slovenia) and in under developed countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, India, Togo) are in the hands of specific organisations and ministries who have the tedious task of defining the content of the exams, the period for the writing of the exams, defining the requirements and conducting the exams (OECD, 2015). In countries such as Britain, France and USA, the organisation of the competitive entrance examinations to admit candidates into some prestigious colleges, universities and professional schools are organised by the Minister of high education. The ministry defined the conditions, the period for the exams, and the content of the exams and also conduct the exams nationwide (Kelleghan & Greaney, 2020, 1992).

In India, competitive entrance examinations and admission tests are the affairs of the ministry of higher education and specialised state owned institutions. The first commission set up in India to

organise admission test in to colleges and universities as well for the recruitment in to the civil service was the public service commission created on the 1st of October 1926. This commission was in charge of organising entrances examinations in to colleges and universities and also for job placement (Li, 2012). On January 26th 1950, this commission was dissolved in favour of a more independent commission known as the Union public service commission. This commission equally have the same role as it predecessor. This commission is in charge of organising the entrance exams for the recruitment of candidates in to the civil service (Berger, 2012).

In Ethiopia, the organisation of competitive entrance examinations and admission tests for the admission of students in to some prestigious universities and professional schools are under the responsibility of the Ethiopian ministry of higher education. The ministry of higher education organised the "concours" annually, fixed the required conditions, defined the number of places available, defined the content of the examinations etc. (Educational Abstract, 2012/13; Yizengaw, 2007). The ministry makes sure that equity, equally and transparency are ensured during the exams.

In Cameroon, the organisation of the competitive entrance examinations as a gate way to some prestigious professional schools in the country such as ENAM, ENS, IRIC, ASMAC, EMIA, ENSPY etc. are in the hands of different ministerial department or through Presidential decrees (Mounchikpou, 2021). There are a considerable number of ministries who are in charge of organising the competitive entrance examinations and direct recruitment examinations in to the public service of the country. Some of the ministries responsible for organising competitive entrance examinations and direct recruitment test in to the public service are as follows; The Ministry of public service and administrative reforms (MINFOPRA), Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP), Ministry of Defence forces (MINDEF), Ministry of international relations (MINREX), Ministry of Public Health (MINSANTE), the General directorate of national security (DGSN) etc. These institutions organised the exams, fixed the entry requirements, define the content of the exams, defined the number of places as well as the period for writing the exams.

The competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon constitutes of the written and oral parts. The exams in most cases starts with the written part which last for two days or more. The oral part of these exams are always conducted after the publication of the result of successful candidates for

the written part. The examination forms are produced by the different governing body. In the domain of education, it is the ministry of higher education that organised competitive entrance examinations in to some of the prestigious professional institutions of learning and training such as the ENS, ENSPY. ENSET, etc. The governing body fixed the number of places, define the content of the exams, and define the time frame for the exams to be written (Mounchikpou, 2021). In the field of administration, the ministry of public service and administrative reforms organised competitive entrance examinations and direct recruitment in the public service of the country. This ministry equally co-organise entrance examinations with other ministries responsible for organising the same exams (Ibid). In the domain of defence and security forces, the ministry of defence forces is in charge of organising competitive entrance examinations in to the EMIA. This ministry equally organised direct recruitment of candidates in to the defence forces of the country (soldiers, Gendarmes, BIRs etc.). This recruitment is open to Cameroonian of both sex willing to make career in the defence and security forces. These candidates are required to fulfil certain conditions so as to be eligible for these recruitment (Kamerpower.com).

All these organising bodies, both in the developed and less developed countries have the same role to play. They are responsible of conducting the examinations, they fixed the available number of places, they fixed the eligible conditions to be fulfil by candidates, they define the content of the exams, and they equally define the period for the writing of the examinations.

The management of competitive entrance examinations

The management of Competitive entrance examinations in the developed and under developed countries are ensured by specialised government and private institutions. In most countries, in the field of educations, higher education institutions retain in theory, the final decision over student's admission to this or that professional schools. The management of student`s application for admissions into the higher education, professional institutions and for job placements is a delicate issue. In the developed and under developed countries, many bodies are in charge of managing the admissions forms of candidates under the control of a government institutions (Tanyi, 2006). The process of collecting and managing applications for competitive entrance examination into the higher education sector (universities and professional schools) and for job placements (civil service) in each country varies. This is in respect with the country`s level of economic development.

In France, the admission in to the “Grandes Ecoles” is managed by the government institutions who has the competencies to do so. The “Concours” into these institutions and even for job placement is centralised through the admissions post-Bac portal (McGrath et al., 2014). This is aim to allow prospective candidates to learn more about higher education courses and the existing job opportunities in their respective domains of specialisations. For a student to apply for a course and institution, it is necessary to complete the portal`s online application. Admissions into the higher education sector is generally the affair of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. It is the ministry that manages the centralised admission process “admission post-Bac” created in 2009. The ministry equally decides on the higher education institutions or “Grandes Ecoles” eligible to take part in the centralised admission process. The ministry fixed the entry requirements for candidates of both sex (McGrath, et al. 2014).

In Germany, the management of competitive entrance examinations and admissions is centralised through a clearing house of “Shiftung fur Horchschulzulassung”. It is believed that in the domain of admission into higher education institutions, applications to degrees with local admission restriction maybe managed directly by the university or via the central clearing house. If is also said that for non-regulated courses, applications are managed by the universities (McGrath et al., 2014). Competitive entrance examinations and admissions in Germany has a dual system. We have a central clearing house “Shiftung fur Horchschulzulassung”, that manages the applications of nationally regulated admissions restriction, as well as some locally regulated courses managed by the university. University admission system is under the federated states.

In the U.S, competitive entrance examinations and admission tests differs with respect to the domain of intervention. Here, application into higher education institutions differs from one university to another (Li, 2012). This can equally use the common application or the universal college admission forms to apply for this or that professional school or university. Admissions in the US are conversely the affair of universities., which sets student’s numbers, admission`s criteria as well as selection requirements. Here, independent institutions manage admissions and tests in the US. For example, the College Board (CB) develops and administers standardised tests including the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SATs) in addition to providing some policy advice. The

SATs are scored by educational testing service (McGrath, et al., 2014). McGrath, et al, (2014), pointed out that in Sweden, the management of admission tests into universities and even for job placement is centralised through the Antagning.se platforms where candidates can apply for courses and even programs at all Swedish universities and also colleges and professional schools with the same application through the said platform.

In Cameroon, the organisation and management of competitive entrance examinations are controlled by state owned institutions. These institutions on behalf of the government fixed the eligibility conditions and modalities that candidates need to fulfil before the examinations. There are several state institutions in charge of organising and managing competitive entrance examinations (Tanyi, 2016). We have various ministries like the Ministry of Higher Education (MINSUP), the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms (MINFOPRA), the Ministry of Public Health (MINSANTE), the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication (MINPOSTEL), the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX), the Ministry of Defence and Security Forces (MINDEF), etc.

Each ministry is in charge of organising and managing the competitive entrance examinations in their various respective domains. They fixed the number of candidates required which is always limited. They equally fixed the entry requirements. The contents of the examination, the period of the examination, the examination criteria as well as the different centres for the examination. These examinations maybe for the selection of nationals and non-nationals in some of the prestigious professional schools and equally for job placements.

In the domain of higher education, the Ministry of Higher education launch entrance examinations in to some prestigious professional institutions of the country, opened to Cameroonian of both sex and even foreigners. He fixed the examination criteria which the same throughout the country. This ministry launches competitive entrance examinations in to professional schools such as the Higher Teacher`s Training Colleges (ENS), the National Advanced Schools of Engineering (ENSPY), the Institute of International Relations of Cameroon (IRIC), (Mounchikpou, 2021) just to name a few.

In the domain of defence and security, the Ministry of Defence and Security Forces launches competitive entrance examinations and recruitment tests aim at selecting candidates willing to be

part of the defence and security forces. The minister through a ministerial degree launched "concours" or competitive entrance examinations opened to Cameroonians of both sex and even other nationals. He fixed the required conditions, the nature of the examinations and the period of the examinations in accordance with the text of the Republic (Mounchikpou, 2021).

Still in the same light, the management of competitive entrance examinations for direct recruitment in to the civil service of the country is ensured by the Ministry of Public service and Administrative reforms (MINFOPRA). Unlike the other ministries, this ministry equally managed the recruitment into the civil service of the country.

The requirements for competitive entrance examinations or "Concours"

The entry requirements refer to the eligible conditions fixed by the organising body which every candidate is required to fulfil. These conditions are applied to all the applicants. These requirements vary from one country to another. According to OECD (2013b), age is one of the requirements for entry into higher education which in most countries is divided into two; that is; the typical age (immediate admission into higher school) and average age (do not enrol immediately into higher education). Applicants (national and international) are all required to fulfil all the necessary requirements before they can be eligible to go in for these examinations.

In some of the European countries such as France, all the applicants must be a holder of a secondary school certificate or diploma (Baccalaureate), a certified equivalent for non-nationals or the National Diploma (Diplome d`access aux etudes universitaires, DAEU) as one of the dominant condition for candidates willing to continue with post-secondary education (McGrath, et al., 2014). This condition is equally applicable to candidates willing to seek admission into the civil service and even those willing to join their dream professional schools and training institutions. This is why national and non-national citizens need to possess qualification allowing to enter the higher education or post-secondary education, professional schools and even the civil service in their homeland and also abroad. According to McGrath, et al (2014), "different requirements apply to different types of institutions. Students may register for non-selective universities or a variety of other higher education institutions, including the Vocational University Institute of Technology (IUT), section of senior Technicians (STS), Diploma in Accounting and Management (DCG) or the prestigious "Grandes Ecoles" pathway, which usually requires two

years of preparatory study". This further emphasis on the importance of "Grandes Ecoles" in France thereby providing an added value to "Concours" in France.

In the United Kingdom (U.K), the story is practically the same. GCE A-Levels are specific subject's exams taken by students in their final year of secondary school. Students apply with this certificate or equivalent to universities and professional schools (McGrath, et al., 2014). As such, the British higher education (Universities and professional schools) may also require to organise specific admission test for applicants in to the tertiary sector. Many believe that the organisation of these competitive entrance examinations sanctioning the access in to higher education confirm the fact that the college and secondary school grading system is gradually losing its value.

In Germany, the story is not quite different. McGrath, et al., (2014), believes that students who attend the upper secondary school (….) attend a "Gymnasium" to write a secondary school leaving certificate called the "Abitur". This qualification allows students to go in for all subjects in all tertiary education institutions. According to Kultusministerkonferenz (2010), attending the Gymnasium is not the only way to gain access in to the tertiary sector. Candidates can equally join the higher education after adult learning which leads to the completion of the Abitur. This can also be possible after vocational training or after working for three years and passing an entrance exam known as "Eigangsprufung".

According to Kubler (2011), candidates in Germany usually have the option to look a degree course and identify which admission process they can apply thanks to the central database known as "Hochschulkompass". The central database serves as a help to the applicants to identify the different courses available and the admission procedures. Here, it is the university and professional institution that manage admissions of candidates in most of the courses.

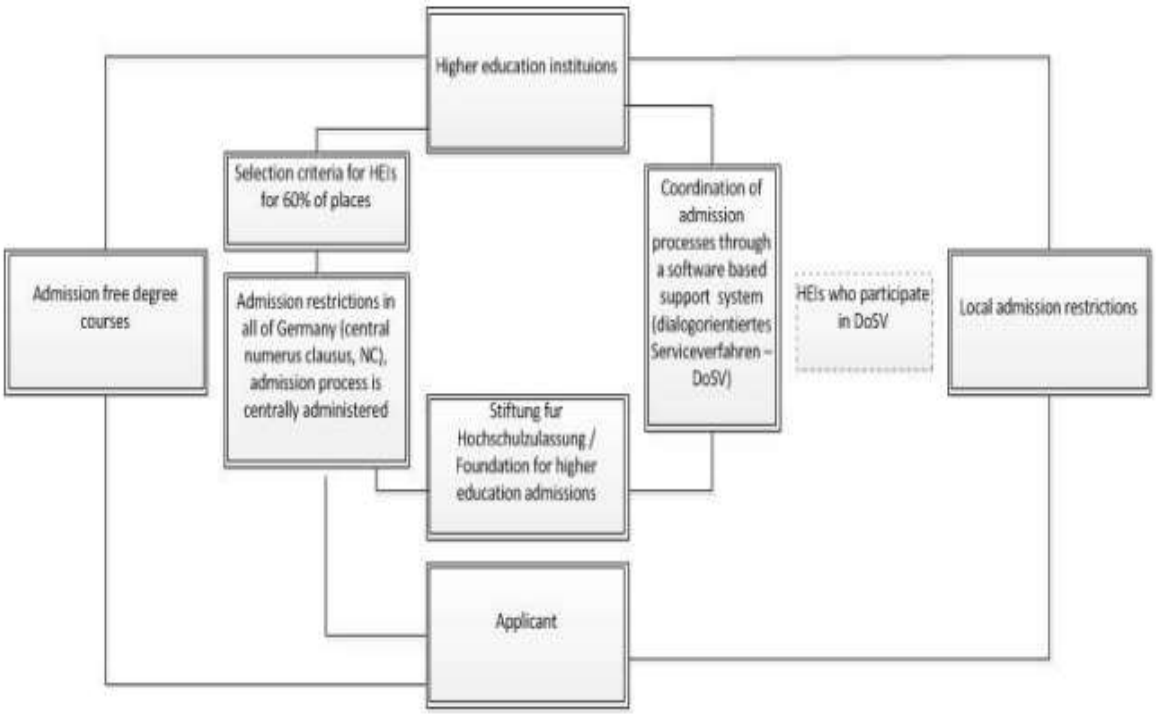


Figure 5: Admission system in higher education in Germany

Source : McGrath, et al. 2014.

McGrath, et al. (2014), point out that nearly all Japanese universities are entails to implement guidance for entrance selection for its applicants known as the "Dakgaku nyusisha senbatsu jissi yoko" put in place by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology (MEXT). In order to ensure the implementation of the guidance, both national, public, and private institutions have the right and responsibility to decide the entrance examinations, the admission procedures and also the requirements for all the applicants. The particularities of these admission tests or competitive entrance examinations in Japan lies on the fact that candidates with upper secondary school leaving diplomas in most cases must be admitted through the general entrance examinations, a recommendation from the principals or the admission office entrance examinations. It can equally be a combination of all this (Ibid). The admission into the tertiary educational sector in Japan largely depends on the implementation of guidance put in place by the MEXT. This guidance to an extend entails the universities and other tertiary institutions such as

the professional training schools to fixed necessary conditions for all candidates willing to foster their educational level. For this to become materialise, some universities and professional schools organised admission tests, listen to the recommendations made by principals and even the admission office entrance examinations or make use of all this.

MHEST (2013), make mention that in order to be enrol in a tertiary education institution in Slovenia, all the candidates are required to pass a secondary school leaving examination known as the "Matura exam". Candidates for the tertiary education equally needs to have adequate mastering of the Slovenian national language, as well as also provide results for the last two years in secondary education. Again, another condition sanctioning the admission of candidates into higher education in Slovenia strongly lies on the fact that candidates in most cases are asked to pass an art skill or mental and physical preparedness test (MHEST, 2013). Also, since 1994/1995, in Slovenia, candidates who completing the secondary education before 1995 were required to provide proof of a recognised national secondary leaving exam equivalent to the matura. This condition was equally applied to non-national applicants (Cecile et al, 2014). Elsewhere in Sweden, admissions into the tertiary educational sector depends largely on school-leaving grades for most undergraduate's programmes. According to Amrft (2012), applicants are admitted into the tertiary sector on the basis of the Independent Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (SweSAT) and also previous validated experience. On the other hand, McGrath, et al, (2014), point out that additional entry requirements in most cases are often demanded by universities and professional institutions for particular subjects such as health, law, and fine, applied and performing arts. In most of these countries, it is the grade system which count the most for the admission of candidates to universities and professional institutions except for some specific subjects which demand extra admission examinations sanctioning the entrance into these universities and professional schools.

In Cameroon, the story is not far from the realities elsewhere. The requirements constitute an integral part of competitive entrance examinations. Candidates, both male and females, nationals and non-nationals are entails to fulfil some conditions in order to be eligible for these examinations. Here, the organising body (Ministry) fixed the different requirements that candidates are oblige to fulfil before being eligible to sit for the examinations. These conditions are fixed by a ministerial degree fixing the different modalities for competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon

(Mounchikpou, 2021). For example, the degree n° 18200230-MINETA/MINCOM/SG/DAUQ/SDEAC of 17 July 2020 organising and fixing conditions for the entrance exam into the Advance School of Mass Communication for 2020/2021 academic year, all the candidates are expected to fulfil the following conditions;

- Be a holder of Baccalaureate of any series or GCE A-Level certificate in at least two subjects and in one session excluding Religious studies or GCE O-Level certificate passed in at least four papers excluding Religion.
- Foreign candidates shall fulfil requirements so as to be admitted in ASMAC (decision n^0 18200230-MINETA/MINCOM/SG/DAUQ/SDEAC of 17 July 2020, cited by Mounchikpou, 2021).

Elsewhere, the conditions and requirements are not the same. This is so because the conditions vary according to the ministry in charge of organising the exam or even because of the nature of the examination. For example, the recruitment of candidates into the Combined Military Academy (EMIA) is practically a different story. The decision n^0 170657/CRP/MINDEF/4 of 14 February 2017 organising and fixing the conditions for entrance examination into EMIA entails that candidates should be;

- Be of Cameroonian nationality
- Be minimum age of 18 years as of 01/01/2017 (be born before January 02/1999) and maximum age of 23 years on 31/12/2017 (be born after December 30/1994)
- Be a holder of a GCE A-Level in two papers excluding Religion or a Baccalaureate or its equivalent plus a successful academic year in higher education.
- Be of good conduct
- Be of good health
- Have a good criminal record (decision n^0 170657/CRP/MINDEF/4 of 14 February 2017, cited by Mounchikpou, 2021).

Candidates willing to make a career in the defence and security forces are entail to fulfil these conditions so as to be admitted to these training and learning schools. They are applicable to all applicants with no discrimination in gender, nor ethnic belonging. These conditions and requirements constitute the basis for competitive entrance examinations and admission tests in Cameroon. The fulfilment of these conditions and requirements is very imperative for candidates to be eligible for any competitive entrance examination. These conditions and requirements are

not static but vary from one country to another, from one organising body to another and even from one competitive entrance examinations or admission tests to another. The objective here according to many countries including Cameroon is to make the exams very selective, limit the number of applicants by making sure that only those who are eligible can look forward to sit for the exams. It is equally the desire of these countries to ensure the adequacy between the supply and the demand force since they cannot absolutely employ all the applicants.

Equity and Equality in competitive entrance examinations in the developed and less developed world

The concepts of equity and equality are to a greater extend tied to examination institutions. These two concepts have considerably gain ground in the 20th and the 21st centuries. Every institution, be it public or private, economic, political or social, the idea of equity and equality in all it facets continuous to champion most of today`s discussion in conferences, seminars, colloquies and even scientific debate. This is why Hu (1984), stated that "all important business of government must not be left to the accidents of either birth or wealth". This implies that neither birth nor wealth should condition the situation of an individual but instead give equal chances to the privilege and under privilege. In the same light, Eckstein and Noah (1993), equally discussed equity and equality in examinations. To them, "following the French Revolution, the principle of equality implied that all citizens would be in a position to compete for qualifications, employment, and wealth, and that advancement would be based on demonstrated achievement in school and in examinations rather than on the social position of one`s family". To these authors, meritocracy should be the guiding principle of every action undertaken by groups or individuals in the society. This means that qualifications, certifications, employment, wealth and even career advancement should not be based on the family status and social classes but instead on equity and equality of chances where all the individuals or groups have equal opportunities.

Correspondingly, Montgomery (1965), and Kellaghan and Greaney (2020), argues that the same motivation is seen in Britain and India, where examinations and admission tests in to the tertiary education and even for employment were introduced to replace practices of patronage and mentorship and even that of buying positions in the civil service and armed forces. Amano (1990), on his own make mention that, in Japan, the introduction of competitive entrance examinations and admission tests in the Japanese educational system in the latter half of the 19th century was

aimed to open educational opportunities to the whole (male) population. However, many believed that in most of these countries, the reality is far from satisfying the aspirations. This is so because examinations and admission tests were seen by some commentators and policy makers to defend equity and equality and foster the development of popular education at a time when secondary education was expanding (Judd, 1935). To back up the idea of equity and equality in examinations, be it competitive or simply admission test, Mathews (1985), raises questions related to possible bias and controversy in examinations susceptible of limiting the chances of a particular groups (boys, girls, ethnic groups, urban vs rural candidates, public vs private candidates etc.).

Factors susceptible of affecting equity and equality in competitive exams and admission tests

Equity and equality are two concepts indispensable in education. In a world in constant quest for quality education and sustainable development, these two concepts appear to be driving force behind every action initiated by educational actors. In this light, some commentators advocate that there are factors liable to affect equity and equality in education. Among these factors are: gender discrimination, socio-economic background, place of residence, type of school attended, ethnic belongings, ethnic language membership etc. These factors relating to equity and equality are exemplify in the following paragraphs.

Gender in competitive exams and admission tests

Gender in education is a determinant factor in relation to equity and equality. Many believed that early examinations in Imperial China and Great Britain were never open to females. This was because in those days, nearly most of the professions on which candidates were evaluated were not available to women. However, the situation changed in the mid nineteenth century with the Oxford and Cambridge "locals" opened to females in 1865 according to Roach, (1971). This happens to be the same story in France where, although the Baccalaureat was awarded to female candidates in 1861, the examination was fully open to female candidates in 1924 (Cross, 2009). This act prompted many commentators to debate on the fact that the opening of examinations to females, be it public or competitive examinations necessitated a separate systems of examination to male and female candidates.

In a study carried out by the Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2017), indicates that gender parity has been achieved in the world as a whole at all educational levels with the exception of

tertiary education. This means that the opening of both competitive entrance examinations, admission tests and public examinations does not necessitate the introduction of a separate examination for male and female candidates since the degree of parity has been achieved. A similar study published by World Bank (2018), find out that even though in most developing countries the parity between the male and female children has been achieved (UNESCO, 2017), disparity at the expense of female children still exist in less developing countries, where economic factors (financial status of family) and cultural bias (religion, tradition) serve to restrict girl access to education thereby reducing their likelihood of taking public examinations, admission tests or competitive entrance examinations into universities and professional schools. Factors such as religion, age, rural location, ethnic belonging, disability and even socio-economic status of family in these less developing countries have tended to affect girl participation in education more than male (World Bank, 2018).

Findings on gender in education equally proof that the gap in performance on examinations between male and female children are not very consistent. This explain why some commentators believed that in some countries, male children in general perform better than female children; a similar study in other countries proof that female children do better than male children but in some countries, little or practically no difference has been recorded. Still in the same light, some commentators have advanced that female children have the likelihood of performing better in language and literary subjects while male children tend to do better in science and technical subjects though it is not universal. In a study carried out in Malaysia by Ahmad et al. (2017); the Government of Malaysia (2015), it is proof that Malaysian and Oman female children do better in examinations than the male children at all level of the educational system (Oman Ministry of Education and World Bank, 2012). For Kellanghan and Greaney (2020), this gap between the male and female children continue to increase over time up to the tertiary education. This explain why we have an overrepresentation of female children in universities in these countries than the male children.

Many commentators believed that the disparity in performance between the male and female children in most countries can be justify by a number of reasons among which we have; cultural beliefs regarding gender roles, conflicting role expectations for male and female children, demands

to work outside school hours, the social organisation and quality of schooling as well as the mode of assessment (Thomas, & Vincent, 2020). It is proof that of all these reasons, the most influential is the mode of evaluation and assessment. The mode of assessment dictates the performance of both the male and female children in this or that subject. Comparing the performance of male and female children on multiple choice type questions and essay writing type questions, it is proof that male children tend to perform better on the former and female children on the latter (Bolger & Thomas, 1990; Lane & Stone, 2006; Mathews, 1985; Stage, 1995; Murphy, 1980; Kellanghan & Greaney, 2020).

Studies in the developing countries proof that gender parity in education have been achieved (UNESCO, 2017) whereas in less developing countries like Malaysia and Oman, there is still the likelihood of disparity between the performance of male and female children (Ahmad et al., 2017). This has make it very difficult for one to talk with exactitude whether or not can we talk of parity or disparity in the performance of male and female children in examinations (public exams, competitive entrance exams and admission tests).

In Cameroon, the debate is not quite different from what we see elsewhere. Instances of disparities on the performance of male children and female children at all educational levels and in all examinations (public examinations, competitive entrance examinations and admission tests) are still visible. This is because in most ethnic groups and tribes, male children are prioritised than the female children. There are a number of considerable factors than explain this disparity between the male and female children in Cameroon. Some of these factors are; socio-economic status of some families, level of parental education, religion, ethnic belonging and traditional beliefs, extra school activities, etc. All these help to intensify the degree of disparity on the performance of the male and female children in education.

Socio-economic status of some families

According to Kellanghan (2015), "the relationship between student`s achievements, measured in a variety of ways, and their socioeconomic background is one of the most strongly established findings of empirical research. In a similar study carried out by Kellanghan and Greaney (1995), it is said that research in industrial market economies has been limited and has equally produced contradictory findings. In this light, some studies have replicated the findings in so-called emergent economies whereas others have not. This occur as the result of the fact that failure to establish the

relationship may be due to limited variation in the variables representing parental education as well as occupation, the use of inappropriate measures of home background, or the absence of differentiation of class that characterises these emerging economies (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2020). Kellanghan and Greaney (1995), states that "when indicators of material, social and psychological aspects of home background are used (for example, parental values and pressure for the child to achieve), one is more likely to find a relationship between home background and school achievement". To them, the used of home background greatly influence the performance of children in school. This is to say that children who come from a more establish and better homes are more liable to succeed than those from poverty pledge homes. This entails that even in the public examinations, competitive entrance examinations and admission tests, the story is still the same. This is because a number of factors associated with examinations appear to be very essential in considering possible inequalities associated with socio-economic background.

According to Kellanghan and Greaney (2020), some children forgo the idea to further education simply because of the opportunity cost. This is so because children coming from under privilege families is most cases abandon school to assist in the home, farm or do something to earn some income necessary to support the family. Children from under privilege homes is most cases are tempted to abandon school because of the required to pay fees. This include examination related fees including fees for books, and examinations and even boarding which may not be at disposal of the family. Also, some children appear to abandon school simply because of the fact that their parent need to pay additional fees for private tuitions. Given the added value attached to competitive entrance examinations and admission tests into state and private universities as well as prestigious professional training schools, it is not a surprise that in many countries, including Cameroon, parent who can afford extra tuitions do it for their children to thrive in the wave of intense competition. Again, in countries characterised by examination malpractices and fraud, parent from rich and wealthier families have the likelihood to be able to afford the costs related with illegal efforts to secure a place for their children. Finally, socio-economic background also plays a crucial role in establishing inequalities between candidates in the sense with the introduction of computer-based forms of examinations in most countries, children from richer and wealthier homes who have been acquainted with these opportunities have an open advantage on the other children.

Ethnic or language group membership

Some commentators in the domain argue that ethnic inequalities occur in an examination when one or more racial groups are politically or economically disadvantaged in favour of one or more ethnic groups. This happen when access to resources, including further education is shaped by one`s racial or ethnic belonging. It is said that in countries such as Sri Lanka in the past and more recently in Malaysia, the government used examination-based quota systems to favour a particular ethnic group to the demerit of others (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2020).

In a study by Eisemon (1990), it is said that a considerable number of commentators have attributed low levels of performance in public examinations and competitive entrance examinations to the language difficulties faced by some students, underlying that students with a very shallow knowledge of a language will inevitably handicapped in his or her ability to demonstrate in an examination the knowledge and skills he/she have acquired. This is the case in Vietnam where students from minority ethnic groups feels disadvantaged as they have to take examinations in the Vietnamese language (World Bank, 2009). A similar study carried out in Russia by Artemev (2014), reveal that non-ethnic students whose first language is not Russian feels disadvantaged as the have to write the Unified State Examination in Russian. Berkhout and Beets (2009), on their part believe that in South Africa, the Senior Certificate Examination "is seen as one of the prominent symbols of the inequalities of the past". This can be back by the fact that in 1988, 95 percent of white candidates, compared to 56 percent of black candidates passed the examination, in the same light, 43 percent of white candidates compared to 17 percent of black candidates attained matriculation status (Kellanghan & Greaney, 2020).

Elsewhere, the inequalities on the performance of candidates in competitive entrance examinations and public examinations sanctioning entrance into universities and professional schools in Great Britain have given rise to the issue of special consideration in examinations in an attempt to tackle the difficulties some ethnic groups might be experience (Mathews, 1985, cited by Kellanghan & Greaney, 2020).

Type of school

In a study carried out by Heyneman and Loxley (1983), the results of their findings reveal that the contribution of the school type to student achievement which is relative to that of the home, appears

to be much more visible in developing economies than in industrialise countries. This is so because the success of students in most cases strongly depends on the type and equally nature of the school where they are enrolled In a similar study carried out by Kellanghan and Greaney (2020), the results of their findings equally reveal that school in both developing economies and industrialise economies differ in a many ways, including the type of management, specialisation, or religious affiliation, whether or not they are public or private, selective or non-selective, fee paying or non-fee paying or residential and non-residential. This implies that the choice of a school type by some parents in some countries largely depend on the quality of management and the ability of managers to incorporate theoretical competencies and practical skills in problem solving as well as boasting the performance of the school. Again, the choice of the school type equally depends on the nature, that is; is the school specialise in a domain which meet the aspiration of the student or parent. We equally have the religious affiliation, that is, is it a religious school or a non-religious school. The choice equally depends on the on the school type whether public or private, the characteristics, that is selective or not and also on the financial status, that is whether fee paying or not.

The degree of inequality lies on the fact that in some countries both in the developed and less developed countries the choice of a school type is condition by the socio-economic background of some families. It is believed that private schools offer quality education as many believe that there is a considerable follow up of students enrolled in the private schools than the public schools. This explain why the fees there is too high as compare to public school. In study carried out by Dunder et al. (2014), the results of their findings reveal that in Nepal, once observable student characteristics were taken into account, private school appear to perform much better than the public schools. A similar study carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2010), proof that private schools may find it difficult to offer any academic advantage to students once the socioeconomic factor have been taken in to account. All these help to highlight and emphasise on the degree of inequalities related to the choice of school type.

In Cameroon, constituting one of the countries of less developed economies situated in sub-Saharan Africa, the idea of equity and equality in competitive entrance examination is still far from being achieved, have the same story to tell like fellow sub-Saharan countries. This is because the problem of equity and equality according to some commentators is worldwide. Here, equity and

equality in terms of admission of candidates into some of the prestigious state professional schools and private institutions does not always obey to the fundamental principles of equity and equality. We still realise that ethnic belongings, socioeconomic background, type of schools, region of origin, religious affiliation as well as gender continue to condition the admission of candidates in to these professional training public and private institutions in the country. This is make extremely very difficult to discuss on equity and equality with ease.

Controversies surrounding competitive entrance examinations and admission tests

Competitive entrance examinations are a set of exams and admission tests organised by countries in the developed and less developed countries as a means to select meritorious or successful candidates out of a hundred of thousands. This examination form used by countries in the world including sub-Saharan African countries and Cameroon in particular serve as the basis for the admission of candidates in some of the public and private professional training institutions as well as for job placement into the civil service. But due to the continuous increase in the number of applicant year in year out, couple with a limited number of seats for a hundred of thousands applicants, has led to fierce competition among candidates wishing to secure a place in these "concours". The growing importance of competitive entrance examinations and admission tests in sub-Saharan African countries have resulted to some candidates and parents seeking unorthodox means in order to secure a place in these professional training institutions. Examination malpractice have become a regular phenomenon in these countries including Cameroon. In the developed economies and less developed economies, instances of examination malpractices and controversies are visible. The work of Kellanghan and Greaney (2020), reveals that in some countries, uncontrolled conditions or illegal conditions arises from time to time which they use a variety of terms to describe these irregularities such as "dishonest conduct, misconduct, cheating, unfair practice, irregularity and corruption".

According to Kellanghan and Greaney (1996), examination malpractice may occur at any level in the examination process, from the organisation passing through the development of the examination through candidate`s preparation, to the actual administration as well as marking cutting across the issuance and the use of results. The different forms of examination malpractices may occur include; examination development, student`s preparation for the examination,

administration of the examination, marking of examination and issuance of results (Haladyna, Nolen, & Haas, 1991; Mehrens & Kaminski, 1989).

Some commentators have proven that examination malpractices appear to be endemic in some countries including Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan (Kellanghan & Greaney, 2020). In a study conducted by Moore (1993), one observer stated that in India, "schools where cheating is not reported in a competitive examination or admission test make the headlines of the newspapers". A similar study conducted in Nigeria in 2013 by Vanguard (2013), reveal that the 2013 results of at least 12,000 matriculation candidates were withheld pending possible disciplinary action. A similar study conducted in the far east of Russian Federation notes that 31 percent of respondents had observed some form of violations during the administration of the Unified States Examination (Denisova-Schmidt & Leontyeva, 2014). In the United States of America, cheating during the standardised tests has been confirmed in 39 States including Washington DC (Schaeffer, 2014). Still the United States of America, in 2019, a scheme involving prominent wealthy parents turned up evidence of examination malpractice, including impersonation, fake documentation, adjusting scores as well as bribery of officials, which helped to secure spots for their children in first year classes in some of the country`s top universities and even for job placement into the civil service (Medina, Benner, & Taylor, 2019).

Many factors account for examination malpractice in competitive entrance examinations, public examinations and admission tests such as educational, social, economic, political and legal realities. Findings in developed and less developed countries revealed that controversy over examinations vary from one country to another (Kuehn, Stanwyck & Holland, 1990; Magnus et al. 2002).

In Cameroon, people have divergent views once the issue of competitive entrance examinations in some of the top prestigious professional institutes of learning such as ENAM, ENS, ASMAC, IRIC, etc. is address. While a minority of the population still have faith in themselves to succeed in a competitive entrance examination in the country, others believe that in order to succeed in a competitive entrance examination, one need to bribe his way into these institutions. Others even go to the extent of saying that it is not all about money but equally that one need a "god father" in order to succeed in these examinations.

According to Olive Ejang et al., (2016), published by "Cameroon Tribune", gone are those days when public entrance examinations in to professional training school was corruption free. Nowadays, financial competitiveness is even at the helm because the final results in most cases carry the names of candidates who did not participate in the written session. For others, money determines success and not skills nor competences giving room to mediocrity over meritocracy.

In a study conducted by Mounchikpou (2021), it is noted that the competition we see in Cameroon today is far from the realities elsewhere simply due to the fact that the competitive part of the examinations has become much more an affair of money than skills and competencies. To many, it is not how much knowledge a candidate has but how much money a candidate has in his or her pocket or which of his or her relatives is well place in a top position in the government. Olive Ejang et al, (2016), compiled the different testimonies and views of some Cameroonians on their perception of competitive entrance examinations in the country. According to Jean Sakiss, a technician, "one need a "god father" father to succeed. Whether you write well or not you still fail". Chief Ngeh Andrew, a lecturer in the department of English, University of Buea (UB), "there is nothing like competitive entrance examination. Everything is just mafia". To Alexis Nkwandi Fangda, accountant, law student in UB, "there is no meritocracy". For Bertrand Tom, a trader, "no money, no success. Without money, you are nothing". Vanessa Tene, a trader, on her part, "believe that the whole issue is fraudulent" (Olive Ejang et al, 2016, cited by Mounchikpou, 2021). All these views can be backed by the following instances of bribery, favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, corruption and mediocrity in Cameroon.

An instance of controversy over competitive entrance examination in Cameroon emerged in 2004 when 88 candidates in ENAM were suspended from all university courses for three following "fraud" and "attempted fraud" consider to be against the ethic and deontology of the institution (www.panapress.com (in French), retrieved on 2018-08-20, cited by Mounchikpou, 2021). another instance came up in 2006 when, Benjamin Amama A, the then minister of the public service and vocational training instructed that the result of the 2005/2006 examination session be cancelled, due to a report forwarded in January denouncing fraud only for the latter to be reversed by the order of Jules Doret Ndongo, the then secretary general of the prime minister office. Similarly, in 2012, Philemon Yang, the then prime miniter ordered Linus Toussaint, the then director general of ENAM, the exclusion of six students admitted through the patronage of the chairman of the

National Assembly, Cavaye Y. Djibril (www.etudiant.ados.com (in French), retrieved on 2018-08-20, cited by Mounchikpou, 2021).

All these instances provide evidence of examination malpractice in Cameroon thereby demonstrating the controversy and mystery which do surround competitive entrance examinations and admission tests into some of the prestigious institutions in the Cameroon. These evidence also bring to the lamp light the degree at which bribery and corruption, favouritism, tribalism and nepotism as well as mediocrity is overrated over meritocracy in competitive entrance examinations and admission tests in Cameroonian public and private professional training institutions.

Importance of competitive entrance examinations and admission tests

Some commentators and specialists in education are of the view that competitive entrance examinations and admission tests are of great importance both to the organising institution and the candidates in numerous ways, (Heyneman 1987; Hill 2013; Tyumeneva 2013; Madaus & Kellanghan 1991). This explain why these examinations are used by many countries in both developed and less developed economies as a relative objective and an impartial means through which limited educational opportunities can be distributed to all the stratum of the society irrespective of gender, ethnic belongings, culture and language, socio-economic background and political status.

The concepts of competitive entrance examinations, public examinations and admission tests in a broader sense help to reduce the rate of patronage or mentorship and the enhancement of higher education as well as a range of occupations for graduates, undergraduates and postgraduate's students in both the developed and under developed economies. The use of these examinations as a medium for the selection of competitive candidates out of a hundred of thousands emerged in a period whereby other means of selection such as family status, political influence, ethnic belongings, parental occupation, socioeconomic background and random selection of candidates was seen by many to be generally unacceptable. This is because the selection of candidates basing on these methods tend to favour a particular ethnic group or groups to the demerit of others. It is equally because these methods of selection tend to favour a minority of the population over the majority population.

A study carried out in Oman (2019), it is said that the introduction of a highly computerised selection system requires applicants to apply to one organ, which is the Higher Education

Admission Centre, instead of applying to more than 50 public and private higher educational institutions as it used to be the case in the past. Here, decisions over admitting candidates into the higher education institutions are largely based on school leaving examination grades, subject requirements and the number of places available in the higher education institutions. The use of a computerised based admission form for higher educational institutions and even for job placement in the civil service have worked against corruption and bribery, patronage and mentorship, mediocrity, increase transparency and equally resulted to fewer instances of examination malpractices in counties using this method of selection of candidates. According to Hanushek and Woessmann (2011), pointed out that examinations, beside its traditional functions of certification and selection of candidates for the next educational level or for job placement, equally improve human capital. As such, it is regarded as an important tool for economic development as it improvement have the potentials to substantially improve the long term well-being of a country.

A similar study, Kellanghan and Greaney (2008), are of the view that "the availability of data from international studies in which a representative samples of students from a number of educational systems sit for the same achievement tests provides a possible source of empirical evidence regarding the contribution to student achievement factors, including public examinations, that vary from country to country". Bishop (1999) on his part make mention that examinations (public, competitive and admission tests) are associated with a higher minimum requirement for teachers and a greater likelihood of recruiting teachers who have a minimum mastery of the subject in question they intend to teach. Examinations equally mounts pressure on the teachers to improve their teaching and make sure that the lessons are well assimilated since their colleagues will be aware of the examination results (Bishop, 2005).

In Cameroon, the importance of competitive entrance examinations, public examinations and admission tests are not to be neglected. To the government, competitive entrance examinations provide them with the basis to select meritorious candidates out of a pool of candidates. The importance also lies on the fact that since the government cannot recruit or employ all the graduates, undergraduates and postgraduates probably because of inadequacy between the demand and supply, they turn to competitive entrance examination as the best way to give equal chances to all the social classes. Again, the use of competitive entrance examination as a medium to select

candidates translate the desire of the government to end the tradition methods of selection basing on patronage and mentorship, political influence, ethnic belongings, socioeconomic background and gender.

To the candidates, the importance of competitive entrance examination in Cameroon lies on the fact it put all the students at the same level. It permits them to at least compete with other students with the hope of securing a spot for themselves. Competitive entrance examination is equally important to candidates in that despite their political influence, ethnic belongings, gender, family status, parental occupation, and socioeconomic background, they are entails to compete with candidates from other schools for the limited spots available.

All these importance of competitive entrance examinations and admission tests further emphasise the necessity of the adoption of these examinations as a medium for the selection of candidates in both the developed and under developed economies in general, sub-Saharan African countries and Cameroon in particular.

Generalities on the informal sector worldwide

Prior to the end of world war two, the global economy underwent significant structural changes, more precisely the developing countries, who had started liberating themselves from colonial rule. Following the zeal to follow the path of industrialisation in Europe and in respect to the Prebisch doctrine of post Keynesian developments, lay more emphasis on appropriate macroeconomic policies as well as institutions capable of propelling the economy to the overall growth and prosperity (ILO/UNDP, 1972). In the last few decades, the informal sector has gained an added value among economists and specialists due to its role in the developed and less developed countries. The belief that the informal sector is regarded as a residual sector or a sector of last resort has been buried by a number of evidences indicating its dynamic character and its instrumental role in ameliorating unemployment and equally propelling the developing economies towards growth and prosperity. In the 1950s and 1960s, empirical investigations widely observed a dichotomy in the developed economies, where apart from the organised industrial or formal sector equally exists an unorganised, unprotected, traditional or informal sector.

The characteristic of the informal sector

The ILO/UNDP (United Nations Development Program) employment mission report on Kenya (1972) put forward a number of characteristics which marked the informal sector. The employment report produced by ILO/UNDP on Kenya suggested the following characteristics of the informal sector:

- There is easy entry for the new enterprises;
- There is reliance on indigenous resources;
- The enterprises are owned by family or individuals;
- There is small scale of operations as well as low productivity;
- It is labour intensive and adapted technology;
- Workers relies on informal source of education and skills;
- There exist unregulated and competitive markets;
- There is lack of governmental support.

It is these characteristics which sums up the informal sector. It provides the differences between the informal and the formal sector.

Theoretical approaches to the informal sector

There exist three broad approaches to the informal sector. These approaches are the Dualistic labour market approach, the Neo-liberal approach and the Structural articulation approach. All these approaches are specific from each other.

Dualistic labour market approach

According to Chaudhuri and Mukhopadhyay, (2010), the dualistic view in under developed countries are marked by two distinct sectors. We have a modern and a more dynamic sector characterised by a capitalist mode of production. This sector is more revolutionised in terms of technological advancement. We equally have a marginal or subsistence sector characterised by agriculture based on pre capitalist mode of production. The first to develop a theoretical model for the dualistic economy was Lewis in 1954. His model was principally based on classical school foundations containing two sectors of production; i.e. agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. He was equally against the neoclassical assumptions of full employment, market clearance and perfect competition. Lewis focus was mainly on the transition from a dualistic economy to a one-sector

economy. He simply advocated for the transition from organisational dualism to the organisational homogeneity. The work of Lewis was expanded by Fei and Ranis (1964) who added product dualism to his organisational dualism. Harris and Todaro (1970), equally contributed to the growth of the Lewis model.

Neo-liberal approach

Unlike the dualistic labour market approach, the neoliberal approach stipulates that the used of legal instruments or procedures account for the emergence and survival of the informal sector (De Soto, 1989). To De Soto (1989), cited by Chaudhuri and Mukhopadhyay (2010), "lengthy registration procedures, complex administrative steps and the costs involved in legalising an enterprise deter entrepreneurs from operating legally and induce them towards informal activities" This means that the reason why most entrepreneurs decide to embrace the informal sector are mainly influence by three factors. These factors condition the action of all the entrepreneurs.

Rauch (1991), on his part describes in neoclassical model that the growth of the informal sector in both developed and less developed countries as a voluntary action by firms to enjoy legal exemptions from a mandated minimum wage policy that distorts resources away from first best allocations. This is why Jones (1997), Suryahadi et al. (2003), Gindling and Terrell (2005) and Fortin et al. (1997), "have empirically studied the effects of minimum wages on informal sector".

Structural articulation approach

The structural articulation approach to the informal sector counters the neo-liberal approach by emphasising the lack of association between the extent of the constraint imposed by institutional and legal framework, costs incurred by the entrepreneurs as well as the size of the informal sector. Some commentators in the domain believed that the differences which do exist between the formal and informal sector rely on the mode of production and the process of distribution.

All these approaches help to substantiate on the perception of the informal sector in the developed and less developed economies. It equally established the gap between the formal and the informal sectors.

An overview of the informal sector in Cameroon

Unlike elsewhere, the informal sector in Cameroon is not far from the realities that we see in other sub-Saharan African countries in particular and the world in general. This sector has gradually gain ground as it provides employment even though not formal to a wide range of the population. This sector is characterised by the lack of administrative registration, little or no regulation of the

activity, a relative small scale of activities and capital, no fixed business premises, operate outside the legal framework, largely depends on family labour and lastly lack of security and social protection of the employees.

The National Institute of Statistic (NIS, 2011), assesses the informal sector using three criteria which include;

- The independence of the promoter or the founder, i.e. the promoter works on his own account;
- There is no administrative registration; i.e. no tax identification number,
- Lack of formal accounting since it is an individual or family business.

It on the basis of these criteria that the National Institute of Statistic prove that the informal sector occupies a principal role in Cameroon's economy. An Employment and the Informal Sector survey carried out in 2005 (SEIS, 2005), reveal that the informal sector occupies 50% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. In 2010, a similar survey reveal that 89.1% of the working population was part of the informal sector.

The persistent increase of the informal sector in Cameroon according to some commentators is mainly cause by lack of productivity and deficiencies in terms of economic governance. This sector is equally regarded by many as a refuge sector for those who find it extremely difficult to integrate the formal sector.

In a survey carried out the National Institute of Statistics in 2011, (N.I.S, 2011), reveal that more than 2.5 million production units of informal sector can be counted in Cameroon. Close to 49.5% are in rural areas and 33.3% in the cities and towns of Yaounde and Douala. The same study equally reveals that 34.1% of the population operate in industries, 33.6% in commerce and 32.2% in services. These statistics help to intensify the importance of the informal sector in the Cameroon`s economy. This sector contributes to the country`s economic development in practically all the domain in the society. With the importance of the informal sector gradually increasing in the last decades, this sector influences economic growth, combat unemployment, increases out, productivity and wages. As such, the educational sector is not left aside. The creation of private tuition classes and preparatory groups in Cameroon provide evidence of the fact that the educational sector is left untouched by the informal activities. This is why it is worthy of note discuss the preparatory groups as an informal initiative.

Towards defining the concept of preparatory groups

Defining preparatory groups appears to be a very daunting task. This arose from the fact they exist little or no literature on the concept and equally as a result of the fact the concept appears to be new more especially in the Cameroonian context. Contextualising this concept permit us to give a definition of this concept basing on the realities of what we see and hear about this activity in Cameroon. Preparatory groups are informal educational projects put in place by an individual or group of individuals, with predefine objectives, pursuing common goals. These groups are aim at assisting students preparing for competitive entrance examinations. These groups are seen as informal educational projects not just because they operate informally but equally because they are educational projects establish out of the legal norms.

Historical background of preparatory groups

Preparatory groups as earlier discussed above are educational projects although in the informal sector conceived to assist candidates preparing for competitive entrance examinations both national and internationally. This activity has been existing in many countries in developed and less developed countries. It can be traced as far back as in ancient China. It is said that the concept was first used to address an activity which consisted of preparing candidates for the next level of education, for certification as well as for job placement. In this line, the idea of preparatory groups equally emerged in the Asian states more precisely in India where these preparatory groups were equally used by the private sector to assist candidates in the course of their preparation.

Elsewhere in Europe, the idea of preparatory groups gradually gained ground. In France for instant, this activity was known as the "Prepa Concours" or "Groupe de Prepa". These groups are charged with the responsibility of assisting candidates preparing for higher school competitive entrance examinations, admission into professional or "Grandes Ecoles" as well as for the recruitment of civil servant in to the public sector. These are legalised structures offering assistant to candidates who wish to recycle themselves before the examinations. According to Chaudron (2009) these initiatives can be dated as far back as 1990, known as private educational enterprises with either SARL or SA. This was because the success of an individual in France was seen as privilege among the French bureaucrats. It was seen as a privilege to belong to the French class of Bourgeoisie. In the United Kingdom, the concept of preparatory groups is as old as the competitive entrance examinations. In Britain, this phenomenon is known as the "preps Classes". The initiation of this activity came as a result of the fact that the degree of competition was really demanding.

As such, candidates were forced to engage themselves in a series of preparing classes or “preps Classes”. The aim here being to prepare candidates to be able to withstand this completion.

In Cameroon, the idea of preparatory groups could be traced as far back as the 1990s. The concept is as old as the concept of competitive entrance examinations. This activity was developed following the government desire to give equal chances and opportunities to all the different social classes of the society to become part of the civil service. The activity emerged in the 1990s following the University reforms of 1993 multiplying the number of state and private universities and professional schools. This came after a considerable decrease in the number of seats available and a considerable increase in the number of candidates. The degree of competition makes it very possible for candidates to seek for extra academic assistant elsewhere and the preparatory groups appears to be a better destination for these candidates.

Reasons for the creation of preparatory groups

The creation of preparatory groups in the developed countries like United Kingdom and in the less developed countries like Cameroon is not for pleasure. These groups are set up for a particular reason which entails preparing candidates for competitive entrance examinations. The principal reason for the creation of preparatory groups in Cameroon is the desire to assistance candidates preparing for competitive entrance examination. This assistant is not financial nor material but a psychological assistant that involves equipping candidates with necessary knowledge on the methodology required in by the different organising body. The number of candidates willing to be recycle, the limited number of seats available to a hundred of thousands of Cameroonians couple with the degree of competition explain why these groups are very necessary. Again, the creation of preparatory groups account for the desire of the promoters of these groups to provide jobs to the unemployed. This further stretches the importance of the private sector in Cameroon. This is because the private sector is known for the provision of informal jobs to the population.

In a study carried out by Mounchikpou (2021), it is observed that apart from the desire to assist candidates in their process of preparation, the increase number of candidates knocking at the door, the limited number of seats for a thousand of candidates as well as the desire to create jobs for the unemployed, entrepreneurial initiative, profit maximisation and the presence of an economic opportunity equally account for the creation of the preparatory groups in Cameroon. In terms of

entrepreneurship, the desire to innovate, to come out with something new, to exploit the existing opportunity by the promoters account for the creation of preparatory groups. Profit maximisation appear to be an important reason behind the creation of preparatory groups. This is so because candidates are required to pay tuition fees. It is from this fees that the promoters are able to make profit out of their effort.

In other countries, the story is not far from what we experienced in Cameroon. This is because preparatory groups in the developed and under developed countries have one thing in common, i.e. the preparation of candidates. Glewwe and Kremer (2005), observed that the presence of private tuition classes or the preparatory groups may occur due to the insufficiency in the public education. This is often the case in the developing countries where the public education presence some short comings. This preparation or assistance provide the students with knowledge on what they could not obtain in school, or simply strengthen their understanding on a particular subject. This knowledge is essential for students to thrive in competitive entrance examinations and even some highly selective higher institutes of learning. All these reasons account for the creation of preparatory groups in both developed and the under developed economy.

The management of preparatory groups

Unlike every organisation, the management of the preparatory groups appear to be a simple but very complicated task. Managing preparatory groups entails developing measures and strategies directed towards the achievement of predefine goals and objectives. In this light, the management of these groups largely depend on the promoters and the administrative staff who assist the promoters in their respective task (Kana & Mounchikpou, 2024). This is because the promoter is placed at the centre of every action within the preparatory groups. He defines the objectives to be achieve, develop the strategies through which the objectives will be achieve, provide finance for the survival of the group, and hire human resources necessary for the achievement of the predefined objectives as well as set the expected results.

The results of the finding carried out by Mounchikpou (2021) on the management of the preparatory groups, revealed that the management of preparatory groups entails managers or promoters to define the goals and objectives to achieved, developed strategies to execute their action plan, define the programs, motivate the subordinates, and equally provide finances for the

groups. The management of preparatory groups also call on the promoters to be able to control external and internal environment as well as ensure a conducive working conditions for his employees. For this to be possible, the promoters must possess skills and competencies in management of organisations, he must be resilient and ready to take risk, he should possess a taste for innovation, he should be capable of combating stress, he must be open to critics, he must be hard working, he must have a positive mind set ready to withstand competitive. All these attributes of the promoter are non-negligible.

Also, the findings (Mounchikpou, 2021), reveal that the promoters of preparatory groups need to make use of good leadership style and equally to be very sensitive and selective when recruiting teachers and staff. In this light, the promoters must be good leaders who can spark change and make others to work relentlessly for the success of the preparatory groups. The recruitment of teaching staff is a crucial element since it is capable of deciding on the survival of these groups. This means that the quality of the teaching staff is susceptible of affecting the growth of the preparatory groups. This is because a good teacher attracts candidates and a poor teacher instead send candidates away. The management of every organisation entails the manager to possess skills and competencies in the organisation. The story is the same with the preparatory groups. Even though in the informal sector, the principles of communication remain the same. This is so because fluidity in communication within the groups will enhance productivity and thus help in facilitating predefined objectives. Basing on these facts and more, the management of preparatory groups strongly rely on the promoters.

Factors influencing the location of preparatory groups (Reasons)

In modern days' organisation, the name, logo, and the location of an organisation are of strategic importance for the success and survival of an organisation. An organisation doesn`t choose to locate anyhow. There are factors that need to be taken into consideration which account for the geographical location (Kana & Mounchikpou, 2024). Some commentators advocate that the location of an organisation in a particular geographical sphere may be due to its strategic geographical position. In the case of the preparatory groups, the fact that these groups are concentrated in some particular localities speak for itself. Most if not all of the preparatory groups in the city of Yaounde are concentrated in the Mfoundi Division, more precisely in Yaounde III Sub Division. The choice of Yaounde III and its environs as the head quarter for some if not all of

the preparatory is not for granted. These groups are equally located in the Lekie Division, more precisely in Soa. The reasons below explain why Yaounde III and its environs and Soa are chosen as the headquarters or for the location of these groups.

In a study carried out by Mounchikpou (2021), it is believed that the location of the preparatory groups in Yaounde III and Soa is for a strategic reason. The presence of state universities such as the Universities of Yaounde I and II explain why these localities are chosen by the promotors as the ideal place to operate. These groups target the post-secondary graduates who after completing their secondary education turn to Yaounde as the perfect destination to continue with their higher school studies. These universities experience the highest enrolment rate over the rest of the universities in Cameroon. As such, the presence of the University of Yaounde I in Ngoa Ekelle and the University of Yaounde II in Soa condition the location of the preparatory groups.

Also, the same study (Mounchikpou, 2021), demonstrate that the choice of Yaounde as the head-quarter for most of these groups is based on the fact that, Yaounde, being the political capital of the country is entitle to so many opportunities. By so doing, it become a necessity for most of the secondary school graduates willing to foster their study to seek for admission in these universities. This account to an increase in the number of students in these two universities than in other regions. As such, the location of these groups in the towns and cities of Yaounde become indispensable for the success and survival of these groups.

Again, the presence of professional schools and training institutions in the towns and cities of Yaounde justifies the presence of these groups in Yaounde. It crystal clear that these professional schools and training institutions greatly influence the geographical set up of these groups. Students tend to enrol in Yaounde so as to be closer to these institutions. The presence of these institutions in the towns and cities of Yaounde contribute to an increase in the number of students thereby conditioning the location of these groups. Some of these professional schools and training institutions concentrated in Yaounde are the ENAM, HTTC, ENSPY, IRIC, Faculty of Medicine, ASMAC, EMIA, etc. For example, the presence of a considerable number of professional schools and training institutions as well as the University in Yaounde III more precisely around Ngoa Ekelle and its environs account for the concentration of these groups within these areas.

Equally, the presence of private universities such as the Catholic University of Central Africa as well as that of private institutions such as the "SIANTOU", "MATAFIN" also account for the presence of these groups in Yaounde. These are professional institutions which train students in various domains in the society. They provide students with skills and technical know-how necessary to facilitate the socio professional integration of graduates. The presence of these institutions in Yaounde attract students after completing their secondary education. This in turn condition the location of the preparatory groups in the cities and towns of Yaounde.

Difficulties encounter in the process of managing the preparatory groups

In every modern organisation, be it public or private organisations, difficulties and challenges are what characterises its entire existence. There is no perfect environment meaning that there is no perfect organisation free from all the difficulties and challenges. The survival of modern day`s organisations are cautions by the capacity and also the ability of managers to deal with difficulties and challenges no matter the circumstance. This is why some commentators argue out that each organisation has its missions to fulfil and challenges to overcome. As such, the survival or the demise of an organisation strongly depend on its ability to advance despite the difficulties and challenges. The preparatory groups are not left aside in this move even though they are in the informal.

The preparatory groups both at the national and international level share one thing in common, i.e. the difficulties. These groups in other to survive must overcome some difficulties and challenges. Among these challenges, we have financial difficulty, managerial difficulty, material and infrastructural difficulties, human capital difficulty, competition just to name a few. All these difficulties affect the growth and emergence of these groups in one way or the other. It became the sole responsibility of the promoters or managers to ensure that the group keep going despite the challenges and difficulties.

Mounchikpou (2021), in a study on the management of preparatory groups in the Yaounde discover that one of the important challenges faced by the promoters of these groups is the financial difficulty. The lack or insufficient finances strongly affect the functioning of the preparatory groups. Most of these groups are individually own meaning that the source of finance is limited to a single individual. This negatively affect the growth of some of these groups and might even lead to the group closing down because of lack of finances. The groups equally depend on tuition fees

paid by candidates. The insufficient finance is very instrumental in conditioning the tempo with which the groups advance.

Also, competition from other groups is another determinant factor which condition the growth and emergence of some if not all the preparatory groups in the towns and cities of Yaounde. It has been proven that in a world characterised by rapid globalisation and industrialisation since the 20th century, organisations producing practically the same goods and services, whether in formal and informal sector competes with each other in order to acquire new market. This is equally the case with the preparatory groups. In the last decades, there have been a boom in the number of preparatory groups. These groups provide the same services to the customers and as such, the promoters are entails to develop strategies permitting them to withstand the competition and be able to survive.

Again, material and infrastructural difficulties equally constitute another challenges which preparatory groups in the towns and cities of Yaounde need to overcome. The absence of permanent settlements for some of the groups proof to be a challenging factor (Kana & Mounchikpou, 2024). This is because some of the newly created groups and even some old ones do not keep to expectation. Some of these groups functions in the form of afternoon classes. As such, they must till the afternoon when the public and private schools where they do operate close during the day. Some of the teachers and students make it clear that the lack of a permanent settlement is very discouraging since some might not be able to attain afternoon lessons because of numerous occupation. Difficulties related to material here is the provision of didactic materials which in most cases is not always the best. The decreasing number of candidates due to an increase in the number of preparatory groups equally affect the survival of the groups very negatively. All these difficulties and challenges affect the growth and the emergence of the preparatory groups. These difficulties in most cases even go to the extent of conditioning the success as well as the survival of the preparatory groups in all it facets.

Evaluation of the preparatory groups

Evaluation is an essential element in day today organisations. With a wide range of technological advancement day in, day out, evaluating the achievements of an organisation become an indispensable task. Vogel (2012), define evaluation as an ongoing process of discussion based

analysis and learning that produces powerful insights to support programme design, strategy, implementation, valuation and impact assessment, communicated through diagrams and narratives which are updated at regular basis. The aim of evaluation in an organisation is to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the organisation, identify areas which necessitate amelioration or change and equally verify if the predefined objectives will be achieve within time and space. This is why Jones (2010), stated that evaluation consist of carrying out some analysis of the forces and weaknesses which have the potential to affect any desired outcomes. This make evaluation a determinant factor in modern day`s organisations.

Unlike every modern organisation, the evaluation of preparatory groups appears to be very instrumental in achieving growth and emergence of these groups. Evaluation permits the promoters to make a throwback to different achievement of the preparatory groups, identify the forces and weaknesses as well as identify areas which required amelioration or change of strategies. The evaluation of the preparatory groups entails taking in to consideration a number of factors. These factors include; the working condition within the groups, the learning environment, the success rate, quality of management, teachers and candidate's evaluation, the external environment. As such, evaluation of the preparatory groups gives room to the promoters and managers of preparatory groups to ameliorate the quality of management, develop resilience strategies necessary for the survival of the groups in the mist of competition, improve on their leadership style and skills. All this is aim at providing tangible and everlasting solutions to problems susceptible of affecting the smooth functioning of the organisation as well as hindering the advancement of these groups. It is in this light that Serrat (2013), argues that the development of a path way of change map enables organisations to think more deeply about their work and also developed strategies of subsistence.

The work of Mounchikpou (2021), on the management of preparatory groups states that the working condition of the employees happens to be a determinant factor capable of conditioning the success of the preparatory groups. In Cameroon unlike elsewhere, the working condition of worker's determinant the growth of the preparatory groups. As such, the promoters need to look into it that the working condition is one that improve the behaviours of employees positively and not negatively. Some of the employees explained that the working condition unlike in any modern

days' organisation is not the best but the promoters continue to work relentlessly to ensure an environment free from all the influence.

Another aspect which necessitate the evaluation within the preparatory groups is the learning environment. The verbatim of some of the participants interviewed (Mounchikpou, 2021), provide a contradictory views of the participants. While others think that the learning environment should undergo complete transformation, others believe that the learning environment only need to be ameliorated and improved upon. This contradictory views goes in line with the affirmation that it is difficult if not impossible to secure a learning environment 100% free from all the ambiguity.
The same study reveals that the evaluation of teachers and candidates are very primordial for the growth and emergence of the preparatory groups. Evaluating teachers largely account for the growth of these groups. Some participants advocated that evaluating teachers appears to be a very tedious task but necessary. It permits the promoter to be able to keep an eye on the teachers and what they do. In the same light, evaluating candidates must be neglected. The aim of this evaluation is to identify the gap between the existing knowledge and the expected results.

Mounchikpou (2021), equally discusses the evaluation of these groups in terms of the provision of didactic materials and the success rate of the groups. Many argues that the provision of teaching materials must not be neglected. The successes of the candidates enrol in these groups count a lot. It provides an image for these groups. The essence of doing an evaluation by the promoters of the preparatory groups provide an opportunity for the promoters to redefine the strategies to withstand competition and even overcome it. On the other hand, some commentators argue that evaluating the preparatory groups provide the basis for the promoters to rejuvenate the relationship between the outside world and the groups. It is aim at developing a partnership of winners-winners between the preparatory groups and the outside world. This further trace the importance of evaluating the successes, the achievements, the forces and the weaknesses of these groups.

Importance of preparatory groups in Cameroon

The transition to a market economy in most developed and less developed countries has increased the level of private tuitions and preparatory classes in countries such as Vietnam, China, Eastern European countries in the former Soviet Union and Sub-Saharan countries including Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Kenya, etc. (Bray, 1999, and Bray, 2003). This appear to boost the importance of

private tuitions and preparatory classes in these countries. To Dore (1976) it is call “the late development effect”. To him, the later a country starts in the modernisation process, “the more widely education certificates are used for occupational selection; the faster the rate of qualification inflation; and the more examination-oriented schooling becomes at the expense of genuine education”. This process according to Dore is known as the “the diploma disease”, whereby modern bureaucratic organisations used someone`s qualification as a selection tool for employment. This has further intensified the role and importance of preparatory groups as candidate`s number one partner. The preparatory groups although known elsewhere as “preps groups” or “private tuitions”, contribute largely to the success of almost all the students who place their trust in them. Whether in the developed and under developed economy, preparatory groups have the same mission; i.e. assisting candidates in their preparation process for competitive entrance examinations.

In Cameroon unlike elsewhere, the demand for preparatory classes from the preparatory groups have gradually increase in the last decades. Candidates continuous to solicit the help of the preparatory groups in their quest of preparing themselves for competitive entrance examinations. There are evidences in Cameroon which demonstrate how important these preparatory groups are to the candidates in particular and the society in general. Some of these evidences are discuss below.

To begin with, the importance of the preparatory groups can be seen on the number of groups that are existing. In some years back, the number of groups were insignificant but in the last decade, the number of groups has increased considerably. Today, apart from the famous Intelligentsia Cooperation, we equally have “Intelligentsia Cognitive”, “Intelligentsia New Generation”, “Intelligentsia Education”, just to name a few. This show how important these groups are to the candidates.

Also, the survival of the preparatory groups in the mist of competition outline the added value of these groups. This is so in that despite a persistent increase in the number of groups, they still survive. This is why the survival of the preparatory groups further intensify its importance to the candidates.

Again, the missions and objectives of the preparatory groups are some of the evidences demonstrating the importance of these groups to the candidates. It is believed that these groups

have as primary mission and objective to assist and help candidates preparing for different competitive entrance examinations. After so many years of existence, candidates continue to believe in these groups. For this reason, the importance of preparatory groups is very much felt since the number of candidates continue to increase day in and day out.

The degree of competition between candidates due to a limited number of seats equally work as evidence of the importance of preparatory groups in Cameroon. This is because due to the inability of the government of the Republic to incorporate graduates into the public sector probably because of limited income. This has push the government to set a require number of candidates each year examinations are launch. As a result, candidates in order to multiply their chances, sees the need of enrolling themselves in the preparatory groups in order to prepare themselves for these examinations. This further proof the importance of preparatory groups in Cameroon.

The demand for private tuition classes (preparatory classes) in Cameroon unlike other sub-Saharan countries seems to have reach its peak in recent times. Candidates preparing for competitive entrance examinations sees the need to prepare themselves so as to be very competitive during these examinations. The number of candidates enrol in these groups every year serve as testimonies of how important these groups are to these candidates. In some cases, it is parents and mentors who select among these groups the best. This further intensify the importance of the preparatory groups in Cameroon.

The economic value of the preparatory groups equally goes a long way to justify the importance of these groups to the promoters and all those involved in the running of the groups. These groups do not only assist candidates in their preparation process for competitive entrance examinations, but equally serve as a source of revenue to all the staffs. From the tuition fees paid, the promoters used it to pay teachers and other people involve in the process of management of preparatory groups. It equally provides job for the unemployed thus contributing to the economic development of the country.

Management and evaluation of educational projects

The field of project management (PM) has for decades witnessed rapid expansion in recognition of the scope and its range of perspectives (Dalcher 2016; Hodgson & Cicmil, 2016; Svejvig & Grex, 2016; Van der Hoorn, 2016; Walker & Lloyd-Walker, 2016). Projectification of work continues to proliferate (Derek Walker, 2018). The management of projects is the ability to move from abstract ideas to concrete and tangible results and actions which is applicable to every

significant we are given or developed by ourselves. Today, it is very clear that individuals, organisations as well as nations require project management skills and competencies more than ever in a world that values individual and collective initiative more than any other attribute. There is no domain in life that operate independent of projects. What used to be managed as operational processes are now increasingly managed as projects (Midler, 1995; Midler & Beaume, 2010).

Be it the domain of education, health, economy, agriculture, politics, humanitarian, and communication, and community development, projects contribute significantly to sustainable community development. Project is seen as the driving force behind any action in the society. Nowadays, the importance of projects cannot be neglected since many believe that an individual or collective action require the use of projects for it to be achieve. Governments are increasingly delivering policy through projects, despite concerns that this may be elevating sectional interest of identified project stakeholders over the public interest (Sjoblom & Godenhjelm, 2009). Project review and evaluation meanwhile is the process of verifying the conformity between the fixed objectives and the results achieved. Project review and evaluation is seen as the final action of the project manager. It is aim at evaluating the outcome of the project and the overall success.

Management

Management according to some commentators and scholars perceived it as an organisational concept applicable nearly in all the domains in the society. In a world marked by constant innovation, globalisation as well as industrialisation of economies both in the developed and less developed economies, management occupies such a vital place in the modern world to the extent that the welfare of the population and also the future of the depends very much on the managerial practices. It is a universal process in all organised, social and economic activities. The word has been used by many scholars in different context to arrive at the same conclusions. Management refers to the process of optimizing as well as making the best use of limited and scarce resources in view of achieving a set of goals and objectives. In most cases, management is referred to the process of planning, organising, directing, staffing, controlling, diagnosing and coordinating activities directed towards the achievement a set of predefined goals and objectives within a given timeframe. Management is equally described as a function of managing people and limited and scarce resources require to meet a set of goals and objectives of an organisation within a given period of time. In the same light, management is seen as a body of knowledge, a practice and also

a discipline with its own specificities. Management is equally regarded as a leadership technique as well as a decision making process. Some commentators pointed out that management is an economic resource, a production factor as well as a system of authority. From the perspectives of Taylorism, cutting across Max Webber Bureaucracy to modern management, many scholars have attempted a definition of the concept of management. Wherever there is human activity aim to achieve a set of objectives, there is management. It is an essential aspect of economic and even social life of a man, characterised by a set of organised activities. In the absence of able managers as well as effective managerial leadership skills, the production resources remain merely resources and thus, can never become production. This is because management provides managerial and leadership skills to economic enterprises. From Taylorism to modern management, many scholars have attempted a definition of management. Some of the definitions of management provided by scholars are the following.

In the words of James, Lundy, "management is principally the task of planning, co-ordinating, motivating and controlling the efforts of others towards a specific objective". Drucker, perceived management as "a multipurpose organ that that manages a business and manages managers and manages worker and work".

To William Spriegel, "management is that function of an enterprise which concerns itself with the direction and control of the various activities to attain the business objectives". Koontz and O`Donnel stated that "management is the creation and maintenance of an internal environment in an enterprise where individuals working together in groups can perform efficiently and effectively towards the attainment of group goals". In this move, Donald, defined management as "the art and science of decision making and leadership"

Stanley Vance on his part viewed management as "a process of decision making and control over the actions of human beings for the express purpose of attaining pre-determined goals". To Schulze, "management is the force which leads, guides, and directs an organisation in the accomplishment of a pre-determined object".

Basing on these various definitions provided by authors and scholars in the field of management, Ulas Chandra Das and Ajit Kumar Mishra (2019), sum up management as "a distinct ongoing process of allocating inputs of an organisation (Human and economic resources) by typical managerial functions (planning, organising, directing, and controlling) for the purpose of

achieving stated objectives namely; output of goods and services desired by its customers (environment).

Management is a process completely different from other activities in the society. This is due to the unique characteristics of management. Some of the salient characteristics of management include.

- Management is a factor of production. The means that the first and foremost task of a manager in an organisation is to secure productivity through planning, directing and controlling of available resources (human, material, financial and informational resources).
- Management is the skill and experience of getting things done through the effort of other people. This consist of performing and activity in an organisation through people.
- Management is a process. This implies that it consists of a series of activities directed towards the achievement of pre-defined goals and objectives of the organisation.
- Management is a universal activity
- Management is a science and also an art.
- Management is a profession.
- Management is a process of decision making.
- Management entails good and quality leadership from managers.
- Management is a dynamic process and not static process.
- Management is goal oriented.

All these characteristics and many more distinguish management from other activities. A manager in order to be successful is required to be aware of these characteristics. Management equally have important functions. Managers are required to master these functions of management. These functions include; planning, organising, staffing, directing, leadership, communication, motivation, supervision, co-ordination, and controlling. It became imperative for managers to possess skills and competencies necessary to perform these functions of management.

A Project

After the aftermath of the Second World War, many countries embarked on the reconstruction of their domestic economies. This was because the world`s economies was shattered by the second world war. As such, many countries started developmental projects in all the domain of the society. It is in this line that projects became an effective tool to overcome various challenges in the society. It is from this period that the concept of project began to gain ground. But then, what is a project?

To Vivien Martin (2006), a project is use to describe an activity which is not part of the day-today activity. It describes something that is purposeful and distinct in character. To V. Martin, a project can be a short term activity which involve organising a special event, making a major purchase or delocalising an office or a long term activity that include more people; that is, a project which involves developing a new market product. Be it educational project, economic project, social or political projects, they are aim to achieve a set of objectives through the use of the available resources over a precise timeframe. All projects are directed towards providing changes in the society. In fact, projects are goal-oriented. It is in this light that Vivien Martin (2002), discussed different features or characteristics of projects. These features include;

- A project as a clear purpose that can be achieved in a limited timeframe;
- A project has a clear end when the outcome has been achieved;
- A project is resourced to achieve specific outcomes;
- A project has someone acting as a sponsor or commissioner who expects the outcomes to be delivered on time;
- A project is a one-off activity and will normally not be repeated.

According to Larson & Gray (2021), projects is an activity undertaken by an individual to bring about desired outcomes. Projects are directed towards the attainment of goals and objectives. This is what make projects different from everyday work. In this light, project should not be confused with routine activity. To Larson and Gray (2021), "ordinary daily work typically requires doing the same or similar work over and over, while a project is done only once". A project is a one off activity that requires the mobilisation of available resources (financial, human, material etc.) in order to achieve a set of goals and objectives over a specific timeframe. This make projects very different from routine activities. The importance of projects to an organisation as well as to an individual is not to be demonstrated as nowadays, it is practically impossible to pick up a newspaper as well as business periodical and not come across something talking about projects. According to Wijnen et al (2001), project is an activity between improvisation and routine.

Projects are very essential for community development. This is because projects bring about desired changes. The goals and objectives of a project may be to ameliorate a situation, provide a solution to a problem or simply develop new products for consumers. Today, people may be called

to work in a project from time to time. They may equally be invited to lead as well as manage a project. It may arrive that we are called to be part of a project team. No matter the case, it is worthy to note that a project is a one-off activity defined within time and space that is always goal-oriented. This have make projects indispensable in the society. This is because projects provide massive changes in the society as it enhances sustainable community development.

Management of projects

According to Hobbs (2009), "project management is the skill of moving from ideas to results and, as such, is applicable to every significant initiative we are given or come up with ourselves". Project management put forwards a range of practical understandings and also skills necessary for any project to be successful as well as satisfying. It provides the project manager with basic knowledge or common sense solutions on how to overcome challenges that you will face during the planning and implementation phases of the project. It provides the project manager with essential tools, tips, techniques and methods and strategies required so as to meet up with predefined objectives as well as to achieve consistent success using minimum resources and equally saving time. Nowadays, individuals, organisations, business enterprises, and nations need project management skills and abilities more than ever in a world that value individual and collective initiative above any other attribute (Peter Hobbs, 2009). Assem Al-Hajj and Mario, (2018), on their part defines project management as a process of attempting the completion of projects by getting it done most efficiently by minimizing cost and achieving external goals related to customer's needs. Project management is not only undertaken by project-based organisations, construction companies and business enterprises but also by project-oriented organisation that use projects as a vehicle for delivery strategy and transformation (Andersen, 2008; Lundin et al, 2015). This is because there is no domain in the society that is not influence by the idea of project. This implies that to both nations, organisations, business enterprises and also individuals, project management is indispensable as it leads to sustainable community development. According to the Project Management Institute (2008), fourth edition, "project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements". The project management institute has paint a rosy picture for future PM team jobs in its "2018 lobs report" (Roskwood, 2018). Project management thus involves the mobilisation of available resources by a project manager to achieve predefined objectives of the project over time and space.

The realisation of the predefined objectives as well as the achievement of results passes through 5 processes. These processes according to PMI (2008) include;

- Initiating
- Planning
- Executing
- Monitoring and controlling
- Closing.

Thus, the achievement of the goals and objectives of the project largely depend on the respect of these stages. Project managers are thus entails to master all the processes as well as keep an eye on the evolution of the different stages.

In this light, the success of a project manager is down to his abilities and skills in managing projects by using necessary tools, tips, techniques and methods so as to overcome complex situations during planning, implementation, evaluation and follow up phases in a project. As such, the success of a project in most cases will depend on the ability of the project manager to make his vision of "what can be" more influential in his own and also other people`s thinking and actions than the reality of "what currently is". At this stage, a project manager must possess the skills and abilities to influence the project team to work towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the project. Project managers are thus required to develop strategies through which they can influence the actions of the project team. For this to be possible, a project manager must possess the necessary skills in project management.

Project classification and characteristics

The classification of projects appears to be very necessary to all project managers. This involve grouping the projects according to their level of importance. On the other hand, the characteristics or features of project bring about the unique nature of projects. In this light, projects may be of different types or classifications, but they have one thing in common which are the characteristics of projects. This part will discuss the different characteristics of projects and also the classification of projects.

Characteristics or features of projects

The characteristics of projects refers to the unique nature of projects. They are the elements that distinguishes projects from other activities in the society such as programs. Whether an educational project, an economic project, a political project, a renovation project, a social or humanitarian project or a restructuring projects, they all share one thing in common which is the unique characteristics of projects. The project characteristics are elements which differentiates projects from routine activities. Some commentators are of the view that the term project is use in quite a precise manner although it can be generalized to distinct types of activities in the society. It may be used to refer to a short personal project, for example, planning and holding of a special events or celebrations. To Vivien Martin (2006), the term project can be used to refer to a major construction such as the construction of new school. All projects which are intended to bring about changes in the society must be goal oriented, have a clear purpose to achieve within a given timeframe and must be a one off activity. These characteristics according to Vivien Martin (2006), include;

- Has a clear purpose that can achieved in a limited time: Every project must have a well-defined purpose to be achieved over a given period of the time. The aims and objectives defined at the early stages of the project provide the framework or evaluation at the of the project. This involves the definition of the aims and objectives of the project. The aims of the project are breakdown into SMART objectives. This means that the objectives must be simple, measurable, attainable, realizable and over a timeline. This requires the project manager to be able to communicate the project objectives to the project team. The definition of the aims and objectives condition the success and quality of a project.
- A project must have a clear end when the outcome has been achieved: Projects are goal oriented. Project have a beginning and an end. This has to do with the project closure. The project team must be aware of the duration of the project. The project is required to communicate to the project team the deadline when the outcome or the result of the project need to be achieved. This will avoid wastage of time and resources.
- Projects are resourced to achieve specific outcomes: Be it educational projects, economic projects, structural projects social or renovation projects, the project manager must mobilize resources needed to achieve the aims and objectives of the projects. These resources include; human, material, financial, informational and temporal resources. The

project manager has the responsible to look for these resources so as to facilitate the achievement of predefined objectives.

- Projects has someone acting as a sponsor: In every projects, there is a sponsor or a commissioner who expects the results and outcomes of the project to be delivered on time. The sponsor provides the finances for the realization of the project goals and objectives. The success of the project depends on the relationship between the project manager and the project sponsor. The project manager and sponsor must have the same perception of what constitute the success and must also established a relationship of trust that permit them to discuss with ease issues concerning the project. It is the project sponsor that have the final say on the outcomes or results of the project.
- Projects are a one off activity which can normally not be repeated: Every projects no matter the domain of intervention is a one off activity and will never be repeated. In this light, a project is expected to achieve the results that will normally be required once. A project cannot be retaken to achieve the same aims and objectives. All the projects have a specific aims and objectives to realize over a well-defined timeline and using the necessary resources.

As far as project is concern, every projects whether social, educational, humanitarian, economic, renovation or structural projects, they must have a well-defined aims and objectives (purpose), that should be achieved over a specific period of time. The result required may be defined very clearly and also measures put in place to make sure that the outcome is in conformity with the specific requirements. Here, the project manager should be capable of estimating the resources needed for the achievement of the expected outcomes or results over a specific period of time. In this line, a project is thus a one off activity since the outcomes can only be achieved once. This means that a project cannot be implemented more once. All these element of characteristics are what differentiate projects from other day today routine activity.

Classification or typology of projects

Project classification or typology consist of identifying the different types of project. Project classification permit the project manager to choose the right project from a considerable number of projects. It permits the project manager to identify the right opportunity from the several opportunities available. According to Larson and Gray (2021, 2018, 2014 & 2011) and Vivien

Martin (2006; 2002), the classification of projects strongly depends on the level of intervention. It can equally be according to the importance of the impact of the project in the society. This means that the importance of a project largely depends on the situation the project intends to address or simply the problem at hand. The classification or typology of projects give room to the project manager to choose the most pertinent and relevant project to execute.

According to Larson and Gray (2021), a considerable number of organizations and business enterprises identify three main types of projects in their portfolio. These include; compliance (emergency or must do projects), operational projects and strategic projects. The classification of project in to three class strongly depends on the level of intervention of each project as well as it importance.

Figure 6: Classification of project

Source: Larson & Gray, (202, p. 9).

Compliance projects: Equally known as must do or emergency projects, compliance projects are projects conceived by individuals or organizations to address an urgent situation within an organization. They are projects required to meet regulatory conditions in a region or a country. Larson and Gray (2021) pointed out to the construction of an auto parts factory destroyed by a tsunami or the recovery of a crashed network as examples of must do or compliance projects. In this light the construction of a school in a village will be seen as an emergency project. Similarly, the introduction of e-learning project into the educational system in Cameroon at all level as a

means to guarantee the continuation of education despite the threat represented by the deadliest COVID 19 is also an example of a must do or emergency project (Mounchikpou, 2021). The compliance, emergency or must do projects are in most cases used by project managers to seek for solution to a particular situation at hand, improve the quality of a product or instead to bring to the market new products. In some cases, these projects usually have penalties in case they are not implemented.

Operational projects: The operational projects are projects conceived to support the existing operations or projects. It is said that operational projects are designed to enhance the efficiency of the delivery systems in a project, they equally serve as a way to reduce production costs as well as enhance the performance and also the quality of the project. These projects in most cases are limited in in cost and scope and as such need only the immediate approval of the manager to get started. To Larson and Gray (2018), total quality management (TQM) are examples of operational projects.

Strategic projects: these are projects which directly support the long term vision of the organization. The aim of these projects in most organizations is to increase the income of the institution or business enterprise. Larson and Gray (2021), believed that the creation of new products, new technologies, research and also development are examples of strategic projects.

The characteristics and classification of projects are two distinct elements which differentiate the projects from other routine activities. While the characteristics of projects presence the unique nature of projects, the classification of projects provide a view on the different types and level of intervention of projects whether educational, economic, social, renovation etc.

Aims and objectives of project

Every human endeavor is directly or indirectly link towards realization of aims and objectives. These aims and objectives in some cases may be well define and in some they may not. Goals and aims in broader sense are the vision of a project manager. It is the desired outcome of an endeavor. It is how he visualize the future to look like. Objectives on the other are the aims breakdown into specific and clear manners. They constitute different steps in the achievement of the goals or aims of an organization. Project practitioners believed that the aims and objectives of projects are interrelated. While the aims of a project describe the ultimate goal, that the purpose of the project,

the objectives on the other hand the objectives of a project describe the overall steps that are required to achieve the goal, purpose or aim of a project. In every projects, defining the aims and objectives of the project appear to be indispensable to all the project practitioners. Some if not all of the project practitioners or project managers are of the view that defining the aims and objectives of the project condition the success of a project. This means that in the absence of the project aims and objectives, it becomes practically difficult to lead the project to the expected destination.

The aims of a project refer to the vision of a project. It is equally the aims or the purpose of projects. The aims are the desired outcomes of the project. It has a futuristic character as it is directed towards the transformation of the future. According to Vivien Martin (2006), "the aims of a project can encompass values alongside purpose, which is helpful as it can describe the outcome in terms of how it should be achieved". In this view, project managers are required to have a clear vision of how they want the future to look like as well as mobilize means and resources necessary to achieve the aims. Similarly, the PMBOK, GUIDE (2008), pointed out clearly that the goals, aims or purpose of a project provide the foundation for the success of the said project. This is because defining a vision by a project practitioner permit the project team to mobilize and direct all the effort towards the achievement of the goals, aims or vision of the project. This means that project managers must be capable of influencing the project team with their vision of the future.

Definition of the objectives of a project by a project manager appear to be very important as the aims or goals of the project. Defining the objectives of a project involves clearly stating the steps necessary to achieve the aims, goals and vision of the project. According to Vivien Martin (2006, 2002), PMBOK-GUIDE (2008), Larson and Gray (2021, 2018, 2014, & 2011), and Derek Walker (2018), the definition of the objectives of a project is very important as it set clearly what the project practitioner or manager is aiming to achieve and equally provide the unique way to know whether a project is a successful one or a fail one. It is usually difficult if not impossible to evaluate the success of a project basing the goals of the project because they mostly appear to be too broad. This is why the goals need to be breakdown into specific and achievable objectives if they are to be used to plan the project and also to guide the evaluation it has achieved what was planned from the beginning.

Martin (2006), Walker (2018), Dalcher (2016), Hodgson and Cicmil, (2016), Svejvig and Grex, (2016), Van der Hoorn, (2016), Walker and Lloyd-Walker, (2016), pointed out that the objectives

are clear once they define what the project is to achieve, define when the project is to be completed and explain how each member of the project team will know that the objectives of the project has been achieved. As such, project practitioners and managers used the word SMART to state their objectives. Smarting the project objectives involves;

Specific: that is clearly defined the objectives of the project in the simplest and specific manner to ensure it achievement.

Measurable: this implies that the project manager and the project team will know when the outcome has been achieved.

Achievable: this means that the project objectives will be achieve in the current environment of the project and using the available skills and resources.

Realistic: in this case, the project objectives must be realistic in the present context to avoid wasting time trying to achieve the impossible. This will permit the project manager and the project team to avoid concentrating on things that are practically impossible to achieve.

Time bound: a project whatever the domain of intervention as well as level of intervention, must have a deadline for the project. The objectives must be achievable over a particular period of time. This is intended to avoid wastage of time and resources over one and the same project.

The objectives define the steps to achieve the goals and aims of the project. These objectives must be specific and clearly stated, must be used to measure the degree of success of a project, must be achievable within the present context and using the available resources, must be realizable and not trying to achieve the impossible and all this over a given period of time. Once the objectives include all these elements, achieving them appear to be very easy to project practitioners and project managers. This explain why the definition of the objectives of a project is a useful tool in planning process. Thus, defining the goals and objectives of a project appear to be an absolute necessity since project is a goal-oriented activity which is require to be breakdown into specific and achievable objectives.

Scoping a project

The idea of scoping a project appear to be very useful to project managers and project practitioners since it defines the boundaries and focus of a project. Every project is different from each other since they are conceived to achieve something specific in a setting characterized by constant

changes. Defining the scope of a project involves identifying the size and shape of the project as well as communicating the vision to everyone involve in the project team. According to Vivien martin (2006), Larson and Gray (2021) and Walker and Lloyd Walker (2016), defining the scope of a project consist essentially of deciding what is "in" the project and what is "outside" the scope of the project. This means that a project manager or project practitioner is entails to define the project in a particular environment as well as define the resources that is needed for the realization of the goals and objectives of the project. At this point, any project which entails to ameliorate as aspect of the organizational life will have to be understood from many different perspectives in complex settings.

In the absence of a project scope, the project manager is often tempted to try to include the interest of all the influential people within the project so as to gain their support. This might hamper the achievement of the goals and objectives of the project since the effort of the project team will be in diverse direction. Elbeik and Thomas (1998), stated by Vivien Martin (2006), reviewed reports of a number of projects and found that there were a number of common faults each time the scope of the project is not define. On most of the project they reviewed, they found that;

- The team was not sure of the project objectives;
- The team was not sure what the project deliverables were;
- At the end of the project, the objectives were only partially met;
- The planned schedule tended to run late;
- The budget was exceeded;
- The need of potential users had not been addressed.

In their opinions, these faults led to the project being abandoned. As such, scoping a project appear to be indispensable as it enables project practitioners or managers to identify exactly the different activities to be carried out in order to achieve the planned outcome successfully. In this light, scoping the project permit the project managers to clarify elements not to be considered as part of project but instead as another project or simply area for improvement. The importance of defining the scope of a project is not to be neglected. This is because when the project scope is defined, it provides a framework of actions for project managers and project team to direct their effort towards the realization of the goals and objectives of the project. Scoping the project equally permit the project manager to mobilize resources needed for the realization of the goals and objectives. Most

of the project practitioners believed that there exist several model in scoping a project. Some pointed out that the sequence of stages through which a project will normally progress can be used to scope a project. Others propose key areas that should be carefully managed for the project to be successful (Vivien Martin, 2006). In this sense, the project life cycle is the best model used by most project practitioners and project managers to scope their project.

In every projects, it is always necessary to manage the project scope. Defining the project scope by a project manager appears to be indispensable so too is the management of the project scope. According to Verma, (1997, 1995,), PMI (2008), project management scope includes the processes required to ensure that the project includes all work required, and only the required work, necessary to complete the project successfully. The management of the scope of the project to some of the practitioners is primarily concerned with defining and controlling what is and is not to be included in the project. The management of the scope of project (PMI, 2008), consist of:

- Collection of requirements which involves defining and documenting stakeholders needs to meet the project objectives;
- Define scope, that is, a process of developing a detailed description of the project and product;
- Create work breakdown structure which involves subdividing project deliverables and project work into smaller, and more manageable components;
- Verification of scope which consist of formalizing acceptance of the completed project deliverables
- Controlling scope, that is, monitoring the status of the project and managing changes to the scope baseline.

The management of the project scope in nearly all project must take into consideration the above cited elements. This is so because the above elements are said to be indispensable to all project managers and practitioners since it permits them to know what to include in the project as well as what to not include in the project.

Defining the project life cycle

Every project has a project life cycle. The project life cycle are the different phases of a normal project. All the phases or sequences are interrelated. The project life cycle, sequences or phases

describes in a clear and concise manner the different stages through which a normal project must pass through as it progresses towards the closing stage of the project. The execution of the next phase of a project is condition by the realization of the latter phase. According to Peter Hobbs (2009), the project life cycle consists of different phases of a project which a project manager and the project team must undertake in order to achieve the pre-established goals and objectives of a project. To Hobbs, the life cycle of any project consists of six (6) phases. These stages are; initiation, definition, planning, control, implementation and review. The project manager who may enter the project half way must be sure to acquaint his or her self with the preceding phases he or she have missed. This is aimed at permitting the project manager to master the whole project.

The initiation and definition phases any every project consists of using tools and also approaches to identify the situation which necessitate improvement, the desired outcomes as well as the project team responsible of executing the project. The initiation phase is all about the identification of the problem to be addressed or the opportunity to be exploited by the project manager. Meanwhile the definition phase of the project refines the understanding of the result the project manager wish to achieve by when, with who and with what resources.

The planning phase then dwells on what has to be produced or the end product of the project and how this can be done most effectively and efficiently with minimum risk. The planning phase continues throughout the project since the project manager need to plan each time there is undesirable situation. In all, the planning process consists of deciding in detail how to achieve the objectives, the timeline, the resources, responsibilities and communications throughout the project.

The control phase consists of performing the work, monitoring the progress of the project, and also adjusting the plan to the need of the sponsor or customers. The implementation consists of the handover of the deliverables to the sponsor or the customers. This involve passing the product to the end users and helping them to adjust to changes. While the review phase involves assessing the outcome and equally making a backward step to see if there is anything that could have been done in a different manner. These phases of project are discussed by Peter Hobbs (2009).

Other authors pointed out that there exists five (5) phases or sequences in a project. This view is shared by Vivien Martin (2006, 2002), Larson and Gray (2018, 2014, and 2011), Derek Walker (2018), Walker and Lloyd Warker (2016), etc. According to Vivien Martin (2006), the project life cycle model describes the different sequences that a project normally passes through as it

progresses to a conclusion. To him "the model is based on the idea that, although all projects are different, they all progress through similar phases. Each phase completes a stage of the project".

Larson and Gray (2021), believed that a project have a limited lifespan and that there are predictable changes in the level of effort and focus over the life of a project. This is because a project no matter the domain and level of intervention are conceived to achieve a particular goals and objectives over a given period of time. In this light, the project managers are required to mobilize resources and other necessary elements consider to be indispensable in the realization of the objectives. The project manager must be good in managing time. As such, a project have a beginning and a date line for the end product to be delivered which if it is not done on time may affects the quality of the project. Larson and Gray (2021), identified four (4) in a project life cycle. The project life cycle starts with the definition when the project is approved and given the go ahead, it builds to the peak and then decline to the project deliverables either to the sponsor or the customers.

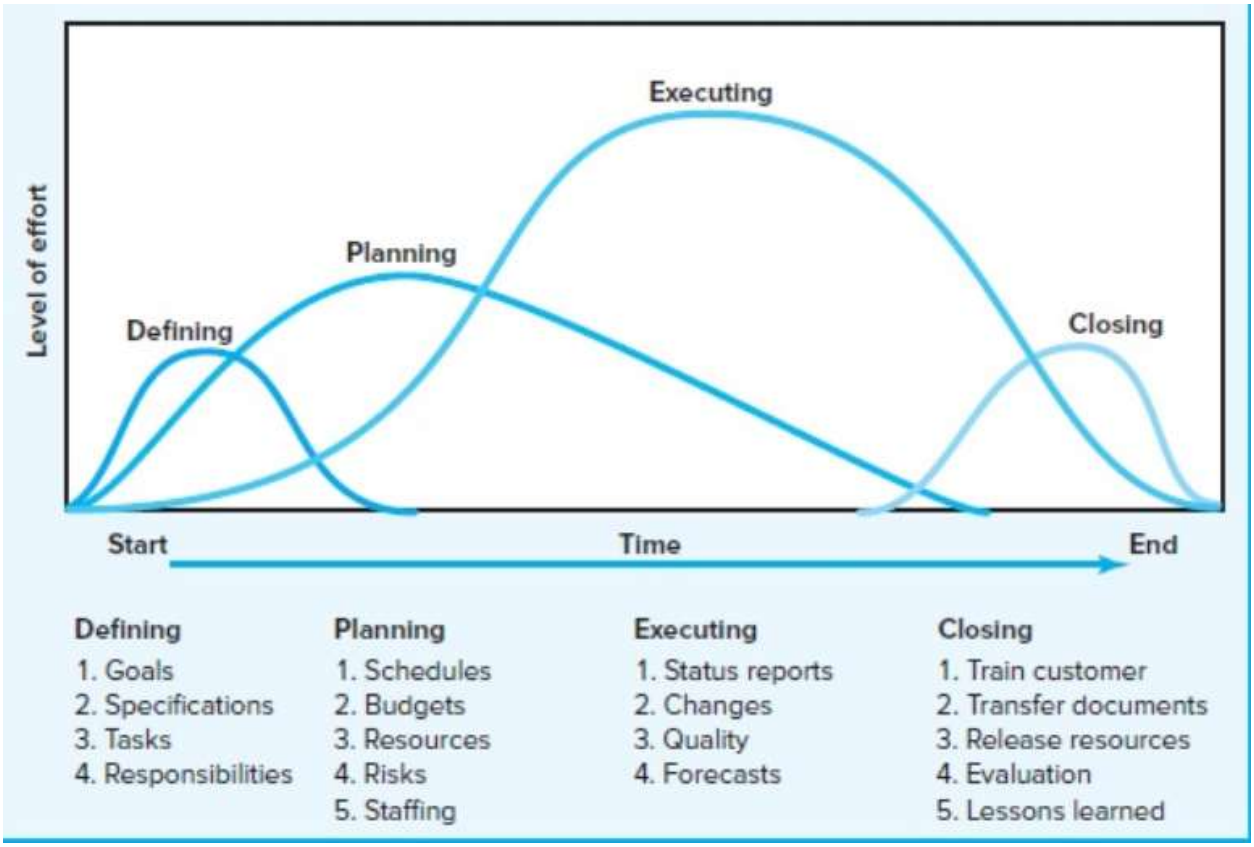


Figure 7: The life cycle of a project

Source: Erik, W. Larson and Clifford, F. Gray 2021, p.49.

Definition phase consists of defining the unique characters of the project. At this stage, the project manager defines the objectives, establish the project team, mobilize resources and equally attribute responsibilities to different member of the project team. It is all about the expected result, by when and with what resources.

The planning stage defines the budgets, the schedules, the resources, risks and staffing. The project manager decides in detail how to achieve the result, the timescales and the resources. The execution cycle is the materialization of the project. This is the implementation sequence in a project. All the resources and persons are convoked to facilitate the achievement of objectives. The closing stage thus mark the end of the project. This is when the project deliverables are hand over to the sponsor or the customers. It equally involves the project review to evaluate the congruence between the result achieved and the objectives pre-established.

The project life cycle thus appears to be very determinant for the success of a project. It requires the project manager to master all the different phases and also to make sure that each phase is totally completed before moving to the next phase. This is because the phases are interrelated and a drawback in any phase is susceptible of affecting the entire project. According to the PMI (2008), "project life cycle is a collection of generally sequential and sometimes overlapping project phases whose name and number are determined by the management and control needs of the organization or organizations involved the project, the nature of the project itself, and its area of application". The project life cycle provides the basic framework for managing the project despite the number of work involved. The project management institute states four principal elements which constitutes the project life cycle. This include, starting the project, organizing and preparing, carrying out the project work, and closing the project.

Role of the project manager

Project manager is an individual or group of individuals who initiate, define, plan, implement, review as well as evaluate a project. They are the central element in a project team. The project manager has a clear vision of what they are and what they intend to be in the nearest future. Peter hobbs (2009), state that a project manager is the central hub around which the project team is formed. The success of the project largely depends on the ability of the project manager to influence the attitudes and actions of the project team. He is the one to make the project something

captivating or at the very least, something the project team do not want to oppose. A project manager can either own a project or sell the project. Owning a project require the project manager to be competent and committed to the project. Competence and commitment are two managerial words that cannot be dissociated. Thus, project managers are paradoxically a combination of self-confidence, decisive, innovative, determine, hands on and always open to learn from other members of their team.

According to the PMI (2017, 2012, 2013, 2011, 2008), project manager is someone who is assigned by an organization to achieve the desired changes. It may equally be an individual or group of individuals working independently as project managers. As such, effective management of projects requires project managers and practitioners to possess a number of characteristics among which we have:

- Knowledge: which refers to what the project manager or practitioner master on the management of project.
- Performance: which is what the project manager can do or accomplish in course of applying their project management knowledge.
- Personal: it refers to the behavior of a project manager when implementing the project as well as other related activities. This has to do with attitudes, personality characteristics and leadership. That is, the ability to lead the project team while achieving the objectives of the project and also balancing the project constraints.

Project managers are thus obliged to possess all these characteristics if they want to be successful project managers throughout their careers of project managers.

To Larson and Gray (2021, 2018), project managers perform the same functions as other managers. They are involved in planning, scheduling, motivating, and controlling the activities and tasks in a project. Project managers are unique individuals because they manage temporary, non-repetitive activities directed towards achieving predefined objectives. Project managers create project teams and organization where none existed before. They are thus, different from functional managers who take over existing operations (Larson, & Gray, 2021, 2018; PMI, 2012, 2011, 2008). Project managers must decide the manner by which things should be done instead of simply managing set of processes. They must equally meet the challenges of the project life cycle by creating

contingency plan. They must be able to determine the probability of risk affecting the project and it degree of materialization in the project. Project managers must be able to manage tension between customer`s expectations and what is feasible and realizable. They equally provide direction, coordination, and integration to the project team. They are responsible for performance within the project. They must ensure appropriate use of time, cost and quality in the project.

All in all, working as a project manager is never boring as each day is completely different from the last. This is because most project are directed towards solving tangible problems or pursuing some useful opportunity. As such, project managers find their work personally meaningful and very satisfying. They enjoy the act of bringing something new to customers, which is, being innovative (Larson & Gray, 2018).

Building a project team

Peter Hobbs (2009), argue that one of the important functions of the project manager is building and maintaining a dynamic project team. To him, giving a strong and positive identity to your project and also making the project environment a good place to be increased the likelihood that people will put in extra "10 percent" that increases the quality of the effort and equally reduces the task of controlling them. People are central to every aspects of the project. According to Vivien Martin (2006), people commission and sponsor projects, provide resources, support or challenge the project, as well as put in their energy and intelligence in achieving project goals and objectives. Project team is thus consisted of all the people that directly participate to the realization of desired goals and objectives of the project. It is a group of people with divergent views that move from being a group to a project team. The project manager must select the right people to include in the project. The selection is based on the availability and the competence and skill of individuals. It equally takes in to account how motivated the project members are ready to work. Here, the project manager approaches the team members individually and request for their participation.

Approaches in project management

An approach is a way of dealing with something. It can equally be the state of mind, the process of how an individual intend to carry out an activity. Gone are those days when Project management was considered as a special-need. Nowadays, project management is rapidly becoming a standardized way of doing business in most business organizations. In project management, there

exists several ways or approaches in managing project. Each approach has it specificities. This part will focus on the different approaches of project management.

Socio-Technical approach in project management

The management of project is a multidimensional process. It involves a good number of activities that are interrelated. This approach to project management is divided into two; we have the technical approach and the socio-cultural approach in project management. The two approaches are distinct in character but are interrelated. This is so because one cannot be used to the detriment of another. They are jointly applied by project managers and practitioners. The technical approach to project management is refers to as the first and foremost dimension in project management. It is an initiative from the project manager which involves the formal, disciplined and purely logical parts of the management process. According to Larson and Gray (2021), Walker and Lloyd Walker (2016) and Peter Hobbs (2009), the technical dimension of project management consists of planning, scheduling, and controlling the project. As such, the project manager has the sole responsibility to define clearly the scope of the project as well as the customers so as to facilitate the planning and controlling process in every project. The technical dimension is a critical part in project management reason being that it involves the creation of deliverables and work breakdown structures which help in planning and monitoring progress in a project. The essence of work breakdown structure is seen as a database linking all the organizational levels, major deliverables and all work right down to the task in a work package. A successful project manager or practitioner thus need to be trained in the technical side of project management since it is believed to be very decisive.

The second dimension in project management is the sociocultural approach. This dimension involves managing the internal and external environment of the project. In this light, project managers have to assuage and shape the expectations of the clients, sustain the political support of top management, and also negotiate with their functional counterparts, monitor subcontractors and so forth (Larson & Gray, 2018). This dimension consists of managing the social and cultural parts of the project. The socio-cultural dimension in project management in the opinion of Larson and Gray (2021), consists of creating a temporary social system within a larger organizational environment that combines the talents of a divergent set of professionals working to realize a project. As such, it becomes the duty of the project manager to develop a culture and atmosphere

characterized by teamwork between the project team and equally a considerable level of self-motivation as well as the ability to quickly identify and tackle threats. The manager thus, must develop a cooperative social network among the team members.

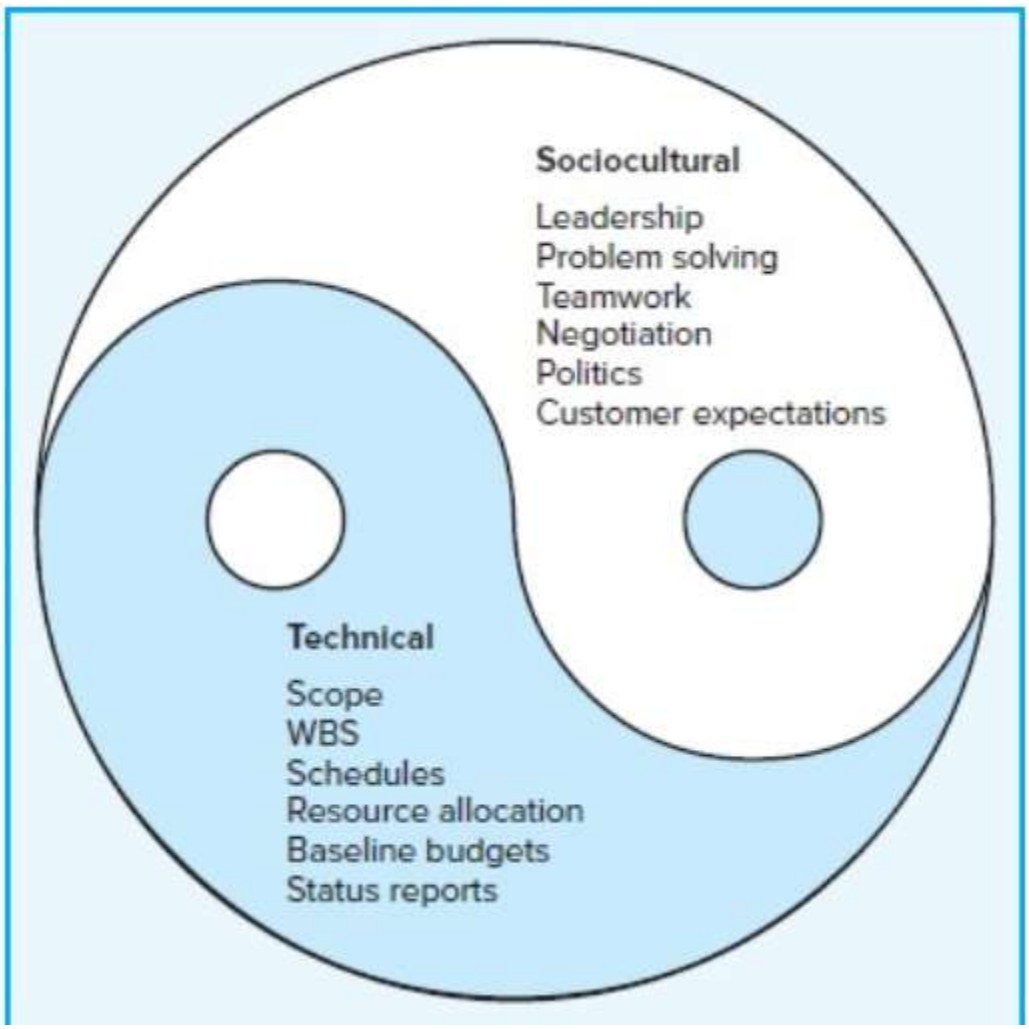


Figure 8: A socio-technical approach in project management

Source: Erik, Larson & Clifford, Gray, 2021.

In project management, the sociocultural dimension of project management represents the "art" managing the project. It permits a project manager or practitioner to be able to manage thee interface of the project al together with the external environment. The socio-cultural dimension in project management thus demands the project manager to develop strategies in controlling factors external to the project which may be related to social and cultural environment. The technical dimension of project management refers to the "science" of managing project. It deals with the

technical elements in project management. It permits the project manager to plan, implement, control, and review the project. Planning thus is a continuous process since the project manager must plan throughout the project life cycle to bring in adjustment where necessary. To become a successful project manager, a manager must master the both dimensions in managing project. In this respect, a good project manager must work with others in order to balance their attention on both the sociocultural and technical aspects of project management.

Agile approach in project management

This is another approach in managing project. The agile project management is an approach which strongly focuses on the active collaboration between the project team headed by the project manager and the customer representatives. To Larson and Gray (2021), "agile methodologies emerged out of frustration with using the traditional project management processes of developing software". The agile project management is thus used by project managers in business enterprises and organizations to manage projects with high level uncertainty. This happens when the scope of a project is not clearly defined. The agile project management permit the breaking of projects into small functional units and adapted to the changing requirements. The agile project management is basically used in the definition phase in order to put in place specificities and necessary requirements for the accomplishment of the project. With the agile project management, some technical issues are address within the project.

In the view of Larson and Gray (2021), agile project management is very different from the traditional method of project management. To them, while the agile project management may be used to address certain technical issues related to the project, the traditional approach in project management addresses issues related to planning, executing and the project closure. The agile project management is much more effective is small teams of four to eight members. In this approach to project management, instead of directing as well as integrating the work of other project team members, the project manager or practitioner serves as a facilitator and a coach. It is the project team who have the responsible to decide to should do what, how to do it and with what to do it. With the agile project management, the project manager adopts an incremental and iterative process in order to complete the project. In this case the scope of the project evolves as the project advance. The essence of the agile project management is that at the end of a stage or phase, progress is reviewed, adjustments are equally made and a different cycle begins.

Strategic approach in project management

The strategic approach in project management is another important approach to project management which project managers and project practitioners must master in order to do their job well. The strategic project management process provides the project manager with an overview of the critical aspect of project and how to go about it. The strategic management of project in education as well as other domains such as business, economies, politics, entails assessing "what we are" and deciding and implementing "what we intend to become and means and strategies through which we are going to get there". The strategy here describes how an organization intend to achieve the predefined goals and objectives using the available resources. According to Larson and Gray (2021), there exists two major dimensions of strategic management of project. The first strategy involves responding to changes in the external environment as well as allocating the organizational scarce and limited resources to improve the organizational competitiveness. In this sense, the project manager must be in constant scanning of the environment to develop strategies and means of survival in a competitive and dynamic environment. The second dimension seek for responses internal to the institution to new actions directed towards the enhancement of the competitive character of the institution.

Larson and Gray (2021), believed that strategic management of project provides the theme and also the focus of the future direction of the organization. It enables consistent action at all levels of the organization. The strategic project management encourages integration since effort and resources are mobilized to achieve common goals and strategies within an organization. Some practitioners of project management believed that strategic management process of project is a continuous and iterative process aimed at developing an integrated and long term plan of action. In this light, the strategic management places the organization to fulfil the needs and requirements of its customers for the long term. The identification of the long term position permits the project manager to set objectives and developed strategies to achieve the objectives thereby transforming it into actions by implementing the projects. The strategies condition the survival of an organization. In fact, the strategic management process centers on the formulation of strategies through which the goals and objective can be achieved.

Many people are of the view that the components of the strategic management process are interrelated in a way that all the elements are directing towards the success of the organization.

With strategic management, there must be strong be strong link between the mission, goals, objectives, strategies and implementation in modern days' organizations. As such, the mission provides the main purpose of the organization. The goals provide global targets within the mission. The objectives provide specific targets to goals. The objectives thus define the implementation strategies. In a country like Cameroon, the provision of quality education to the citizens entails the experts and policy makers to state clearly the mission of the educational sector, set up the targeted goals, elaborates objectives, developed strategies to achieve the objectives as well as identifies actions and tasks.

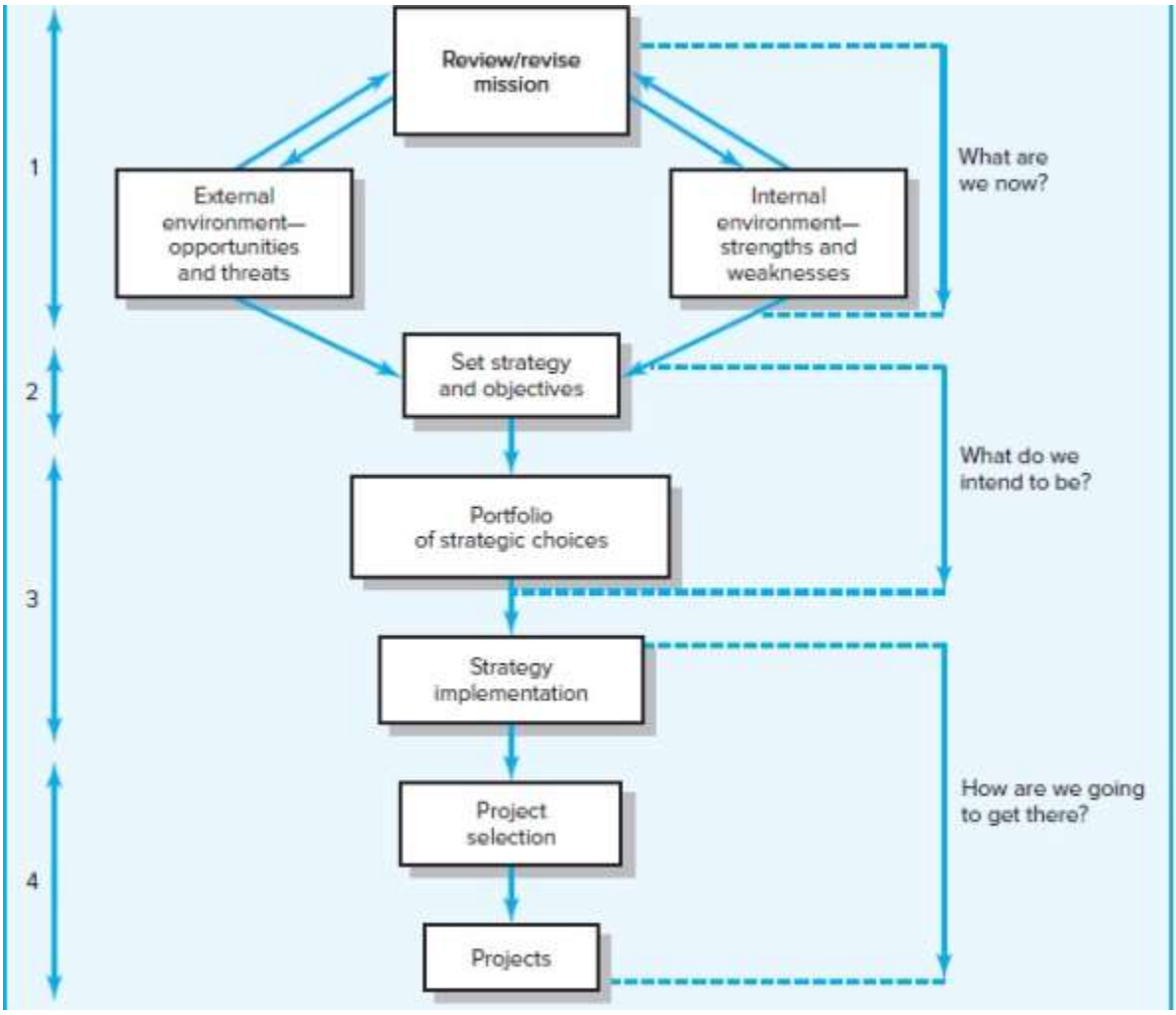


Figure 9: The strategic management process

Source: Larson and Gray, 2021, p. 76.

Review and define the mission of the organization: the missions of an organization involves what it wants to be in the nearest future. Thus, defining the mission of the organization becomes an imperative in every project. This is all about who we are now. The mission lay the foundation for effective decision making in project management. The mission communicates and identifies the purpose of the project to the stakeholders, project managers and the project team. As such, the mission of a project to be achieved is the principal element which conditions the effort of the project team.

Analyze and formulate strategies: With the mission of the project being clearly defined, the identification of possible strategies require for the achievement of the missions becomes indispensable. It consists of defining ways and also means that will be use by the project team to achieve the mission and objectives of the project. It is all about how we are going to get to the desired destination. Strategies equally involved determining and evaluating the alternatives as well as choosing the right alternative. It is all about the identification of customer/clients as well as their needs and expectations. Thus, analyzing the internal and external environment of the project permit the project manager to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the environment and look for means to minimize their degree of impacting the project.

Set objectives to achieve the strategies: The objectives of a project translate the project implementation strategies into specific, concrete and measurable terms. The objectives must be smart so as to facilitate the implementation of project strategies. This will permit the achievement of the mission, goals and objectives of the project. As such, setting the objectives to implement the strategies point at the direction where the project is heading to as well as when it will reach there. This is why Doran (1981), argue that the objectives must be very smart in such a way that all those involve in the project will direct their effort towards its achievement.

Implementation of strategies through projects: The implementation of strategies within a project deals with how the activities and tasks are realized depending on the available resources. This demands the project manager and practitioners to be attentive to several key areas such as:

The realization of the project thus requires resources which represents the funds, people, managerial skills and talents, technological skills as well as equipment. Also, planning and control systems must be well defined to ensure that the strategies are effectively implemented through different project activities. The strategic project management thus appears to be an indispensable

skill that all the project managers and practitioners must possess if they want to become successful project managers and practitioners.

Project management offices (PMOs)

The project management office (PMOs) is an organization body or entity assigned various responsibilities related to the centralized and coordinated management of projects under its domain (PMI, 2008, 2012, 2017). The duty of the PMI can range from assisting project managers in their management functions to the responsibility of managing directly a project. The PMO in most cases may be attributed the right to act as a key stakeholder and also decision maker at the beginning of each project, make recommendations. The PMI (2008) outlines the primary functions of the PMO in supporting project managers. These functions include:

- Managing shared resources across all projects under the PMO;
- Identify as well as develop project management methodology, best practices and standards;
- Coaching, mentoring, training and oversight;
- Monitoring compliance with project management standards, policies, procedures, and templates via project audit;
- Develop and manage project policies, procedures, templates and other shared documents
- Coordination of communication across projects.

These, according to the project management institute constitute the many and different actions of the project management office. It provides the framework of action to the project management office.

According to Larson and Gray (2011), project management office is a centralized unit within an organization or simply a department within an organization which oversees the implementation of different projects under their control. The PMO is those a response to the poor experience many companies have faced in finishing projects on time, using the defined budget and in respect of the project plan. In a survey conducted in 2011, over 1,100 project professionals reported that three out of five respondents' organization had PMOs in their organization (PMI, 2011). This is as a result of the desire realize the goals and objectives of the project on time using an estimated budget and the project plan. As such, the management of project in all the domains in the society thus

appear to be a must do activity since it permits project managers to avoid timelessness in project delivery and also the misuse of project budget.

Project management office takes different forms in organizations. In small and medium size organization, with few projects, the PMO may consist of a single individual assigned to support project effort towards the achievement of goals and objectives of the project. PMO in big and multinational firms may involves a hundred of professionals acting at different levels. As such, the PMI has since 2013 grant PMO year awards. This is explained why Casey and Peck (2001) describes certain PMO as a being the weather station, a control tower or a resource pole.

Today, it is believed that PMOs performed more than one of these functions. This is because the PMOs intervenes in several aspects in the project world such as track projects, provide training, define the methodology and also lesson learn. This is why Patel (2018), pointed out that PMOs have contributed significantly in assisting organizations adapt to the management of agile projects. It is worthy to note that PMOs in today's organizations are very indispensable in managing projects in all the domains of the society not leaving aside education.

Management and assessment of risk in project management

In modern project management, the management and assessment of risk in a project determines the success of a project. In every project, the probability of risk occurrence is always high, thus the project manager or the project team must set up strategies to manage, assess and overcome risk. Risks are known to be inherent to every projects (educational, structural, compliance, social, economic as well as innovative projects). Risk refer to any undesirable situation susceptible of hindering the project closure as well as handing of the project deliverables to the final customers or clients.

According to Larson and Gray (2021, 2018, 2014, 2011), project deliverables may be delayed because of accidents, finance, ill health of the project team members etc. This means that no amount of planning can avoid risks from occurring. Risk thus, is an uncertainty that if its occurs, may affect the project negatively or positively. Risk management attempts to recognize and equally manage potential troubles that may occur once the project is under execution. For this reason, possessing skills and competencies in risk management by project managers and also project team members appear to be indispensable to the project management institutions. Larson and Gray (2021), put forward that risk management permit project managers to identify as many

risk events as possible (what can go wrong), simplifies their impact (what can be done about the risk before the starting of the project), manages responses to risks that actually occur (contingency plan) and also provide contingency funds to risks which actually materialized. According to PMBOK (2008), the management of risks in a project take into consideration the following elements;

- Plan risk management which consist of defining how to conduct risk management activities for a project;
- Risks identification which is the act of determining which risks is susceptible of affecting the project;
- Perform qualitative risk analysis which involve prioritizing risks for further analysis by combining their probability of occurrence and impact on the project;
- Perform quantitative risk analysis by numerically analyzing the effects of the identified risks on the overall project objectives.

In projects management, some commentators believed that the probability of risks occurrence is very high from the start of the project. This is due to high degree of uncertainty caused by unanswered questions. Some of these questions are; will the technology be effective? Is the timeframe feasible? Will the budget cover the project? Etc. As such, project managers and project team members are obliged to possess skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary for the management of risks.

Source: Larson and Gray, 2021.

Figure 10: The process of risk management in project management

In fact, the process of risk management in project management is proactive instead of reactive. This is because the project manager and the project team have to plan ahead of time before the risk occur. They must be prepared to deal with the risk. They must not wait for the risk to occur before reacting. Hence, risk management is seen as a preventive process designed to ensure that surprises are limited and also that negative outcomes associated with undesirable events are completely minimized.

Risk assessment in project management

The assessment of risk in project management also determines the success of a project. Risk management is the process which involve measuring the gravity and the potential probability of the degree of occurrence of a trouble or an unwanted event during the execution of the project (Larson & Gray 2021; 2018; PMI 2017; 2008; 2011). The aim of assessing the gravity of risk on

the overall project account for the fact that not all risks necessitate attention. This is so because they are some risk with low probability meaning that even if they occur, their effects won`t greatly affect the execution of the project. This is why some risks are said to be trivial and can be ignored while others pose serious threats to the welfare of the project. Because risks are assessed in terms of priority, they exist different kinds of impact scales used assessing risks. Some scales may use descriptors such as “low”, “moderate”, “high” and “very high”. Others focus largely on the different specific objectives (Larson, & Gray, 2021).

As such, risks assessment in project management requires project managers and project team members to develop methods for selecting the most probable risk, eliminating redundant risks, and classifying worthy ones in terms of importance and consideration. Thus, risks are assessed in terms of their likelihood of occurrence and equally its effects on the overall project. Risk management and assessment therefore determines the success of a project since it can affect the project negatively and even positively.

Factors affecting the management of project

The management of projects in modern days’ organizations is not always a routine activity since there are factors that can affect the realization of the project either positively or negatively. The success of a project or the project manager and the project team depends on their ability to overcome factors which act as obstacles to the realization of a project (Vivien Martin, 2006). The achievement of the objectives of the project by the project manager has to do with his/her ability to deal with these challenges. Basing to recent studies on the management of projects, (Vivien Martin, 2006; PMIBOK, 2008; Larson & Gray, 2021, 2018), some of these factors include; organizational factors, economic factors, geographical factors, security factors, legal and political factors, cultural factors, etc. As such, project managers and project team members are required to possess skills and competencies in project management. They are required to be able to develop strategies and means to deal with these challenges. Thus, every project manager strives to succeed since projects are goal oriented.

Organizational factors: Enterprise or organizational factors refers to the internal factors that surround or affect the success of a project (PMIBOK, 2008). These factors affect all organizations involved in project management. These factors may enhance as well as constrain project management options and may affect positively or negatively the project outcome. These factors

according to PMIBOK (2008) include; organizational culture, structure and processes, industry standards (regulatory agency regulations, codes of conduct, product standards, and quality standards), infrastructures (existing facilities and capital equipment), existing human resources (skills, disciplines, and knowledge), personnel administration (staffing and retention guidelines, employees performance review and training records), stakeholder risk tolerances, company work authorization systems, organization`s established communication channels etc. these internal factors to the organization plays a vital role in the realization of the project.

Economic factors: the economy of a country also condition the execution of a project. This is because the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country suggests the level of development of that country. Other factors associated to the economic factors also include balance of payment, taxation, labor laws, safety regulations as well as the size of the market.

Geographical factors: the geography or the topography of an area mostly affect the success of a project either positively or negatively. As such the planning and implementation processes must always consider the topography of the country or region so as to evaluate the impact of the geographical factors of the region or country on the realization of the project. The consideration of these factors by the project manager avoid a situation whereby the project manager and the project team will be forced to abandon or reorient the goals and objectives of the project thereby impacting on the project deliverables. Larson and Gray (2021), believed that project managers must always incorporate factors such as climate, seasons, altitude, and natural geographical factors susceptible of affecting the success of the project. Vivien Martin (2006) on his part, argue that geographical factors are inevitable in every project and thus, must be included in the planning process.

Security factor: the security factor refers to the ability of the country to react and respond to attack. Security factor is very instrumental in the realization of a project. This is because a project may be carried out in a country, a region or a locality characterized by political crisis and civil unrest. The manager while planning the project is required to take this aspect serious because they can affect the realization of the project. Recent studies have demonstrated that it is always difficult to work in an environment pledge by terrorist attacks and civil wars, thus, the project manager must always think about it when planning the project (Hobbs, 2009).

Legal and political factors: the legal factors refer to norms and standards set by a country which all the project managers must comply to. The political factors on the other hand have to do with the situation of the country. The legal and political factors of a country or a region condition the success of every project and as such, the project manager must always include it in their planning process.

Cultural factors: cultures and traditions play a vital role in the implementation of a project. In some regions, people are very rooted to their tradition and every innovative is consider as a taboo in such locality. Also, some people are not willing to accept anything that touches their culture and tradition. As such, it becomes the responsibility of the project manager to convince this people to accept the innovation initiated by the project (Martin, 2006).

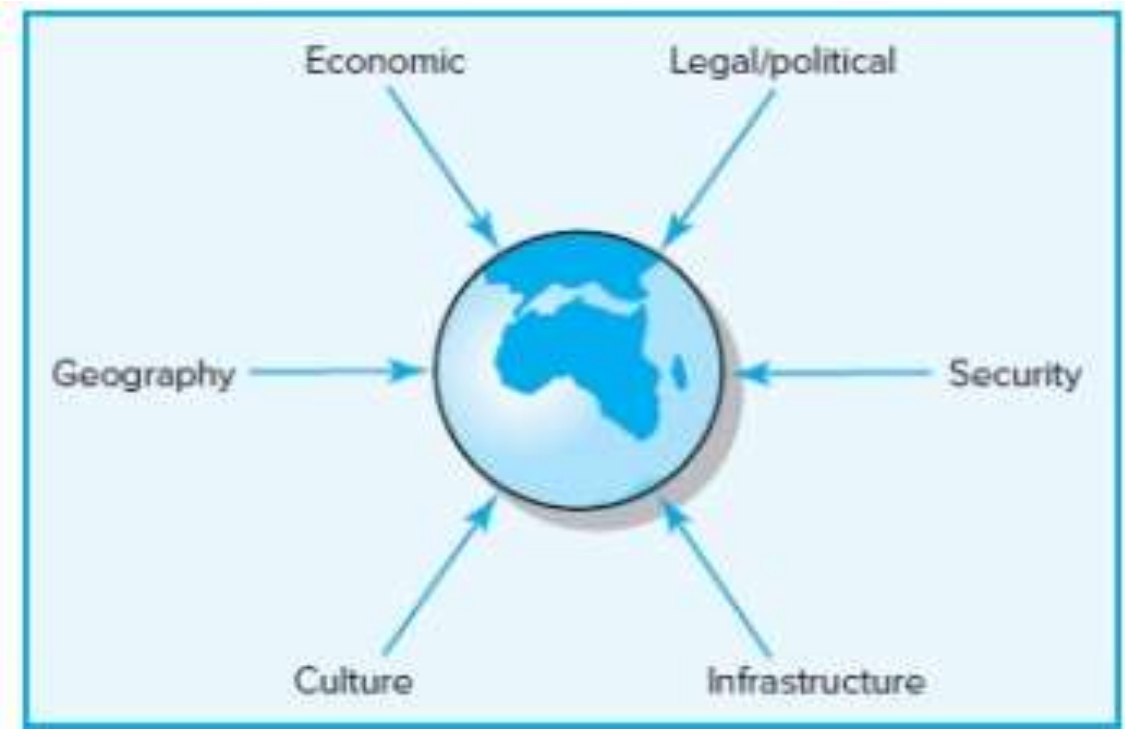


Figure 11: Factors affecting the management of project
Source: Larson, & Gray, 2021.

The above illustration shows the different factors susceptible of affecting the implementation of a project. Developing means and strategies to deal with these challenges when they arise become the work of the project manager.

Project Closure

Whether educational projects, structural projects, social projects, compliance projects, or economic projects, they must eventually come to an end. According to Larson and Gray (2021), with project closure, the deliverables are completed, project ownership is set to be transferred, every project team members focus on what next. Carefully managing the end of the project is as important as any other phase of the project. Ending a project appears not to be an easy task since it is characterized by a number of daunting tasks to be performed by the project manager or team members. In small projects, it is believed that its closure is the responsibility of the project manager alone. But in today`s project driven organizations, the closure of the project requires the coordination and cooperation among the stakeholders. It is the responsibility of the project manager, project teams, project office, contracts office, and human resources etc. to close a project. There exist three major deliverables for project closure according to Larson and Gray (2021). These include project wrapping, project audit and evaluation of performance and management of the project.

Wrapping up the project: this occur when the customer approves and accept the project outcome or result. It has to do with the closing of accounts, paying bills, reassigning equipment and personnel, finding new opportunities for project staff, closing facilities, and also issuing the final report.

Project auditing: project auditing is a process which consist of reviewing how successful the project is. We have in process audit which consist of auditing the project during the monitoring stages of the project. The post project auditing on the other hand consist of reviewing how effective and efficient the project was. It has to do with causal analysis and careful retrospection that identify lessons learned.

Evaluation of performance and management of the project: evaluation of performance in a project is a process of verification and control. It includes the project team, individual team members, and the project manager performance.

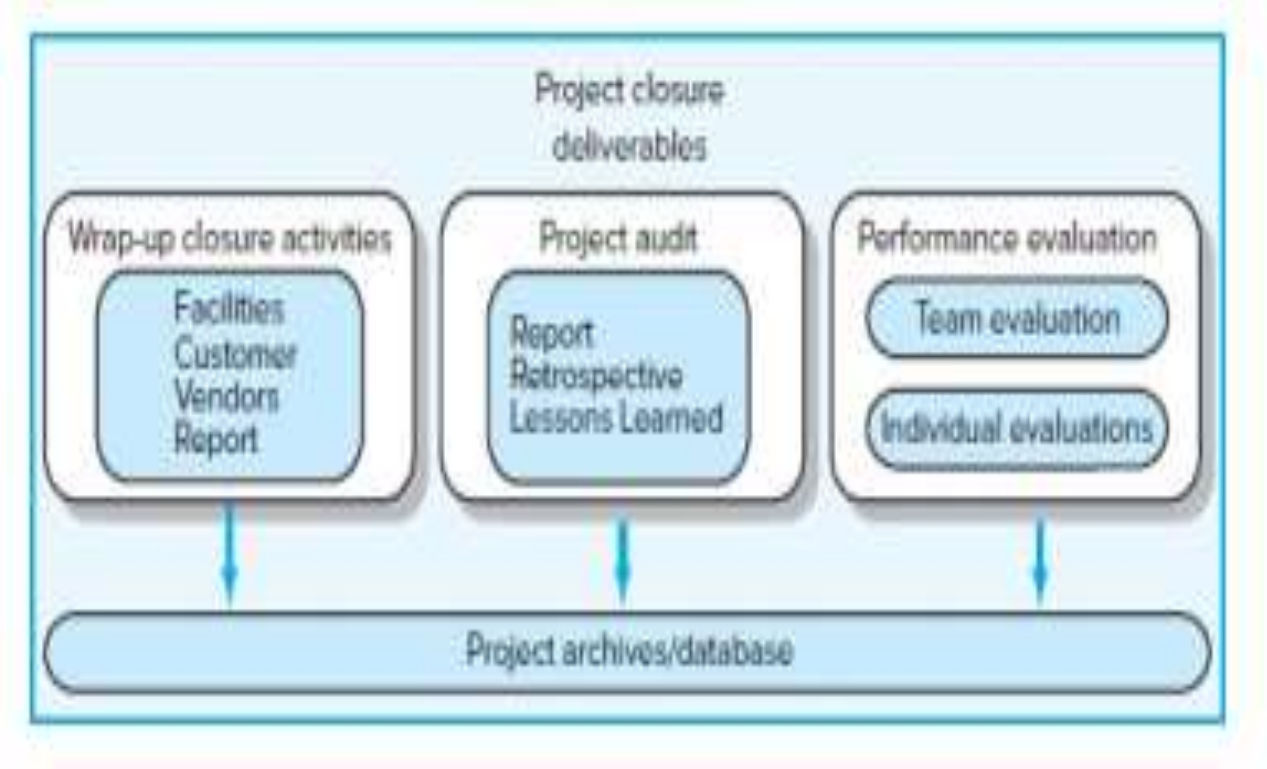


Figure 12: Project closure and review deliverables

Source: Larson, & Gray, 2021, p.535.

Different types of project closure

Project closure take into consideration different tasks as indicated above. There exist different types of project ending depending on how successive a project is. We have the normal project ending, the premature project ending, perpetual project ending, failed project ending and changed of priority.

Normal project ending: the normal project ending is more or less a completed project. This consist of handing off the final outcome to the customer and creating new product or service line. The normal project ending make sure are the deliverables are delivered to the end user or the new product is being put in the market. The normal project ending ensures the completion of all the stages of the project.

Premature project ending: premature project ending in project management occur when some of the stages of the project are skip. In a new product development project for example, a marketing manager may insist on production models before testing. “Give the new product to me now, the way it is. Early entry into the market will mean big profits! I know we can sell a bazillions of these. If we don`t do it now, the opportunity is lost!” (Larson & Gray, 2021). This explain why some stakeholders may prefer a project to end prematurely.

Perpetual project ending: it is believed that some project never ends. This may be because of the fact that the scope of the project was not well conceived. To remedy this, the project team and project manager either develop measures to put a final end to the project or initiate another project to provide correctives measures to the project.

Failed project ending: a failed project is one which have not achieved the predefined goals and objectives of the project. Failed projects are easy to identify and also easy for the review team to close. The project manager thus, must provide reasons why the project is not a successive one. Some projects equally fail because of factors beyond the understanding of the project manager and the project team members.

Changed of priority: some scholars and commentators believed that organization`s priorities often change and strategies shift. For example, during the 2008-2010 financial crisis, organizations shifted their focus from money-making projects to cost-saving projects (Larson and Gray, 2021). When there is changed of priorities in an organization, projects under execution may need to be altered or cancelled.

Project`s Monitoring and Evaluation

Globally, project monitoring and evaluation have been in existence since the ancient times (Kusek, 2004). Monitoring and evaluation of projects is defined as a process of tracking, reviewing and regulating the progress to meet the performance objectives defined in the project management plan (Ivy Mukami & Stephen, 2018). Monitoring has to do with reporting status, measuring progress and prevision or forecasting. Evaluation on the other hand entails a systematic and an independent process of verifying the degree of achievements of the predefined objectives. According to PMBOK (2001), monitoring and evaluation provide project managers and team members with information on the project performance about project scope, cost, resources, quality, as well as possible risk, which in some cases are used as input to other processes. According to Kahilu (2010),

project monitoring and evaluation provide an added value to the overall efficiency of project planning, management, implementation by providing corrective action to the variances from the expected standards. This is why many scholars and experts advocates that project monitoring and evaluation plays a vital role in monitoring progress toward achieving the desired outcomes of the project.

Monitoring according to Barasa Kabeyi, (2018), "is a continuous function that aims at providing management and stakeholders with indications of progress or lack of progress in realization of project or program results". Edmunds and Marchant (2008), cited by Barasa Kabeyi, (2018), defined monitoring as monitoring and evaluation of inputs and outputs at its very basic level where inputs are tracked. Ryan Sherman (2013), believe that monitoring is different from evaluation although they are being used interchangeably. According to him (2013), monitoring is used in a descriptive context to check project`s inputs in line to the outputs of the project. In this case, once there is the identification of inconsistencies, it is believed that monitoring has done it job and evaluation will then be conducted to see why such inconsistencies exist in the project. Monitoring is equally a periodically recurring activity that begins in the planning stage of a project or program and allows results, experiences and processes to be documented or recorded. As a result, monitoring is seen as an integral part of evaluation (Development Organization, n.d.). Monitoring thus focuses on the following.

- ✓ Quantity and quality of executed activities and how they are managed to give outputs.
- ✓ Process used in the project and program e.g. effects or changes that took place due to interventions undertaken during implementation.
- ✓ Processes that are external to an intervention i.e. impact triggered by implemented activities and other environmental factors.

Project monitoring therefore is seen as indispensable in the achievements of project goals and objectives.

Barasa Kabeyi, (2018), defined project evaluation as a "selective exercise whose aim is to systematically and objectively assess progress towards achievement of outcomes or results as planned". Evaluation is not a one-off initiative or activity but a continuous process since it is intended to track progress and the degree of achievement of predefined goals and objectives. The United Nations Development evaluation office (2002), made it clear that the project and program

relevance, performance, and the processes must be assessed through evaluations. There exist different forms of project and program evaluation such as internal and external. A majority of evaluation are carried out as an internal exercise by an internal agent but in order to ensure objective and unbiased results, it is preferable to recruit an external agent or individual independent to the organization to conduct the evaluation.

According to Patton (1986), "evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs (projects) for use by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness and make decisions with regard to what these programs are doing". The Austrian Development Agency (2009), on its part defined evaluation as "the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project or program, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project. In the same light, Micheal Scriven as quoted from Hughes and Nieuwenhuis (2005), "synthesizing the definitions from the major dictionaries, we take evaluation to be the process of determining merit, worth or significance. Evaluations are the products of this process".

Haass, and Guzman (2019), "project evaluation is a multi-layered affair. Because projects vary in size, industrial sector, availability of resources and specific goals, they must be adapted to the uniqueness of its context, especially with changes occurring over time". Project monitoring and evaluation plays several roles in the accomplishment of project objectives. Recent studies (Arrow et al., 2003; Andersen et al., 2012), cited by Haass, and Guzman (2019), argue that project evaluation (monitoring and evaluation) can be useful in demonstrating project transparency, accountability and allows for project lessons learned to be shared, constructing knowledge and expertise that can be incorporated into policy and practice (Rolstadas et al., 2014; Sato & Chagas, 2014). Davis (2014), Hanisch and Wald (2014), pointed out clear that project monitoring and evaluation provide a solid foundation for examining prior assumptions and constraints to review whether they are still reliable. McLeod et al., (2012), and Snowden and Boone (2007), cited by Haass and Guzman (2019), argue out that the "official narrative of project evaluation can also be used to confer either status or stigma, legitimize particular behaviors or courses of action, justify large or risky projects or distance the future from the past. These different views of scholars on

project monitoring and evaluation demonstrate the importance of evaluation and how it leads to project success.

There is a lack of consensus in the literature on how projects should be evaluated (Anzoise & Sardo, 2016; Turner & Zolin, 2012). This is due to the multiplicity of projects and the roles project evaluation do play in the achievements of project goals and objectives. This has led to the development of diverse ideologies on how projects should be really evaluated. While project evaluation field is fractioned with multiple approaches attempting to show diverse angles of the phenomena to different audiences (Haass & Guzman, (2019), most project evaluation approaches consider only time, cost and quality known as the golden triangle in project management (Anzoise & Sardo, 2016), and neglecting soft criteria such as long term goals and impact on the society and environment (Ngacho & Das, 2014; Ika et al., 2012). The latter implies that project evaluation literature is mainly concentrated on the more objective aspects of project evaluation and overlooked the subjective aspects that reflect the temporal, dynamic, complex and subjective nature of today`s project (Haass & Guzman, 2019).

Aims and objectives of project monitoring and evaluation

The objectives of project monitoring and evaluation are clearly stated in the existing literature. The primary objective of project monitoring and evaluation is to monitor work progress in projects and programs as well as the assessment of the degree of achievement of stated objectives. It is directed towards improving performance and achieving expected or planned results. According to the United Nations Development evaluation office (2002), the objective of project monitoring and evaluation is to improve current and future management of inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact in projects and programs being executed by assessing the progress, performance and results of projects and programs. Traditionally, the focus of project monitoring and evaluation was on the assessment and implementation process. Today, the objective of project monitoring and evaluation has shifted to assessing contributions of various activities to a given development outcome with factors such as outputs, participation, policy, procedures and coordination (Edmunds and Marchant, 2008).

Evolution of monitoring and evaluation in project management

The origin of project management can be traced as far back as early civilization. By this time, the word project did not exist but people were already practicing project management. It was at the

end of the 20th century that the word project management emerged. Frederick Taylor, considered to be the father of scientific management theory has contributed significantly to the early project management (Cleland & Gareis, 2006; Tache & Spasoiu, 2013; Ramachandran, n.d.; Haughey, 2014). With the evolution of the science of project management in complexity and application, monitoring and evaluation appear to be essential tools in tracking project development and progress from simple control methods and techniques to more sophisticated mechanisms, which combine more than one methods or techniques of progress tracking (Cleland & Gareis, 2006; Tache & Spasoiu, 2013). The table below summarizes the evolution of project monitoring and evaluation in project management.

Table 1: The evolution of project monitoring and evaluation in project management

	Period	*Stage*	*Evolution Of Monitoring And Evaluation Mechanisms*
1	1860-1900	Inception stage	First concerns regarding management as a science emerge while the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation have not appeared yet.
2	1900-1955	Empirical stage	First base concepts of the project management, being outlined. First definitions and approaches of the project concept, with regard to civil engineering or to military services. As monitoring and evaluation tools used the Gantt Diagram and simplified versions of it
3	1955-1970	Applied stage	Need for efficient activity generated an anachronism regarding the relation between theory and practice. The CPM and PERT methods are used as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and was made the first reference to Logical Framework Approach, respectively to Logical Framework Matrix.
4	1970-1990	Scientific stage	Theorization of the project management as a science develop. There emerge magazines and publications with regard to the project management, most of them being still current. Project management bodies emerge e.g. IPMA or PMI. The monitoring and evaluation mechanisms remain focused on Gantt Diagram, CMP and PERT methods and Logical Framework Matrix
5	1990-2000	Information stage	Project management follows the world economy approach, detaching practically from the status of technical science and going quasi-definitively to the sphere of economics sciences with use of software. Flexible management structures, such as matrix organization emerge including management through projects or also new methods and techniques (Balanced Scorecard).
6	2000-present	Strategic stage	Project management emerge as the key field of the organization strategy, capable of producing added value and competitive advantage. There developed companies that have as activity object the elaboration, development, implementation and project monitoring

Source: Moses Jeremiah Barasa Kabeyi, 2018, p.13.

Criteria of project monitoring and evaluation

Many scholars are of the view that there exists no better way to ameliorate the results of projects than to systematically measure, criticize and understand the project`s processes as well as apply the lessons learned to the current and future projects by the project manager or project team

members. Evaluating projects entails the project manager to master some key elements or criteria. These criteria are considered as basis for project monitoring and evaluation. Basing on recent studies and the existing literature. The literature shows that project evaluation criteria are based on two dimensions which are the objectivist and the subjectivist approaches. According to Burrell & Morgan (2019), Huber & Daft (198), the objectivist views follow system-structural, functionalist and instrumental assumptions that fit the principles of positivist epistemology. The objectivists believed that project management events and situations are concrete, meaning that it can be examined and quantified. On the other hand, subjective views are based on the interpretive assumptions (Spender & Grant, 1996; Weick et al., 2005; Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The subjectivists argue that the subjectivist views are based on the fact that the social world is continuously build, transformed and reproduced via social interactions (Omid Haass & Gustavo Guzman, 2019). The OECD/DAC (2007), provides criteria for projects monitoring and evaluation which lay emphasis on the standard of the quality and necessity of evaluation. The different evaluation criteria proposed by the OECD/DAC (2007), are referred to as benchmark for project evaluation. These project evaluation criteria include; relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Project efficiency

According to Ngacho & Das (2014), Xu & Yeh (2014), and Dvir et al., (2006), as quoted by Haass and Guzman (2019), project efficiency is a means used to measure how economic resources and other resources are converted to tangible and desired project`s outcomes or results. Samset (2003), on his part defines efficiency as the degree to which project outputs have delivered as planned and in line with the budget. It may happen to be cheaper, quicker and with better quality. According to OECD (2000), efficiency is a measure of ratio between inputs and the outputs. Youcef, et al., (2015), argue that the term efficiency signifies the act of using least costly resources possible in order to achieve desired outcomes and results. OECD (2000), suggested some considerations by asking the following questions: were the activities cost-efficient? Were the objectives achieved on time? Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives? The efficiency criterion makes use of indicators such as scope, time, cost and quality (Zidane et al., 2012). The project efficiency criterion equally indicates whether or not the project met its schedule, budget as well as quality metrics. It is necessary for any project manager to evaluate the use of

resources in project in order to avoid the wastage of resources. Thus, the efficient criterion in project evaluation ensure an efficient use of available resources.

Project effectiveness

Haass and Guzman (2019), argues that project effectiveness as a criterion of project evaluation deals with the degree of achievement of project objectives embedded in the project plan (Hanisch &Wald, 2014; Rolstadas et al., 2014; McLeod et al., 2012). Olsson (2006), considers effectiveness as the measure of the long-term effects of the project and as performing the right things. OECD (2000), argue that the effectiveness criterion in project evaluation permit practitioners to ask questions such as to what extent has the objectives of the project been achieved? The project effectiveness criterion equally seeks to determine the factors that influence the realization or non-realization of the goals and objectives of the project (Davis, 2014; Mir & Pinington, 2014). According to Ika et al., (2012), the most common indicator used in evaluating project effectiveness is "how well the project`s product satisfies users` need". The efficiency and effectiveness project evaluation criteria are also recommended by the OECD to evaluate international development projects and programs (Chianca, 2008). These two criteria focus on the evaluation of objectives, outcomes and processes of a project.

Recent studies have identified two principal approaches which rely on the efficiency and effectiveness of project evaluation criteria. We have the tactical (operational) evaluation (Im et al., 2015) and goal-oriented evaluation (Marsh, 1978). The tactical evaluation is based on the evaluation of objectives/outcomes of the project or program while the goal-oriented evaluation focusses on the specification and measurement of project objectives and results.

Project relevance

Samset (2003), while discussing on the relevance criterion point out that it is the overall assessment of whether a project is in harmony with the needs and priorities of the owners, the intended users as well as other attested parties. According to Haass and Guzman (2019), project relevance is equally known as business success. The relevance of the project as an evaluation criterion is concerned with the wider organization or institution (the firm, consortium, government), sponsoring the project, and its long-term viability (Ika et al., 2012; Mulller & Turner, 2007; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007). Mir and Pinnington (2014), McLeod et al., (2012), Shao et al., (2012), as cited by Haass & Guzman (2019), argues that this criterion considers the accomplishment of

strategic objectives and benefits as well as the impacts on the markets and competitors, business development or expansion, and the ability to react to future opportunities and challenges. Davis (2014), and Maylor et al., (2006), on their side equally argue that this criterion takes into consideration the project team gains, learning, motivation and lessons learnt which can be applicable to the ongoing or future projects. Evaluating the relevance of a project permit the project manager and project team members to identify the importance of the project to the project stakeholders, sponsors, customers and beneficiaries.

Project impact

still according to Haass and Guzman (2019), project impact as a criterion of project evaluation refers to the direct and indirect, as well as primary and long term effects produced by a project, which can either be intentionally or unintentionally (Ika et al., 2012). According to OECD (2000), impacts are the positive and negative changes produced by a development project either directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This criterion basing on recent studies (Ngacho & Das, 2014; Ika et al., 2012; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007), assesses whether the results achieved by the project address the needs, problems and issues of key stakeholders including project investors, sponsors, contractors, customers, and project team (ibid). the impact criterion extends beyond the project predefined goals and objectives and even address the long term impacts. This is because project impact criterion is more subjective since it deals with the achievement of strategic goals of the organization and the impact on the project team which at times are hard to be evaluated specifically and quantitatively.

Project sustainability

According to Muller and Turner (2007), this criterion is related to the extent to which the project`s results maximizes inter-generational welfare and maintenance of the environment, rather than solely maintenance of the economy productive base (Ngacho & Das, 2014; Ika et al., 2012). Youcef, et al., (2015), stated that sustainability of a project questions whether the benefit of a project will continue once the sponsors and investors ceased to fund the activity. Tatikonda and Rosenthal (2000), and Ika et al., (2012), on their part argue out that the sustainability criterion is mostly relevant in development projects, which deals with a range of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political concerns, which most of the times happens during the implementation of project as well as after the completion of the project. The sustainability criterion

falls under the subjective approach in project evaluation. Sustainability as a criterion of project evaluation permit project practitioners to ask questions such as: to what extent did the benefits of a project continue after the donor funding ceased? What were the major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project? (OECD, 2000; Samset, 2003).

Types of project evaluation

Project monitoring and evaluation refers to vital tools use in tracking work progress in a project as well as the degree of achievement of predefined objectives. Project monitoring permit the tracking of work progress while project evaluation permits the measurement of results in line with objectives. For this to happen, project managers and team members are required to use project evaluation criteria. The evaluation of project pay attention to different types of evaluation among which we have; Ex-ante or pre evaluation, interim or mid-term evaluation and the Ex-post project evaluation.

Ex-ante or pre-project evaluation: This type of evaluation evaluates projects prior to its implementation (Haass & Guzman, 2019). It is conducted before the implementation of the project either by the investors and sponsors or a specialised team on their behalf. The aim of the ex-ante evaluation is to ensure that the project is feasible and will yield the expectations of the investors and sponsors. It is stated that ex-ante evaluation mostly follows an objective and a subjective approach. While it is based on the past hard data (economic indicators, costs of labour), it equally makes use of subjective views to justify taken-for-granted contextual assumptions embedded in objective criteria (Haass & Guzman, 2019; Makarova & Sokolova, 2014). The importance of the ex-ante project evaluation verifies all feasibility of the project before the implementation phase so as to make any possible amendment on the project budget, cost, plan and time.

Interim or mid-term project evaluation: In project management, interim or mid-term evaluation appear to be one of the types of evaluation used by project managers to track work advancement. According to Ngacha and Das (2014), quoted by Haass &Guzman (2019), interim evaluation reflects the status and progress of the project against its plan. This type of evaluation permits the collection of data and information regarding the performance and achievement of the project during the implementation. The interim evaluation is usually conducted during the planning, initiation, execution and monitoring phases of a project. The goals and objectives of interim evaluation is to improve or adjust the different activities carried out the implementation phase.

Time is equally at the centre of this type of evaluation. Haass and Guzman (2019), argue out that the mid-term or interim evaluation works well when it focuses on the criteria that deal with highly tangible outcomes which can be assessed through the application of different project management techniques.

Ex-post project evaluation: Ex-post evaluation can be described as an evaluation of an intervention (in our case a project) after the intervention has been completed (Youcef,, et al., 2015). The ex-post evaluation or end of term evaluation is one of the commonly used type of evaluation used by project managers and team members to evaluate the long-term impact of the project. This type of project evaluation aims at deriving lessons and recommendations for the improvement of future projects and programs (OECD, 2000). Ex-post evaluation mostly follows a social time perspective simply because it is a medium term or long term exercise required to verify the degree of achievement of the predefined goals/objectives of the project. Ex-post evaluation appears to be the most important used to monitor and evaluate success of the project. It helps in evaluating the long term impact of the project taking into account the interest of the stakeholders, sponsors, investors, customers and beneficiaries of the project.

Challenges of project monitoring and evaluation

Project monitoring and evaluation is an indispensable activity in project management and at the same a tedious task for project managers and practitioners to deal with. In every initiative, it is always necessary to either carry out ex-ante, mid-term or ex-post evaluation. This is because the evaluation of project permits to know the degree of achievement of predefined objectives. This activity (evaluation) make use of evaluation criteria such as efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact and sustainability. Evaluation is an imperative to all the project oriented organizations, but this activity at times is pledged by a number of challenges among which we have: evaluating the subjective aspects of the project, engaging all the stakeholders and timing of evaluation.

**Stakeholder`s engagement:** the engagement of stakeholders in project evaluation is necessary but very problematic. According to Khan et al., (2013), Corn et al., (2012), Molenear et al., (2012), "cooperation and collaboration between the project`s key stakeholders and evaluation team is key for a comprehensive project evaluation". It became problematic to engage all the key stakeholders in the project evaluation especially when some support the project and others does not (Coupasson

et al., 2012). This make it difficult and a challenging task to project managers, practitioners and evaluation team to cope with the diverse views of key stakeholders over the project.

Project evaluation timing: recent studies has shown that ex-ante, interim and ex-post evaluation are evaluation types commonly used by project practitioners and managers to the detriment of ex-post long-term evaluation (Eduardo et al., 2014). It is believed that the timing of the evaluation equally affects stakeholder's interpretation of the impact of the project. The problematic related to timing of evaluation is that few project evaluation approaches consider project evaluation across diverse timelines (Haass & Guzman, 2019).

Challenges of evaluating the subjective aspects of the project: According to McLeod et al., (2012), "any development of a shared understanding of the project outcome necessarily involves the communication and negotiation of individual and collective perceptions, expectations, and evaluations. This is so because the engagement of key stakeholders in the evaluation process usually include different values, interests, needs, and expectations. This make it difficult project managers to take into the respective needs and expectations of the different key stakeholders in the evaluation process.

Importance of project monitoring and evaluation

In every modern organization, monitoring and evaluation are important tools used to track work progress as well as verify the degree of achievement of predefined objectives. Monitoring activities during the implementation phase of the project account for the success of the project. This is because project monitoring permit project managers and practitioners, project team members, sponsors and investors to track the progress of the project. It permits the improvement of activities at each phase of the project. It prepares the ground for project evaluation. Ika et al., (2012), and Haass and Guzman (2019) argue out that evaluation is as important as any phase of the project. Evaluation give room for the amelioration of the ongoing project as well as ameliorate the future ones through lessons learned. In project management, evaluation permit project managers to learn how to optimize for success and also discover the story behind the results. Evaluation allows evaluator to as three important questions at the start, middle and end of the project (Youcef et al., 2015).

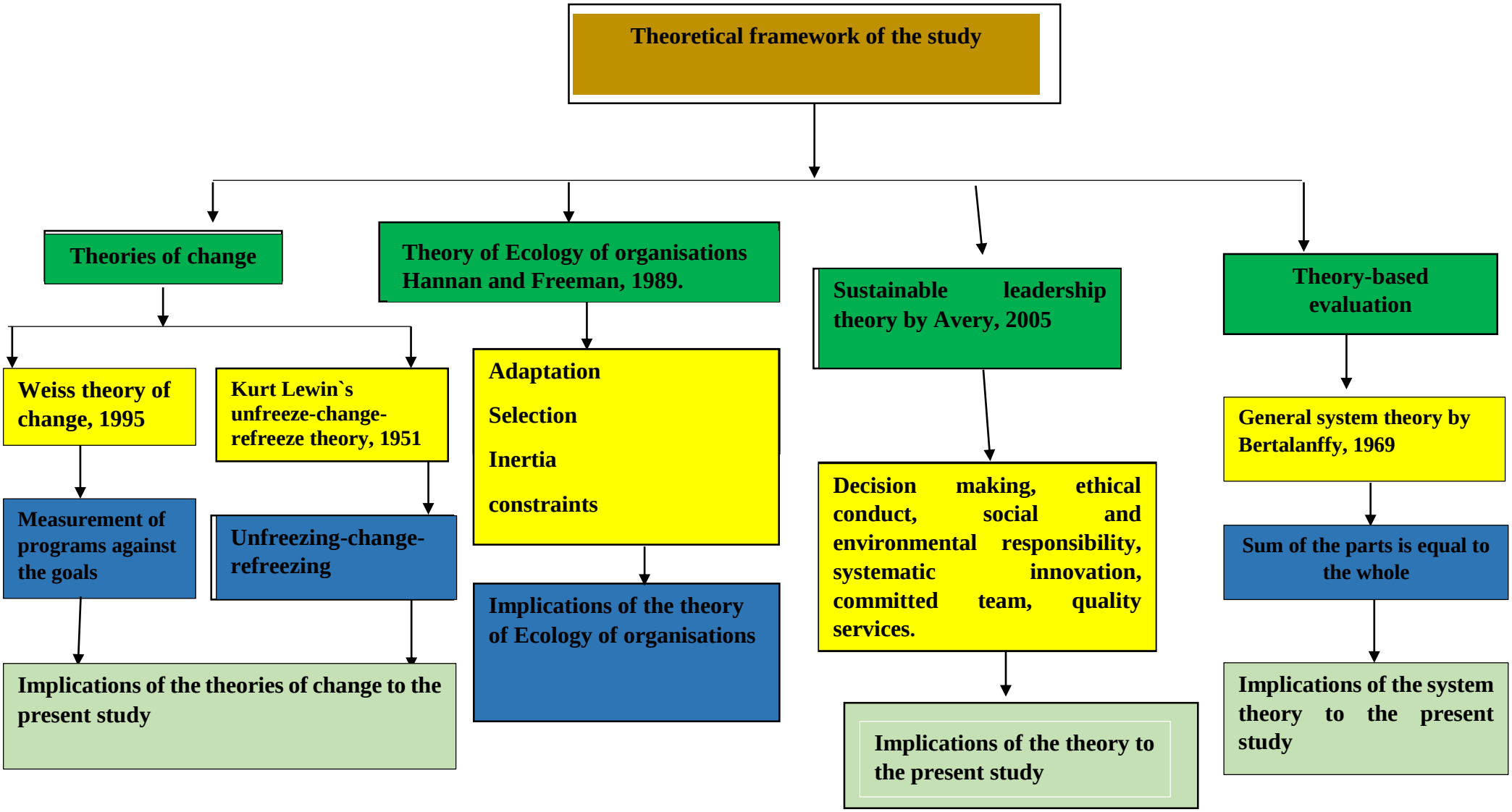
- What happened?
- Why? (the story behind what happened)
- What do these results matter and what next?

Evaluation of projects and programs open the way for project improvement. This means that the results of evaluation benefit the immediate project as well as enhance future initiatives through lessons learned. Evaluation equally permit to identify the contribution of each of the project team members to the realisation of project objectives. It also permits the consideration of the needs, interests, and expectations of the various key stakeholders.

Theoretical Literature Review of the Study

The theoretical framework in the present constitutes a structure which helps to understand how the research questions are formulated by analysing the impact of the preparatory groups or classes in the training of candidates for higher school`s competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon. To better analyse this impact, the present study is informed by the theories of change of Carol Weiss, and Kurt Lewin as well as the theory-based evaluation more specifically the general system theory by Bertallanfy, Ecology of organisation theory by Hannan and Freeman and Avery's sustainable leadership theory.

Figure 44: Theoretical framework of the study



There are several reasons for conducting evaluations, but from a general perspective, evaluation can be done to exercise control and enable learning and enlightenment, that is; for strategic, tactical, symbolic or constitutive reasons (Dahler-Larsen, 2013). Project evaluation in a relevant endeavour for a number of reasons (Svejvig & Hedegaard, 2016). Project evaluation is an explorative endeavour aiming to develop a better understanding of projects. Project evaluation is also a directive endeavour, aim at improving and optimizing projects and programs. Project evaluation can be ex-post; at the end of the project, mid-term to correct and ex-ante in advance to prioritise between alternative projects as well as project feasibility (Harri, Linzalone & Schiuma, 2015).

Therefore, the theoretical framework in this study constitutes a structure which helps to understand how the research questions are formulated taken into consideration the different criteria of project evaluation which includes; effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability of projects. In order to understand the process of project evaluation, theories of change model constitute the focal point for the discussion in this study. The theory based approaches are equally convoked to provide a clear understanding and the discussion of the results of the findings.

Theories of change

Change is crucial for modern days' organisations especially in growing and highly competitive and dynamic business environments. A theory of change describes how effective an organisation can be in modifying their strategies, objectives, goals, processes and structures within an organisation or a project framework. A theory of change is a purposeful model of how an initiative such as a policy, a strategy, a program, or a project contributes through a chain of early and intermediate outcomes to the intended result. Vogel (2012) defined a theory of change as an "ongoing process of discussion based analysis and learning that produces powerful insights to support program design, strategy, implementation, evaluation, and impact assessment communicated through diagrams and narratives which are updated at regular intervals". Jones (2010) stated that developing a theory of change normally involve carrying out some analysis of the forces which have the potential to affect any desired outcomes.

Carol Weiss (1995), seen by many as the pioneer of the theory of change argue out that the theory of change is an explicit process of thinking through and documenting how a program or intervention is supposed to work, why it will work, who it will benefit (and in what way) and the

conditions required for success to take place. Jones and Rosenberg (2018) argues that a theory of change is typically (but not always) developed in the design phase of the project development and it is built on evidence, beliefs and assumptions. This is why Reinholz and Andrews (2020) states that a theory of change is a diagram or written description of the strategies, actions, conditions and resources that facilitate change and achieve outcomes. It has explanatory power in that it should states out clearly why individual believe that a particular action will lead to particular outcomes. In project management and evaluation, bringing about change is a crucial aspect since it is an initiative which is goal oriented. As such, all the modern day's organisations are required to evaluate their activities to see what has been done and what still need to be done in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Therefore, the theories of change appear to be indispensable in project evaluation for the only reason that a project is initiated to spark change in the society. Church and Rogers (2006) believe that the usefulness of the theory of change in evaluation cannot more be underrated. To them, evaluating a project, a program, a policy, a strategy or an intervention requires a precise methodology and the theory of change offers this methodology to the practitioners.

History of the theories of change

Pundits, commentators and evaluators believed that it is extremely very difficult to trace with exactitude when and where and by who the term "theory of change" was first used. Some are of the view that the first scientific work which led to the used of theory of change can be traced as far back as in the 1950s thanks to the work of Kirkpatrick on "Four levels of learning evaluation". But the term theory of change came to lamplight through the work of American researchers such as Carol Weiss, Huey Chen, Peter Rossi, Patton and Michael Quinn. Weiss is regarded as the pioneer of the theory of change. This is because she popularised the used of theory of change in both project, program, strategy, policy evaluation. To Weiss (1995) any intervention in the society need to be evaluated. She went ahead to emphasise that evaluation is a crucial part of every modern business and non-business organisations especially in a period characterised by business competitiveness.

The discovery of the CIPP model (context, input, processes and products) by Daniel Stufflebeam and the widely used logical framework model (Logframes) which lays more emphasis on inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes coupled with long term goals explain the necessity of a theory of

change. However, James (2011) argue that US writers such as Weiss, Chen, and Patton increasingly highlighted the challenges in evaluating complex social or community change programs when it was not clear precisely what the programs had set out to do or how and therefore difficult to evaluate whether or how they had achieved it. This implies that the theories of change according to theorists such as Weiss, Kotter, Lewin, Chen, Patton, Rossi in very crucial in evaluating social initiatives in the society.

The first organisation who began to focus on these issues was the US based Aspen Institute and its Roundtable on community change. The initiative of the Roundtable at the Aspen Institute led to the publication of the book entitled New Approaches to Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives, in 1995. In the book, Carol Weiss, a member of the Roundtable Steering Committee on Evaluation, hypothesised that a key reason complex programs are so difficult to evaluate is that the assumptions that inspire them are poorly articulated. She went ahead to argue that stakeholders of complex community initiatives typically are unclear about how the change process will unfold and therefore give little attention to the early and mid-term changes that need to happen in order for a longer term goal to be achieved. Carol Weiss equally advocated that the absence of clarity on the mini-steps which must be taken to achieve a long term goal not only makes the task of evaluating a complex initiative like a project or a program very challenging but also reduces the likelihood that all of the important factors related to the long term goal will be addressed (Carol Weiss, 1995). This study therefore made used of three principal theories of change developed by C. Weiss, Kotter and Kurt Lewin model of change theory.

Carol Weiss theory of change, 1995

Carol Weiss, a US writer is seen as the pioneer of the theory of change. She believed that monitoring and evaluation are crucial in today`s society. To her, the purpose of evaluation as a process "to measure the effects of a program against the goals it set out to accomplish as a means of contributing to subsequent decision making about the program and improving future programing" (Weiss, 1972). Weiss popularised the term "theory of change" in the early 1990s. Carol Weiss defined the theory of change as a way to describe the set of assumptions that explain both the mini-steps that is susceptible of leading to the achievement of the long term goal and the connections between program activities and outcomes that occur at each step of the way (Weiss, 1995). Weiss based her discussion on the fact that stakeholders and designers of complex

community programs and projects must be specific about the theories of change guiding their initiatives and equally suggested that doing so would automatically improve their overall evaluation plans as well as strengthen their ability to claim credit for outcomes that were predicted in their initiatives. She further emphasised that stakeholders should "lay out the sequence of outcomes that are expected to occur as the result of an intervention, and plan an evaluation strategy around tracking whether these expected outcomes are actually produced" (Weiss, 1995). Her interest in evaluation was basically to examine the goals that the program itself promulgated. The ultimate goal of evaluation is to promote decision making as it ensures a drastic change in the future of a program or a project. The contribution of Carol Weiss in the development of the theory of change is very visible. It is believed that since the publication of Weiss`s book, the use of planning and evaluation using theories of change has greatly increase among researchers, project and program managers, philanthropies, government agencies, international NGOs, the UNO as well as a lot of many other organisations in both the developed and less developed countries. With Weiss, the theories of change have strengthened monitoring and evaluation of complex interventions. The theories of change have also provided an opportunity to understand and assess impact in difficult areas to measure such as governance, capacity strengthening, as well as institutional development.

The theory of change advocated by Carol Weiss (1995) is based on the assumptions that many programs are difficult to evaluate because they are poorly articulated. To Weiss every steps in an intervention is as important as the first and the final step. As such, evaluators need to look at the mini steps if they want to achieve the long term outcome. She sums her discussion in four steps considered to be indispensable when evaluating a program or a project.

Kurt Lewin`s "Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze theory of change, 1951

Change is one of the shared strand that is experienced in all organisations irrespective of the size, age, technology or industry. The ecosphere is fast shifting requiring organisations to adapt instantly to change. Kotter (2012) argue that organisations which succeed in adapting to the change succeed well while those who find it difficult to adapt tend to struggle. The successful management of change strongly depends on the type of individual involved, the change being pursued and the activities runs by the organisation (Riches, Rankin-Writght, Swain & Kuppan, 2017). Kurt Lewin developed the theory of change in 1959. His theory is seen as one of the pillar theories which helps

individuals and organisations to better understand and adapt to change in the environment (Kritsonis, 2005). The theory is commonly branded as the "unfreeze-change –refreeze" theory that describe the three phase procedure of change (Lee, 2006).

Burnes (2004) render Kurt Lewin`s theory of change more explicit. He argues that if someone has got a big ice cube and then recognises that they do not need the cube but the ice cone, the very first step of what to do is to liquidity the ice to make it responsive to any necessary change (unfreezing). Secondly, one needs to make this ice water to the desired shape (change) and lastly one needs to coagulate this new different shape that has been made (refreezing). Kurt Lewin theory is based on three basic assumptions which are unfreezing-change-refreezing.

The unfreezing is the initial phase of the change progression. The existing situation bas to be disrupted before any change initiative be implemented. Cummings, Bridgman and Brown (2016) describes this as the contravention of the current situation before building up a different operational way. The change according to Kurt Lewin is the transition phase. It is believed that it at this point that individuals began to understand the change process and start looking for different ways of operation. They start behaving and acting in a manner that will support the new program. Levasseur (2001) argues that time and communication are two important components that will drive change to take place successfully.

The third and last phase of Lewin theory of change is refreezing. This occur when the change has taken place to ensure that the new program can be sustained (Kaminski, 2011). This phase must be carefully handle if not the program will be short-lived. This is why Shirey (2013) argue that the external marks of readiness to refreeze include a steady organisational chart, reliable job descriptions etc. therefore, unfreezing-change-refreezing are basic assumptions on which the theory relies.

Implications of the theories of change to the present study

From the above views, the theories of change provide a whole of number of opportunities to evaluators that can influence the growth and development of modern day`s organisations. The theories of change in question are Carol Weiss (1995), and Kurt Lewin (1951). These expects in evaluation have addressed the issue of evaluation in organisation. They believed that every

business organisation required change. Based on the objectives and aims of the present study, the theories of change are instrumental for the following reasons.

The first implication is related to change. These theories help to reveal how change is necessary for all the organisations. Preparatory groups are non-formal educational projects equally known as business organisations. They operate in a very dynamic and competitive environment. Carol Weiss (1995) seen as the person who popularised the used of the theory of change in all the social and complex intervention believed that evaluation is paramount to the evolution of business and non-business organisations. Lewin (1951) on his own, argue out that change is a common process cherished by all the organisations. This is why to him; every change must start by unfreezing the original set up. The change therefore will occur once the old method is disrupted at the end of which they should be the refreezing of the new method to better the understanding of all. This will permit us to understand the importance of evaluation of the different preparatory groups.

Also, John Kotter`s eight steps change model (1996) equally lay more emphasis on the necessity of evaluating all the complex social intervention. Kotter believe that change is necessary for all the organisations. To him, in trying to bring about change, promotors of the different preparatory groups have to pay attention to a series of criteria. He called these criteria as the eight steps change model require to bring about change. This theory is relevant for the present study in that it provides some sort of methodology for the evaluation of the different preparatory groups.

Again, the importance of evaluation in business and non-business enterprises is not to be neglected. This is because the success or failure of an enterprise largely depends on the ability of the managers to bring about change. This change, focal point in the growth and development of modern day`s organisations cannot be initiated without first and foremost evaluation. Evaluation permit to know the present state of an organisation, to know the possible strengths and weaknesses of the organisation as well as identifies areas which need improvement. This is why Kurt Lewin`s Unfreezing-Change-Refreezing model is appropriate for the evaluation of the different preparatory groups in Yaounde.

Weiss (1995), Lewin (1951) and Kotter (1996), are therefore the different theories of change which will assist us throughout the study. The choice of the models of these evaluation experts is because although they all approaches changes in an organisation, each author tries to deal with a specific aspect of change which differentiate them. Their approaches will help us to understand the

necessity of evaluating all the social interventions. The theories of change are therefore important for the present study as it serves as guidelines and methodologies for evaluation of the different preparatory groups in Yaounde.

Michael Hannan and John Freeman Ecology of organisations theory (1989)

The ecology of organisations theory was developed by Hannan and Freeman in 1989. The ecology of organisations as advocated by Hannan and Freeman stipulates that the ecology of the organisation largely depends on the context and the environment in which the enterprise and its members operate in question. In this regards, Hannan and Freeman (1989) suggests that the means to sustain the environment, which is favourable for the organisation`s activities and operations need to be designed. Managers in an organisation are hereby required to set up a management system capable of enhancing productivity in the organisation and most importantly handling elements which may affect the success of the organisation. Hannan and Freeman in their findings adopted four principles guiding organisational ecology. This include;

- Adaptation principle
- Selection principle
- Inertia principle
- Constraints principle

Correspondingly, Hannan and Freeman (1989), cited by Frenken (2011) identify adaptation as the most important mechanism which provide the organisation with the appropriate opportunity to create a proper organisation ecology within a particular company. For them, adaptation is known as the flexibility and the dynamism of an organisation or a company which consist of searching the appropriate avenues for addressing a particular problem or challenge with a limited amount of resources (human, material, financial, temporal, and informational). Frenken (2011) insisted that the theory itself helps in identifying methods and ways through which the so-called organisational inertia can be addressed. This consist of obstacles and possible challenges which may blocks the way towards organisational adaptation. For Hannan and Freeman (1989) adaptation permits organisations to reach their goals. This means that if an organisation does not have the sufficient resources required for the best and efficient solution, one therefore need to find a less expensive way to achieve the expected results. The ecology of organisations as an organisational theory addresses the issues of efficiency and effectiveness. So, most effective and efficient organisations

find proper ways to perform adequately in an environment by developing adaptive strategies and focusing on the available resources instead of trying to impress.

Hannan and Freeman (1989) also argues that organisational inertia are obstacles and challenges which prevent organisations and companies from developing adaptation strategies. For them, the inertia in organisations can be physical plant, the organisation structure, employee's specialisation, insufficient or lack of managerial skills at the top level, as well as the history of the organisation which can leads to a particular culture and attitude. They emphasised that for organisations to be highly effective and efficient, the managers need to identify these challenges and consciously work towards their minimisation. This will provide the ground for organisations to effectively adapt to the changing environment.

Hannan and Freeman (1989) equally stated that the effectiveness of an organisation depends on its ability to select. This is because the success of organisations largely relies on its capacity to adapt to constraints by over performing under undesirable conditions.

Constraints are paramount to all organisations. Organisations faces challenges which can come from the internal and external environment. The company may not have the required finance for everlasting solutions, the people or raw material needed, external competition, and inadequate equipment. With this in mind, Hannan and Freeman (1989) argued that the role of the top management is therefore to develop mechanisms under which the organisation can operate and produce proper and better results irrespective of the constraints.

Implications of the theory of ecology of organisations to the present study

The theory of organisational ecology as discussed by Hannan and Freeman in their study helps to understand how organisations can do to perform effectively and efficiently irrespective of the resources available to the organisations. The ecology of organisations theory provides the foundation for companies of any kind to find proper solutions to organisational issues by using limited resources. This theory gives a global view of how efficiency and effectively can be jointly achieved in organisations. This theory will be very essential for us to better understand the efficiency and effectiveness of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates. This is because efficiency and effectiveness constitutes two important criteria in measuring organisational success. Since these groups evolves in the external and internal environment characterised by positive and

negatives factors, it will be very pertinent to see how adapting to the various constraints from the external and internal environment will improve the success of these groups. The theory of ecology of organisations as developed by Hannnan and Freeman will also permit us at the end of this study to see how the rational use of the resources will facilitate the achievement of the organisational goals and objectives. This will entails looking at the practices in the preparatory groups to see if they can permit the promotors of these groups to find best possible solutions to the problems faced.

Avery, G`s theory of sustainable leadership, (2005)

The desire to ensure "harmonious coexistence between man and nature" all along with environmental protection in a period characterised by heavy industrialisation, the concept of sustainable development has since become key in national and international colloquiums and conferences as it has always played a vital role in guiding global actions (Piwowar-Sulej et al., 2021). With the introduction of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development aimed at "transforming our world", issued by the UNO in 2015 has ushered a new era of sustainable development. Sustainable leadership as perceived by Avery (2005) is the product of the integration of sustainable development and leadership, which to him is a kind of leadership and management behaviour which aims to meet the needs of stakeholders and develop the core business of the enterprise, so as to create long-term values for all the stakeholders (Yaohua Liao, 2022).

According to Avery (2005) for organisations to ultimately take into account the needs of all the stakeholders, managers are required to establish the concept of sustainable leadership development, integrate it into the organisation and implement sustainable leadership attitude since the leader is key to the transformation of the organisation. Haegreaves and Fink (2004) and Avery (2005) were the first to use the concept of sustainable development with leadership to develop the theory of sustainable leadership. Since then, a number of scholars has explored the field. Avery (2005), cited by Yaohua Liao (2022) was the first to introduce the concept of sustainable leadership into the field of organisational management. He proposed a new concept of sustainable leadership based on comparing the differential impact of the two development models of capitalism, that is; the British American model and the Rhine model on the leadership style of managers. He summarised his approach into 19 elements.

Avery (2005) pointed out that sustainable leadership means having long-term decision-making skills, enhancing systematic innovation, developing a loyal and committed team, and also

providing high quality products, services and solutions to all the stakeholders within and outside the organisation. This is intended to balance the relationship between people, profits, and earth and promote the sustainability of the enterprise through corresponding management practices. Avery and Bergsteiner (2011a,b) subsequently identified four additional practices of sustainable leadership (self-management, trust, innovation and job involvement) which they integrated into the 19 initial elements to finally make a sustainable leadership framework of 23 elements.

The Avery`s sustainable leadership theory according to Yaohua Liao (2022) is divided into three levels. This consist of the Basic level practice, the high-level practice and the key performance drivers.

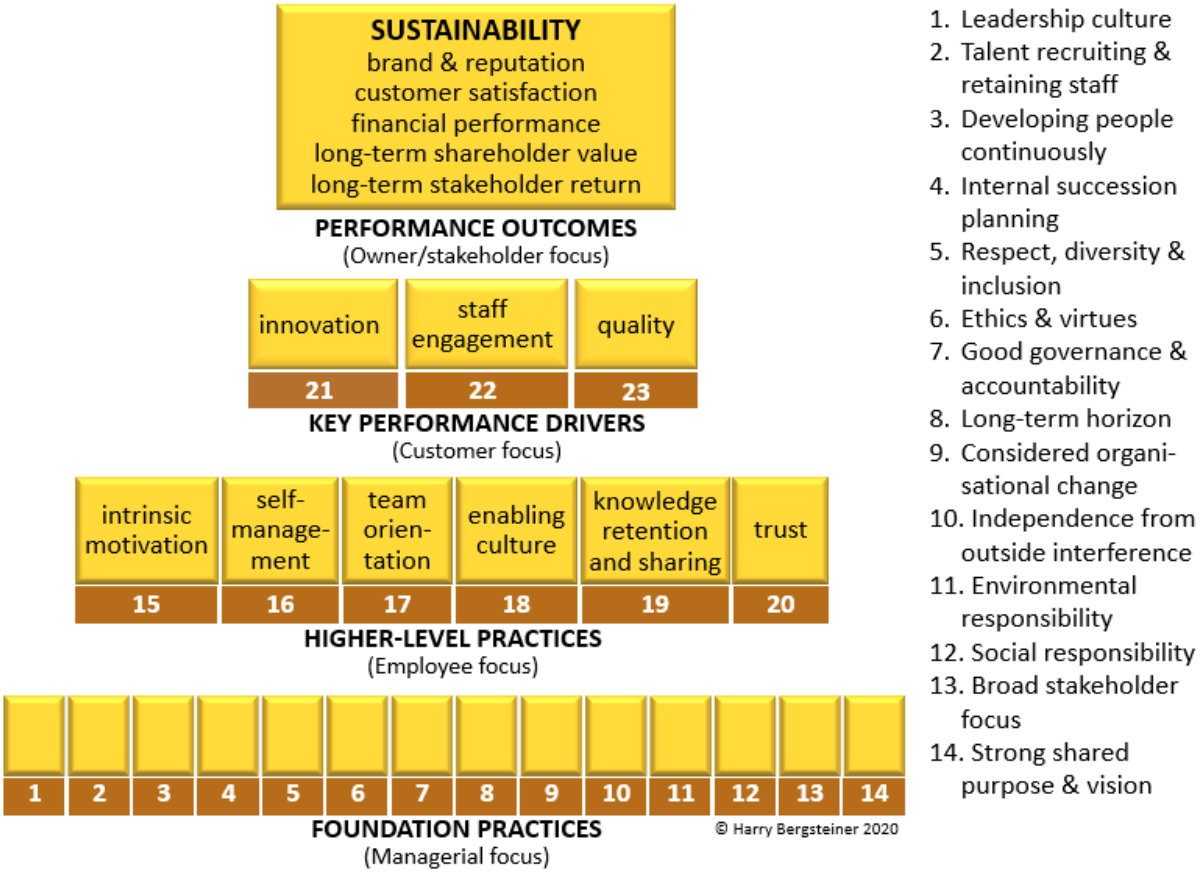


Figure 16: Pyramid of sustainable leadership by Avery

Source: Avery and Bergsteiner, 2011 a, b.

The basic practices of management are at the bottom of the pyramid. The basic practice comprises of 14 activities including continuous development of employees, cooperative labour relations, long-term perspective, stakeholder's responsibility, strong shared purpose and vision, environmental responsibility, leadership culture etc.

The high-level practice is situated at the second level of the pyramid. The high level practice consists of 6 elements which include; self-management, trust, intrinsic motivation, enabling culture, etc.

The last level of the pyramid is known as the key performance drivers. This consists of innovation, staff engagement and quality. All of this constitutes the sustainable leadership theory as developed by Avery (2005) and ameliorated by Avery and Bergsteiner (2011, a, b).

Implications of the sustainable leadership theory by Avery in the present study

The sustainable leadership of Avery (2005) addresses the sustainable practices an organisation can undertake to ensure the success, consistency and longevity. This theory is vital for the present study as it permits us to cut across the sustainability strategies developed in the preparatory groups in Yaounde to ensure their longevity. Basing on the fact that these groups operate as informal activities where most of them are not recognised, it generates a high level of competition among the shareholders and everyone is required to develop a sustainable mechanism to ensure the sustainability of their groups. The theory of sustainable will be very vital for the present study since it will provide us with a framework for understanding the various sustainable endeavours put forward by the promoters of the preparatory groups in Yaounde in particular and Cameroon in general. This will equally permit us to get an insight on how the careful implementation of the basic level, high level and key performance driver's practices as outlined by Avery (2005) will boast the rate of innovation, team engagement, leadership culture etc. in the preparatory groups.

Theory based-evaluation

Over the past decades, theory-based approaches to evaluation have increasingly becomes the mainstream of thinking and practicing how interventions (projects, programs, policies, strategies or initiatives) are designed, described, implemented, managed and evaluated. Theory-based evaluation has provided evaluators with relevant means to address the variety of challenges such as overcoming the complex nature of certain interventions as well as overcoming the limitations of experimental evaluation designs. According to Chen (1990), Weiss (1995, 1997), Rogers

(2007), Funnell & Rogers (2011), theory-based approaches to evaluation use an explicit theory of change to make conclusions on whether and how a program or a project contributed to the achievement of the set goals and objectives. These evaluators argue that the theory-based approaches to evaluation are a "logic of enquiry" which complement and can be used in combination with most of the evaluation designs and data collection techniques. For the purpose of the present study, the theory-based approaches to evaluation are therefore convoked in the framework of this study to understand the relationship between the context, mechanism and output in the various preparatory groups in the city of Yaounde. In this light, the system theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) is the theory-based approach to evaluation used in this study.

The General System Theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1969)

As mentioned in chapter one, the system theory was founded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, born on the 19th of 1901 in Atzgersdorf. He was a biophysicist and discovered the system theory in his effort to appreciate nature's development and system behaviour in biology in the 1920s (Dreck, Apfalta, Purvreau, 2010). The appreciation that an outcome is not explained simply by parts but that the relationships between and among those parts and their environment (context) are important eventually led to the formulation of system theory (Frye & Hemma, 2012). The system theory states that a system is a series of interrelated and interdependent parts interwoven such that any movement or action on one part affects the whole system. This holds on to Aristotle's dictum that "a whole is greater than the sum of its parts". This theory is one of the central theory of this work and it helps to explain how our independent variable (preparatory groups) functions in education as an open system. It holds that no single aspect or part of the system planned to enhance the system's objective is more important than the other. They all function fully to enable each other to achieve the stated objectives.

Furthermore, this theory states that a system is a series of interrelated and interdependent parts interwoven such that any movement, intervention or action on one part affects the whole system. According to Tanah (2015), a system is a unit with a series of interrelated and inter-dependent parts such that the interplay of any part affects the other. The basic idea here is that the parts of anything are so related and dependent that the interaction of anything affects the whole. In this light, the system theory affirms that the preparatory group as an open system is made up of different components, departments, and activities geared towards the attainment of the defined vision. All

these components must function as one, regarded as the same and important in realizing the vision. This view is shared with the fact that knowing one part of a system enables us to know something about another part (Kuhn, 1974). The goal of the system theory is systematically discovering a system's dynamics, constraints, conditions and elucidating principles (purpose, measure, methods, tools, and many others) that can be discerned and applied to systems at every level of nesting and in every field of achieving optimized equability.

Ludwig described two main systems, the close and the open system. A closed system is one where interactions occur only among the system components and not with the environment, while an open system is one that receives input from the environment and/or releases output to the environment (Walonick, 1993). The open system best describes the preparatory groups since every preparatory groups relates and interacts with other systems such as the economic, political and social systems in the society. The environment or society consists of other organizations that directly or indirectly exercise respective forces or influence on the economic, political, and socio-cultural nature or practices of the institution. The environment provides key resources that sustain the organization and promote change and survival while institutions supply the society or environment with goods and services. This theory is the one of the principal theory of this study. Its role in this study is primordial as it intervenes in both sections. Moreover, its description of the preparatory groups as an open system gives this research work logical support of the internal practices and their impacts out in the job market.

Implications of the general system theory to the present study

The system theory is relevant to the present study because the entire preparatory group set-up is a system and upholds the concept of interaction and interdependence of parts with the others are applicable. The top-down or bottom-up management styles equally yield in the system theory as it does with others, duties and responsibilities are shared according to different stages and domains that exist and make-up the parts of the system. The economic notion of division of labor also clinches on the reliability of the system. The closeness of the collaboration can improve output in any system. The preparatory groups as a social system has a series of properties such as the open nature, inputs, process, output, and feedback, the cycle of events, dynamic equilibrium, and differentiation. Within the system, both processes taking place, either on the management strategies, teaching-learning or evaluation, these characteristics come into play and enable the

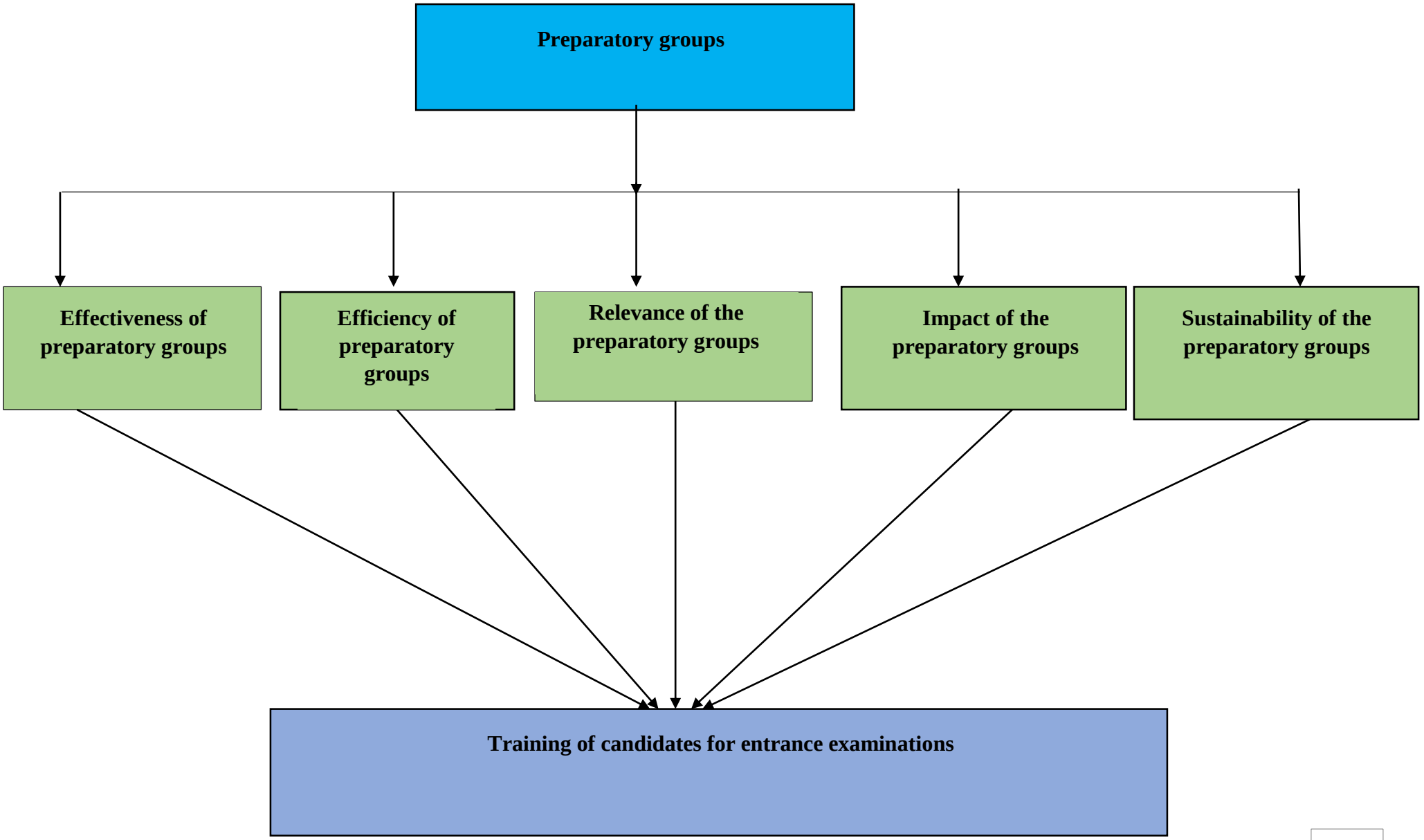
relevance of the process and further permit its interactivity. In managing an organization, different roles are carried out by different people in view of achieving stated goals and objectives. The system theory upholds that every aspect of part play by every individual in the management team is very important to keep the chain moving. This theory advocates that all parts must be given oppression advantages and empowered to function to its maximum to keep the organization in constant progress.

General system theory is relevant to the process of assuring the quality of the preparatory groups in different dimensions. Both external and internal quality assurance is a process that carries along with all the activities of the departments within the preparatory groups and all these activities are interrelated to each other. This interrelatedness strengthens the quality assurance process and enhances its ability to take on all the activities in each department to successfully assure the quality of a system. If all the departments are not assured, then the evaluation process will be biased and the quality of the output may not be balanced as expected. Any improvement in an activity due to quality assurance strategy will either influenced other activities negatively or positively depending on the state of those activities. For instance, if the quality of preparatory group`s infrastructure is enhanced and the quality of teaching is not improved as well, the general improvement will remain low.

Empirical Review or review of related Studies

The empirical literature of the present study shall be developed basing on the principal variables of the research topic. Taking the main variable, project evaluation, further operationalised to have the various constituents of project evaluation which includes, project effectiveness, efficiency, impact, relevance, and sustainability are the main modalities retained for the present study.

Figure 53: Empirical literature review of the study



Effectiveness of preparatory groups and training of candidates for entrance examinations

Olson (2008) in "*conflict related to effectiveness and efficiency in Norwegian rail and hospital projects",* argued that effectiveness is linked to doing things in a right way. To him, it is an external type of measurement. The project effectiveness therefore is the ability of the process to satisfy the requirements, objectives, and priorities related to clients in a construction industry. Samset (2003), in "*project evaluation – making investment succeed",* effectiveness measures the realization of the project1s purpose, aim, objective, or the project`s long term consequences. The effectiveness of a project has to do with the degree of achievement of the predefined objectives and goals of the project. This consist of looking into it that the intervention achieved the predefined objectives of the project. It is seen as the extent to which the intervention or action achieved or is expected to achieve its goals and objectives. Project effectiveness criterion assist in understanding the degree to which an action is achieving or has achieved its goals and objectives. According to OECD (2002), project effectiveness provides an insight to whether an action, a task or an activity has attained the planned results/outcomes, the process through which it was done, the decisive factors in the process as well as unintended effects. Olsson (2006), considers effectiveness as the measure of the long-term effects of the project and as performing the right things. OECD (2000), argue that the effectiveness criterion in project evaluation permit practitioners to ask questions such as to what extent has the objectives of the project been achieved? The project effectiveness criterion equally seeks to determine the factors that influence the realization or non-realization of the goals and objectives of the project (Davis, 2014; Mir & Pinington, 2014). According to Ika et al., (2012), the most common indicator used in evaluating project effectiveness is "how well the project`s product satisfies users` need". The efficiency and effectiveness project evaluation criteria are also recommended by the OECD to evaluate international development projects and programs (Chianca, 2008). These two criteria focus on the evaluation of objectives, outcomes and processes of a project.

The definition of project effectiveness includes a number of key concepts such as achievement of objectives, the varying importance of the objectives, results, differential results and also understanding the factors susceptible of influencing the outcomes. The focus of the achievement of the objectives is to determine whether an intervention has achieved the predefined objectives as well as the expected results.

Efficiency of preparatory groups and training of candidates for entrance examinations

In a study conducted by Arazi Idrus, Mahmoud Sodangi and Mohamad Haq Husin "*Prioritizing project performance criteria within client perspective*", journal of Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology, (2011), in Malaysia, the results show that quality of finished projects, construction cost and construction time are the three most valuable criteria considered crucial by the respondents for evaluating project performance from current practice in Malaysia. The results of this study further reveal that quality of finished projects, construction cost and construction time are the most important performance criteria given high priority by clients in evaluating the performance of construction project.

For Olson (2008) in "*conflict related to effectiveness and efficiency in Norwegian rail and hospital projects",* efficiency is related to producing direct outputs and effectiveness is related to the additional value for owners and clients. Eikland (2000) in "*Teoretisk analyse av byggeprocesser",* efficiency linked efficiency in a construction project to the cost and time used. High efficiency therefore implies that the project uses a minimum resource, time and cost to produce specific results in a project. According to Ngacho & Das (2014), Xu & Yeh (2014), and Dvir et al., (2006), as quoted by Haass and Guzman (2019), project efficiency is a means used to measure how economic resources and other resources are converted to tangible and desired project`s outcomes or results. Samset (2003), on his part defines efficiency as the degree to which project outputs have delivered as planned and in line with the budget. It may happen to be cheaper, quicker and with better quality. According to OECD (2000), efficiency is a measure of ratio between inputs and the outputs. Youcef, et al., (2015), argue that the term efficiency signifies the act of using least costly resources possible in order to achieve desired outcomes and results. OECD (2000), suggested some considerations by asking the following questions: were the activities cost-efficient? Were the objectives achieved on time? Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives? The efficiency criterion makes use of indicators such as scope, time, cost and quality (Zidane et al., 2012). The project efficiency criterion equally indicates whether or not the project met its schedule, budget as well as quality metrics. It is necessary for any project manager to evaluate the use of resources in project in order to avoid the wastage of resources. Thus, the efficient criterion in project evaluation ensure an efficient use of available resources.

Love and Holt (2000) in *"the propagation of rework benchmark metrics for construction aimed at developing a series of benchmark metrics for the causes and cots of rework",* the study reveal that

most organizations should learn to accept to accept the rework as part of their operation. The study included two construction projects performed by the same contractor using different types of procurement methods. The results reveal that on the design part, the rework occurs when the activities and materials order are not similar to the original contract thereby making it difficult to be realized on the agreed time. On the construction side, one of the factors which may cause rework might be a simple mistake by the worker such as installing a door incorrectly.

Othman (2006) in a study "*forging main and sub-contractor relationship for successful projects"* the coordination from all parties involved is essential for the achievement of project success. He believed that having a good connection and understanding as well as collaboration between the parties involved (client, main contractor and subcontractor) is very important in achieving project success and avoiding disputes and misunderstandings which might escalate into legal actions against each other.

The empirical review on the efficiency of projects reveal that for projects to be successful, project clients, main and sub-contractors are therefore required to perform a number of tasks. They are required to objectively and optimally use the project resources to make sure that the project is delivered on time, using required budget and respecting the quality pre-established.

Relevance of preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations

Samset (2003), while discussing on the relevance criterion point out that it is the overall assessment of whether a project is in harmony with the needs and priorities of the owners, the intended users as well as other attested parties. According to Haass and Guzman (2019), project relevance is equally known as business success. The relevance of the project as an evaluation criterion is concerned with the wider organization or institution (the firm, consortium, government), sponsoring the project, and its long-term viability (Ika et al., 2012; Mulller & Turner, 2007; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007). Mir and Pinnington (2014), McLeod et al., (2012), Shao et al., (2012), as cited by Omid Haass and Gustavo Guzman (2019), argues that this criterion considers the accomplishment of strategic objectives and benefits as well as the impacts on the markets and competitors, business development or expansion, and the ability to react to future opportunities and challenges. Davis (2014), and Maylor et al., (2006), on their side equally argue that this criterion takes into consideration the project team gains, learning, motivation and lessons learnt which can be applicable to the ongoing or future projects. Evaluating the relevance of a project

permit the project manager and project team members to identify the importance of the project to the project stakeholders, sponsors, customers and beneficiaries.

Impact of preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations

Still according to Haass and Guzman (2019), project impact as a criterion of project evaluation refers to the direct and indirect, as well as primary and long term effects produced by a project, which can either be intentionally or unintentionally (Ika et al., 2012). According to OECD (2000), impacts are the positive and negative changes produced by a development project either directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This criterion basing on recent studies (Ngacho & Das, 2014; Ika et al., 2012; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007), assesses whether the results achieved by the project address the needs, problems and issues of key stakeholders including project investors, sponsors, contractors, customers, and project team (ibid). the impact criterion extends beyond the project predefined goals and objectives and even address the long term impacts. This is because project impact criterion is more subjective since it deals with the achievement of strategic goals of the organization and the impact on the project team which at times are hard to be evaluated specifically and quantitatively.

Sustainability of preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations

Danish and Senjyu (2020) in "*Green building efficiency and sustainability indicators. In green building management and smart automation", argued that* sustainability goes beyond basic statistics and has to cover multi-dimensional aspects. These dimensions include energy production, distribution, delivery, consumption and also consider technological efficiencies, the pillars of sustainability are economic, social, institutional, technological and environmental. For Dobrovolskiene (2018), sustainability is a harmony of economic, social and environmental aspects. According to Muller and Turner (2007), this criterion is related to the extent to which the project`s results maximize inter-generational welfare and maintenance of the environment, rather than solely maintenance of the economy productive base (Ngacho & Das, 2014; Ika et al., 2012). Youcef, et al., (2015), stated that sustainability of a project questions whether the benefit of a project will continue once the sponsors and investors ceased to fund the activity. Tatikonda and Rosenthal (2000), and Ika et al., (2012), on their part argue out that the sustainability criterion is mostly relevant in development projects that deals with a range of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political concerns, which most of the times happens during the

implementation of project as well as after the completion of the project. The sustainability criterion falls under the subjective approach in project evaluation. Sustainability as a criterion of project evaluation permit project practitioners to ask questions such as: to what extent did the benefits of a project continue after the donor funding ceased? What were the major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project? (OECD, 2000; Samset, 2003).

Gap in the existing literature

Shadow education, commonly known as a supplement to the formal education or organise education, provides the most needed assistance to candidates preparing themselves for both entrance examinations into advanced schools of training as well as for job placement in the country. The preparatory groups, though focus on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into some prestigious institutions of the country is recognised as an aspect of shadow education. Recent studies reveal that shadow education, private tutoring, private coaching, etc. is a phenomenon which is not only common to developing countries like in Asia and Africa, but also to the developed world like Europe and America. Li (2012) and Berger (2012) argues that the phenomenon of training candidates for entrance examinations into prestigious schools and "Grandes ecoles" is recognised and well documented in countries like France, U.K, U.S.A, India, Korea, Japan, China, Germany, and so on.

In France for example, Chaudron (2009) argues that preparatory groups are known as "Prepa-Concours". He further argues that they are recognised institutions known under the appellation of "SARL" or "SA" enterprises. Similarly, Buisson-Fenet and Draelants (2010) argues that these groups are legalised institutions recognised by the education system which in return ensures their sustainability and survival. This practice has greatly gain countries in these countries for the simple reason that many families sees the prospect of succeeding in a competitive entrance examination into a "Grandes Ecoles" as a laudable achievement. Correspondingly, Paton and Graeme (2012) in their study, argues that this activity is known as "Preps Classes" in the United Kingdom. They are recognised institutions which provides extra-academic follow-up to students and candidates nationwide. This is because the grade system previously used for the grading of candidates and students has greatly lost its values. This is due to the fact that some families seek illicit means to ensure the success of their peers (Paton & Graeme, 2012). As such, the instauration of competitive entrance examinations as the only way through which candidates can be selected has call for the

need for candidates to recycle themselves before going in for these examinations. In the U.S.A, students are also required to prepare themselves before sitting for the SAT examinations.

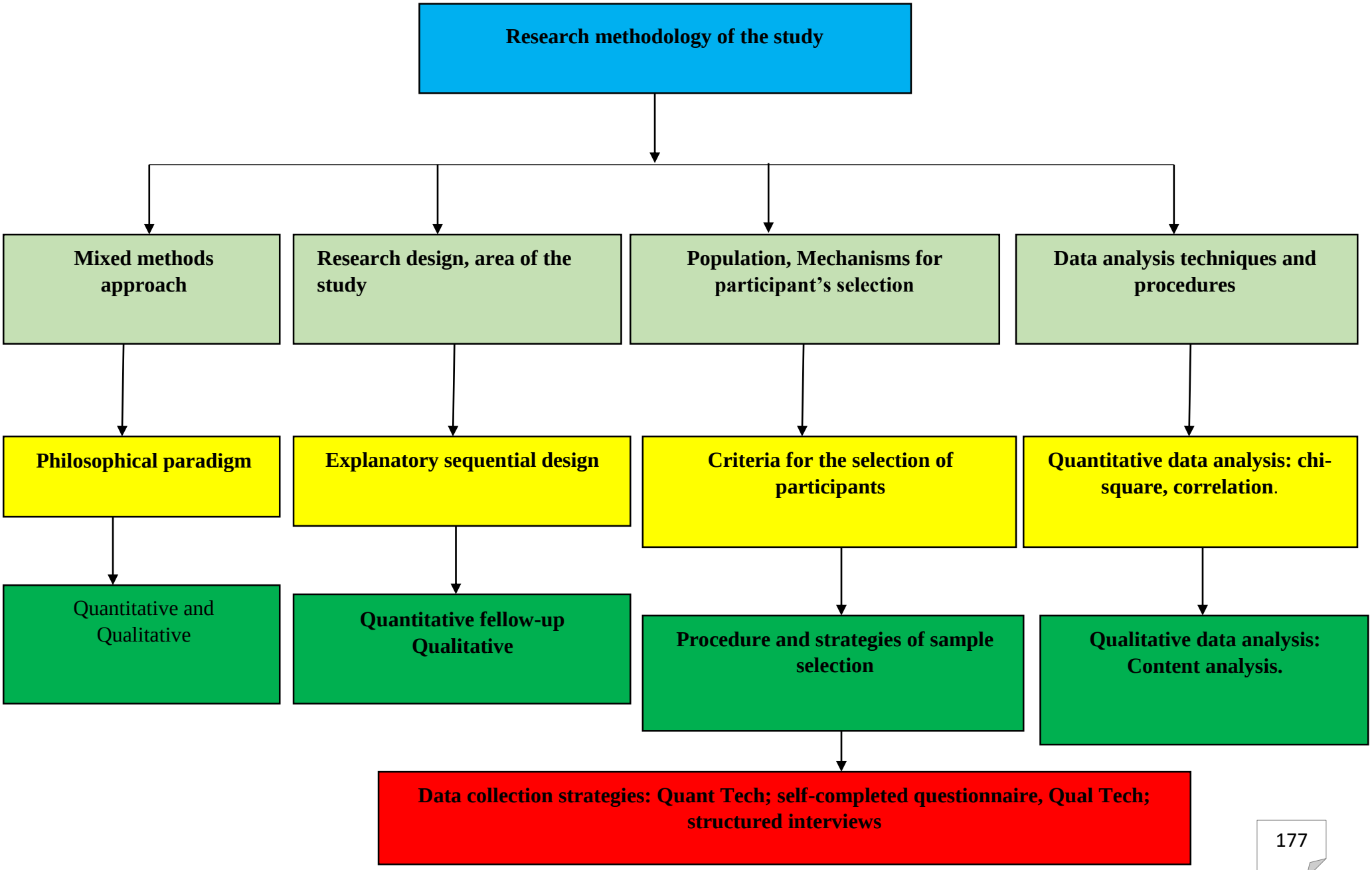
While the practice of training candidates is a common phenomenon in developed countries like Britain, France, U.S.A, Japan, Korea Republic, China, etc. especially for privileged families, the story is quite different in Africa in general and Cameroon in particular. A considerable number of studies identified on shadow education explores the phenomenon out of the Cameroonian and even the African context. This is to say that in Africa in general and Cameroon in particular, little or no literature exist on this practice. It is observed that the activity of preparing candidates for entrance examinations into advanced training schools occurs in the informal sector and it is purely in the hands of private individuals. These individuals motivated by the desire to make a living out of this practice creates these groups which at times operate illegally. Basing in mind that this activity falls in the informal sector which in majority of sub-Saharan countries are neglected, little or no work is conducted to document this activity. For this and many more reasons, the present study sets out to fill the gap in the existing literature as far as the activity of training candidates for entrance examinations is concern in Africa in general and Cameroon in particular.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

This chapter provides a discussion of the methodological approach adopted in the present study which is an exploratory research design based on the inductive approach. Crotty (1998) argue that a better understanding of the research methodology in a scientific work consists of the choice of appropriate approaches before starting any practical decision. This choice entails the theory of knowledge, philosophical stance, sampling strategies as well as the techniques of data collection and data analysis used in a research work. For Creswell (2013), the choice of a good research method is based on personal experiences. That is, the researcher must be familiar with one of the approaches including quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. For the present study, a mixed research approaches (quantitative and qualitative) is adopted.

Figure 17: Overview of the research methodology of the study



Research methodology

According to Crotty (1998) cited by Mukuna Kanaga (2016), a good understanding of the research methodology in a scientific exercise consists of the choice of the appropriate approaches, before starting any practical decision. This has to do with the theory of knowledge, the philosophical paradigm, the sample strategies and procedures, data collection and data analysis techniques as well as the validity and reliability of data collection instruments. The choice equally includes the criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of participants and also the ethical considerations of the study. For Creswell (2013), the choice of an appropriate methodology should be based on personal experiences, which requires a certain degree of familiarity with at least one of the research approaches. That is; qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. For this reason, the choice of a method or an approach largely depends on the knowledge and experiences one has accumulated over time concerning a given research method.

Therefore, considering the aim of the present study and the desire of the researcher to get more insights on the studied phenomenon, a mixed methods research approach was adopted as the research method for the present study. The choice of a mixed methods research approach simply indicates the willingness of the researcher to provide a deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon by both analysing quantitative and qualitative data collected from the field from the participants to get the meanings they give to their world.

Area of the study

The present study is conducted in Yaounde, the central region and the political capital of Cameroon. The city is a cosmopolitan city inhabited by both French speaking and English speaking Cameroonians from different geographical, and socio-cultural background. The region comprises of 10 divisions which include; Haute-Sanaga, Lekie, Mbam-and-Inoubou, Mbam-and-Kim, Mefou-and-Afamba, Mefou-and-Akono, Mfoundi, Nyong-and-Kelle, Nyong-and-Mfoumou, and Nyong-and-So`o. The city is situated on a hilly, forested plateau between Nyong and Sanaga rivers in the South-Central part of the country. The population is estimated at approximately 1.801,000 in 2010 and 4.159,500 in 2015 (Neba, Aaron, 1999). The city is located at about 700m above the sea level, which is surrounded by hills, swamplands and small streams. In the North West of the city is the Mbam Minkom mountain (1295m), and the Nkolodom mountain (1221m) and in the South West, by the Eloundem mountain (1159m). The city has a municipal lake which is located

near the administrative centre. In a general manner, the climate of Yaounde is an Equatorial Guinea type marked by four different seasons. The annual temperature of the city is about 23.7^0c. The precipitation is about 1747mm each year (Fanso, 1989). The city is a French metropole which is equally inhabited by different groups of people from different socio-cultural background. It is a cosmopolitan city characterised by pacific co-habitation between the autochthones and the halogens. According to UNESCO and United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the degree of literacy is estimated at about 88%. Bilingualism is a reality in the city (Ngoh, 1996). Park (1990), states that the territorial, cultural, and economic association plays an important role in the preservation of linguistic and cultural heritage of the city. Simonin (2008, p.74), argue that the city follows a socio-historical patterns, in respect to a well-defined socio-spatial morphology. The economic activities are visibly in the formal and the informal sector.

This study thus, was conducted in two areas that is Mfoundi division and the Mefou and Afamba division, specifically in Soa zones. The Mfoundi division was considered since most of the preparatory groups are concentrated there probably because it is the administrative head quarter with a number of professional schools, universities, private training institutions and provides job opportunities. The availability of the public and private universities, professional institutions, job opportunities and even the presence of a considerable number of students around this area has led to the concentration of these groups in this particular division especially in Yaounde III sub-division. Equally, the fact that there is the presence of public secondary and primary schools in the locality which provide these groups with a conducive environment where classes can be held also explain why these groups are present in Yaounde III sub-division. Thus, the population of the study came from some of the preparatory groups which constitutes our case study. The study side was extended to Soa because of the presence of a state university and professional schools and in the area. The groups and the participants for the study were selected basing on the different criteria set by the researcher. This was intended to avoid a situation whereby the data collected could be subjective and bias.

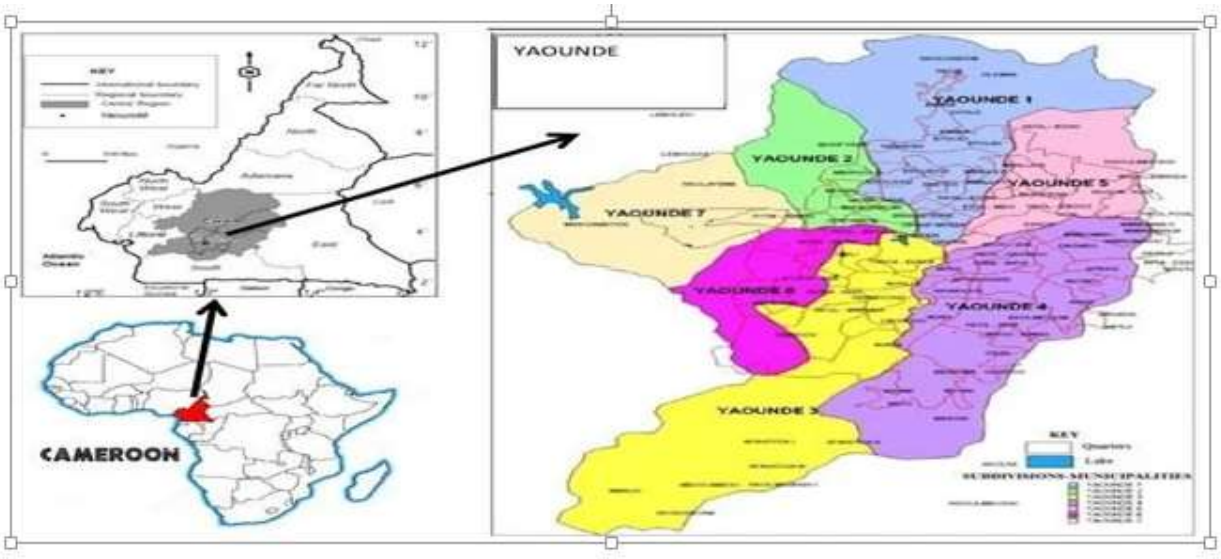


Figure 18: Description of area of study

Source: Adapted from Google Maps.

Research design

Kerlinger (1986) defined research design as the plan and structure of investigation so conceived in order to obtain answers to the research questions, the study strategy and the plan by which the strategy is to be carried out. The research design embraces the methodology and procedures employed by a researcher to conduct a scientific work. Different types of designs can be used in mixed research such as exploratory sequential design, explanatory sequential design, embedded design, and convergent parallel design. A better understanding of research methodology process in any study must include the choice of approaches before starting any practical decision (Crotty, 1998). Based on the aim of this study, the mixed methods approach was adopted to provide a deeper understanding of the effect of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for advanced school`s competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon by employing an explanatory sequential design.

Explanatory sequential mixed method research design

The present study adopted the explanatory sequential mixed methods research design so as to capture both distinct quantitative data in the first place and then explain the quantitative results with an indebt follow-up by qualitative data (Creswell, Clark, Gutman & Hanson, 2003). In the quantitative phase of the study, the researcher collected data on the different criteria of evaluating the performance of the preparatory groups. In all, four criteria were selected which for the

researcher significantly determine the performance of the various preparatory groups or classes. These includes; effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability. In the second phase (qualitative), data was collected using face to face structured interviews. The findings from each method was not meant to contradict the results of the other but instead to complement the results of each other to further get more insights on the studied phenomenon. Thus, the quantitative approach became the principal research method while the qualitative approach was simply employed to complement and add more meanings to the quantitative results. In the end, both methods permitted us to make more informed judgements and conclusions.

Mixed methods approach

Over the past decades, mixed methods approach have become the most renounced concept in the scientific world (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) in a study took the pain to define mixed methods research as a research design based on the philosophical assumptions as well as a method of inquiry. In the same light, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2004) argued that mixed methods is a type of research where the researcher mixes or combines the qualitative and the quantitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or language in a single study. Creswell (2008) further insists that mixed methods research is a procedure for collecting, analysing and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of a research process in a single study so as to better understand a research problem. Johnson et al. (2007) pointed out that both qualitative and quantitative methods are juxtaposed to provide a more elaborated understanding of the problem studied and also to gain more confidence in the conclusions drawn from the study. The mixed methods approach was employed in this study for the following reasons. It is believed that mixed methods are very rich in nature and also provide an insight on the studied phenomenon. It also provides more consistent data as well as answer the question of validity. In this method, findings are triangulated from two different methods using different techniques.

Because of the following advantages of the mixed methods research all along with the possibility of enabling a better and deeper understanding of a research problem (Creswell & Clark, 2007), a mixed methods research approach was adopted by the researcher in this study, in which both the qualitative and the quantitative methods are complemented (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The mixed methods approach appears to be the appropriate method to study the phenomenon of the

preparation of candidates as it helps the researcher to do a complete evaluation of these groups in relation to the training of candidates for advanced school`s competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon. The adoption of this method was because qualitative or quantitative approach appears to be insufficient to develop multiple perspectives and a more complete understanding about the research problem (Klassen, Creswell, Clark, Smith & Meissner, 2012). The choice of the mixed methods approach for the present study is simply because it helps in the triangulation of the findings, achievement of greater validity, as well as obtain mutually corroborated results (Brayman, 2006), improve the usefulness of each method, provide adequate information (data) as well as a better understanding of the research problem. All of this give room for the researcher to conduct an indebt analysis of the training of candidates by the preparatory groups in Cameroon.

Philosophical paradigm in mixed methods study

Morgan (2007) argues that over the past decades, scholars, researchers and experts in social science research methodology reflected the word paradigm as a central concept in research process. According to Fossey, et al., (2002) a paradigm refers to a system of ideas or worldview, used by a community of researchers to produce knowledge. Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) on their part argues that the concept of paradigm is associated with different philosophical assumptions. The word paradigm is viewed as a "mental model" that consists of "assumptions, understandings, predispositions, and values and beliefs with which all social inquirers approach their work" (Greene, 2007). For Creswell (2007) "a research paradigm approach specifies the research culture including a set of general philosophical beliefs and interrelated assumptions about the natural social world". Creswell (2007) further describes research paradigms as the lens through which the researchers view and interpret the natural world. Ng Ha (2011) states that the term "paradigm" is an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological perspectives and tools. Pundits and experts in the research community are of the views that paradigms treat consensus about which questions are more understood and which procedure of research methods are more adapted to answer the questions to the phenomenon, and to the specific community being studied (Morgan, 2007; Tuli, 2011). This therefore means that, a research paradigm is based largely on the epistemology which predetermines the type of research approach to be used, the research design, the methods as well as strategies and procedures that are suitable for a given study.

Based on the above meaning of a paradigm, this study adopted a paradigmatic stance in order to understand and gain more insight on the studied phenomenon. However, there exists multiple paradigmatic stances that can draw from more than one paradigm in a mixed study. These include complementary strengths strategies (Morse, 2013), the dialectical thesis (Greene, 2007), and the multiple paradigms thesis and a single paradigm stance (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The latter paradigm therefore determines the correctness of the choice of paradigm in mixed methods in this study.

Mixed methods as a method of research

A mixed methods approach is defined as a process of data collection, and analysis through the mixture of both the quantitative and the qualitative data in a single study (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The distinction as well as the definition of each of the method depends on the nature of data, the logic used, the research type, the analysis method, the approach to explanation as well as the presumed paradigm (Bazeley, 2004). Quantitative and qualitative research methods were combines in the present study.

Quantitative research method: According to Aliaga and Gunderson (2000), quantitative research is the explanation of phenomena through the collection of numerical data which are analysed by using mathematically-based methods more precisely statistical tests. This is why Maree and Pietersen (2013) highlighted that quantitative researchers require three most important elements in their study which are objectivity, numerical data as well as generalisability.

In the present study, the researcher measured the impact of the preparatory groups on the preparation of candidates for advanced school`s competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon. The adoption of the quantitative approach in this study was not for granted but instead as a result of the fact that the researcher wanted to be emotion-free and objective in his declarations. Equally, this approach or method was once again necessary for this study as it permitted us to cover a larger population size contrary to the qualitative method. The end result here being the generalisation of the results of the findings to the entire population come the end of the study.

Qualitative research method: The main aim of qualitative research is to capture, explore, understand, describe and represent participant`s actions and meanings through and in their own words (Kafle, 2013). According to Meriam (2009) qualitative research is the understanding of the

meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. This method of research is devoted to developing an understanding of human systems such as personal histories, gender, natural environment, belief systems, social class, school level, etc. (Kafle, 2013). Daley (2004) argues that these experiences are collected through an open-ended, unstructured approach. All the qualitative study is a process of inquiry which consists of reporting on the details of a phenomenon.

As such, the present study explores, understands and describes the impact of the preparatory groups in the training and preparation of candidates for higher school`s competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon. The adoption of this research approach besides the quantitative approach was aimed at collecting rich data using face-to-face structured interview guide on the studied phenomenon. This research approach was not aim to contradict the findings of the quantitative approach but instead to permit the researcher to enrich the findings by adding more meanings to the quantitative results.

Sources of data

Data are raw information which has not yet been processed. Data is indispensable in every study. In this study, the data was gotten from two main sources including primary and secondary sources of data.

Primary source of data: The primary source of data refers to first-hand information collected by the researcher from the field. They are the original data collected from the field and analysed by the researcher to provide answers to the research problem. The data was mainly obtained from the participant`s responses to a self-completed questionnaire and a structured interview guide which was conducted on one-on-one. The primary source of data serves as the principal source of data for the study.

Secondary source of data: Apart from the original data collected from the field which constituted the main source of data, we equally made used of the secondary source of data in the course of this study. This consisted of the documentary research which helped to elucidate the researcher on the various research questions. This type of data refers to data collected by another person or researcher which only help to shed more light on the studied phenomenon. To Lindstrom et al., (2010) this kind of previously collected information is not case specific but it can be relevant to the studied problem. LeCompte and Preissle (1993), cited by Merriam (2009) argued out that

artefacts are “symbolic materials such as writings, signs, and non-symbolic materials such as tools and furnishings”. The use of the symbolic and non-symbolic materials in a scientific study is intended to provide the researcher with an insight on the problem he/she want to address. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) “when someone stands in the library stacks, he is, metaphorically, surrounded by voices begging to be heard. Every book, every magazine article represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist`s informant or sociologist`s interviewee”. In the various books, journals, newspaper and articles, people converse, announce positions, argue with a range of eloquence, as well as describe events and scenes in ways entirely comparable to what is seen and heard during fieldwork.

Secondary source of data was therefore an important element in the realisation of this research project. The secondary source permitted us to identify the key debates, theories, point of views and the existing evidences on the problem addressed. The information which constituted the secondary source were gotten from web sites, books, articles, journals, newspapers, magazines, laws, degrees, PhD thesis and Masters dissertations. These were indispensable in the realisation of this research project since it provided the researcher with information necessary to better elucidate the problem addressed.

Procedure for data collection in mixed methods approach

In the mixed methods research, data collection is an on-going process which consists of the identification of the population of study, the sample size, the sampling technique, as well as the definition of the various criterion for the inclusion and exclusion of the participants of the study. It equally consists of identifying the strategies and mechanisms for the collection of data.

Population of the study

In order to prepare for a convenient research description, we ideally identified the population of the study. This permitted us to select a sample size appropriate for the study. It all started with the identification of the targeted population as well as a clear definition of the population. Gilbert (2008) defines a population of study as the totality of objects in the real world in which researchers are interested. Zibran (2007) states that a population of study does not need to be large to count as a population. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) define population of study as the total collection of elements about which we wish to make some inferences. Brinker (1998) on his part, defines the targeted population as a large population from which a sample population is selected.

The population of the present study consisted of all the stakeholders in the various preparatory groups in the Yaounde. All the various preparatory groups in this locality served as our population of the study. The researcher opted to work with all the groups who willingly expressed their desire to participate in the inquiry because these groups though they are many, the participants are not quite many.

In order to have a substantial sample size which could be considered appropriate, it was essential for the researcher to work will all these groups. This was advantageous to us because we did not have to locate and work with only candidates or personnel from a particular group, but instead work with anyone who, in one way or the other have been involved in this activity. In these groups, this study targeted mainly the promoters, the administrative staff, the teachers and the students that are in the system and out of the system (candidates). Candidates in the system are those who are undergoing training at the moment when we went for the fieldwork and candidates who are out of the system are those that have been trained by these groups and who are in the professional schools. The reason why the researcher opted to work with various component of the targeted population was aimed to collect the views of everybody and to be objective in our declarations and judgements. Since it was not easy for us to know the total population that constituted the targeted population, we proceeded by selecting a sample size deemed appropriate from the various preparatory groups in Yaounde that constituted our case study.

Targeted population

The targeted population in a research work generally refers to a portion of the total population sharing the same characteristics. In the work of Onen (2020) a target population refers to a smaller portion of the population drawn from the total population having the same characteristics as the total population. The reason for always selecting a target population in a research work lies in the fact that it is practically impossible for the researcher to work with everybody and as such, it is advisable for a researcher to narrow the population of study to the target population.

For this reason, the present study targeted all the preparatory groups located in Yaounde III subdivision and also some groups in Soa subdivision. These areas where retained for this study because of the fact that the majority of preparatory groups are located around there. The presence of State`s and private universities, higher institutions and advanced schools accounts for the concentration of these groups in these areas.

Accessible population of the study

Onen (2020), argued that the accessible population can be defined as the portion of the target population to which the researcher has reasonable access and from which sample can be drawn. The accessible population provides us with necessary information required for the selection of the original sample size of the study. For the present study, since it was very difficult or even impossible for the researcher to identify the exact number of participants in the preparatory groups, the researcher opted to work with all the participants who were present during the period of data collection. This was for the simple reason that these groups operate informally and they don't have an official checklist from which the exact number of the total, targeted or the accessible population could be known. This is why involving all the participants in the study was considered appropriate until the expected sample size was achieved. The accessible population therefore consisted of the promoters, the personnel (staffs and teachers), the candidates and the ex-candidates from the preparatory groups in Yaounde.

The field work was carried out during the month of July, August and September. These months were mainly targeted by the researcher because it is the only period of the year whereby the preparatory groups is crowded by candidates. During this period, it is easier for the researcher to meet the expected sample size. A total of 1337 participants manifested their desire to participate in the study. This consisted of the promoters, teachers, staff, and candidates and ex candidates, both male and female. This accessible population is distributed in the table below.

Table 2: Distribution of the accessible population of the study

Category of population	Population	Total
Promoters	33	**33**
Teachers	107	**107**
Staff	77	**77**
Candidates	1120	**1120**
Total	**1337**	**1337**

Source: Field work, 2024.

Sample size and sampling techniques

A sample is a smaller group or subset of the total population carefully selected (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2010). A sample should be drawn and have the same characteristics of the broader

population from which it is selected (Gilbert, 2008). A population sample is therefore a selection of a specific group of people or events with diverse characteristics from a population to collect data on a phenomenon. The idea of selecting a sample in a research becomes necessary since the entire population cannot be studied because of a number of challenges among which we have language barrier, financial constraint, inaccessibility and time. Thus, it becomes inevitable for every researcher to select a precise sample for a study.

Sample size of the study

Merriam (2009) states that "within every study, there exist numerous sites that could be visited, events or activities that could be observed, people who could be interviewed, documents that could be read. The researcher thus, need to choose what, where, when, and whom to observe or interview". In qualitative research, the sample size is quite different from that of the quantitative research. The sample size in a qualitative study is based on the principle of theoretical saturation; that is when the next participant cannot not add something new on the data already collected. According to the original grounded theory texts, data collection should continue until there are no new discoveries, that is, saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Dey (1999) states that it is rare for data collection process to be exhaustive, therefore researchers should rely on how well their data are able to create a sufficient theoretical account or theoretical sufficiency. For the quantitative data, the researcher administered a self-completed questionnaire to 515 participants which were selected basing on the criteria of selection sets by the researcher.

For the qualitative data, Morse (1995) emphasised that sample size in a qualitative study is determine by theoretical saturation, the point at which new data appears to no longer contribute to the findings due to repetition of themes and comments by the participants. Clarke and Brawn (2013), Fugard and Potts (2014), Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) recommended that qualitative studies require a minimum sample size of at least 12 participants to reach data saturation. Creswell (1998) argue that sample size guidelines suggested a range between 20 and 30 interviews to be adequate. Patton (2002) shares the view that the interviewer or the note taker agreed that thematic saturation, the point at which no new concepts emerge from subsequent interviews.

For the present study, the quantitative sample size consisted of promoters, administrative staff, teachers, candidates and ex-candidates in the various preparatory groups that constituted our case study. We had to select the right persons that fulfil all the criteria of participation fixed from the

start of the study. The sample population was made up of eighteen (18) promoters, forty-five (45) administrative staff, seventy-three (73) teachers, three hundred and one (301) candidates and seventy-eight (78) ex-candidates both male and female purposively selected from the different preparatory groups which constituted the case study. In all, we retained 515 participants for this study. This sample size was deemed appropriate by the researcher for the quantitative part of the study. For the qualitative part, we selected 12 participants, including the promoters, the staff and the teachers were retained with which we carried out the face-to-face structured interviews to get their experiences and meanings they give to their world. This was intended to collect rich and quality data from the participants. Also, the results obtained from the structured interviews permitted us to cross-check the responses of the quantitative part.

Table 3: Sample size of the study

Participants	Population	Effective participants
Promoters	18	18
Administrative staff	45	45
Teachers	73	73
Candidates	301	301
Ex-candidates	78	78
Total	515	515

Source: fieldwork, 2024.

Procedure of sampling techniques of the study

The procedure of the sampling techniques consists of the process used by the researcher to recruit the participants for this study. Ross (2005) states that the selection of a sample from a defined/target population obligates a careful construction of a sampling frame. This helps the fieldworker or note taker to “take hold” of the target population without any need to worry about the contamination with incorrect entries or with elements associated with the excluded population (Ross, 2005). The procedure adopted by the researcher for the selection of sampling techniques in the present study involved a non-probability sampling techniques.

Qualitative and quantitative sampling techniques: The sampling techniques refers to the procedure use by a researcher in a study to select participants. In this light, the sampling technique adopted for this study is the purposive or non-random sampling technique. This sampling technique was considered to be appropriate for this study since it reduces the coast of the research, gave the research more efficiency and great flexibility of findings, it based on the subjective judgements (Latham, 2007). Latham (2007) states that the purposive or judgements sampling consists of selecting sample as it is judged in order to represent a similar characteristic of participants for the study. It is considered as a type of sampling technique through which particular setting, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices (Max-well, 1997; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Babbie (1990), Ross, 2005, and Frey, Botan, & Kreps, (2000), mentioned that the quality of the sample selected is based on the researcher`s own knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of research objectives. Regarding the objective of this study, a non-probability or non-random sampling was adopted to carry out the evaluation of the preparatory groups. With regards to the objective of this study, a purposive sampling technique (snowball sampling) and the convenience sampling technique were used as the techniques for the selection of participants for the study. Also, because the exact number of the various actors (promoters, staff, teachers, candidates and ex-candidates) are not known, this sampling method was necessary.

The convenience sampling refers to a sample which is selected basing on the availability of the participants or at the convenience of the researcher (Ross, 2005). The convenience sampling was ideally accepted for the study due to a number of advantages that it provided to the researcher. The fact that the researcher lives in the same area with the sample population made access easier and facilitated the data collection process. This sampling technique was beneficial as it economised time and money.

A quantitative sample size of five hundred and fifteen (515) participants were chosen through the convenience and judgement sampling who expressed their willingness to participate in the study. A sample size of ten (12) participants was selected for the qualitative phase with whom the researcher conducted the face-to-face structured interviews. The participants were selected from different preparatory groups around the Ngoa-Ekelle and Soa (Yaounde II) neighbourhoods which constituted our case study.

Criteria for the selection of participants for the study

The criteria for the selection of participants for this study were based on the conditions fixed from the beginning by the researcher for all the participants to fulfil before been eligible to participate in the study. The criteria for participant`s selection were inclusive. The following are the inclusive criteria predetermined by the researcher at the beginning of the study.

- Participants should be living not far from the locality that constituted our fieldwork.
- The participants should voluntarily indicate their willingness to participate in the study.
- Participants who were considered curious and open to discuss with the researcher on the topic addressed.
- Participants should be available at the time of conducting the interviews.
- Participants should be open and accessible.
- Participants must be candidates in the preparatory groups or ex-candidates of the preparatory groups.
- Staff and teachers should be active member in the preparatory groups.
- Participants should understand the purpose of the study and be ready to give necessary information.
- Ex-candidates should be only those who happened to work with any of the preparatory groups that constituted our sample.

All the participants who did not fulfil all the above criteria were excluded from the study. These criteria were fixed as a result of the fact that the researcher wanted to avoid any wrong entry or contamination with the wrong population.

Instrumentation and tools

Data collection instruments and tools constitutes the essential part of any research. the objectiveness of the data collected largely depends on the instruments and tools used in collecting them. So, it is therefore very essential to properly design data collection instruments in order to ensure the reliable and valid conclusions. According to Merriam (2009) “data are nothing more than ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment. They can be concrete and measurable as in an attendance, or invisible and difficult to measure as in feelings. There exist so many methods of data collection for a qualitative and quantitative research. The researcher

therefore has the choice to go for a combination of two or more methods or simply go in for a unique method".

In the present study, considering the nature of the research approach, the researcher opted for a questionnaire and a structured interview guide as the instruments of data collection for both quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The choice of these instruments for data collection was because the researcher wanted to understand deeply the studied phenomenon and to provide an opportunity to the participants to share their experiences as well as meanings that they give to their worlds or communities. Also, the willingness of the researcher to generalise the results at the end of the study equally explains why a questionnaire was used for data collection.

Quantitative techniques of data collection: For the present study, a self- completed questionnaire was administered to the sample population to collect data on the impact of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for higher school's competitive entrance examinations in Cameron. The questionnaire was constructed basing on the established guidelines for the construction of questionnaire is social and educational sciences. Below is the presentation and description of the questionnaire.

Description of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire is a data collection instrument mostly used to collect factual and perspective responses from the participants in a quantitative or mixed study. Fellows and Liu (1997) and Enshassi et al. (2010) argued that a questionnaire is a widely used approach for descriptive and analytical surveys used to find out the facts, opinions and views of the participants on a given subject. The questionnaire administered to the participants was a close ended questionnaire divided into four parts of seven sections. The construction of the questionnaire was done in a way that each question was clearly phrased to avoid ambiguity and checked for expression, objectivity and relevance to the problem investigated (Idrus, 2001; Foddy, 1993).

The first part known as the introductory part ensures the anonymity of the participant`s identity as well as the confidentiality of their responses. It focusses on the informed consent of the participants. It presents the researcher, outlines the aim of the study, and the informed consent of the participants. The second part concerns the demographic data. it provided information on the background of the participants. This part focuses on variables such as name of the group, status, age, gender, level of education etc. This consisted of 5 items. The third part reserve for the

independent variable is further break down into four sections which consists of the various sub-variables or modalities of the independent variable. The first section under this is focused on the effectiveness of the preparatory groups which items ranges from 1 to 10 (Q1 – Q10). Section two of the questionnaire under the independent variable focuses on the efficiency of the preparatory groups and the items ranges from 11 to 20 (Q11 – Q20). The third section under the independent variable centres on the relevance of the preparatory groups which consisted of 10 items, from item 21 to item 30 (Q21 – Q30). The fourth section of the questionnaire handles questions related to the sustainability of the preparatory groups which equally consisted of 10 items, ranging from item 31 to 40 (Q31 – Q40). The data obtained here permitted us to be able to evaluate the various preparatory groups. The fourth part of the questionnaire is reserved to the dependent variable. It provides information on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into professional schools in Cameroon. The items in this section of the questionnaire ranges from item 41 to 50 (Q41 – Q50). The direct mode of delivery/administering the questionnaire was used by the participants to enter their responses. Here, questionnaires were either given to the participants presently or via their emails. The use of emails to send the questionnaires to the participants was due to its relatively low cost and also the fact that respondents are given enough time to complete the questionnaire. The Linkert scale of measurement was the format used to record responses which ranges from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, to 4 = strongly agree.

The weighting of the questionnaire depended on the aim of the study. In order to achieve the objective of the present study, the questionnaire was weighted as follows:

- Strongly agree = 4;
- Agree = 3;
- Disagree =2; and
- Strongly disagree = 1.

Qualitative techniques of data collection: Interviews are seen by experts in qualitative research as the appropriate instrument for collecting data. it can either be structured or semi-structured interview guide. DeMarrais (2004) defined an interview as “a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study”. Interview can either be person to person or through focus group discussion. Merriam (2009) argues that both

person to person and group interview can be defined as a conversation but a "conversation with a purpose". Dexter (1970), cited by Merriam (2009) shares the same view.

This study made used of structured interview in the qualitative phase to collect data from the participants of the study. Interviews were deemed appropriate for data collection since the researcher seeks to get an insight of the participant`s experiences and meanings they attribute to their actions. The choice of interview as instrument of data collection was because close ended questions could not provide us with adequate and sufficient information on the studied phenomenon. This study opted for the structured interview guide as instrument for qualitative data collection.

Face-to-face structured interview guide

According to Quivy and Van Camenhoudt (1995) structured interview guides permit the collection of rich and valid data on the interpretation, perception and experiences of participants. Merriam (2009) argues that "this format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondents, and to new ideas on the topic". The structured interview guide permitted us to collect data on the studied phenomenon, its representation and interpretation through the participant`s experiences. Here, we employed face-to-face structured interviews as a method of collecting qualitative data. The interviews consisted of themes and sub themes which focusses on the participant`s views and experiences on the impact of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates in Yaounde. The essence of using themes and sub themes was beneficial in that it permitted us to probe on the respondent`s responses and be able to ask additional questions in order to have clearer and richer insights on the studied phenomenon. We ensured a logical sequence in the ways of interviewing the respondents and equally ensured that the interview took place in an appropriate and conducive setting that would permit participants to give accurate answers to the questions (Phellas, Bloch & Seale, 2011). With all the protocols respected, the participants were free to speak out their minds without being intimidated which in return gave us valid and reliable data.

Description of the interview guides

For the purpose of this study, a structured interview guide was designed to collect data from the participants. Here, the researcher selected a particular group of participants whom he thought could provide rich insights on the studied phenomenon. As such, the researchers essentially choose to

interview the promoters, the teachers and the staffs for the qualitative phase of data collection. These categories of the participants were considered to have a better mastering of the phenomenon under study. The interview guide starts with demographic information on the participants. This consisted of asking questions to the respondents on their background. The interviews equally seek the views of the participants on the management, organisation, structure, objectives and challenges faced by the preparatory groups. The structured interview guide was developed basing on the major themes and sub themes of the study. The themes addressed in the interview guide were efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability of preparatory groups and management of the preparatory groups. These themes were further break down into sub-themes and items. In all, the interview guide comprises of five major themes and a number of sub themes. The interviews were conducted in varied settings depending on the location of the participants. Interviews were conducted along the road where we met some participants doing advertisements and orientations while others were conducted in various classes and offices were we met the teachers and the students and equally the promoters. The interviews were one on one which permitted all the participants to speak out clearly their minds. The duration of the various interviews depended on the determination and devotion of the participant to contribute to the study. It equally depended on how vex the participant was with the themes addressed. In all, the interviews varied between 40, 50, to 60 minutes or even more than.

Tools of data collection

In mixed methods study, the researcher is required to use different tools in order to collect data. In the present study, the researcher opted for a questionnaire to collect quantitative data and a telephone to record the various interviews with the participants. Here, the choice of the telephone was simply because it was the first hand tool at our disposal and easy to manipulate. The telephone therefore was used to record all the interviews conducted with the promoters, administrative staff, teachers, in the preparatory groups while the questionnaire was used to collect numerical data.

Validity and reliability of instrument of data collection

In every scientific study, it is always essential to conduct a validity or reliability test in order to give room to the researcher to be familiar with the data collection instruments and the field so as to be prepared to resolve any potential difficulty that he/she might encounter in the course of conducting the study. For the present study, a pilot study was conducted to test the validity and

reliability of the data collection instruments. We equally used the face validity and content validity to test the instrument.

Pilot study as a method of testing reliability of the instruments

Pilot study, also known as feasibility study is a process whereby a researcher conduct a preliminary study aim to test the validity and feasibility of the data collection instrument. It is a comprehensive analysis as well as evaluation of a study or a project. According to Ries (2012) "a pilot study assists the researcher to determine whether a particular project is technically feasible within the estimated cost and whether it will be profitable to implement such a project". Van Teijilngen & Hundle (2001) and Polit, Beck & Hungler (2001) pointed out that the pilot study specifically uses the pre-testing of a particular research instrument including a questionnaire schedule. A pilot study is of paramount importance and there is a wide range of reasons for implementing a pilot study in a research project (Secomb & Smith, 2011; Arian, Campbell, Cooper & Lancaster, 2010; Zailinawati, Schattner & Mazza, 2006). Van Teijilngen and Hundley (2001) advance a number of reasons why researchers should conduct pilot studies before the principal studies. To them, pilot studies gives advance warning about where the researcher could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or where proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated. Herzberg (1959), and Leon, Davies & Kraemer (2011) suggested that the purpose of the pilot study is to test the feasibility of the research that is intended to ultimately be applied in a larger scale study. This explain why De Vaus (1993), argues that researchers should conduct pilot study to test the methods and the data collection instruments instead of taking risk.

In the present study, the reasons for conducting a pilot study are grouped into different principal groups that include process, resources, management and scientific reasons according to Thabane, et al. (2010). The process reason of a pilot study is to assess the feasibility of different phases to be carried out in the main study. The resource reason has to do with the assessment of time and cost that can happen in the main study. The management reason encompasses the human and data optimization issues such as personnel, availability of data, the time required to collect and analyse the data just to name a few. The scientific reason covers the assessment of treatment safety, the determination of other levels and responses, and an estimation of treatment effect and its variance and the challenges of personnel study (Thabane, et al., 2010). The pilot study therefore permitted us to be familiar with the field and equally identify possible challenges that might affect the main study. Thanks to the pilot study, we were able to modify and reconstruct the data collection

instruments. The pilot study was conducted on some of the selected preparatory groups in Yaounde having the same characteristics as the original sample size of the main study. The sample for the pilot study consisted of the promoters, administrative staff, teachers, candidates and ex-candidates from the preparatory groups. The pilot study equally tested the internal and external validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. It all started with the face validity from the supervisor before the fieldwork. The results of the validity and reliability test permitted us to carefully adjust the different instruments in order to avoid bias data.

Table 4: Distribution of the pilot study population

Preparatory groups	Participants	Total
Intelligentsia Cooperation	10	10
Kalata Group	11	11
Visa pour la reussite groupe	8	8
Prepa Vogt	12	12
Intellitgensia Cognitive	9	9
Total	50	50

Source: Pilot study, 2023

The data collected from the above participants was analysed to test the reliability of the data collection instruments. The results of the pilot study are seen in the following tables below.

Table 5: Results of the pilot test

Scale: All Variable

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	50	95.0
	Excluded[a]	1	5.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Pilot study, June 2023.

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 6: Cronbach`s Alpha

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.847	**50**

Source: Pilot study, June 2023.

For the pilot study, a total of 50 questionnaires were administered. The analysis of the data gotten from the pilot study permitted us to ensure the reliability of the data collection instrument. After analysis, a Cronbach`s alpha of 0.847 was obtained, which is good and strong. Basing on the results of the pilot study, we were able to make corrections, and adjustments on all the variables and modalities which appears to be ambiguous from the beginning. This result confirms the reliability of the data collection instruments.

Face validity and content validity

In order to test the validity of the instruments of data collection, the researcher equally used the face validity and the content validity. The face validity consisted of meeting the supervisor, reviewing the instruments and together carried out modifications and corrections. This permitted us to better construct our instruments of data collection. For the content validity of data collection instruments, it was all about making sure that all the modalities, indicators and indices of the studied problem was thoroughly explored in the various instruments of data collection. The face validity and the content validity was very essential to the researcher as it permitted us to carry out modifications and corrections of the data collection instruments.

Data analysis in mixed methods research

The process of data analysis in the present study consisted of the quantitative data analysis techniques and the qualitative data analysis techniques. The qualitative data was used to enrich the quantitative data. in other words, it was used to explain the quantitative data. it all started with the quantitative analysis, descriptive and inferential analysis followed by the thematic analysis as a qualitative method.

Quantitative techniques of data analysis

For the quantitative data analysis, the researcher used the statistical tests more precisely the simple linear regression; descriptive and inferential statistics. This consisted of data screening and cleaning. Hellerstein (2008) argued that the presence of incorrect or inconsistent data can significantly affect the results of the analysis in a research. Thus, data screening is very important in quantitative study as it helps in the isolation of strange data to be adjusted in advance for further analysis (Fitrianto & Midi, 2011). Data screening in the present study consisted of capturing the data in Microsoft excel and using the Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS). This consisted of data cleaning, verifying the sources of errors, and accuracy, dealing the missing data and the testing of hypotheses.

- Data cleaning**:** Data cleaning is a major step in a quantitative study. Data cleaning is all about detecting and removing errors inconsistencies from the collected data so as to avoid bias and improve the quality of the data (Rahm & Do, 2000). As such, data cleaning in the present study consisted of eliminating all the unwanted data that were judged of being able of affecting negatively the quantitative results.
- Checking for sources of errors and accuracy**:** Hellerstein (2008) argued that it is useful to understand the sources of errors in data in the process of data analysis.
- Outlier detection and external values;
- Treating missing data;
- Testing the statistical hypotheses.

Descriptive statistics: In the present study, the researcher used descriptive statistics as the preliminary method of analysing quantitative data. The descriptive statistics was used to analyse all the datasets of the variables of the study. The focus of the descriptive statistics was basically for the frequencies distributions of the respondent`s responses. The descriptive statistics help the researcher to characterise the sample of the study. The descriptive statistics analysis basically consisted of calculating the means, standard deviation, and score range for the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of the preparatory groups and competitive entrance examinations. The descriptive statistics equally included participant's computation in terms of age, gender, group, level of education etc.

Inferential statistics: The testing of the hypotheses in the present study was done through the use of a statistical test more precisely the Simple linear regression analysis. This statistical test permitted us to draw conclusions basing on the results gotten from the data collected and analyzed. A correlation test between variables was conducted to establish the relationships between variables of the study. In this light, a Pearson correlation coefficient was carried out to determine the relationships between the variables and sub-variables of the study.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis: In the present study, the testing of hypotheses was conducted by using the simple linear regression analysis. Simple linear regression is a parametric statistical test used to determine the extent or the degree of relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable. The simple linear regression determines the linearity in relationship between the independent and the dependent variable and have a unit change in the independent variable will automatically affects the dependent variable. The simple linear regression is based on a number of assumptions which are: Homogeneity of variance, independence of observations, normality of data and linearity in relationship. The objective of the simple linear regression is to set up a linear equation which best predicts, estimates or describes the value of the dependent variable based on the change on the independent variable.

- Homogeneity of variance: this implies that the size of the error in the prediction doesn`t change significantly across the values of the independent variable;
- Independence of Observations: this means that the observations in the dataset were collected thanks to a valid statistical sampling methods, with no hidden relationships among the observations;
- Normality of data: the data gotten from the field follows a normal distribution; and
- Linearity in relationship: this means that the link between the independent and the dependent variable is linear, with the line of best fit through the data points being a straight line.

The equation for calculating simple linear regression analysis can be expressed as follows:

$$\mathbf{Y = \beta o + \beta 1\, X + \epsilon}$$

Where:

_ Y represents the dependent variable or the variable we want to predict or explain,

_ X represents the independent variable or simply the variable used to explain or predict Y,

_ βo is the y-intercept or simply the constant term, which represents the value of Y when X is equal to zero (0),

_ $\beta 1$stands for the regression coefficient, which represents a change in Y (dependent variable) for a one-unit change in X (Independent variable),

_ ϵ represents the error term, which account for the variability that cannot be explained by the linear relationship between X and Y, which stands for the independent and the dependent variable respectively.

Considering the object and the objective of the present study, the simple linear regression analysis was used to test the extent of the relationships between the independent variable (Preparatory group effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). Thanks to the simple linear regression analysis, the various research hypotheses were either confirmed or rejected. Simple linear regression was chosen as the appropriate statistical test for this study since the objective of the study was not to establish the relationship between the two main variables of the study, but instead to determine the extent or the degree of the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. The simple linear regression permitted us to assess the strength and the direction of the relationship between the dependent and the independent variable. This statistical test is thus, appropriate as it underlines the effect of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning.

Qualitative data analysis techniques

Merriam (2009) argue that "data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of the data involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher have seen and read – it is the process of making meaning". Qualitative data involves participant`s meanings (Ruona, 2009) generated through language and actions or mass of words that mostly resulted from transcribed interviews from tape to paper, observations, recorded listening tape (O`Connor & Gibson, 2003; Lacy & Luff (2012). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argues that "there are no objective observations" in a qualitative research but "only observations socially situated in the world and between the observer and the observed". Qualitative data analysis therefore is the process of organising and sorting data in light in order to increase

sophisticated judgements and interpretation (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, cited by Kafle, 2013). Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) state that "data analysis is a systematic search for meanings". According to Stake (1995), Ritchie, Spencer & O`Connor (2003), and Kafle (2013) the process of data analysis demands great interactivity and reflectivity in order to understand and interpret a phenomenon as well as a creative and intellectual engagement of interpretation. The aim of the qualitative data analysis is to understand the real thought and feelings of participants in certain situation or at certain point of time (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). In every qualitative study, data analysis consists of transcribing the tape to paper, coding the data, dividing the text into small units, assigning a label to each unit, and then grouping the data into themes, sub-themes and category (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The present study described themes such as effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability of preparatory groups in relation to the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon. This study adopted content analysis as a qualitative method of data analysis.

Content analysis

Content analysis is considered as the essential method for data analysis in qualitative research (Boyatzis, 1998; Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun& Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) defined content analysis as a tool for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes within data and it allow interpreting different aspects of research. Alhojailan (2012) and Braun & Clarke (2006) believes that the use of content analysis in qualitative research is beneficial for a number of reasons. Content analysis is very flexible as it can use both the inductive and deductive approaches in analysing and interpreting data. Kafle (2013) argues that in the inductive approach, abstracts and concepts are built from the data believing that themes identified closely emerge from the inspection of accumulated cases. Thematic analysis of data also allows the researcher to code and categorise the data into themes, sub-themes, and categories to facilitate interpretation. Content analysis therefore is a vital research analysis technique which provides rich and deep detailed information on the studied phenomenon. Content analysis demonstrate rigor in the analysis process. Content analysis is equalling known as content analysis. Content or thematic analysis therefore looks for deeper meanings where situations, styles, settings, images, meanings and nuances are key topics in a research study.

In the current study, the Content analysis provided the opportunity to the researcher to be familiar with the data, as well as gain an overview of the qualitative data by reading and re-reading the data since the identification of themes involved careful reading and re-reading of the transcribed interviews (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Rice & Ezzy, 1999). As such, the thematic analysis of data in this study takes into consideration some key factors such as familiarising with the data, organising the data, coding the data, identification of themes, defining and naming of themes and producing the final findings. The process all started with the transcription of various interviews so as to facilitate the reading and re-reading of data.

Familiarisation with the data: The first step in analysing the data consisted of getting familiar with the data. According to Bradley, Curry, & Devers (2007), familiarisation with data is very important in qualitative research since it helps the researcher to emerge themes without losing the interconnections between concepts and their context. The process consists of reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews, jotting down the initial ideas for the overall understanding in entirety (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Familiarisation with the data equally involves transcription of the mass words or generated data from interviews or observations (Lacy, & Luff, 2012). As such, familiarisation with the data collected from the field permitted us develop themes, sub-themes and categories. This at the end facilitated the data analysis process.

Organisation of the data: Data organisation is one of the important phase in the qualitative data analysis process because of the amount of qualitative data in the paper. Data organisation has to do with preparing the data for analysis proper. Huberman & Milles (1994) are of the view that "a valid analysis is immensely aided by data displays that are focused enough to permit viewing of a full data set in one location and are systematically arranged to respond to the research question at hand". This is why O`Connor and Gibson (2003) shares the view that it is thus, important to revisit the original research questions or even the interview guide and to discriminate between the questions which necessarily need to be answered and those that might be important but not very much relevant. In this light, O`Connor and Gibson (2003) continued by saying that a researcher can therefore look at new themes and ideas related to his or her study once the original research questions are cleared off.

In the present study, we started data organisation by opening a confidential research file for all the respondents. By doing so, each participant was attributed a code. Analysis then were organised

and displays in words, lines, sentences and paragraphs to facilitate the identification of concepts and themes. It provided an opportunity to look at each topic individually. This step was followed by the codification of data.

Data codification: Basit (2003) argue that generating relevant codes to the entire data as well as making sense out of themes is a crucial factor in the qualitative data analysis process. Herbarman and Miles (1994) refers to coding as the "stuff of analysis which consist in segmenting data with symbols, descriptive words, or paragraphs in categories and in labelling those categories with names (Creswell, 2003). Codification is therefore a process of creation of categories in relation to the data collected; the grouping synthesizing together of different instances of datum under an umbrella term that can enable them to be regarded as "of the same type" (Mukuna, Kananga, R. 2016).

A code in a qualitative study is a short hand designated often word or short sentence that symbolically represents a theme or a pattern, summary, salient attributed to a portion of transcribed interview, observation, field notes, documents or video data (Saldana, 2009; 2015; Kafle, 2013), cited by Mukuna Kananga, R, (2016). Boyatzis (1998), cited by Mukuna, K. R. (2016) states that a good code derives from data captured from qualitative richness of the phenomenon. He continued by saying that a good code should contain a label (name), theme concerned (characteristics of themes), themes occurred (indicators on how to flag the themes), qualification to identify the themes and both positive and negative aspects of themes in a conceptually meaningful way.

Once codification of data is done, the researcher is entitled to perceive and interpret the data based on the coding filters (Saldana, 2015). Merriam, (1998) and Saldana (2015) argues that the analysis and interpretation should reflect the concepts, language, models, and theories that structure the study from the beginning. Sipe and Ghiso (2004) argue that "all coding is a judgment" reason while the researcher brings in his or her subjectivity, personality, predispositions and coincidences to the analysis and interpretation process. In the present study, the data were systematically arranged in order to facilitate classification and categorisation. This permitted us to group data in categories with the same features.

Identifying themes: Themes identification is a very important step in qualitative data analysis process (Braun, & Clarke, 2006). In qualitative data analysis, themes are used for the sake of category, unit of analysis, patterns, domain and strategy. Themes emerges as the result of coding,

categorisation and analytic reflections of data and unified ideas relating to the topic of inquiry (Bradley, Curry & Devers, 2007; Saldana, 2009; Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), in Boyatzis (1998), cited by Mukuna Kananga (2016) mentioned that themes are referred to as patterns in the information that at minimum explain and organise possible observations and at maximum interpret aspects of the phenomenon. Themes identification in the present study proved to be indispensable since from the start, the study opted for an inductive approach. That is the identified themes emerge from direct data.

Defining and naming of themes: Defining and naming themes in a qualitative data analysis process is another step indispensable in this process. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that the naming of themes must be concise, succinct in order to give the sense of the themes. By doing so, the researcher at the end produce a thematic map which permit the description of each theme (Daley, 2004) and in which the number of themes are represented by the number of codes formed from each sub-themes (Hinton, 2013).

Presenting the final analysis and findings: Ryan (2006) argue that the final analysis or findings consists of the final report that emerged from the data after the analysis process. Mukuna Kananga (2016) on his part explain that the final report for analysis is very necessary because the findings require an evidence to convince the existing knowledge on the subject matter. He continued by stating clearly that this has to do with completion of the final analysis of selected extracts related to the research questions, literature and the production of the final results from the thematic analysis. Ryan (2006) believe that presenting findings in the last steps in qualitative data analysis process as it provides similarities as well as differences between the findings and also their theoretical importance.

Reliability and validity of qualitative data

Reliability in a research work is the consistency of the research instruments to produce one and the same result over and over again meanwhile validity is the ability of the instrument to measure the object of the study. Qualitative data analysis requires rigorous data analysis. This entails the researcher to carefully analysed the participant`s interviews to identify emerging themes and sub-themes in the study. In the present study, data was rigorously analysed as a checklist was used to determine the reliability and validity of the findings of the study. This was intended to avoid any

result bias and also to grab more insights from the meanings the participant's attributes to their world.

Trustworthiness of qualitative data

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), the trustworthiness in qualitative study requires the researcher to the credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of the results. The respect of these criteria permits the researcher to achieve trustworthiness of the results in a study. Since this part of the study adopted an interpretative approach, it was thus conceptualised to produce trustworthy results.

As such, credibility of the findings was restored by carefully examining the extent to which the findings make sense and how credible it is to the studied population (Roana, 2009). Rich insights and information was thus gotten from the participant`s interviews to understand the studied phenomenon. Regarding transferability of the results of the study, we can boast the fact that it can be transferred to other settings using the same theoretical framework as well as analysis procedures. The results of the findings are dependable and also conformed to the data collection and analysis procedures.

Triangulation of the results

According to O`Donpoghue and Punch (2003), data triangulation is a "method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data". this is intended to have a complete view and gain insights on the studied phenomenon. Existing studies has revealed that there are generally five types of triangulation. We have data triangulation (use of multiple sources of data), theoretical triangulation (use of multiple theories in a same study), methodological triangulation (use of more than two research methods in a same study), analysis triangulation (use of more than two methods of data analysis in a study), and investigator triangulation (use of more than two researchers in a same research). In the present study, the researcher attempted to triangulate the results of the findings. We made used of the data triangulation which consisted of gathering data from more than two sources to draw conclusions on the studied phenomenon. The purpose of data triangulation was to contradict the findings of each part of the study but instead to enrich the results of the findings. This helped us to better understand the studied phenomenon and to draw more informed conclusions.

Data interpretation in mixed research methods

According to Creswell et al. (2011), data interpretation in mixed research consists of stepping back from the detailed results and advancing their larger meaning in relation to the research problem and research questions of the study. Creswell (2006), argues that data interpretation in mixed approach seeks to compare the results of the findings with the initial questions that were asked and objectives that were set in order to determine the manner by which the research questions or even hypotheses were addressed in the study. The combination of both the quantitative and the qualitative methods in interpreting data in a research work is intended to provide a better understanding of the studied phenomenon. It gives room to the researcher to provide meanings to the experiences of the participants. In the present study, both the quantitative and the qualitative data was interpreted in line with the researchers understanding of the meanings the participant's attributes to their world. The purpose here was to be able to link the results as well as draw conclusions.

Ethical considerations in the study

Ethical considerations in research are all actions taken by the researcher to ensure the protection of the dignity of participants and the publication of results in the research (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). This is because research cannot be conducted by anybody and everywhere. Every research respect follows some ethical norms. There exists two principal dimensions of ethics in a scientific study (Guillemin &Gillam, 2008). This include procedural and practical ethics. Procedural ethics has to do with obtaining an informed consent from a relevant ethical committee especially when human beings are the subjects of the study. Practical dimension refers to everyday ethical matters when conducting the research and interacting with the participants (Mukuna, 2016). In a study where the researcher is dealing with individuals, it is important to understand and pay attention to ethical principles such as privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, protection from harm, voluntary participation, free consent and skills of the research (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011).

Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity according to Babbie (2005) describes privacy as the identities of the participants which must be protected. In the present study, the privacy of the participants was respected as the participants had the right to participate or not in the study. They were informed of the objective of the study and they were given the free will to withdraw from the study.

For the informed consent, the researcher before conducting the data collection process from the participants obtained an authorisation of research from the university of Yaounde I. Approval was also obtained from different promotors of the preparatory groups that constituted our case study before proceeding in collection of data. Research authorisation serve as a back up to the researcher and assurance to the participants.

All the participants were protected from harm. We made sure that the rights of the participants were respected during the one-on-one interview as the study to an extent dealt with a sensitive and delicate issue.

Free consent and voluntary participation was ensured to all the participants. Here, the researcher explained the objective of the study to the participants, ensured that they understood very well the topic before embarking on the various interviews. Participants were again and again informed that they could withdraw from the study any time that pleases them.

Evaluation model adopted in the framework of this study

Evaluation is an active component of change management. Evaluation is the act of assessing the impact of a project, a program, or an activity to determine whether the aims and objectives prescribe from the beginning has been achieved. A good number of scholars are of the view that there exist several evaluation models that can be used to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of a project, program or activity. The choice of an evaluation model depends on the type of the program, the goals of the evaluation, and the available resources. With regards to the type of program under evaluation as well as the goal of the evaluation, the present study adopted the logical framework evaluation model as the model of evaluation.

Logical framework evaluation model

The logical framework evaluation model is a visual representation of how a program, a project or an activity is expected to work. It outlines the program`s or project`s inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. The logic model is very useful as it clarifies the objectives and goals of the program and also identify potential challenges. This model provides the evaluators with a more informed visual representation of the program`s components, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. This evaluation model is used to help stakeholders understand the program`s theory of change, or how the program`s activities are expected to lead to the desired outcomes and impacts. The logic model is very essential as it can be used to guide the evaluation process by helping evaluators to identify

the goals and objectives of the program or project, the expected outcomes and also the possible indicators that will be used to assess the progress and success. This model of evaluation facilitates communication and collaboration among the program team, funders, and other stakeholders.

According to Kaplan and Garret (2005), "a logic model is a graphic display or map of the relationship between a programme`s resources, activities, and intended results, which also identifies the programme`s underlying theory and assumptions". For over 30 years now, the logic models have been used and are recommended in official evaluation guidance as a method to support robust evaluation (HM Treasury, 2011). The logic models according to Midlands and Lancashire (2016) are often used in theory-based evaluation, which is designed to explicitly articulate the underlying theory of change which shapes a transformation programme. Midlands and Lancashire (2016) stated that the "process of creating a logic model is considered to be valuable as it requires programmes to fully and clearly articulate vision and aims, thus introducing a more structured approach to evaluation, setting out a clear hypothesis to be tested. For Kaplan and Garrett (2005), and Hulton (2007), cited by Midlands and Lancashire (2016) the logic model help to build ownership, consensus and a shared understanding". Kaplan and Garrett (2005) emphasised that a collaborative approach acknowledges the range of different perspectives and facilitates communication in a more credible way and stating what it means for participants and stakeholders.

Components of the logic model

A logic framework model of evaluation incorporates the underlying assumptions which articulate how what you do (interventions and mechanisms) is susceptible of resolving the problems or satisfying the needs your program aims to satisfy (Gugui & Rodriguez-Campos, 2007). The components of the logic model are often expressed in a tabular format. This includes;

Inputs: The inputs are the investments a manager carried out in a project. Inputs are expressed in terms of resources. The inputs are indispensable for the success of an activity, initiative or a program/project. Here, we are making reference to resources such as funding (finance), staff (human) and materials which are required for the effective and efficient realisation of a program or a project. Thus, managers are therefore to possess the required inputs and equally to be able of managing the inputs to achieve the expected outcomes and results.

Activities: with the availability of the required inputs or resources, managers are then required to define clearly what are the actions they intend to carry out. The activities refer to specific and concrete actions or interventions that the program or the project will undertake to achieve its goals and objectives. With this in mind, the actions or interventions are thus intended to achieve the aims of the program by carefully implementing the various planned activities.

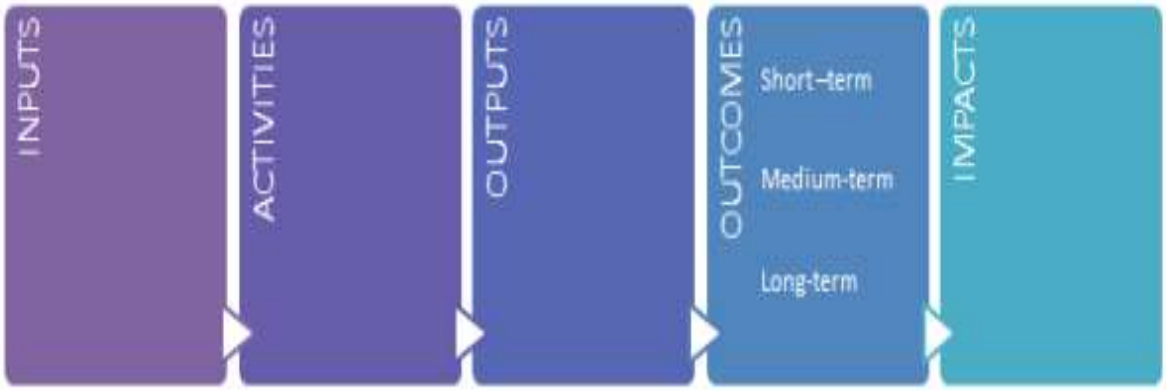


Figure 19: Components of the logic model of evaluation

Source: Mclaughlin & Jordan, 1999.

Outputs: Program outputs in the nutshell refer to the immediate results of the project or program. The outputs are the direct products or services which result from the program`s or project`s activity or intervention such as the number of people served or satisfied or the number of workshops held. Project outcomes thus tackles the issue of immediate effects or results of the project/program.

Outcomes: these are the immediate results produce by the project or program. The outcomes are often divided into three categories; that is; short term outcomes, intermediate outcomes and long term outcomes. For short term outcomes, we make reference to the immediate changes or benefits that result from the program`s outputs. This might be increase in knowledge or improve skills and competencies. Intermediate outcomes consist of changes or benefits which occur over a longer period of time as a result of the project`s short term outcomes. That is; changes in behaviour or attitudes. The long term outcomes thus, is the ultimate goals or objectives of the program. This may include improvement in health or reduction of poverty.

Impacts: the impacts of a project or program is the combination of the long term, intermediate and short term outcomes. Impacts are changes or benefits which arises as a result of the implementation of the program`s activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes. These are the broader

social or economic changes or benefits which result from the project`s long term outcomes. This might include improvement in the quality of life style or increase in economic growth.

Gugui and Rodriguez-Campos (2007) stated that logic models helps in supporting communication in setting out a clear argument for the programme. For Page et al. (2009) "the use of the logic model became a second language within the organisation, allowing for effective communication among programme staff and the evaluator". This indicate that logic model is an evaluation model which establishes the relationship between the various stakeholders in the organisation. Helitzer et al. (2010) argued that using a logic model consists of involving the evaluators in the beginning of the project or program. This therefore means that evaluation can be built around the vision and aims of the project which can be designed to facilitate formative (continuous) as well as summative (at the end of the project) evaluation (Midlands & Lancashire, 2016). Helitzer et al. (2010) and Reynolds and Sutherland (2013) argued that the use of logic model approach across a larger project or program offers a standardised approach to evaluation whilst allowing for flexibility for different approaches to suit different local contexts, which can help create a valuable evidence base, by establishing what works for which groups and in what contexts.

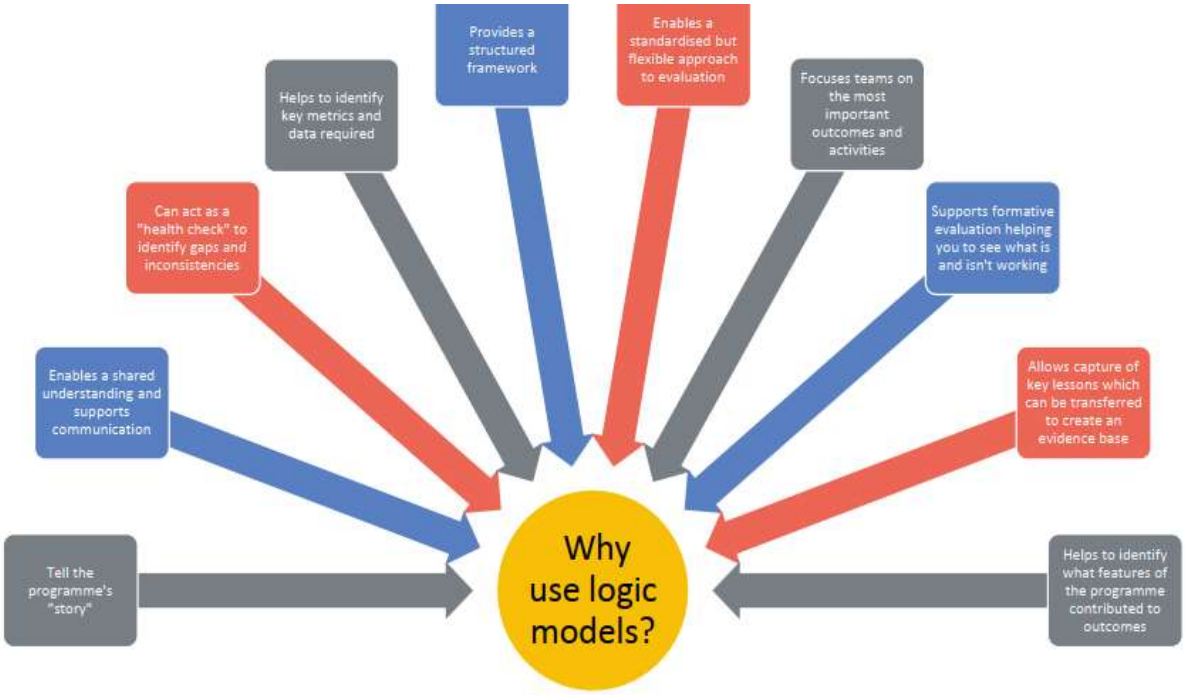


Figure 20: Benefits of the logic model of evaluation

Source: Midlands & Lancashire, 2016.

The logic model can be used to guide the evaluation process by helping evaluators identify the program`s goals, objectives and expected outcomes. This can also be used to come out with the indicators that will be used to measure progress and success. It equally helps stakeholders to understand the program`s theory of change and can also enhance communication and collaboration among the project team, funders and other stakeholders.

Identification of variables of the study

In a research, a variable is an element which does not have a fixed value but instead changes depending on the situations. They are two principal variables in a research work, that is; the dependent and the independent variables

Dependent variable of the study: A dependent variable in a research work is a static variable in a research work. The dependent variable is the effect variables. It occurs as a result of something. It is being influence by another variable. This is why it is being referred to as the dependent variable. In the present study, the dependent variable is: Preparatory groups.

Independent variable of the study: The independent variable in a research work is also known as the causal variable. It is the cause variable because it directly influences the dependent variables. The independent and the dependent variable studies the link of causality between two variables. The independent variable is one which is manipulated in a research work. In the present study, the independent variable is: the training/preparation of candidates.

Figure 21: Identification of the main variables and modalities in the study

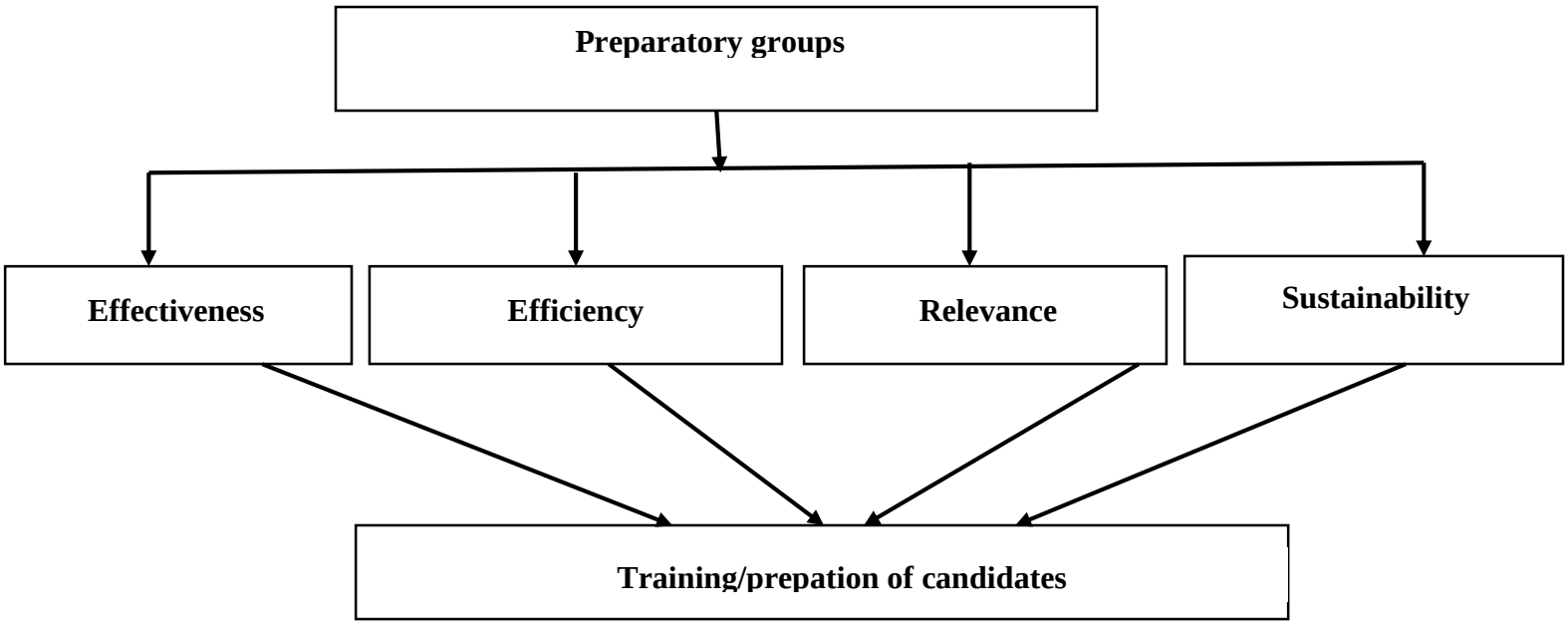


Table 7: Synoptic table of variables, modalities, indicators, items, hypotheses, instruments and data analysis techniques

General research hypothesis	Specific research hypothesis	Independent variable (IV)	Modalities	Indicators	Items	Dependent variable (DV)	Modalities	Items	Instruments of data collection	Data analysis techniques
Preparatory groups have a significant impact on the training of candidates for higher schools competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.	The effectiveness of the preparatory groups significantly influence the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.	IV1	Effectiveness of the preparatory groups	Organisational climate, achievement of objectives, organisational culture, admission rates, positive mind-set, 21st century skills, quality buildings	Q1-Q10	Preparation/training of candidates	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree	Q41-Q50	Quantitative data collection instrument ; close ended Questionnaire, Qualitative data collection instrument ; Structured interview guide. Observation guide.	Quantitative data analysis techniques ; Statistical data analysis techniques ; descriptive and inferential (Pearson rank correlation) statistics. Qualitative data analysis techniques : content analysis.
	The efficiency preparatory groups significantly			Staff incentives, cost effective,						

affects the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.	IV2	Efficiency of the preparatory groups	transparency, budget adherence, accountability, rationality, stakeholders involvement, timeliness, partnerships, didactic materials	Q11-Q20	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree
The relevance of the preparatory groups significantly influences the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.	IV3	Relevance of the preparatory groups	Candidate's satisfaction, competitive advantage, praises from the society, alignment with	Q21-Q30	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

			objective, qualified staff, career paths, orientations, equity, equality, employment, methodology.		
The sustainability of preparatory have a significant impact on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon.	IV4	Sustainability of the preparatory groups	Decentralised decision making, adaptation strategies, relationship with candidates, long term impact, corresponding manageme	Q31-Q40	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

nt practices, systematic innovations, long term decision, quality services, scale up,

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF findings

In the previous chapter, we focused our discussion on the research methodology, the research approach, the philosophical underpinnings as well as the procedure of data collection and analysis. The present chapter dwells on the presentation and interpretation of the data analysed through content or thematic analysis. It further presents the qualitative results generated from semi-structured face to face interviews, through the thematic analysis process. The chapter finally interprets the qualitative results making use of theories related to the study.

Quantitative results: Data Presentation and interpretation of findings

The present section of the study focusses on the data analysis, presentation and interpretation of the results of the findings. The data analysed are presented in tabular forms and the interpretation carried out with respect to the various research hypotheses of the study. The data is analysed by using both the descriptive and inferential statistics as seen below.

Presentation of the findings of Descriptive statistics

The data collected was analysed using the statistical data analysis techniques with the help of the SPSS version 22. Both the descriptive and the inferential statistics were used in this study. The present section focusses on the presentation of the descriptive statistics of the study. Here, the results are presented in tabular form. The descriptive statistics presents the responses of the participant in the frequencies and percentages distribution tables. In this distribution, the mean and the standard error are equally presented for each item as well as the "grand" mean and standard error. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented below ranging from the socio-demographic variables to the various independent and dependent variables of the study.

Descriptive statistics on the Socio-demographic variables

This section presents the results of the descriptive statistics on the socio-demographic information of the participants in the study. Variables such as age, gender, position occupied and longevity in the preparatory groups are discussed.

Table 8: Gender of the participants

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Male	193	37.5
	Female	322	62.5
	Total	515	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

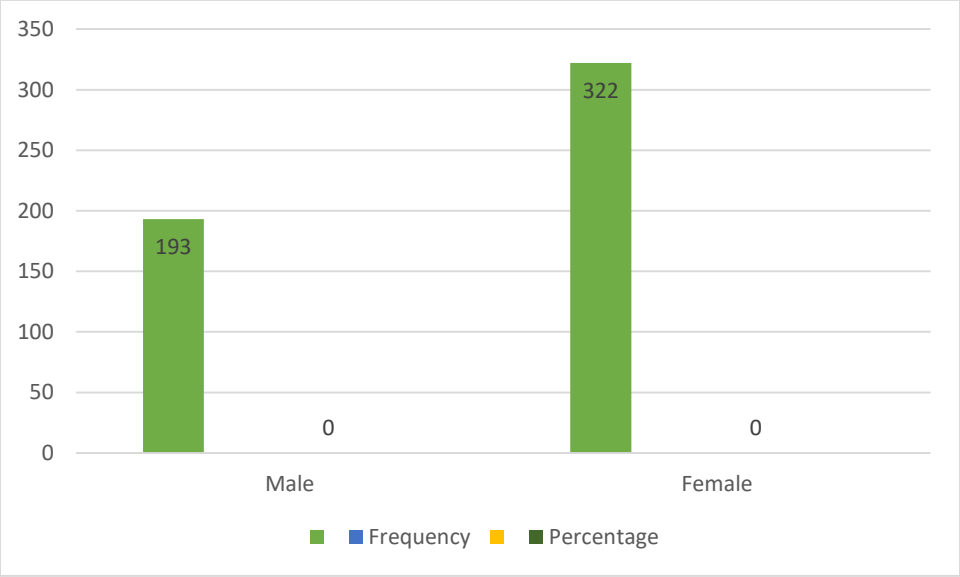


Figure 22: Graphical representation of the gender of participants

Source: fieldwork, 2024

The table above presents the findings on the gender of the participants. A total of 515 participants were sampled for this study. After the analysis, the results reveals that a considerable number of the participants are female (322), which account for a percentage of 62.5%. The results of the findings regarding the gender of the participants also reveals that 193 were male, which account for 37.5%. In all, majority of the respondents in the study were female. This can be explained by the simple fact that thus the majority of the promoters, staff and teachers were male, a good number of candidates were female. This accounts for the female domination in our sample. Again, female participants appear to be many in this study than the male in that nearly all the female participants who were sampled willingly accepted and effectively took part in the study while the male

participants were reticent and reluctant to participate in the study. In the end, a sample of 515 participants, both male and female were sampled for this study.

Table 9: Age of the participants

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-25	276	53.6
	26-30	124	24.1
	31-40	70	13.6
	41-50	32	6.2
	50 and above	13	2.5
	Total	515	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2023.

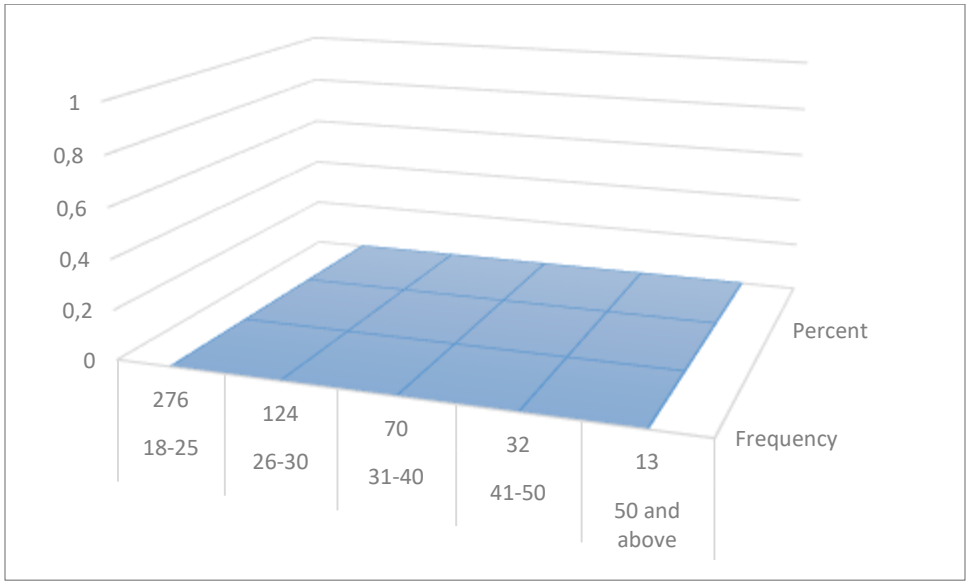


Figure 23: Graphical representation of the age of the participants

Source: fieldwork, 2024.

The table and graph above presents the results of the findings regarding the age range of the participants. Looking at the categories of our sampled population which included the promoters, the staff, the teachers and the candidates, the age range ranges from 18 to 50 years and above. 18 years corresponds to the least years of the participants while 50 and above corresponded to the highest. As such, majority of the participants (276) were aged between 18 to 25 years. This mostly included the candidates and the ex-candidates. This age range amounted to 53.65 of the participants of the study. This is followed by the age range between 26 to 30 years which also recorded a high

number of participants. A total of 124 participants amounting to 24.1% falls within this age range. In the third position, is the age range between 31 to 40 years. A total of 70 participants amounting to 13.6% of the total population falls within this age range. This mostly included the promoters, the staff and the teachers. Also, a total of 32 participants were registered in the age range between 41 to 50 years. This corresponds to a percentage of 6.2. The age range between 51 and above registered the least of the participants with a total of 13 participants which amounted to 2.5%. The age range between 31 to 50 years and above corresponded in larger part the administration (promoters, staff and teachers) and also few of the ex-candidates.

Table 10: Position occupied in the group

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Promoter	18	3.5
	Staff	45	8.7
	Teacher	73	14.2
	Candidate	301	58.4
	Ex-candidate	78	15.1
	Total	515	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

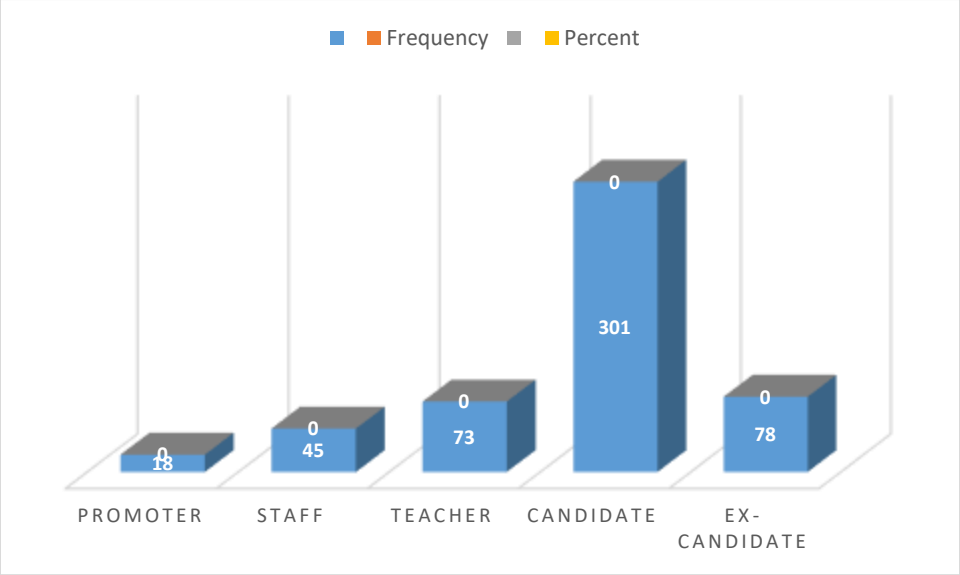


Figure 24: Graphical representation of the status of the participants

Source: fieldwork, 2024.

The table and the graph above presents the results of the findings related to the position of the participants. A total of 515 participants were sampled for this study which consisted of the promoters, the staff, the teachers, the candidates and the ex-candidates. As such, a total of 18 promoters, amounting to 3.5% of the sampled population was retained in this study. Each of the promoter was either the founder, the co-founder or the coordinator of a group. As far as the staff is concern in the preparatory groups, a total of 45 staff amounting to 8.7% participated in this study. In the same light, a total of 73 teachers amounting to 14.2% also participated in this study. In all, a total of 133 members of the administration participated in the study. This group of participants was crucial for the study as they provided us with rich and first-hand information regarding the preparatory groups, their activities and their survival in Yaounde in particular and in Cameroon in general. Majority of the participants were candidates. The candidates account for 301, which amounted to 58.4%. The ex-candidates came next, with a total of 78 amounting to 15.1%. The candidates and the ex-candidates has bigger number of the participants (379) reason being that they were available and willing to participate in the survey.

Table 11: Longevity in the group

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0-1 year	309	60.0
	2-4 years	138	26.8
	5-7 years	41	8.0
	8-9 years	21	4.1
	10 and above	6	1.2
	Total	515	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

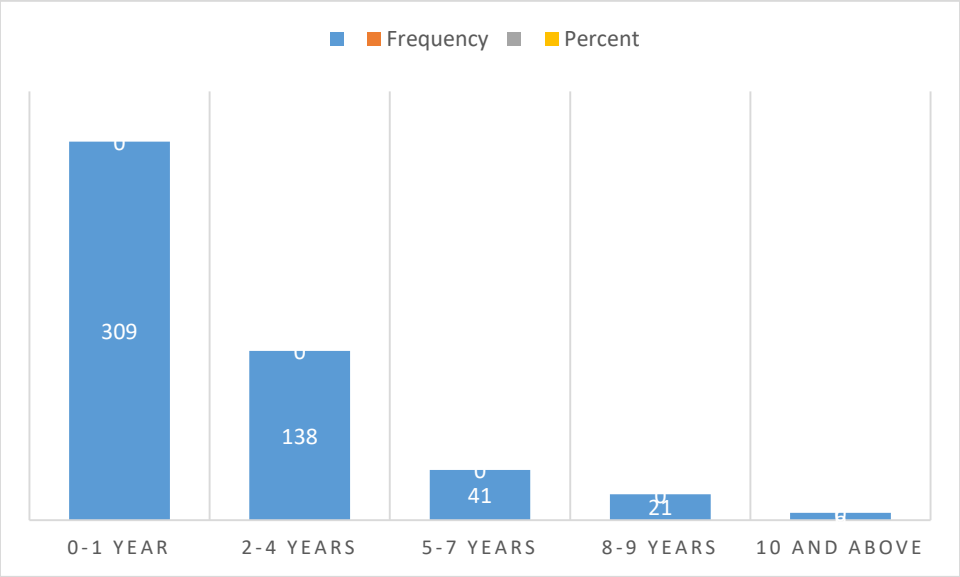


Figure 25: Graphical representation of the longevity of the participants in the group

Source: fieldwork, 2024.

The table and graph above presents the results of the findings regarding the longevity of the participants in the preparatory groups. This item was addressed to all the participants. As such, it is found that majority of the participant's lies in between 0 to 1 year in the groups. A total of 309 participants corresponding to 60.0% falls within this range. This mostly concerns the majority of the candidates and few members of the staff. This range was dominated by secondary school graduates who were preparing for the competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning either for their first time. A total number of 138 participants amounting to 26.8% were believed to be between 2 to 4 years' longevity in the groups. This was mostly teachers, staff and candidates which were in their second, third or fourth year of preparing for the entrance examinations. Also, 41 of the participants amounting to 8.0% admitted to be between 5 to 7 years' longevity in the groups. Again, 21 of the participants corresponding to 4.1% admitted to be 8 to 9 years' longevity in the groups while 6 of the participants, amounting to 1.2% admitted to be in between 10 years and above of longevity in the groups. It was therefore observed that participants who felt in between 5 to 10 and above years of longevity were principally members of the administration. This consists of the promoters, the staff, the teachers and few of the candidates; both actual candidates and ex-candidates.

Presentation of the results of descriptive statistics on the independent variable

The above tables presented the descriptive results on the socio-demographic variables of the participants of the study. This section focusses on presenting the descriptive results of the independent variables. Here, the descriptive results of each of the modality of the independent variable is presented in a tabular format. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented on the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of the preparatory groups in Cameroon.

Table 12: Presentation of the results on the effectiveness of the preparatory groups

No	Item	N	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	Std d
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1	The content of the training programs are defined by the respective preparatory professional schools.	515	157	30.5	239	46.4	82	15.9	37	7.5	3.0019	.86771
2	There is good organisational culture in your group.	515	174	33.8	273	53.0	56	10.9	12	2.3	3.1825	.71237
3	The admission rates into various professional schools is very satisfactory in your group.	515	134	26.0	272	52.8	81	15.7	28	5.4	2.9942	.79759
4	Your group make sure that candidates are morally and psychologically prepared for the exam.	515	260	50.5	205	39.8	43	8.3	7	1.4	3.3942	.69878
5	Promoters makes use of sustainable leadership in the group.	515	177	34.4	269	52.2	57	11.1	12	2.3	3.1864	.71681
6	Preparatory groups ensures career success of its candidates.	515	170	33.0	235	45.6	86	16.7	24	4.7	3.0699	.82458
7	Your group ensures a good and conducive teaching and learning environment for all.	515	210	40.8	252	48.9	38	7.4	15	2.9	3.2757	.72322
8	The group does everything to achieve the goals for which it was set up.	515	225	43.7	220	42.7	56	10.9	14	2.7	3.2738	.76193
9	The group possesses quality and permanent infrastructures which accommodate all the candidates.	515	104	20.2	270	52.4	109	21.2	32	6.5	2.8660	.80339
10	The promoters makes use of the 21st century communication skills in the running of the group.	515	210	40.8	210	40.8	72	14.0	23	4.5	3.1786	.83406
Valid N (listwise)		**515**									**3.14233**	**0.77404**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The table above presents the findings on the effectiveness of the preparatory groups in relation to the training and preparation of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in to advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon. A total of 10 items were designed to measure the extent to which the effectiveness of the preparatory groups influences the training of candidates in the Cameroonian context. The following results were obtained as per item. In the first item, majority of the participants (239), amounting to 46.4% agreed to the statement of whether the content of the training program was defined by professional schools. Similarly, 157 participants (30.5%) shares the same view. With a mean value of 3.0019 and standard deviation of .86771, majority of the participants strongly agreed and agreed to the statement. In the second item, the mean is 3.1825 and standard deviation is .71237, indicating that majority of the participants either agreed (273) or strongly agreed (174) to whether the groups practices good organisational culture. In the third item, it is revealed that 272 participants agreed and 134 of the participants strongly agreed to whether the rate of admission to these professional schools was satisfactory. In the fourth item, a total of 260 participants (50.5%) strongly agreed and a total of 205 participants (39.8%) agreed to the statement of whether the groups ensures the moral and psychological preparedness of the candidates. In the fifth item, a total of 269 participants amounting to 52.2% and 177 participants (34.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed respectively to whether the groups practice sustainable leadership and governance.

Also, in the sixth item, it is revealed that a total of 235 participants (45.6%) and a total of 170 participants (33%) agreed or strongly agreed to whether the groups ensures career success to the candidates. Again, in the seventh item, it is revealed that majority of the participants (462) either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement of whether the groups provide good and conducive environment for teaching and learning for both teachers and students. In the eight item, out of 515 participants sampled, 225 of them (43.7%) strongly agreed while 220 of them (42.7%) agreed to the fact that the groups put forth all the strategies necessary to achieve the predefined objectives. In the ninth item, with a mean of 2.8660 and a standard deviation of .80339, majority of the participants agreed (270) or strongly agreed (104) to the statement of whether the groups possesses quality and permanent infrastructures where classes and other extra-curricular activities could take place. In the tenth and the last item in the above table, a total of 420 participants amounting to 81.6% agreed and strongly agreed to the statement of whether the promoters of the respective preparatory groups make use of the 21st century communication skills.

From the findings, it is revealed that majority of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed to all the statements that were formulated to test the effect of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates. This therefor means that with the overall mean being 3.14233 and the standard deviation being 0.77404, which is above the normal cut off mean of 2.5, we thus conclude that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups has an impact on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon.

Table 13: Presentation of the results on the efficiency of the preparatory groups

No	Item	N	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	Std d
			F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%		
11	Your group involves all the stakeholders in the running of the group activities.	515	130	25.2	282	54.8	71	13.8	32	6.2	2.9903	.79999
12	There is rationality in the allocation of all the resources in your group.	515	97	18.8	284	55.1	111	21.6	23	4.5	2.8835	.75502
13	The group ensures budget adherence which is the respect of the program`s overall budget.	515	114	22.1	287	55.7	85	16.5	29	5.6	2.9437	.78081
14	There exist transparency in financial transactions in your group.	515	126	24.5	214	41.6	137	26.6	38	7.4	2.8311	.88250
15	There is always Accountability in financial transaction in your group.	515	138	26.8	259	50.3	90	17.5	28	5.4	2.9845	.81316
16	The activities of your group are cost-effective.	515	171	33.2	228	44.3	92	17.9	24	4.7	3.0602	.83355
17	Your group ensures the respect of timeline required for the long term or short term training of candidates.	515	243	47.2	205	39.8	53	10.3	13	2.5	3.3748	1.47394
18	Your group provide quality and updated didactic materials to enhance the teaching and learning process.	515	148	28.7	278	54.0	69	13.4	20	3.9	3.0757	.75636
19	Your group ensures partnership with the outside, both national and international non-governmental organizations.	515	90	17.5	179	34.8	167	32.4	79	15.3	2.5437	.95193
20	Your group welcomes both constructive criticisms and innovative ideas for the sake of its growth and development of the group.	515	182	35.3	265	51.5	42	8.2	26	5.0	3.1709	.78031
Valid N(listwise)		515									**2.9858**	**0.88275**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The table above presents the findings on the efficiency of the preparatory groups in relation to the training/preparation of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in to advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon. A total of 10 items were designed to measure the extent to which the efficiency of the preparatory groups influences the training of candidates in the Cameroonian context. The following results were obtained as per item. In the first item, majority of the participants (282), amounting to 54.8% agreed to the statement of whether the groups ensure the engagement of all the actors in the running of the group's activities. Similarly, 130 participants (25.2%) shares the same view. With a mean value of 2.9903 and standard deviation of .79999, majority of the participants strongly agreed and agreed to the statement. In the second item, the mean is 2.8835 and standard deviation is .75502, indicating that majority of the participants either agreed (284) or strongly agreed (97) to whether the groups ensures rationality in the distribution and allocation of the resources. In the third item, it is revealed that 287 participants agreed and 114 of the participants strongly agreed to whether the groups ensure budget adherence which is the respect of predefined budget. In the fourth item, a total of 214 participants (41.6%) agreed and a total of 126 participants (24.5%) strongly agreed to the statement of whether the groups ensures transparency in the financial transactions in the groups. In the fifth item, a total of 259 participants amounting to 50.3% and 138 participants (26.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed respectively to whether the groups ensure accountability at all levels.

Also, in the sixth item, it is revealed that a total of 228 participants (44.3%) and a total of 171 participants (33.2%) agreed or strongly agreed to whether the activity of training candidates is cost-effective. Again, in the seventh item, it is revealed that majority of the participants (448) either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement of whether the groups respect the timeline or the duration of each training session, whether long term or short term session. In the eight item, out of 515 participants sampled, 278 of them (54%) agreed while 148 of them (28.7%) strongly agreed to the fact that the groups provide quality and reliable didactic materials to both teachers and students so as to facilitate the teaching and learning process. In the ninth item, with a mean of 2.5437 and a standard deviation of .95193, majority of the participants agreed (179) or strongly agreed (90) to the statement of whether the groups ensures partnerships with the outside world, including the other preparatory groups. In the tenth and the last item in the above table, a total of 447 participants amounting to 86.8% agreed and strongly agreed to the statement of whether the groups welcomes constructive criticisms and innovative ideas which helps to enhance the growth of the groups.

From the above findings, it is thus observed that majority of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed to all the statements that were formulated to test the effect of the efficiency of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates. This therefor means that with the grand mean being 2.9858 and the standard deviation being 0.88275, which is above the normal cut off mean of 2.5, we thus conclude that the efficiency of the preparatory groups has an effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon.

Table 14: Presentation of the results on the relevance of the preparatory groups

No	Item	N	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	Std d
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
21	Your groups ensures the alignment with the goals and objectives for which it was set up.	515	268	52.0	212	41.2	26	5.0	9	1.7	3.4350	.67266
22	Your group provides institutional incentives to all the staff.	515	128	24.9	246	47.8	102	19.8	39	7.6	2.8990	.86067
23	Your group provide candidates with relevant and specific methodology on how to tackle questions.	515	273	53.0	209	40.6	20	3.9	13	2.5	3.4408	.69032
24	Preparatory groups maximizes the chances of candidates to succeed in an exam.	515	205	39.8	258	50.1	33	6.4	19	3.7	3.2602	.73693
25	Preparatory groups provides employment to a good number of graduates who finds it difficult to integrate the public service.	515	97	18.8	169	32.8	172	33.4	77	15.0	2.5553	.96149
26	Equity and equality of access is ensured to all the candidates, teachers and staff.	515	151	29.3	262	50.9	83	16.1	19	3.7	3.0583	.77441
27	Your constantly receives praises from successful and unsuccessful candidates and even parents.	515	122	23.7	240	46.6	97	18.8	56	10.9	2.8311	.91284
28	Preparatory groups ensures candidates satisfaction.	515	167	32.4	240	46.6	74	14.4	34	6.6	3.0485	.85505
29	Your group provide training opportunities both in French and in English (bilingual).	515	138	26.8	169	32.8	140	27.2	68	13.2	2.7320	.99905
30	Your group possess highly qualified teachers who are products of these professional schools or holders of Masters and PhD degree	515	227	44.1	213	41.4	47	9.1	28	5.4	3.2408	.83240
Valid N (listwise)		**515**									**3.0501**	**0.82958**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The table above presents the findings on the relevance of the preparatory groups in relation to the training/preparation of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in to advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon. A total of 10 items were designed to measure the extent to which the relevance of the preparatory groups influences the training of candidates in the Cameroonian context. The following results were obtained as per item. In the first item, majority of the participants (268), amounting to 52% strongly agreed to the statement of whether the groups ensure the alignment with the goals and objectives predefined. Similarly, 212 participants (41.2%) shares the same view. With a mean value of 3.4350 and standard deviation of .67266, majority of the participants strongly agreed and agreed to the statement. In the second item, the mean is 2.8990 and standard deviation is .86067, indicating that majority of the participants either agreed (246) or strongly agreed (128) to whether the groups provides institutional incentives to all the staff for job well done. In the third item, it is revealed that 209 participants agreed and 273 of the participants strongly agreed to whether the groups provide candidates with relevant and specific methodology required for questions answering in professional schools. In the fourth item, a total of 258 participants (50.1%) agreed and a total of 205 participants (39.8%) strongly agreed to the statement of whether the preparatory groups maximises the chances of candidates to succeed in these exams. In the fifth item, a total of 169 participants amounting to 32.8% and 97 participants (18.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed respectively to whether the groups are a source of employment to a good number of people. Majority of the participants (172) pointed out clearly that it is not a reliable source of employment.

Also, in the sixth item, it is revealed that a total of 262 participants (50.9%) and a total of 151 participants (29.3%) agreed or strongly agreed to the fact that equity and equality of access is ensured to all the candidates and personnel's irrespective of sex, age or even background. Again, in the seventh item, it is revealed that majority of the participants (362) either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement of whether the groups constantly receives credit from the candidates and any other person as appreciation for job well done. In the eight item, out of 515 participants sampled, 240 of them (46.6%) agreed while 167 of them (32.4%) strongly agreed to the fact that the groups ensure candidates satisfaction. In the ninth item, with a mean of 2.7320 and a standard deviation of .99905, majority of the participants agreed (169) or strongly agreed (138) to the statement of whether the groups provide training opportunities both in English and French to ease the understanding and fluidity of the training. In the tenth and the last item in the above table, a

total of 440 participants amounting to 85.5% agreed and strongly agreed to the statement of whether the groups possess highly qualified teachers who they themselves are products of most of these advanced schools.

From the above findings, it is thus observed that majority of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed to all the statements that were formulated to test the effect of the relevance of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates. This therefor means that with the grand mean being 3.0501 and the standard deviation being 0.82958, which is above the normal cut off mean of 2.5, we thus conclude that the relevance of the preparatory groups has an effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon.

Table 15: Presentation of the results on the sustainability of the preparatory groups

No	Item	N	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	Std d
			f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%		
31	Your group practices decentralization of decision through the delegation of responsibility.	515	138	26.8	243	47.2	103	20.0	31	6.0	2.9476	.84105
32	Your group keep in touch with candidates in the profession and in the professional milieu.	515	138	26.8	267	51.8	75	14.6	35	6.8	2.9864	.82860
33	Your group put on adaptation strategies to overcome challenges and ensures its sustainability.	515	175	34.0	277	53.8	48	9.3	15	2.9	3.1883	.71766
34	Your group have long term impact on candidates` academic and career paths.	515	157	30.5	241	46.8	92	17.9	25	4.9	3.0291	.82349
35	Your group make sure they create a committed staffs ready to help achieve group`s objectives.	515	157	30.5	267	51.8	77	15.0	14	2.7	3.1010	.74430
36	Preparatory groups ensures effective staff participation, a mechanism for sustainability.	515	184	35.7	243	47.2	67	13.0	21	4.1	3.1456	.79404
37	Your group makes use of corresponding management practices like ethical conduct, high social responsibility etc.	515	175	34.0	213	41.4	98	19.0	29	5.6	3.0369	.86916
38	Your group makes long term decision, a determinant for its sustainability.	515	155	30.1	240	46.6	95	18.4	25	4.9	3.0194	.82496
39	Your group support systematic innovations from the staffs aimed towards its growth.	515	147	28.5	227	44.1	103	20.0	38	7.4	2.9379	.88218
40	Your group provides high quality services and solutions to the candidates preparing for entrance exams.	515	191	37.1	249	48.3	58	11.3	17	3.3	3.1922	.76138
Valid N (listwise)		**515**									**3.05845**	**0.80868**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The above table presents the findings on the sustainability of the preparatory groups in relation to the training/preparation of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in to advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon. A total of 10 items were designed to measure the extent to which the sustainability of the preparatory groups influences the training of candidates in the Cameroonian context. The following results were obtained as per item. In the first item, majority of the participants (138), amounting to 26.8% strongly agreed to the statement of whether the groups practices decentralisation in the decision making process. Similarly, 243 participants (47.2%) shares the same view. With a mean value of 2.9476 and standard deviation of .84105, majority of the participants strongly agreed and agreed to the statement. In the second item, the mean is 2.9864 and standard deviation is .82860, indicating that majority of the participants either agreed (267) or strongly agreed (138) to whether the groups keep in touch with successful candidates both in the professional schools and also the professional milieu. In the third item, it is revealed that 277 participants agreed and 175 of the participants strongly agreed to whether the groups develop adaptation strategies to be able to survive in a competitive environment. In the fourth item, a total of 241 participants (46.8%) agreed and a total of 157 participants (30.5%) strongly agreed to the statement of whether the preparatory groups have a long term impact on the academic and career path of candidates. In the fifth item, a total of 267 participants amounting to 51.8% and 157 participants (30.5%) either agreed or strongly agreed respectively to whether the groups create a more engaged and committed staff.

Also, in the sixth item, it is revealed that a total of 243 participants (47.2%) and a total of 184 participants (35.7%) agreed or strongly agreed to the fact that the groups ensures effective staff participation, a mechanism for sustainability of the groups. Again, in the seventh item, it is revealed that majority of the participants (378) either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement of whether the groups make use of corresponding management practices such as good leadership, ethical conduct, and high social responsibility to ensures it sustainability. In the eight item, out of 515 participants sampled, 240 of them (46.6%) agreed while 155 of them (30.1%) strongly agreed to the fact that the groups make long term decision regarding the vision and its mission. In the ninth item, with a mean of 2.9379 and a standard deviation of .88218, majority of the participants agreed (227) or strongly agreed (147) to the statement of whether the groups support systematic initiations and innovations from the staff directed towards its growth. In the tenth and the last item in the above table, a total of 440 participants amounting to 85.5% agreed and strongly agreed to

the statement of whether the groups provide high quality services and solutions to the candidates preparing for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning.

From the above findings, it is thus observed that majority of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed to all the statements that were formulated to test the effect of the sustainability of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates. This therefor means that with the grand mean being 3.05845 and the standard deviation being 0.80868, which is above the normal cut off mean of 2.5, we thus conclude that the sustainability of the preparatory groups has an effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon.

Presentation of the descriptive statistics on the dependent variable

This section presents the results of the descriptive statistics on the dependent variable. Unlike the above tables, a total of 10 items were designed to measure the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools in Cameroon.

Table 16: Presentation of the results on the training of candidates

No	Item	N	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	Std d
			f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%		
41	Preparation and training are key to success in any exam, competitive or not.	515	314	61.0	157	30.5	34	6.6	10	1.9	3.5049	.70675
42	Preparation is basically on the essential elements related to the exam.	515	191	37.1	212	41.2	83	16.1	29	5.6	3.0971	.86563
43	All the preparatory groups have a unanimous training program.	515	115	22.3	203	39.4	121	23.5	76	14.8	2.6932	.97789
44	Preparatory groups control external variables capable of affecting the training process.	515	124	24.1	240	46.6	125	24.3	26	5.0	2.8971	.82229
45	Preparation is well organized to make sure that it satisfies the needs of the candidates.	515	160	31.1	294	57.1	56	10.9	4	0.8	3.2233	1.05059
46	Candidates who prepare themselves in this group tend to perform better than those who do not.	515	182	35.3	248	48.2	66	12.8	19	3.7	3.1515	.77934
47	The training take place in an organize, safe and conducive classrooms.	515	172	33.4	251	48.7	71	13.8	21	4.1	3.1146	.78933
48	The duration of the training varies depending on the needs and expectations of the candidates.	515	172	33.4	219	42.5	92	17.9	32	6.2	3.0311	.87274
49	The group provide hand outs and other learning materials to candidates to facilitate training.	515	200	38.8	210	40.8	74	14.4	31	6.0	3.1243	.87112
50	The training takes the candidates one step closer to succeeding in a competitive exam.	515	249	48.3	209	40.6	42	8.2	15	2.9	3.3437	.75135
Valid N (listwise)		**515**									**3.11806**	**0.84870**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The above table presents the results of the descriptive statistics on the dependent variable (training of candidates). To collect the views of the participants on the quality of training, a total of ten items

were designed by the researcher. The objective here was to collect the perception of the participants regarding the nature, quality and importance of training to a candidate preparing for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon. The following results were obtained. In the first item as shown in the table above, majority of the participants (314) strongly agreed and 157 of the participants agreed to the fact that training is a determinant of candidate's success in any exam, whether competitive or not. In the second item, it is revealed that majority of the participants (212) corresponding to 41.2% agreed, while 191 strongly agreed to the statement of whether the training is primarily on the essential elements of the exams. In the third item, with a mean of 2.6932 and a standard deviation of .97789, more than half of the sampled population strongly agreed (115) and agreed (203) to the statement of whether the various training or preparatory groups have the same programs. This means that the structure might differ from one group to another but the contents remains the same. In the fourth item, with a mean of 2.8971 and a standard deviation of .82229, more than half of the participants (364) amounting to 70.7% strongly agreed or agreed to the fact that the groups controls external variables capable of influencing the training process. In the fifth item, it is revealed that 160 participants strongly agreed, 294 of the participants agreed while 60 participants either disagree or strongly disagree to the fact that training is well organised and coordinated to make sure that it meet up the expectation of the candidates.

In the sixth item, 248 participants amounting to 48.2% and 182 participants (35.5%) agree or strongly agree to the statement of whether there is a difference in the performance of candidates who prepares themselves in the preparatory groups and those who instead goes in for individual or personal training. In the seventh item, with a mean of 3.1146 and a standard deviation of .78933, more than half of the participants (423), amounting to 81.7% either agree or strongly agree to the statement of whether the training takes place in a safe, conducive and peaceful environment so as to facilitate the assimilation of lessons by the candidates. In the eight item, it is revealed that a considerable number of the participants (391) agree or strongly agree to the fact that the duration of the training session varies depending on the needs and expectations of the candidates as well as their financial readiness. In the ninth item, with a mean of 3.1243 and a standard deviation of .87112, a total of 410 participants amounting to 79.6% either agree or strongly agree to the fact that the groups ensures the provision of learning materials such as handouts to the candidates so as to facilitate the training process. In the last item, it is revealed that out of 515 participants

retained for this study, 249 of them strongly agree, 209 of them agree, 42 of them disagree meanwhile only 15 of them strongly disagree to the fact that the training and preparation take the candidates one step closer to succeeding in a competitive entrance exam into advanced schools of training and learning.

From the above findings, it is thus observed that majority of the participants either agree or strongly agree to all the statements that were designed to test the perception that the participants has of the training of candidates. This therefore means that with the grand mean being 3.1180 and the standard deviation being 0.84870, which is above the normal cut off mean of 2.5, we thus conclude that the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon is a determinant of candidate`s success.

Pearson`s Correlation analysis between variables

In the present study, the Pearson`s rank correlation coefficient was determined to establish the relationship between the variables of the study. In this case, the researcher crossed the various variables against each other to determine the correlation coefficient value. The result is provided in the table below.

Table 17: Pearson`s correlation coefficient between variables

Correlations

		Effectiveness of PGs	Efficiency of PGs	Relevance of PGs	Sustainability of PGs	Training of candidates
Effectiveness of PGs	Pearson Correlation	1	.472**	.497**	.468**	.374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	515	515	515	515	515
Efficiency of PGs	Pearson Correlation	.472**	1	.358**	.450**	.226**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	515	515	515	515	515
Relevance of PGs	Pearson Correlation	.497**	.358**	1	.583**	.470**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	515	515	515	515	515
Sustainability of PGs	Pearson Correlation	.468**	.450**	.583**	1	.427**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	515	515	515	515	515
Training of candidates	Pearson Correlation	.374**	.226**	.470**	.427**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	515	515	515	515	515

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The table above presents the results of Pearson`s correlation analysis between variables. A total of five items were correlated against each other. The objective here is to establish the relationship or dependency between the variables. When a variable is correlated against itself, it is 1 per the law. The first step consisted of correlating the independent variables with the dependent variable. As such, it is observed that when the effectiveness of the preparatory groups is correlated with the training of candidates, it gives a value of r= 0.374, which indicate a positive relationship. With the level of significance being 0.000, which is largely less than the alpha (0.05) we thus conclude that there is a positive relationship between the effectiveness of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates. When the efficiency of the preparatory groups is correlated with the training of candidates, it gives a correlation value of r=0.226. At 0.000 level of significance, less than the alpha, we thus conclude that there is a positive and strong relationship between the variables. Also, when the relevance of the preparatory groups is correlated with training of candidates, it gives a correlation value of r=0.470. At 0.000 level of significance, largely less than the alpha, we thus conclude that there is a positive and strong relationship between the variables. Again, when the sustainability of the preparatory is correlated with the training of candidates, it gives a correlation value of r=427. At a 0.000 level of significance, less than the alpha (0.05), we conclude that there is a positive and strong relationship between the variables.

The Pearson correlation table also reveals the relationship of the independent variables when correlated against each other. Hence from the correlation analysis, it can be concluded that all the four measured independent variables are significantly correlated. More so, due to the confirmed linearity of relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the precondition according to Saunders at al. (2016) to run the regression analyses to effectively test the previously developed hypotheses is met.

Inferential statistics

This section of the study is known as the inferential statistics of the study. The inferential statistics is used to test the hypotheses of the study. The statistical test used here is the regression analysis, more precisely the simple linear regression. We are therefore going to determine whether the independent variable (preparatory groups) exerts an effect on the dependent variable (training of candidates). To this end, we will proceed by hypotheses testing. In order to determine whether preparatory groups have a statistical significant effect on the training of candidates, it is important to state the null and the alternative hypothesis of the study.

Ha: Preparatory groups has a statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training in Yaounde.

Ho: Preparatory groups has no statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training in Yaounde.

Verification of research hypothesis one

To test the effect of the effectiveness of preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Yaounde, we begin by formulating the alternative and the null hypothesis as seen below.

Ha1: The effectiveness of the preparatory groups has a statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning of Yaounde.

Ho1: The effectiveness of the preparatory groups has no statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning of Yaounde.

To test the above hypothesis, a regression analysis was carried out to ascertain the extent to which the effectiveness of the preparatory has an effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Yaounde.

All the tables below reveal the linear regression test conducted to determine the effect of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Yaounde.

Table 18: Model summary table

Model Summary[b]				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.374[a]	.140	.138	3.27894

a. Predictors: Effectiveness PGs

b. Constant: Training of candidates

In the model summary table above presents the linear regression results of the effect of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for entrance examinations. It

is revealed that there exist a positive and strong linear relationship between preparatory groups effectiveness and the training of candidates with a Pearson`s correlation coefficient of r = .374. The regression model predicted 14.0% of the variance. The model was therefore a good fit for the data (F (1.513) = 83.218, p <.000).

Table 19: Analysis of variance table

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	894.718	1	894.718	83.218	.000[b]
	Residual	5515.488	513	10.751		
	Total	6410.206	514			

a. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

b. Predictors: (Constant), Effectiveness of PGs

The analysis of variance was used to determine the level of the relationship between the effectiveness of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates. This is known as the F test. The linear regression F test has the null hypothesis which stated that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups has no statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations at p = .05. As such a significant regression equation was established with F (1,513) = 83.218, p= .000. The test is highly significant. Hence, we can assume that there is a statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

Table 20: Table of coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.778	1.149		18.076	.000
	Effectiveness of preps group	.331	.036	.374	9.122	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates
b. Predictors: (constant), Effectiveness of PGs

The simple linear regression model established, indicates that the effectiveness of preparatory groups had a positive β coefficient. The slope coefficient for the effectiveness of the preparatory groups is 374. This means that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups at a constant of zero, training of candidates will be 18.076. That is; ($t = 9.122$, $p < 0.000$). Thus, any unit increase in the effectiveness of the preparatory groups will result to 9.12 unit increase in the training of candidates. At 5% level of significance and 95% confidence level, effectiveness of the preparatory groups had a 0.000 level of significance, largely less than the alpha (0.05). We therefore conclude that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups has a statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

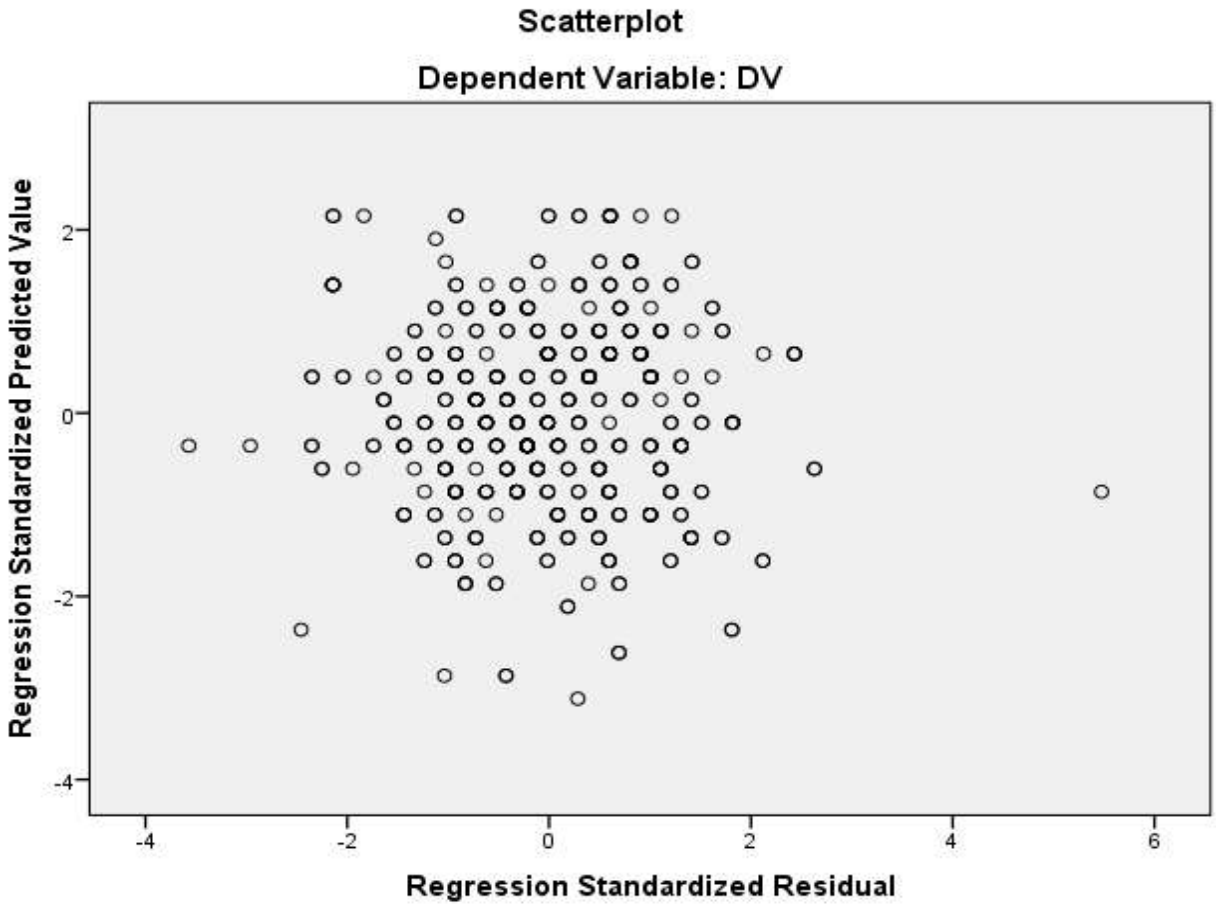


Figure 26: Scatterplot of the effectiveness of preparatory groups

The scatterplot above revealed a strong positive linear relationship between the effectiveness of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations. This can be confirmed by the fact that the plot is clustered around the line which is the mean. The closeness of the plot to the straight line which represents the mean established the significant relationship between the effectiveness of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon. The direction is positive indicating that as the independent variable increases, the dependent variable also increases. The strength is moderate meaning there is a relationship between the variables although there is the presence of outliers. The form of the plot is in a curve which means that there is a genuinely positive relationship between the variables.

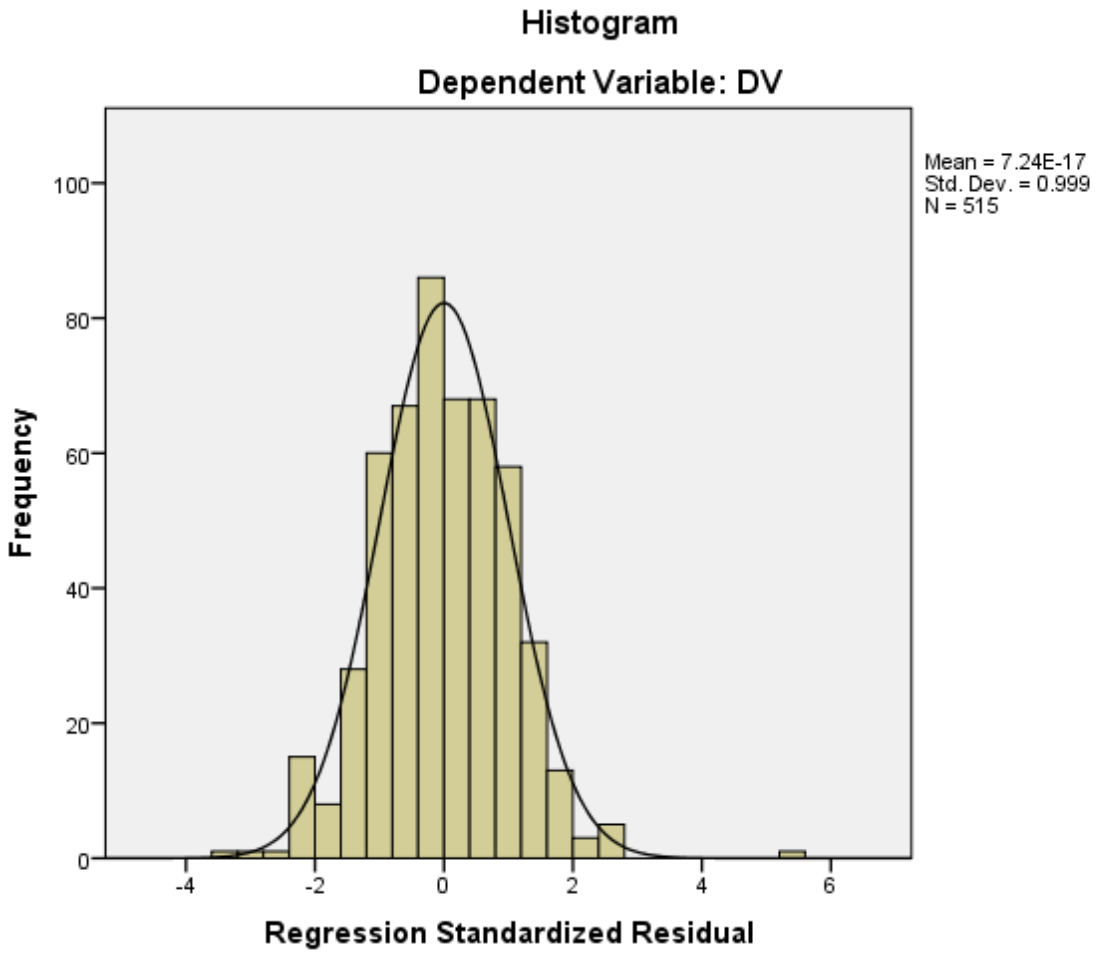


Figure 27: Histogram for the effectiveness of the preparatory groups

Source: *Fieldwork, 2023.*

The graphical representation helps to emphasise on the linearity of the relationship between the effectiveness of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training in Cameroon. Thus, there exist a positive and strong linear relationship between the effectiveness of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates, indicating that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative retained.

Verification of research hypothesis two

To test the effect of the preparatory group`s efficiency on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advances schools of learning and training, it is important to state both the alternative and the null hypotheses of the study.

Ha2: The efficiency of the Preparatory groups has a statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Yaounde.

Ho2: The efficiency of the Preparatory groups has no statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Yaounde

All the tables below reveal the linear regression test carried out to determine the effect of the efficiency of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Yaounde.

Table 21: Table of Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.226[a]	.051	.049	3.44330

a. Predictors: (Constant), Efficiency of PGs
b. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

In the model summary table above presents the linear regression results of the effect of the efficiency of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for entrance examinations. It is revealed that there exist a positive and strong linear relationship between preparatory groups efficiency and the training of candidates with a Pearson`s correlation coefficient of r = .226. The regression model predicted 51% of the variance. The model was therefore a good fit for the data (F (1.513) = 27.657, p <.000).

Table 22: Analysis of variance table

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	327.910	1	327.910	27.657	.000[b]
	Residual	6082.296	513	11.856		
	Total	6410.206	514			

a. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

b. Predictors: (Constant), Efficiency of PGs

The analysis of variance was used to determine the level of the relationship between the efficiency of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates. This is known as the F test. The linear regression F test has the null hypothesis which stated that the efficiency of the preparatory groups has no statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations at p = .05. As such a significant regression equation was obtained with F (1,513) = 27.657, p= .000. The test is highly significant. Hence, we can assume that there is a statistically significant relationship between the efficiency of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

Table 23: Table of Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	25.258	1.136		22.228	.000
	Efficiency of Preps group	.198	.038	.226	5.259	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

b. Predictors: (constant), Efficiency of PGs

The simple linear regression obtained, indicates that the efficincy of the preparatory groups had a positive β coefficient. The slope coefficient for the efficiency of the preparatory groups is .226.

This means that the efficiency of the preparatory groups at a constant of zero, the training of candidates will be 22.228. That is; (t = 5.259, p <0.000). Thus, any unit increase in the efficiency of the preparatory groups will result to 5.25 unit increase in the training of candidates. At 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, efficiency of the preparatory groups had a 0.000 level of significance, which is largely less than 0.05 (alpha). We therefore conclude that the efficiency of the preparatory groups is a strong and positive determinant of the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training of the country.

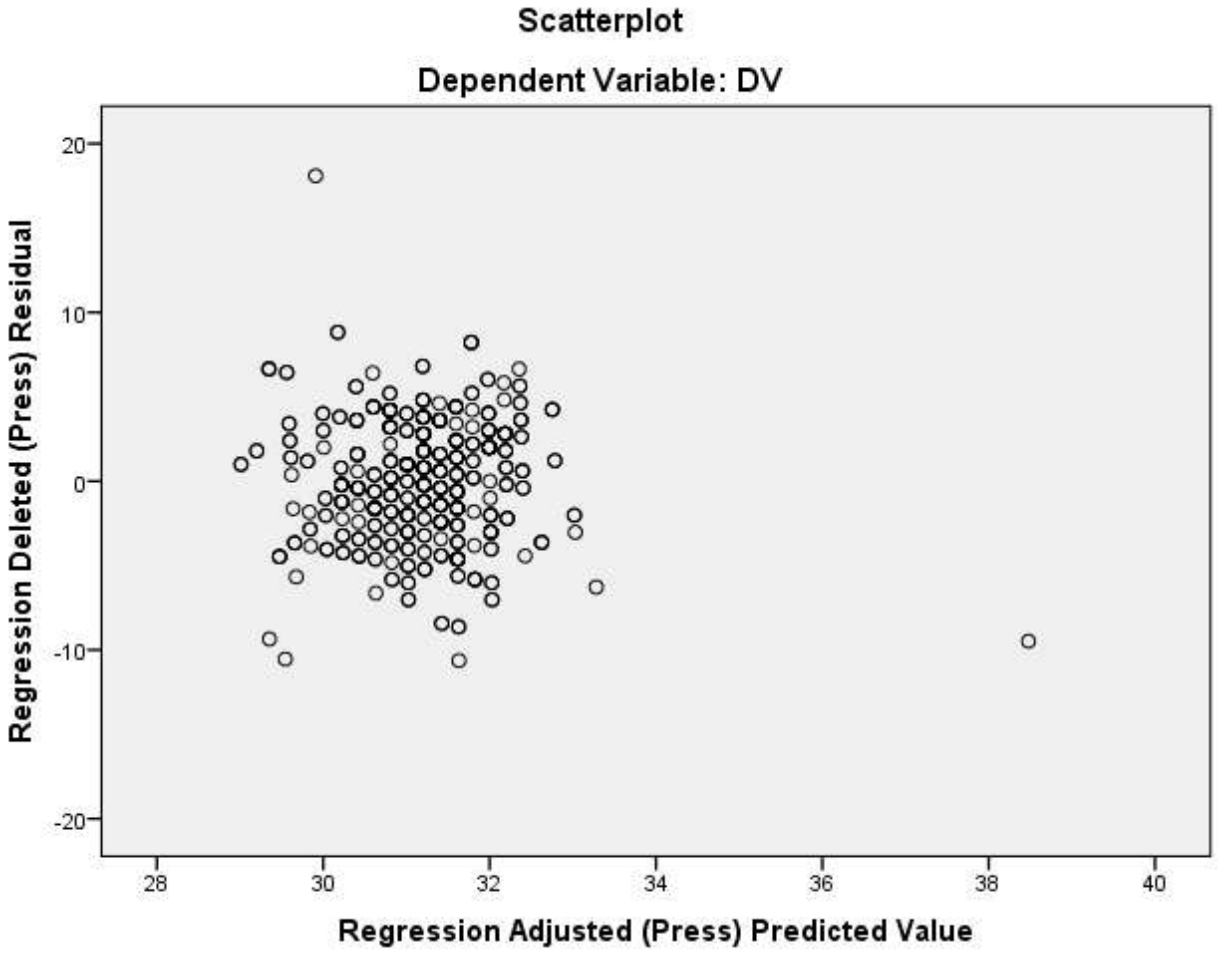


Figure 28: Scatterplot for the efficiency of preparatory groups

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The scatterplot above revealed a strong positive linear relationship between the efficiency of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations. This can be confirmed by the fact that the plot is clustered around the line which is the mean. The closeness of the plot to the straight line which represents the mean established the significant relationship between the efficiency of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon. The plot is directional which show a genuinely positive relationship. The form of the plot is in a curve form going up which means that there is a linear relationship between the variables. Looking at the strength of the relationships, the plot revealed that there is a moderate linear relationship between the variable even though there is the presence of outliers.

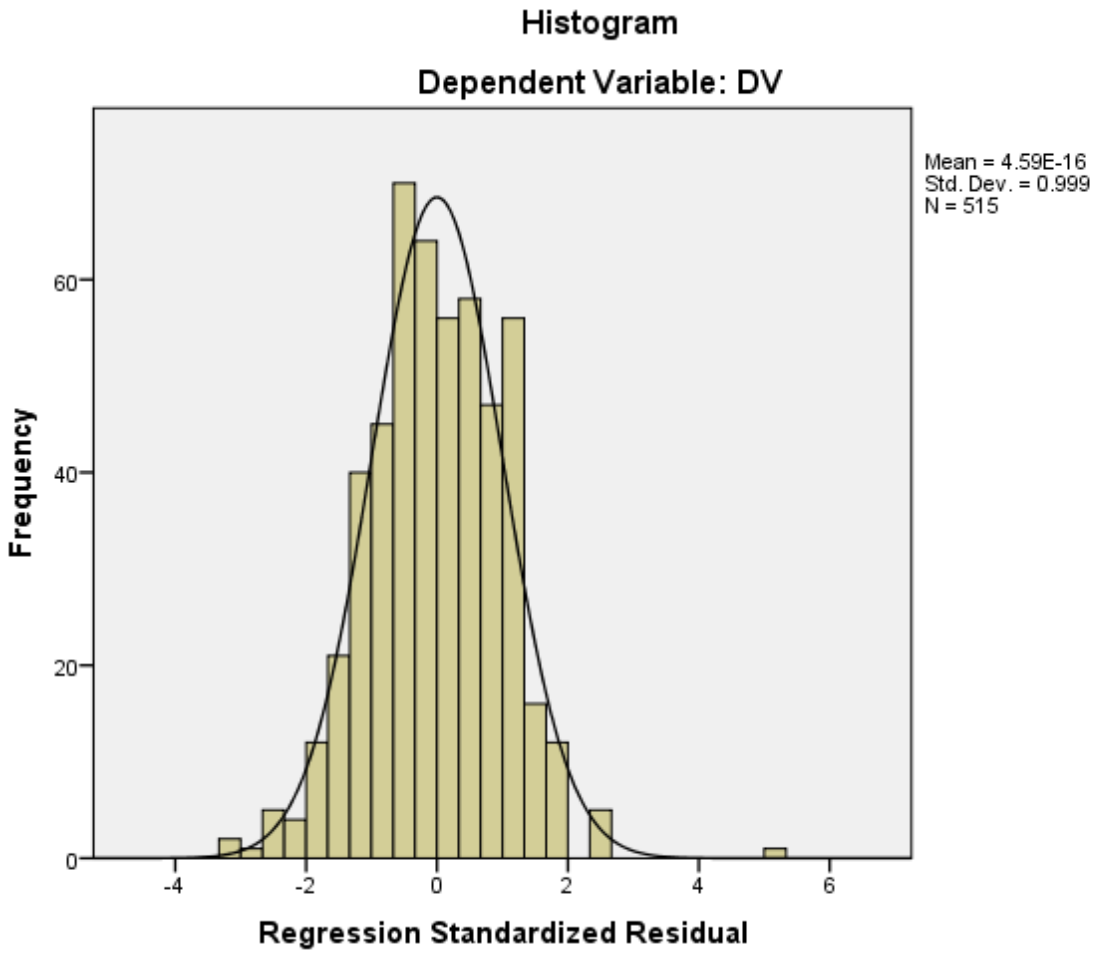


Figure 29: Histogram of preparatory group`s efficiency

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The graphical representation helps to emphasise on the linearity of the relationship between the efficiency of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training in Cameroon. Thus, there exist a positive and strong linear relationship between the efficiency of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates, indicating that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative retained

Verification of hypothesis three

In order to ascertain the statistically significant relationship which do exist between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations in advanced schools of learning and training in Yaounde, a linear regression test was conducted. To do this, we started by formulating the alternative and the null specific research hypothesis (Ha3, Ho3) of the study.

Ha3: The relevance of the preparatory groups has a statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training of Yaounde.

Ho3: The relevance of the preparatory groups has no statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training of Yaounde.

All the tables, chart and histogram below presents the results of the linear regression test which was conducted to measure the effect of the relevance of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning of Yaounde.

Table 24: Model summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.470[a]	.221	.220	3.11939

a. Predictors: (Constant), Relevance of PGS
b. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

In the model summary table above presents the linear regression results of the effect of the relevance of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for entrance examinations. It is

revealed that there exist a positive and strong linear relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates with a Pearson`s correlation coefficient of r = .470. The regression model predicted 22.1% of the variance. The model is therefore a good fit for the data (F (1.513) = 145.770, p <.000).

Table 25: Analysis of variance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1418.426	1	1418.426	145.770	.000[b]
	Residual	4991.779	513	9.731		
	Total	6410.206	514			

a. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

b. Predictors: (Constant), Relevance of PGs

The analysis of variance was used to determine the level of the relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates. This is known as the F test. The linear regression F test has the null hypothesis which stated that the relevance of the preparatory groups has no statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations at p = .05. As such a significant regression equation was obtained with F (1,513) = 145.770, p = .000. The test is highly significant. Hence, we can assume that there is a statistically significant relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

Table 26: Coefficients value

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	17.829	1.114		16.000	.000
	Relevance of preps groups	.438	.036	.470	12.074	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

b. Predictors (constant), Relevance of PGs

The simple linear regression obtained, indicates that the relevance of the preparatory groups had a positive β coefficient. The slope coefficient for the relevance of the preparatory groups is .470. This means that the relevance of the preparatory groups at a constant of zero, the training of candidates will be 16.000. That is; (t = 12.074, p <0.000). Thus, any unit increase in the relevance of the preparatory groups will result to 12.1 unit increase in the training of candidates. At 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, relevance of the preparatory groups had a 0.000 level of significance, which is largely less than 0.05 (alpha). We therefore conclude that the relevance of the preparatory groups is a strong and positive determinant of the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training of the country.

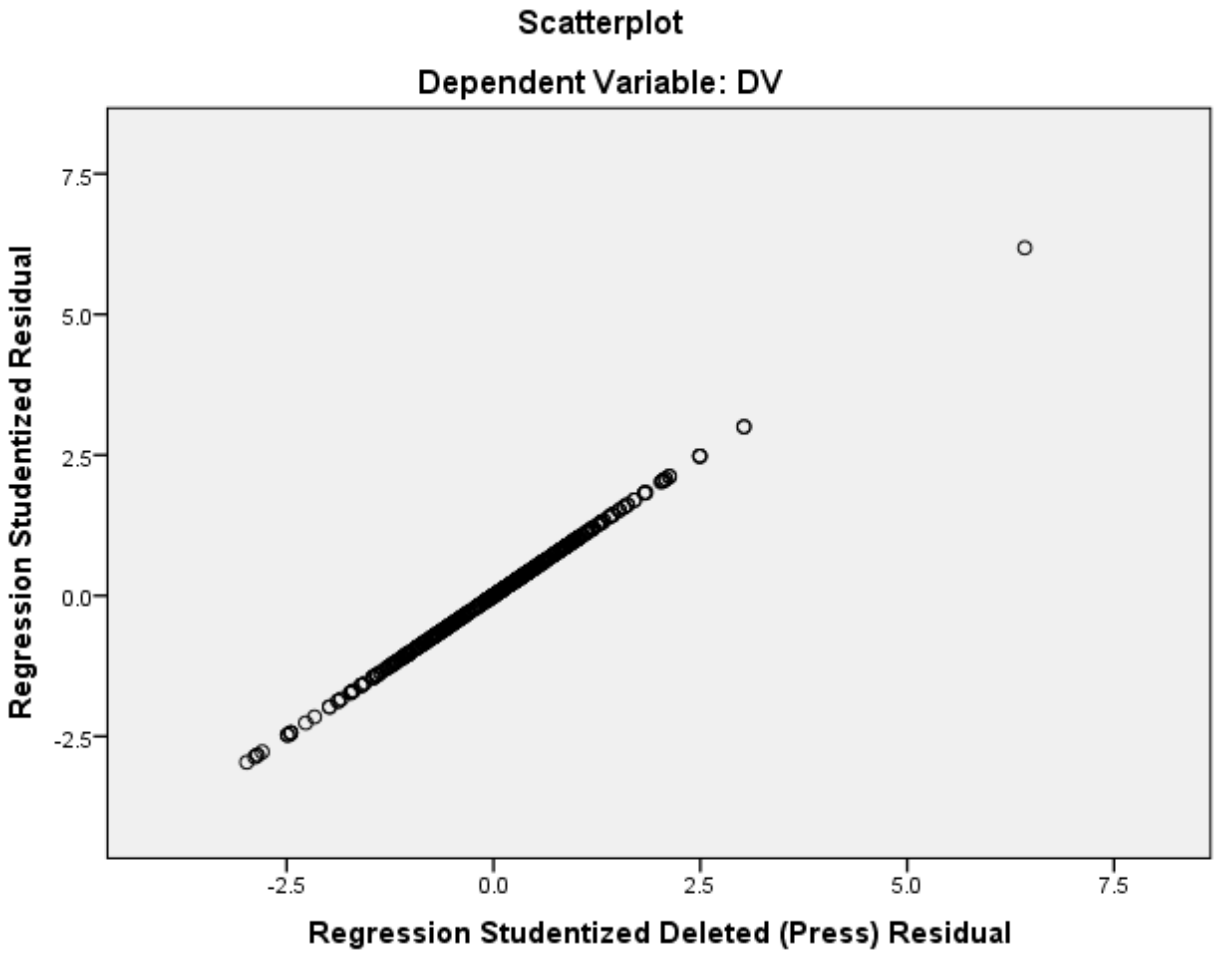


Figure 30: Scatterplot of the relevance of preparatory groups

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The scatterplot above revealed a very strong and positive linear relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations. This can be confirmed by the fact that the plot is clustered around the line which is the mean. The closeness of the plot to the straight line which represents the mean established the significant relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon. The scatterplot is directional indicating a genuinely perfect association between the variables. The form of the scatterplot is in a linear form indicating a very strong and positive linear relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. The strength of the relationship is positive since the plot is clustered around the straight line and also there is no outliers.

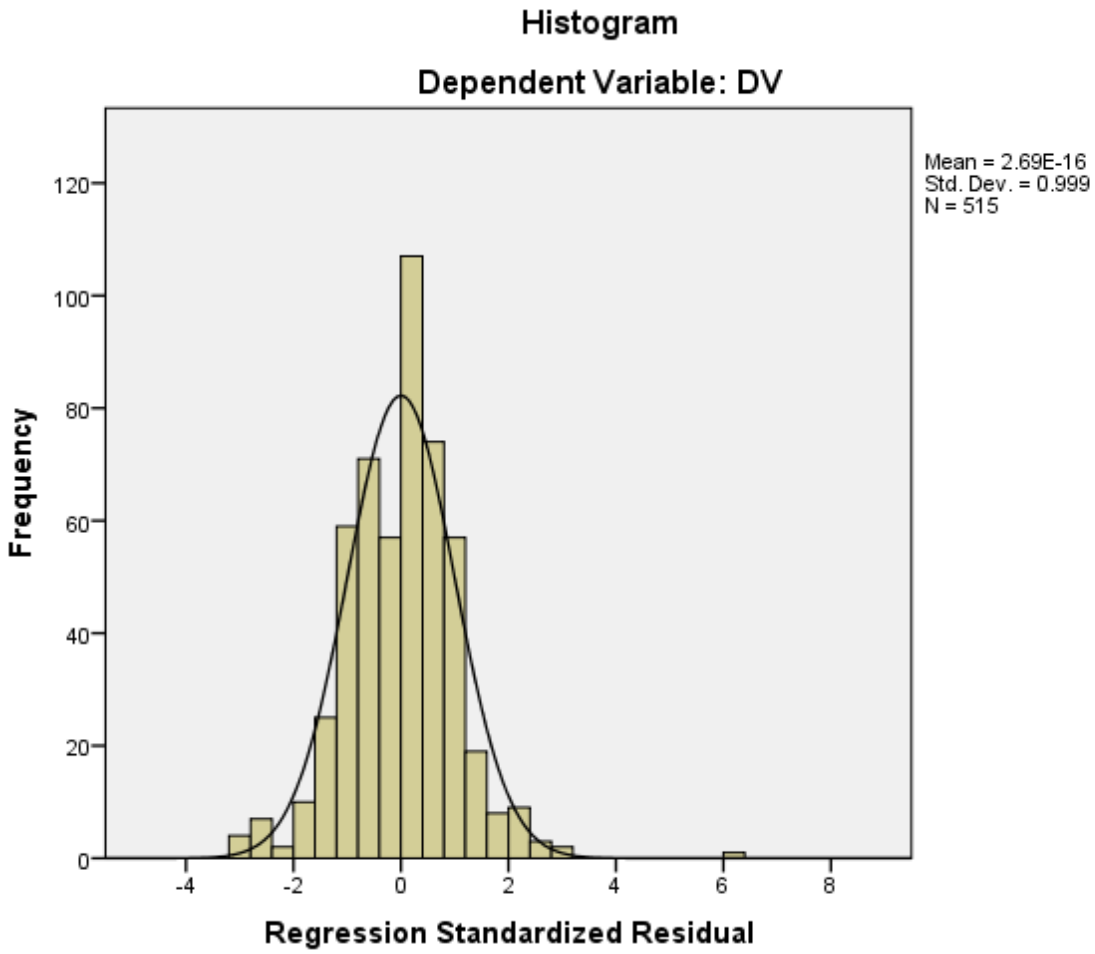


Figure 31: Histogram of the relevance of the preparatory groups

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The graphical representation helps to emphasise on the linearity of the relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training in Cameroon. Thus, there exist a positive and very strong linear relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates, indicating that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative retained.

Verification of research hypothesis four

To ascertain the statistically significant relationship which do exist between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations in advanced schools of learning and training in Yaounde, a linear regression test was conducted. To this end, we started by formulating the alternative and the null specific research hypothesis (Ha4, Ho4) of the study.

Ha4: The sustainability of the preparatory groups has a statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training of Yaounde.

Ho4: The sustainability of the preparatory groups has no statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training of Yaounde.

All the tables, chart and histogram below presents the results of the linear regression test which was conducted to measure the effect of the sustainability of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning of Yaounde.

Table 27: Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.427[a]	.183	.181	3.19570

a. Predictors: (Constant), Sustainability of PGs

b. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

The model summary table above presents the linear regression results of the effect of the sustainability of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for entrance examinations. It is revealed that there exist a positive and strong linear relationship between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates with a Pearson`s correlation coefficient of r = .427. The regression model predicted 18.3% of the variance. The model was therefore a good fit for the data (F (1.513) = 114.683, p <.000). This indicates that the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training largely depends on the ability of the preparatory groups to withstand the taste of time. The Pearson correlation value of 0.427 explains why the promoters are tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the project throughout time.

Table 28: Analysis of variance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1171.201	1	1171.201	114.683	.000[b]
	Residual	5239.005	513	10.212		
	Total	6410.206	514			

a. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

b. Predictors: (Constant), Sustainability of PGs

The analysis of variance was used to determine the level of the relationship between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates. This is known as the F test. The linear regression F test has the null hypothesis which stated that the sustainability of the preparatory groups has no statistically significant effect on the training of candidates for entrance examinations at p = .05. As such a significant regression equation was obtained with F (1,513) = 114.683, p= .000. The test is highly significant. Hence, we can assume that there is a statistically significant relationship between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon.

Table 29: Coefficient value

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.826	1.070		18.535	.000
	Sustainability of preps groups	.371	.035	.427	10.709	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Training of candidates

b. Predictors: (constant), Sustainability of PGs

The simple linear regression obtained, indicates that the sustainability of the preparatory groups had a positive β coefficient. The slope coefficient for the relevance of the preparatory groups is .427. This means that the sustainability of the preparatory groups at a constant of zero, the training of candidates will be 18.535. That is; ($t = 10.709$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, any unit increase in the relevance of the preparatory groups will result to 10.7 units increase in the training of candidates. At 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, relevance of the preparatory groups had a 0.000 level of significance, which is largely less than 0.05 (alpha). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that the sustainability of the preparatory groups is a strong and positive determinant of the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning of the country.

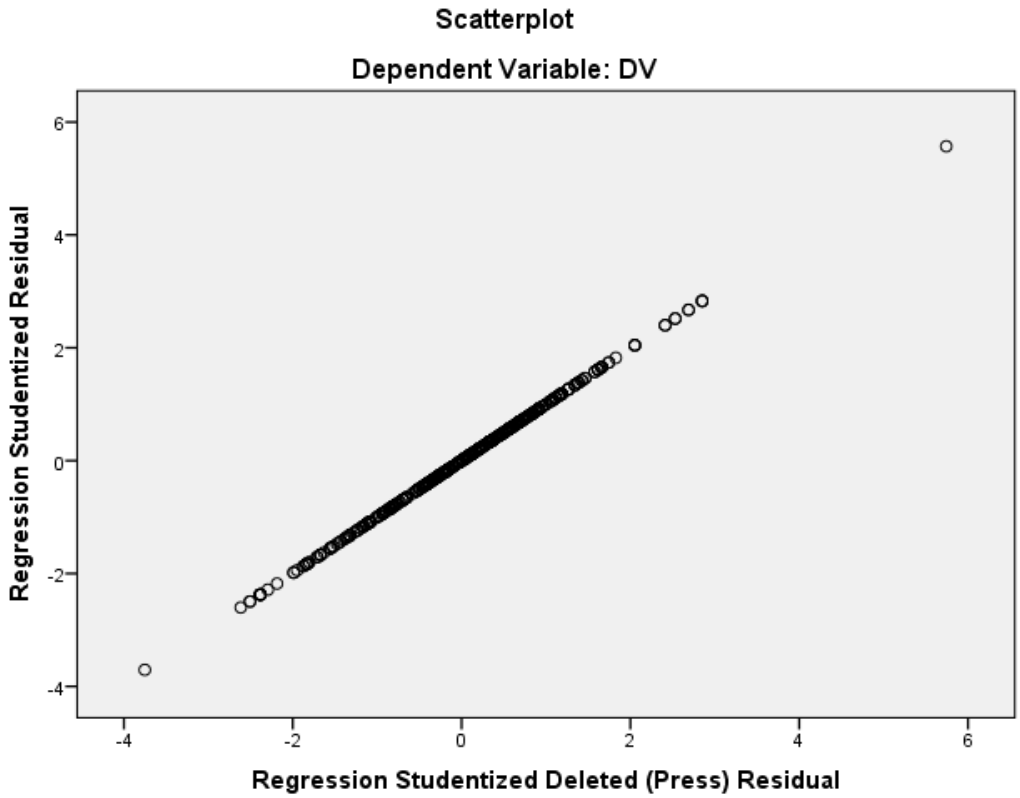


Figure 32: Scatterplot of sustainability of the preparatory groups

The scatterplot above revealed a very strong and positive linear relationship between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations. This can be confirmed by the fact that the plot is clustered around the line which is the mean. The closeness of the plot to the straight line which represents the mean established the significant relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon. This indicates that sustainability of the preparatory groups is a correlate of the training of candidates. This is so because regarding the direction, we can say that it is a genuinely positive relation. The form of the plot has a genuinely straight line part indicating a positive linear relationship. Looking at the strength of the plot, we can say that it is very strong and positive linear relationship since it is clustered around the straight line and also there is no outlier.

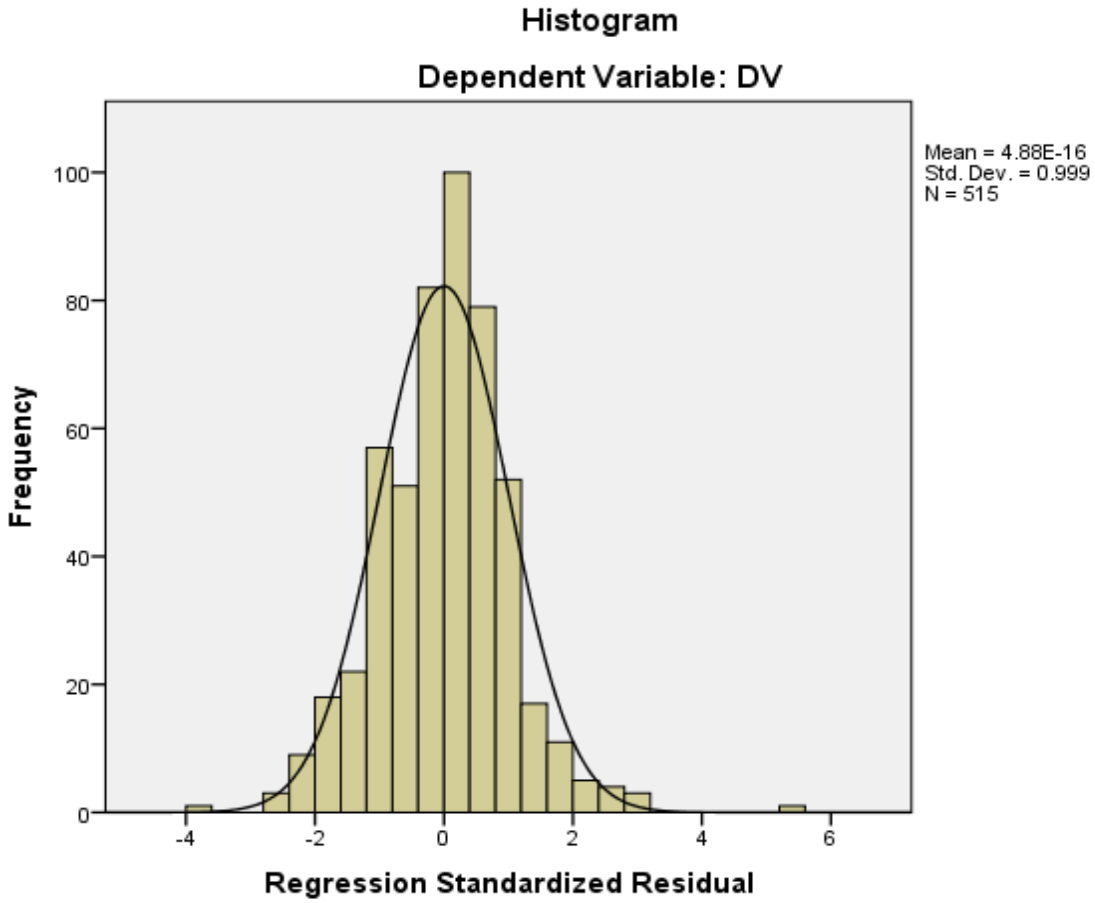


Figure 33: Histogram of the sustainability of preparatory groups

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The graphical representation helps to emphasise on the linearity of the relationship between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training in Cameroon. Thus, there exist a positive and very strong linear relationship between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates, indicating that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative retained.

Table 30: Summary of quantitative results

Hypotheses	Regression weights	B	T	p-value	Results
Ha1: Effectiveness of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates.	EPGs --- TCs	.374	83.218	0.000	Retained
Ha2: Efficiency of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates.	EFPGs --- TCs	.226	22.228	0.000	Retained
Ha3: Relevance of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates.	RPGs ---- TCs	.470	12.074	0.000	Retained
Ha4: Sustainability of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates.	SPGs -----TCs	.427	18.535	0.000	retained

Note: $p < 0.05$; EPGs = Effectiveness of preparatory groups, EFPGs = Efficiency of preparatory, RPGs = Relevance of preparatory groups, SPGs = sustainability of preparatory groups.
Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

Interpretation of quantitative results of the study

Interpretation of the results of the findings is an important step in research. Interpretation consist of explaining in details the results of our findings. This is the critical analysis and synthesis of empirical findings to derive meaningful insights, draw conclusions, and make inferences based on the data collected and analysed. The interpretation of the results of the findings provides a complete meaning to the tables, plots and graphs above. In the present study, the researcher makes use of the research objective to report the findings of the study.

Research objective one

In the first research objective, the researcher seeks to examine the impact of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The regression analysis was used to accept or refute the relationship between the independent variable (effectiveness of the preparatory groups) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). The dependent variable was therefore regressed on the independent variable (IV1). The independent variable (effectiveness of the preparatory groups) significantly predict the training of candidates, F (1.513) = 83.218, p <0.001. Also, the R^2 = 14.0 depicts that the model explains 14.0% of the variance in the training of candidates. Moreover, regression coefficient was further assessed to ascertain the effect of the independent variable (effectiveness of preparatory groups) on the dependent variable (training of candidates). The results revealed that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups exerts a significant and positive influence on the training of candidates (B = .374, t = 9.12, p = 0.000). Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted which states that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

The above results demonstrate the need for an effective management of the preparatory groups. In order to provide quality training for candidates, preparatory groups are therefore tasked with the responsibility of ensuring a safe and peaceful learning environment for candidates so as to facilitate the assimilation of lessons. Effective management of the preparatory groups thus requires the promoters to critically handle a number of elements. This include the definition of the content of the training programs, provision of teaching materials, securing of permanent infrastructures where classes will take, providing a safe, calm and peaceful learning environment as well as recruiting qualified teachers capable of convincing the candidates. The effectiveness of the preparatory groups thus appears to be an indispensable element in the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools in Cameroon. This requires the promoters to develop a well committed teaching staff.

Basing on the findings above, the effectiveness of the preparatory groups is a strong determinant of the success of candidates in entrance examination. This is so because the quality of the training candidates receives in a group determine their level of competitiveness. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the preparatory groups as well as to gain a competitive advantage over the

competitors, the promoters, the staff, the teachers and all those involve in this initiative are required to perform a number of task so as to guarantee the satisfaction of the candidates. These groups are in the informal sector and its survival largely depends on the ability of the managing body to handle with delicacy all the aspects related to training.

Research objective two

In the second research objective, the researcher seeks to examine the impact of the efficiency of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The regression analysis was used to accept or refute the relationship between the independent variable (efficiency of the preparatory groups) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). The dependent variable was therefore regressed on the independent variable (IV2). The independent variable (efficiency of the preparatory groups) significantly predict the training of candidates, F (1.513) = 27.657, p <0.001. Also, the R^2 = 5.1 depicts that the model explains 5.1% of the variance in the training of candidates. Moreover, regression coefficient was further assessed to ascertain the effect of the independent variable (efficiency of preparatory groups) on the dependent variable (training of candidates). The results revealed that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups exerts a significant and positive influence on the training of candidates (B = .226, t = 5.259, p = 0.000). Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted which states that the efficiency of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Basing on the above results on the efficiency of the preparatory in relation to the training of candidates for entrance examinations in to advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon, it is crystal clear that the quality of the training and the success of the candidates in these examinations largely depends on the ability of the promoters to efficiently management the existing resources so as to achieve the predefined objectives. Naturally, project efficiency is the ability of the project to meet the expected or targeted goals and objectives by using the available resources diligently. This consist of looking into it that the resources (material, financial, human, informational and temporal resources) are used in the best and possible so as to achieve the predefined project objectives. Efficiency of the preparatory therefore requires the promoters to take into consideration a number of elements when defining the strategies, the goals, the mission

and the objectives of the groups. The promoters are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring financial transparency and accountability in the groups, providing incentives for engaged and committed staff (teachers and support staff), equity and equality at all levels and between all the members of the group, ensuring budget adherence and the alignment of the strategies to the main purpose of the groups.

The efficiency of these groups thus appears to be a vital tool for the success of the candidates. In this light, promoters, teachers, staff and candidates must work towards achieving this valuable objective. Effectiveness and efficiency are strong indicators of success in project management. Considering the fact that these preparatory groups thus in the informal sector are educational projects, it is primordial to diligently manage the available resources so as to achieve the predefined objectives. This is because effectiveness and efficiency are interrelated and interdependent. This is so because it is very difficult to be effective and not been efficient and vice versa. Thus, the promoters of the different preparatory groups must handle this two indicators of project performance very diligently and with a lot of care to avoid any bottlenecks in the realisation of the set objectives.

Research objective three

In the third research objective, the researcher seeks to examine the effect of the relevance of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The regression analysis was used to accept or refute the relationship between the independent variable (relevance of the preparatory groups) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). The dependent variable was therefore regressed on the independent variable (IV3). The results show that the independent variable (relevance of the preparatory groups) significantly predict the training of candidates, $F(1.513) = 145.770$, $p < 0.001$. Also, the $R^2 = 22.1$ depicts that the model explains 22.1% of the variance in the training of candidates. Moreover, regression coefficient was further assessed to ascertain the effect of the independent variable (relevance of preparatory groups) on the dependent variable (training of candidates). The results revealed that the relevance of the preparatory groups exerts a significant and positive influence on the training of candidates ($B = .470$, $t = 12.074$, $p = 0.000$). Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted which states that the relevance of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

This result show that one of the criteria for the success of the candidates in competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning is nothing but the relevance. Relevance as a modality of project performance look at the outcomes of the project deliverables on the beneficiaries in the first place and the community at large. The result show that the preparatory groups are relevant both to the candidates and the society as a result of their relentless effort to satisfy the desire of candidates and the expectations of a number of families. This is because for the past decades, succeeding in an entrance examination in Cameroon is considered to be an extra-ordinary achievement. This is because of the level of competition which has considerable increase as a result of the growing number of graduates who want to join the public service coupled with the inability of the government of the republic to absorb all the graduates. Also, some families at times goes to the extent of bypassing the norms, values, and ethics of the society just to ensure the admission of their peers into these advanced schools.

For candidates and families who do not have both the social, material and financial strength to ensure their admission or that of their peers in these advanced schools, are forced to rely specifically on the help of the preparatory groups. The growing importance of the preparatory groups has seen for the past decade a drastic increase in the number of preparatory groups in Yaounde in particular and across the entire Cameroonian society. Today, the phenomenon of preparation for entrance examinations in advanced schools in not just the affair of the urban areas, but it is also visible in the rural areas or the hinterland. This further intensifies the pertinence and relevance of this activity. It is therefore the sole responsibility of the promoters all along with the management team to ensure candidates and families satisfaction. This is so because the relevance of the preparatory groups can easily be measured in relation to the candidate's satisfaction and even that of the society.

This result proof the trust and the attachment families and candidates has placed on the preparatory groups. Today, it is very difficult to pick a newspaper without seeing something related to the preparation for entrance examinations in to advanced schools such as ENAM, EMIA, ENS, ENSPY, IRIC, FAZA etc. Also, this result can be supported by the non-participant observation that we made during the fieldwork. We were able to observe that a good number of socially positioned families came along and drop their peers in these groups and before the time of closing pass by to take them. Majority of these parents keep in touch with the various promoters of the

preparatory groups. Some constantly called to know about the state of their children. All of this demonstrate the trust and believe these families have on these groups. Thus, the relevance of the preparatory groups in a direct correlate of the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Research objective four

In the fourth and last research objective, the researcher seeks to examine the effect of the sustainability of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The regression analysis was used to accept or refute the relationship between the independent variable (sustainability of the preparatory groups) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). The dependent variable was therefore regressed on the independent variable (IV4). The results show that the independent variable (sustainability of the preparatory groups) significantly predict the training of candidates, $F(1.513) = 114.683$, $p < 0.001$. Also, the $R^2 = 18.3$ depicts that the model explains 18.3% of the variance in the training of candidates. Moreover, regression coefficient was further assessed to ascertain the effect of the independent variable (sustainability of preparatory groups) on the dependent variable (training of candidates). The results revealed that the sustainability of the preparatory groups exerts a significant and positive influence on the training of candidates ($B = .427$, $t = 10.709$, $p = 0.000$). Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted which states that the sustainability of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Sustainability is seen here as the ability of the groups to stand the test of time. The results above show that the continuous and persistent training of the candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training in Cameroon will likely depends on the ability of these groups to stand for a longer period of time. The durability of the preparatory groups therefore requires managers, promoters and the managing staff to set up strategies capable of enhancing the growth and the development of the groups. Considering the fact that the government will never absorb all the graduates of the educational system and also that a good number of graduates will continue to knock at the door of the government in search for recruitment into the civil service, it is crystal clear that competitive entrance examinations remains the only

and unique means through which equity, and equality of chances can be guaranteed for all irrespective of the social and cultural background. This implies that as far as the government of the republic will continue to recruit people in the public service through the entrance examinations, preparatory groups will continue to be partner's number of these candidates.

Taken in to consideration the fact that these groups operate in the informal sector, which in Cameroon is not fully recognised and in most of the times neglected, there is the need for all the promoters to set up strategies and mechanisms for subsistence. In this light, most if not all the preparatory groups have set their eyes on a number of strategies intended to promote the growth and development of the groups as well as the sustainability of the groups. These sustainability strategies includes; the desire to move from a preparatory groups to a centre or an institution where the focus will not only be on the training of candidates for entrance examination but also where attention will be tilted towards training impacting individuals with required skills, competencies and aptitudes in domains such as entrepreneurship education, management, health, public finance, accounting, computer literacy, journalism, marketing, business management, human resource planning and development, career management, project management, software development, e-commerce, transport and logistics etc. This constitute the number one strategy for practical all the groups who aimed for long term achievement. Another noticeable strategy of sustainability by the preparatory groups involves partnerships. This strategy consists of developing friendship with the outside and the inside world. Inside world partnerships consists of developing partnerships with other groups in the domain of preparation so as to facilitate the growth and development of the groups. Whereas partnerships with the outside world focusses principally on securing collaboration and corporation with other external organisations other than the preparatory groups.

As such, basing on the above findings, the sustainability of the preparatory groups is a strong and positive determinant of the training of candidates for entrance examinations. Majority of the candidates sees these groups as saviours and in return places all their trust in them. In the minds of a good number of Cameroonians, to succeed in a competitive entrance examination like ENAM, EMIA, IRIC, ENSPY, NASLA, ASMAC, or School of Public Works, one need to undergo intensive training and preparation in these groups. While others argue that training and preparation alone is not an assurance for the admission, majority believes that everything starts with training. This show how capital training determines the success of candidates in both competitive and non-

competitive exams. For this reasons and many more, the various preparatory groups must set up sustainability strategies considered to be indispensable for the training of candidates for entrance examinations in advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Qualitative results: Data presentation and interpretation

In the previous section, we presented the quantitative results on the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of the preparatory groups in relation to the training of candidates for entrance examinations. The present section presents the results of the qualitative data obtained through the structured face to face interviews and analysed using the thematic analysis. A total of 12 participants from different preparatory were retained for this study. Here, the researchers present the biographical information of the participants, presents the results of the findings and subsequently interpret the results of the qualitative part of the study.

Presentation of biographical information of the participants

The present study collected information from a total of 12 participants which consisted of 5 females and 7 males. All the participants were members of the preparatory groups either promoter, teacher, or staff. This three category of the participants were chosen for the reason being that they are people resources and master a number of elements in the running of the groups. The participants provided personal details regarding the position, the longevity in the groups, age, residential areas, level of education and future vision for the groups. The table below show the groups and the participants who took part in this study.

Table 31: Distribution of the population of the qualitative study

Preparatory groups	**Gender**		**Total**
	Males	**Females**	
Intelligentsia corporation	1	1	2
Kalata group	1	1	2
Success story	1	_	1
Intelligentsia new generation	1	1	2
Groupe la Reussite	1	_	1
La Methode Plus	1	1	2
Groupe L`Intellect	1	1	2
Total	**7**	**5**	**12**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

The table above presents the information on the various groups from which the sample population for the qualitative study was drawn. Looking at the table, a total of 7 preparatory groups were retained for this part of the study amongst which we have Intelligentsia Corporation, Kalata Group, Intellect group, Success Story for Anglophones just to name a few. All the groups provided at least one participant for this study. In all, a total of 12 participants were retained for the qualitative of the study. This consisted of 7 males and 5 females made up of promoters, teachers and staff. These people were selected because they are believed to have a good mastering of the running and management of the groups. They were therefore seen as people resources for this part of the study.

Participant 1

Participant 1 was a male participant from the group intelligentsia corporation. He is believed to be aged between 35 to 45 years old. He is a holder of a master decree as reported to be one of the co-founder of the group. He is married and father to 3 children. The participant speaks and writes fluently the French language but manage to speak and understand the English language. He also reported to be living around “Entrer Simbock” neighbourhood.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is aged between 30 to 40 years old and is a male. He is a holder of master decree in educational management from the University of Yaounde I. He said that the passion and love for preparing candidates started as far back as during his early years in the university where he worked with academic seniors. Since then, he has grown up nurturing his dream of one day creating a repetition classes group to help those who are not only preparing for entrance examinations but also those facing difficulties in the assimilation of class courses. He speaks very well the French language but manage with the English language. He lives around Total Melen.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is a female staff aged between 25 to 30 years old. She said that she is a staff and at the same a teacher in the group. She has been in the group for 5 years. She said she get to know about the group when she also was looking for a group to prepare herself for the entrance examination in E.N.S. She further said that since then she has been in contact with the promoter

of the group and after graduating from the Teacher`s Higher Training College, she opted to join the group. She is French speaking and lives around Nkolmesseng.

Participant 4

Participant 4 is a male teacher aged between 35 to 40 years old. He is a holder of a master decree in the faculty of science of the University of Yaounde I and a master student in the faculty of education of the same university. He starting repetition classes in the faculty of science and it is of recent that he joins the preparatory classes. He declared to be intervening in 3 different groups as a teacher. He teaches maths and chemistry. He speaks French very well and manages in English. He is married and father to 2 children. He lives around Polytechnic of Yaounde.

Participant 5

Participant 5 is a male coordinator aged between 35 to 40 years old. He is in charge of coordinating the activities of the groups and substitute the promoter whenever he is not there. He said to be part of the group for over 7 years and he started as an advertisement agent before being promoted to the rank of the coordinator. He is French speaking and lives around Messassi neighbourhood.

Participant 6

Participant 6 is a female staff aged between 25 to 30 years old. She reported to be in the group for approximately 4 years. She is a decree holder from the University of Douala. She is responsible of guiding, orientating and counselling newly recruited candidates. She usually sits at the road side to orientate and direct the candidates in class. She is not married and lives around Biyem Assi Lac.

Participant 7

Participant 7 is a male promoter aged between 40 to 45 years old. He is the founder of the group. He is a holder of a master degree in sociology. His group has been existing for over 10 years. He reported that his desire to train candidates for entrance examinations came after his multiple trials to join an advanced school which was only possible after when he joint a preparatory group. From that day, he has been nurturing his dream of creating a preparatory group. He speaks both English and French fluently. He is married and lives around Olembe.

Participant 8

Participant 8 is a male teacher who is aged between 35 to 40 years old. He teaches general knowledge in the preparatory groups. He reported that it is close to 8 years that he is teaching in the various preparatory groups. He is English speaking but also speaks fluently French language. He operates in different preparatory groups both Francophone`s and Anglophone`s groups. He lives around Nkolbison neighbourhood. He is a secondary school teacher and a holder of DIPES II. He is married.

Participant 9

Participant 9 is a 38-year-old male teacher. He is a secondary school teacher and holder of a DIPES II from the Teacher`s Higher Training College of Yaounde. He is also a PhD student in the faculty of science of the University of Yaounde I. He is a teacher as well as a staff and has been in the group for almost 6 years. He speaks both English and French language. He lives around Carrefour Obili. He is married and father of one.

Participant 10

Participant 10 is a female staff in the group who is aged between 30 to 35 years old. She is an agent of communication. She is also a secretary in the group. She has been in the group for up to 5 years. She is a degree holder and is unemployed. She speaks both English and French fluently. She obtained her degree in the University of Dschang before moving down to Yaounde. She lives around Ekounou Palais.

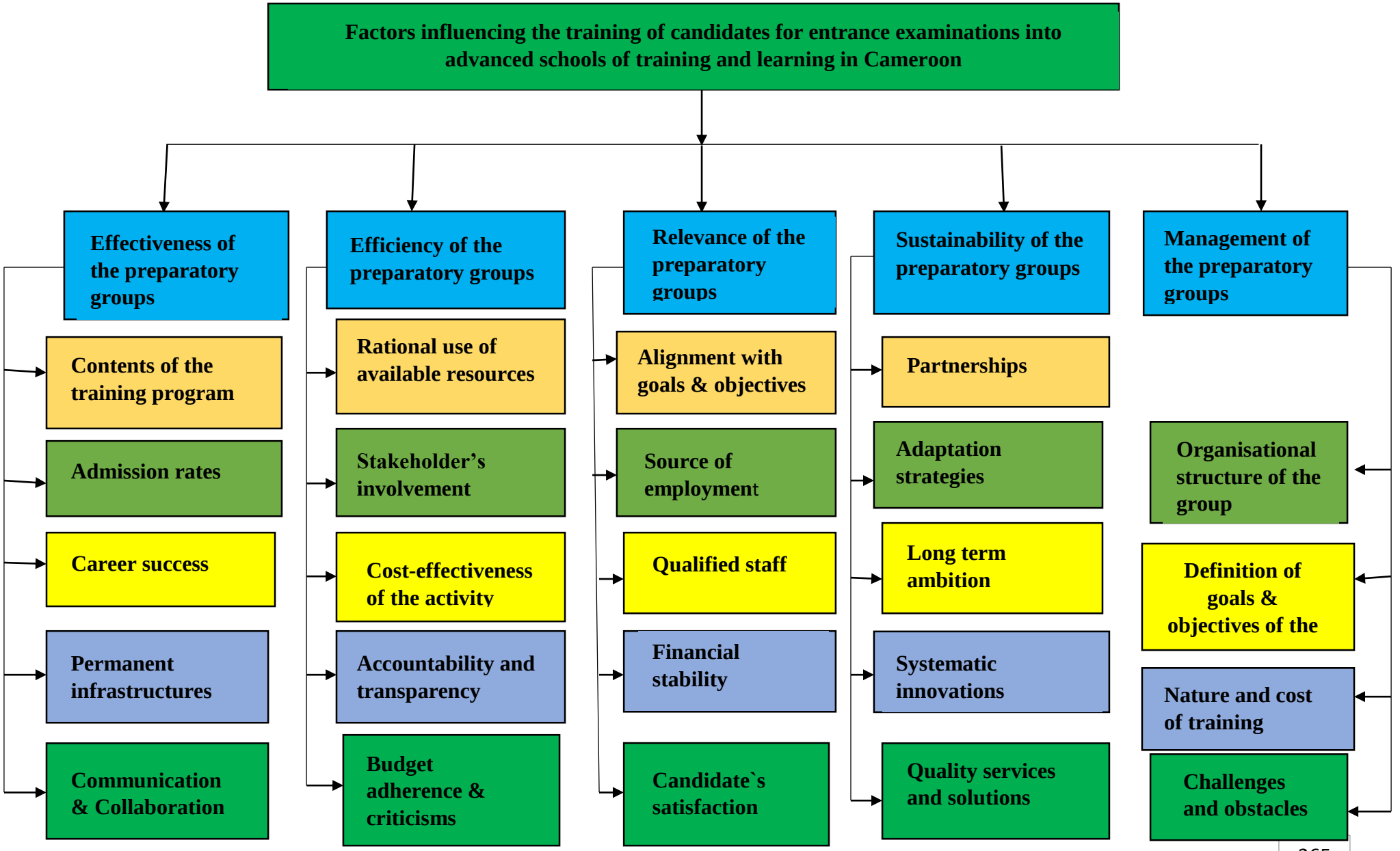
Participant 11

Participant 11 said to be a staff in the preparatory group. The participant is a female aged between 25 to 30 years old. She has been in the group for three years. She is a holder of a degree from the University of Yaounde I. she is an advertisement agent in the group. She moves around distributing tracks to students in secondary schools and universities. She also sits at the road side and guide and orientate the newly recruited candidates to the classes. She is not married and live around CRADAT, going towards Ecole de Poste.

Participant 12

Participant 12 is one of the co-founder of one of the preparatory groups. The participant is a female aged between 30 to 35 years old. She is the only female promoter in the study. She is a holder os a master degree in the University of Yaounde I and a PhD student in the same university. She has been in the group for approximately 6 years. She is bilingual and at times go into classes to give lectures to the candidates. She is married and lives around Etoa-Meki.

Figure 34: Interconnection between the themes and sub-themes of the study



Presentation of qualitative results of the findings of the study

This section presents the findings of the qualitative part of the study. Here, the researcher looks for the emerging themes and sub-themes from the participant`s interviews. The themes and sub-themes are concepts and sub-concepts which constantly appears in participant`s interviews. As such, a total of 5 major themes and a number of sub-themes were identified in this study. The various themes and sub-themes are presented in the table below.

Table 33: Emerging themes and sub-themes from the participant`s interviews

Themes (T)	Sub-themes (ST)	Participants												Total
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	
Effectiveness of the preparatory groups	Content of the program	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
	Admission rates	x	_	x	x	x	_	_	x	x	x	_	x	8
	Career success	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	_	x	x	x	11
	Infrastructures	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
	Communication & collaboration	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
Efficiency of the preparatory groups	Rational use of resources	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	_	x	_	x	x	10
	Stakeholder involvement	x	x	x	x	_	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
	Cost-effective	x	_	_	x	x	_	x	x	x	x	x	x	9
	Accountability & transparency	x	_	x	x	x	_	_	x	x	_	_	x	7
	Budget adherence & critics	x	_	_	x	x	x	x	x	_	x	x	_	8
Relevance of the preparatory groups	Alignment with goals and objectives	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
	Source of employment	x	x	x	x	x	_	x	x	x	_	x	x	10
	Qualified teachers	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	-	x	9
	Financial stability	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	11
	Candidates satisfaction	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
Sustainability of the preparatory groups	Partnerships	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
	Adaptation strategies	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
	Future ambitions	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
	Systematic innovations	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	10
	Quality of service	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
Management of the preparatory	Organisational structure	x	-	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	10
	Definition of goals and objectives	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
	Nature and cost of training	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
	Challenges	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

Note: T = themes, ST = Sub-themes, P = Participant

The table above presents the emerging themes and sub-themes from participant`s interviews. A total of five principal themes are identified. This involves effectiveness, efficiency, relevance,

sustainability and management of the preparatory groups. The table also show the various sub-themes which emerges from the different themes. Four of the themes have five sub-themes each while only one theme (management of the preparatory groups) have fewer sub-themes (4) in the table. The table also include the participant`s responses mark by an "X" sign and "- "sign.

Where T = Theme, ST = sub-theme, P = Participant

"X" = meaning the participant mention the sub-theme

"_" meaning the participant did not mention the sub-theme

Interpretation of qualitative results of the study

The present section of the study focusses on interpreting the results obtained from the qualitative data of the study. The interpretation of the qualitative results provides the framework for the researcher to have a deeper insight on the studied phenomenon. As such, a total of five main themes were identified from the participant`s interviews. These themes because of it complex nature were further break down into sub-themes. Each themes therefore gave us a total of five or four sub-themes which are interpreted below.

Theme 1: Effectiveness of preparatory groups

The analysis of the participant`s interviews helped to identify key aspects which influences the effectiveness of the preparatory groups in relation to the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training in Cameroon. The participants explained that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups is the ability to achieve the stated goals and objectives. Effectiveness thus appear as a determinant for the training of candidates since it takes in to consideration a number of elements considered to be indispensable for the training and learning to take place. It is worth mentioning that ensuring the effectiveness of the preparatory groups requires the promoters and the managing body to look after the content of the training program, ensure a satisfactory admission, enhance career success, ensures candidate`s satisfaction, permanent and quality infrastructures for the training to take place. The following sub-themes which emerged from this theme are discussed below.

Sub theme 1: Content of the training program

The content of the training program provides the basis for the effectiveness of the preparatory groups regarding the training of candidates for entrance examinations. Actually, the programs here refer to those elements which constitutes the focal point in competitive entrance examinations.

During the interviews, all the 12 participants mentioned that the content training program is defined based on two elements, that is; the level 1,2, and 3 university programs and past questions for second cycle entrance examinations and final year secondary school program and past questions for the first cycle entrance examinations. This can be justified by the following verbatim of the participants of the study.

Participant 1 argues that:

> *Déjà au niveau de contenu de cours, à mon expérience personnel, j`ai juste remarqué que les centres de formation ou encore les grandes écoles n`aide pas en fait les groupes ou encore les candidats a mieux s`orienter ou bien à mieux s`organiser pour travailler parce que quand on voit l`arrêté, on nous dire le concours c`est niveau Bac. Quand on dire niveau Bac sa sous-entend que on droit pratiquement parcourir toutes les programmes terminaux ainsi de suite ainsi de suite. Mais comment dont expliquer le fait que par exemple quand on prend un sujet, on se rend compte qu`il y a des notions qu`on voit à l`université. C`est un peu à ce niveau qu`il y a parfois le problème. Ça veut dire que bon déjà au niveau des groupes qui sont bien spécialisée, le préfet d`étude sera dont charger d'harmoniser les programmes et essayer dont maintenant de ressortir les modules qu`on va aborder tout au long de préparation. Ceci veut tout simplement dire qu'a base des arrêtés tous les préfets d`étude produire des modules de formation. Dont à partir l`arrêté, ils vont dont segmenter le programme. Par exemple en chimie, ils vont segmenter les diffèrent modules qu`on doit parcourir tout au long de la préparation (P1).*

For participant 8, the content of the training program is much more inspired from the degree launching the so called entrance examination. The participant argues that:

> *Bon vous avez que quand on lance le concours, sur l`arrêté on voir les filières à préparer. Par exemple pour un concours comme ENAM, sur l`arrêté il y a le programme bien définir et c`est à partir de là qu`on définir les programmes de formation. Même à l`école normale il y`avait des programmes même comme de nos jours ça ne vient plus avec le programme. Le programme de formation chez nous est baser sur les anciens sujets et l`arrêter même de ces grandes écoles (P8).*

While for participant 8, it is the degree launching the entrance examination which helped to define the content of the training program, participant 2 is of the view that in Philosophy for example, it is the past questions and the level 1, 2, and 3 which helped in defining the program. The following extract helps to illustrate this.

> *En tant que promoteur, le programme que je donne à mes candidats puisse que je prépare principalement en philo au seconde cycle. C`est à dire que celui qui vient pour se préparer à une licence en philo, sociologie et autres. Alors le programme je m`inspire du cours de la licence 1, 2 et 3. Le programme est basé principalement sur l`histoire de la philosophie parce que au regard des anciens sujets, les questions qui*

sont généralement poser est axer sur l`histoire de la philosophie. Donc le programme est rythmé sur l`histoire de la philosophie qu`on étudie en fac sur lequel les épreuves sont formuler. Pour définir le contenu de programme, on prend en compte deux éléments à savoir ; les cours en fac et les anciens sujets (P 2).

For the third participant, entrance examination is not a recent phenomenon in Cameroon. They argues that it is something that have been existing over the years and so the content of the training program takes into consideration the past questions. According to her,

Pour définir le contenu de programme, on se déjà que le concours ne pas une chose qui date d`aujourd`hui. C`est quelque chose qui existe depuis fort longtemps. Aussi nous sommes en partenariat avec les enseignants qui enseigne à la faculté de médecine qui savent ce qui faut. Puisse que ce sont le concours nous aussi on eut à faire on sait ce qu`on donne aux enfants et comment le donner. C`est beaucoup plus les anciens sujets qui nous aides à définir le programme. Généralement le programme de concours prend compte le programme de terminale et la première année université (P3).

The above verbatim from the participants outlines that the definition of the content of the training program takes into consideration a number of elements. While some participants argue that the content of the training program is developed basing the degree launching the entrance examinations as it outlines the area for preparation, others argues that the content of the training program is defined based on the past questions meanwhile others simply combines the first cycle university programs and the final year in secondary schools to come out with their programs.

Sub-theme 2: Admission rates of candidates in entrance examinations

Another determinant of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups in relation to the training of candidates for entrance examinations in to advanced schools in Cameroon is the rate of admission candidates. The primary objective of the preparatory groups is to ensure the admission of the candidates into the respective advanced schools and professional institutions of the country. The admission rate into these schools tells more about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these groups. During the interviews, majority of the participants expressed their feelings about the admission rate of candidates into these schools. Here, the feelings were shared. While some participants argue that the admission rate of candidates in the advanced schools are satisfactory, others does not. The participants had mixed feelings as far as the rate of admission of candidates in competitive entrance examinations is concern. The following extracts from participant`s interviews can be used to illustrate this.

Participant 9 argues that :

> *En ce qui me concerne, le taux de réussite ne pas qu`a même satisfaisant. En terme de pourcentage, sur 10 candidats former, parfois maximum c`est deux ou trois qui réussir pour des groupes qui n`ont des objectifs clairs. Mais pour certains je pense que ça peut même aller jusqu`à cinq candidats qui réussir. Le taux de réussite varie en fonction de l`objectif que chaque groupe se fixe (P3).*

For participant 7,

> *Il faut dire que le taux de réussite varie d`une année à une autre. Pour dire que les années ne sont pas le même. Il y a une année ou j`étais vraiment satisfaite parce que beaucoup ont eu le concours d`école normale que ce soit à Yaoundé ou à Maroua. D`autres années n`était vraiment encourageant puisse en philo et autres beaucoup ne se prépare pas. Donc sur 10 qui vient, parfois c`est un ou deux qui réussir et l`année ou j`ai vraiment brillé c`est j`avais eu 5 candidats qui ont réussi au concours. Donc je suis relativement satisfaite parce que c`est ne pas une satisfaction totale parce que tout le monde ne réussit pas. Honnêtement le taux de réussite en pourcentage varie entre 35 et 40% (P7).*

Participant 12 on her part argues that:

> *Pour le taux de réussite c`est ne pas toujours ce qu`on souhaite mais on faire avec. Comme on dire souvent mieux vaut un que zéro. Pour dire que depuis que nous sommes dans la préparation le taux de réussite ne jamais ce qu`on veut mais on multiplie les efforts pour que un jour les choses marche pour le mieux (P12).*

Participant 5 argues that looking at the admission rate annually is at times satisfactory but looking at the admission per entrance examination is not really the best.

> *Le taux de réussite se calcule annuellement. Mais si on se résume sur 16 ans passer sur le terrain, on peut dire que de fois le taux est satisfaisant et parfois non. Dont si on s`abstient en année, je dirais qu'il y a de moment où le taux est vraiment satisfaisant mais il y a aussi des moments obscurs ou tout ne va. Dont les candidats peuvent être 40 mais on a que 10% de réussite. Dont c`est ne pas vraiment ce qu`on attendait. Tout cela c`est peut-être la prolifération de groupe un peu de partout. Voilà pourquoi de nos jours, 10%, 20% c`est du travail pour vraiment avoir cela et les enfants ne s`y mettent pas aussi. Au début ils se disent qu`ils sont à l`école pour aller en classe supérieur (P5).*

Sub-theme 3: Career success of candidates

Career success here encompasses both the educational and the professional achievements of the candidates after their passage in the preparatory groups. Career success constitute another mechanism through which the effectiveness of the preparatory groups in relation to the training of candidates for entrance examinations could be measured. Besides impacting knowledge, skills and

aptitudes required for the success of candidates, in order to be effective, preparatory groups are also tasked with the responsibility of impacting life changing skills in the candidates which can help them to succeed even if they are not admitted into their dreamt professional schools. The analysis of the participant`s interviews has revealed that of all the participants interviewed, majority made mention of the career success as a determinant of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups. This can be justified by the following verbatim of the participants.

According to participant 1, career success as a determinant of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups requires these groups to:

> *La formation dans le groupe de prépa concours a justement un impact sur le parcours académique et même professionnelle des candidats. Bon vous allez le constater, tout ceux qui font la prépa concours même s'ils ne réussissent pas à ce concours trouverons ou pourrons faire d`autres concours lie à formation reçu dans les groupes de prépa concours. Dont en dehors de les aider à réussir au concours en question, ça les aides également dans leurs études à venir. J`en connait certain qui se sont préparer pour faire ENAM, mais après on postuler ailleurs comme à l`ambassade de France et ils sont là-bas (P1).*

For participant 6, the training of candidates has an impact on the career success of the candidates. He argue that ;

> *Pour ce qui concerne la formation des candidats aux concours d`entrée dans les grandes écoles, le tout ne pas de réussir. Il s`agit de doter les candidates avec les connaissances qui peut le permettre au cas où il ne sort pas gagnant de ces examens mais de qu`à même utiliser ces connaissances pour être utile dans un domaine bien précis. C`est pour quoi parfois on ne se contente pas à bombarder les cours mais on faire des breaks pour conseiller nos candidats pour qu`ils soient prêts psychologiquement (P6).*

Participant 11 in return argues that:

> *Il est vrai que le but de la formation est d`assurer la réussite des candidats dans un premier temps au concours d`entrée dans les grandes écoles, il ne pas a exclu que cette formation permet aux candidats de capitaliser sur bon nombre des choses. Pour dire que cette formation a une double mission. D`abord d`assurer la réussite au concours et en suite assurer la réussite professionnelle candidats (11).*

Sub-theme 4: Availability and nature of infrastructures

The availability and nature of the infrastructures constitutes key element in the effectiveness of the preparatory groups in relation to the training of candidates for entrance examinations in to advanced schools and professional institutions of the country. The preparatory groups are informal

education projects which operate in the informal sector. As such, majority of the groups do not have permanent infrastructures like classrooms were classes can take place at any time. Most of these groups organised their classes in public and private schools around them. Infrastructures are seen as part and parcel of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups. The analysis of the participant's interviews revealed that infrastructure is a major concern to the preparatory groups which at times even temper the effectiveness of the groups. The following extracts from the participant`s interviews can be used to illustrate this.

> *Les infrastructures permanent, hhhh non non je veux être formelle la déçus. Les groupes ou j`officie n`ont pas des salles de cours permanent. Ils font recours aux établissements qui sont aux alentours. Bon ils voient ceux qui sont en charge de sa comme le chef d`établissement ils essayent de négocier pour voient s`ils peuvent les octroyer les salles de cours. Déjà les cours sont programmées de tel sorte que la préparation est bien délimitée. Dont ils font en sorte qu'avant même la rentrée scolaire en septembre on ait déjà boucler avec les programmes. On essaie de tout faire en 2 ou 3 mois de cours. Ils ont délimité la période de formation qui commence au mois de Juin, Juillet et Aout (P4).*
>
> *Permanent hm hm hhh …. Oui oui. On peut dire oui et non parce que il y a des moments où c`est difficile d`avoir une salle. Vous avez déjà été au polygone de l`université, il y a des jours ou c`est libre tout le monde travail. Mais il y a des jours ou on vous demande d`arrêter. Dont c`est souvent compliquer. En période de classe pour la lycéenne et la collégienne, on s`arrange à ce que le cours se passe dans l`après-midi. C`est à dire après la sortie des élèves (P1).*
>
> *Pour avoir la salle il faut viser le site ou tu veux mener l`activité. Demander un peu aux établissements aux alentours si c`est possible d`avoir les salles. Pendant les vacances c`est facile d`avoir la salle et même de mener les activités mais pendant la période de classe c`est parfois difficile. Pour la préparation pendant les heures de cours on a une grande salle a Oledzoa ou on faire le cours ou encore on ramène les cours en soirée. C`est à dire après les heures de cours dans cette établissement (P11).*
>
> *Pour avoir des salles de cours je me rapproche de chef d`établissement. J`ai eu deux sites. La première est au cycle philo socio situe vers la cité U et la bas j`utilise la salle de lecture en soirée avec l`autorisation du président de ce cycle-là. La compétitivité était également élevée mais on essayait d`organiser nos emplois du temps pour que d`autres groupes qui venait solliciter la salle qu`on ne se retrouve pas en train de discuter la salle. Donc on respecte un emploi du temps qu`on fixe. Même chose au niveau du carrefour EMIA au Centre Catholique Universitaire (CCU). Il y a des salles de lecture en annexe qu`on utilise là-bas et ces salles-là vous ne pouvez qu'avoir Access qu'a une certain heure qu`on vous donne et si vous payer ce qu`il faut (P2).*

Regarding the availability of infrastructures needed by the preparatory groups to have their classes, the above extracts explains the challenges related to the acquisition of permanent infrastructures for their activities. This is because most of these groups are considered to be "young guns" who

are still in their beginnings. As such, to acquire classes for their training, they are obliged to negotiate with principals and school heads of the various secondary and primary schools around them. This at times tend to affect the effectiveness of the preparatory groups.

Sub-theme 5: Communication and collaboration in the preparatory groups

Communication and collaboration constitutes the 21st century sustainable skills which contribute to the growth and development of modern days' organisations. The effectiveness of the preparatory groups vis-a-vis the training of candidates passes through effective communication and collaboration. By this we mean that they should be effective communication and full collaboration between the promoters, the staff, the teachers and the candidates in the group. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that communication and collaboration are central for the effectiveness of the groups in relation to the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training in the country. This can be better explain by the various participant`s verbatim.

> *Chez nous il ne s`agit pas d'un simple groupe en fait. Nous sommes comme une famille. On n'a pas de discorde entre nous. Ce qui faire que on s`entend les uns envers les autres. Donc tout se passe bien parce que c`est ne pas une seule personne qui décide. On est mélanger les musulmans, le chrétien, il n`y a pas que le gens de tel ou tel région donc tout se passe bien. Ici c`est en fonction de performance en fait. Tu es performant tu es la bienvenue (P3).*

> *Quand on parle de communication et collaboration, c`est indispensable pour la réussite du groupe étant donné que tout droit être harmoniser. Tout droit se faire en collaboration avec les autres membres du groupe vue que la réussite ne jamais individuelle mais plutôt collective. Le coordonnateur assure que les enseignants viennent aux heures adéquates et que les candidats aux heures requissent pour le cours, et qu'on trouve une salle. Quand il y a déjà ces trois choses, le cours se passe très bien (P7).*

> *La communication est la plaque tournant pour le succès de n`importe quelle organisation. Je me rassure toujours que le climat est favorable au sein du groupe. Généralement quand les résultats sortent, souvent c`est un candidat ou alors c`est moi qui ai les résultats en première. Alors lorsque je publie les résultats dans notre plateforme, la stratégie que j`utilise généralement est celle de réconforter ceux qui ont échoué et de féliciter ceux qui ont réussi. Réconforter en leur disant voilà vous n`avez pas démérité c`est juste que vous n`avez pas était parmi les meilleurs. Il était question pour nous de les assister dans cette épreuve-là. La technique utiliser à ce niveau se soit un appel individuel ou un communiqué adressé à tous (P12).*

The above extracts from the participant`s interviews indicate that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for entrance examinations must take into consideration the communication and collaboration strategies. The promoters are therefore responsible for encouraging effective communication and collaboration in the groups.

Theme 2: Efficiency of the preparatory groups

The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training largely depends on the efficient management and rational utilisation of the available resources. The participants defined efficiency of the preparatory groups as the ability of the promoters to effectively and efficiently use the available resources (human, financial, material etc.) so as to achieve the predefined objectives. Efficiency is thus the use of minimum resources to achieve maximum results. It thus becomes the responsibility of the promoters to look into it that all the resources are used in an efficient manner so as to avoid wastage of time and resources and also to capitalise on the results. To understand efficiency of the preparatory groups in the context of Cameroon, the theme is further break down into sub-themes derived from the participant`s interviews.

Sub-theme 1: Rational use of the available resources

The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that one of the pillars of the efficiency of the preparatory in the Cameroonian context is making sure that the resources are rationally distributed or utilised. This requires the promoters and all those involve in the management of the group to look into it that the resources are fully exploited in a more responsible manner. By doing this, the promoters will deliberately avoid mismanagement as well as wastage of resources and time. A good number of participants shares the view that rationality in the use of the available resources in key to the success of the preparatory groups as far as training of candidates is concern. This can be supported by the following extracts from the participant`s interviews.

Regarding rationality in the use of the available resources, participant 1 mentioned that;

> *Pour une formation de qualité, les ressources interviennent au niveau de formateurs. Les ressources qu'un formateur droit avoir c`est d`être déjà parmi les meilleurs dans sa discipline. C`est à dire maitriser sa discipline au bout de doit pour pouvoir transmettre. Donc la première ressource est épistémologique. La deuxième ressource est pédagogique parce que il faudrait que ce qu`il connait qu`il soit capable de le transmettre aux*

candidats qui sont là et les amener à perfectionner parce que j`insiste la déçus. Nous utilisons les ressources documentaires, et on invite les majors d`autres promotion à venir les encourager et ça leur donne envie justement de réussir. Alors au niveau des candidats la ressource principale c`est la psychologie. Il doit être motivé à subir ce concours là pour que les résultats escompter soit là (P1).

Another participant was of the view that rationality in the use of the available resources is fundamental for the success of the group. He stated that;

Oui bon en ma qualité d`enseignant, je peux dire que déjà au départ quand on arrive il y a les contrats qu`on signe. Moi personnellement à la fin je ne pas de problème avec eu vue qu`il respect toujours le contrat signer. Dont j`arrive qu`a même à avoir ma cote part qui ma était destiner. Dont déjà à ce niveau-là il n`y a trop de souci (P6).

For another participant, rationality in the use of the available resources requires the promoters to make sure that practically all the necessary materials required for the training are given on time and in quality as well as quantity. She stated that;

Quand on parle de l'Egalite et de l`objectivité, tout se faire en harmonie dans le groupe. Il n`y pas des pratiques discriminatoires dans tout ce que nous faisons. On s`assure que chacun soit satisfaite d`une manière ou d`une autre. La rationalité dans l`utilisation est visible dans le groupe vu que tout un chacun rentre toujours chez au finale avec ce qui lui revient de droit (P12).

Bon en fait chez nous d`abord c`est pas … tous ceux qui sont dans la communauté en fait autre que les enseignants qu`on emplois, l`objectif principale est que le projet soit un succès. C`est tout un projet et c`est en fonction des objectifs qu`on aura atteint que chacun va … ou on va voir comment faire. Vue que au début on a encore beaucoup à faire et si on commence à mettre l`argent en avant on ne va pas s`en sortie (P5).

The above verbatim of the participants proves that rationality in the use of the available resources in the preparatory groups in a reality. The promoters all together with other staff look into it that all the resources are equally distributed to compensate the effort of each and every one.

Sub-theme 2: Stakeholder`s involvement

In organisations, stakeholders refer to individuals who have a particular role to play in the achievement of the stated objectives. They are individuals or group of individuals who works together to ensure that the goals and objectives of the organisation are achieved in due time and using minimum resources. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that the stakeholders in the preparatory groups involves the promoter, the teachers, the staff, the candidates, and the partners. Each of the stakeholder irrespective of his or her status in the group has a role to

play. A good number of the participants interviewed affirms that the groups ensures the full participation of everybody in the groups. This can be illustrated by the following verbatim of the participants.

> *Oui oui on est vraiment très engagé dans tous ce qu`on faire que ça soit le promoteur, le staff, les enseignants ou encore les candidats. On s`assure que chacun soit vraiment impliquer dans la gestion et le fonctionnement du groupe quel qu`en soit sa qualité. Pour ce faire avant d`intégrer le groupe on te faire part de conditions d`adhésion et si tu voir que tu ne peux pas tenir tu te signale. On ne force pas parce qu`il s`agit d`un projet ou encore d`une communauté donc c`est ne pas un truc que on veut faire à la hâte (P10).*

For participant 7, all the individuals are involved in the running of the group. For him, the partners are also involved in this process as he stated that:

> *Sur ce point-là ils ont qu`à même de partenariat. J`ai déjà eu à assister à ce genre d`échange ou par exemple le groupe est spécialisée dans la prépa concours scientifique et qu'un candidat qui faire par exemple ENAM ou ERIC vient. Bon ils ont le partenariat qu`a même dont le quota que chacun est censé recevoir quand il apporte un candidat (P7).*

For participant 11, everyone in instrumental in the training of candidates. The training is not only the affair of the promoter and some workers but everybody irrespective of the position occupied. She stated that:

> *En réalité la formation de candidats est un phénomène très complexe. Cette activité nécessite beaucoup de sacrifices et dire qu'une personne peut faire cela c`est de vous mentir. Pour assurer le bon fonctionnement du groupe et pour capitaliser sur la formation des candidats au concours nous somme obliger d`impliquer tout un chacun dans la gestion du groupe. C`est pour dire que dans notre groupe quel qu`en soit ton statu, on considère chacun comme pièce maitresse parce que chacun a un plus à donner (P11).*

For participant 4, the training of candidates in not a single day issue but a long process. This make it difficult for a single individual to handle everything. He stated that:

> *La formation de candidats est le fruit d`effort collective. Le promoteur droit veuillez à ce que toutes les personnes dans le groupe participent dans la gestion du groupe. Pour moi, je suis d`avis qu'impliquer tout le monde dans la gestion du groupe revient à minimiser les risques d`échecs (P4).*

Sub-theme 3: Cost-effectiveness of the preparatory groups

Every human effort requires a pay or compensation. The cost-effectiveness of the training of candidates addresses the issue of profitability of the training. With the growing number of candidates seeking for preparation and extra-academic follow-up, the phenomenon of the

preparatory groups has completely gain ground. This sub theme seeks to question the profit or benefit derived from the training of candidates for entrance examinations. The analysis of the various interviews revealed a mixed feeling between the participants regarding the benefit of the training of candidates. While some participants argue that the activity was beneficial at first, others argues that today, will the increase number groups and the fact that the government has render some of the entrance examinations indirect has affected the cost-effectiveness of the activity. Below are some of the extracts of the participants which justifies this.

> *Bon hm hm hhh c`était peut-être avant mais de nos jours il y a une centaine de groupes qui faire dans la préparation. Dont maintenant il est difficile de parler de rentabilité de cette activité en terme financier vue que l`argent même il n`y a pas. C`est ne plus l`enrichissement mais juste que pendant les vacances il faut que les gens s`occupe. Si quelqu`un peut avoir quelque chose pour envoyer les enfants à l`école ça passe (P1).*
>
> *La rentabilité varie également en fonction du nombre de candidat parce que le cout de l`inscription est évaluer a 5000 et la formation pour chaque candidat est de 45000. C`est à dire 45000 pour 3 mois qu`on peut payer en trois tranches. Ça faire que si j`ai 10 candidats je tourne autour de 450000. L`année ou j`ai eu 5 réussit sur 12, j`avais 12 candidats qui ont tous payer leur 50.000 en inscription et le frais de cours et une somme de 590.000 que j`ai utilisé pour résoudre un certain nombre de problème. La formation se faire en deux vague. Il y a la vague de courte durée et la vague a longue durée. Pour ce qui est de la vague a longue, sa couvre une période de 9 mois à un an. Le cout de la formation a longue durée ne pas là même avec la formation a courte durée. On sait que le temps comme il est généralement dire c`est de l`argent (P2).*
>
> *Hhhhhhhh on peut dire que ça permet qu`a même de nourrit son homme. Ça permet qu`a même d`avoir le stricte minimum parce que dans cette histoire celui qui a le plus à gagner c`est le promoteur. Dont c`est celui qui a le plus de pouvoir qui a le plus à gagner. Parce que bon j`en ai des exemples ou le promoteur à la fin de l`échéance tu vois quelqu`un qui construire une maison, qui paye des terrains ainsi de suite ainsi de suite. Bon nous enseignant comme vous les savez si bien le peu qu`on nous donne on essaie également de faire vivre la famille et voir si on peut réaliser mais pour être clair c`est le promoteur qui bénéficie le plus (P9).*
>
> *La rentabilité dépend largement des objectifs fixer dès le début. Au final on peut dire le fait de préparer les candidats bien que ça ne soit pas à 100% est plus au moins rentable. C`est à dire à la fin de la formation on peut qu`à même rentrer avec ne se reste quelque chose qui nous permet de combler les efforts fournir. Ça nous permet de résoudre quelque souci dans nos vies personnelles (P11).*

The above extracts from the participant`s interviews show the mixed feelings that the participants have regarding the benefit of the preparation of candidates to the promoters and other staff. At this point, some participants made mention of the fact that the activity was really cost-effective in the past when the groups were not many. But today, it is difficult to say whether it is beneficial or not

since many people are involved in the preparation. There is a lot of competition and in order to withstand the competitive other groups even considerably reduces the training fees. So this has an impact on the cost effectiveness of the activity.

Sub-theme 4: Accountability and transparency

One of the important determinant of the efficiency of the preparatory groups is ensuring accountability and transparency in the management and use of the resources. Accountability requires the promoters to always make sure everyone is accountable or responsible of this or that activity in the group. Accountability is all about attributing tasks and responsibilities to the members of the groups irrespective of their status. Transparency on the other hand look after the use of the resources. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that accountability and transparency are strong determinant of the efficiency of the preparatory groups in relation to the training of candidates. This is so because the promoters all along with other staff are tasked with the responsibility to ensure accountability and transparency in financial transaction in the group. This can be supported by the following extracts from the participants.

> *Pour la transparence je pense que là où j`ai qu`a même eu la chance d`officier, bon il n`y a pas de souci à ce niveau-là. Bien qu'il y a certains groupes dont l`objectif du départ n'a pas été bien établie ou ils sont juste là pour leur argent. Lui parfois te dire vient tel jour, la semaine prochaine et au final tu n`auras pas. Mais dans la majorité des groupes ou j`ai travaillé j`ai jamais eu des problèmes concernant cela. Dont il y a toujours eu la transparence. Dont on me donne toujours ce qui me revient (P8).*
>
> *Pour ce qui est de la transparence dans la gestion de la chose, il y a une secrétaire qui se charge de noter tous les entrées et sorties dans le groupe. Je vous ais dire que chez nous c`est ne pas un individu qui a le pouvoir mais la communauté (P3).*
>
> *Comme je reçois moi-même l`argent, je ne peux pas me tromper moi-même. Donc c`est une gestion un peu concentrer ou j`ai tout le pouvoir et c`est moi qui était le trésorier. Justement comme je le dire tantôt il y a na la qui est de jongleurs. Il vient il paye l`inscription il faire deux semaines de cours. En principe l`inscription vous donne peut-être Access a un premier jour de cours en attendant que vous payez au moins la première tranche. Mais il y a eu de cas de malhonnêteté ceux qui par avis sociale, par compassion pour les aider il m`ont dire voilà je compte sur ta confiance je veux me faire former je vais payer à la fin. Et arriver à la fin tu appel tu appel il ne prend pas le téléphone ou alors il te donne le faux rendez-vous. J`ai eu le cas de ce genre qui est venu à faire le coup mais n'a pas payer (P2).*

Sub-theme 5: Budget adherence and criticisms

The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that the respect of the defined budget and the openness of the promoters to accept criticisms and welcome new and innovative ideas determines the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training of the country. Budget adherence requires the promoters and the governing staff to stay focus on the defined budget for a session of training long term or short term. This will require the promoters to carefully monitor the activities of training so as to make sure that all is under control. Looking at the critics, the participants emphasised on the fact that criticism is a driving force behind the growth and success of the preparatory. They further argues that in a group where the promoter is open to accepting critics, the group will practice a form of bottom-up management rather than top-bottom management all the time. This can be illustrated using the following extracts from participant's interviews.

Regarding the respect of the defined budget, participant 1 stated that:

> *Le budget bon je ne définissais pas un budget à l`avance. Tout dépend de premières candidats qui s`inscrivent ce qui me permet justement de gérer la salle et d`autres modalités pratiques*

For participant 3 :

> *Ok bon ici également a va dépendre hein. Parce que si nous prenons des groupes vraiment structurer, c`est à dire les groupes qui ont des bases bien solide, eu au moins prennent la peine de définir un budget pour l`année. D`autres au contraire compte sur l`argent d`inscription des candidats pour faire quelque chose. Dont eux c`est beaucoup plus les candidats. Ça veut dire que quand il n`y a des candidats ça veut dire qu`il y a rien. Il compte sur ce que les candidats apportent pour essayer de voir ainsi de suite ainsi de suite (P3).*

Talking of the openness of the promoters to critics and new ideas, participant 6 stated:

> *Pour être vrai la plupart ne sont pas ouvert aux critiques hein. La preuve en a que dans un groupe je me suis rendu compte que la chimie passait une seule fois dans la semaine. Et pour une préparation qui nécessite beaucoup d`efforts en matières scientifique plus précisément en chimie, travailler une seule fois la semaine c`est peu. Bon quand j`ai suggéré ça hhhhhh… au promoteur ou ceux qui gère le groupe, il n`ont prise en compte. Bon j`ai compris que bon ici ils ont surement leur objectif à atteindre ils ne sont pas ouverts à des critiques ou encore à des suggestions qui peuvent améliorer le groupe (P6).*
>
> *Les suggestions je les prends toujours an considération. Déjà j`ai un support de cours et ce support de cours ne pas parfait. Donc les ainés me faire des suggestions que je prends*

en compte pour améliorer ce support. Donc en 6 ans je pense que j`ai révisé le support trois fois en ajoutant de nouveaux sujets et surtout en ajustant le contenu de ce support. Dans la structuration, je travaille beaucoup en collaboration avec un ainé qui prépare plus de filière et concours plus que moi. Donc les stratégies qu`il utilise, j`essaie de les appliquer chez moi. En fait je créer le groupe après mon accession à l`école normale. A l`avance quand moi-même je me préparais pour le concours de l`école normale j`ai travaillé avec les ainés de façon individuelle. Donc je sélectionnais les ainés brillant avec qui je travaillais (P2).

Theme three: Relevance of the preparatory groups

The relevance of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training outlines the importance or the impact of the contribution to these groups to the achievement of societal goals. Due to the growing rate of unemployment in the country, succeeding in an entrance examination is a laudable achievement both to families and individuals. This situation has further upgrade the importance of the preparatory groups in Cameroon. Today, a good number of parents spent too much money in private tuition whether for competitive examinations or certification or official examinations. Many researchers argue that this situation is caused by the weaknesses of the educational system. This means that they are some disparities related to access, equity, equality, inclusion, and even governance which hinders all Cameroonian to be on the same level. This situation has raised eyebrows and preparatory groups or private tuition appears to be an immediate solution to this problem. The analysis of the theme permitted us to identify 5 sub-themes which are addressed below.

Sub-theme 1: Alignment with the goals and objectives of the training

The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that the primary aim of the preparatory groups is to train and prepare candidates both intellectually and moral for entrance examinations. This objective underpins all the effort of the promoters in the preparatory groups to make sure that the stated objective is achieved. The alignment with the goals and objectives of training by the preparatory groups simply requires them to put forth mechanisms through which these objective can be achieved over the state time. Some participants argue that the respect of the stated objectives is the central preoccupation of the majority of the groups. This is because the groups seek to achieve the primary objective for which it was set up before anything. These views of the participants can be supported by the following verbatim extracted from their interviews.

En fait notre groupe se donne tous les moyennes nécessaires pour atteindre les objectifs qu`il se fixer dès l`entame de la formation. On s`assure de finir le programme et de donner le nécessaire au candidat pour une bonne réussite au concours. On travaille avec les enfants que ça soit en ligne ou en présentiel pour pouvoir combler les lacunes de tout un chacun et de faciliter l`assimilation du cours. Là nous sommes sûr qu'avant qu`ils partent composer on est au moins faire l`essentiel exiger (P3).

En effet, l`objectif principale de groupes de prépas concours au Cameroun et partout ailleurs ne rien d`autre que la formation et préparation des candidats pour ces concours. Bien qu'à côté le promoteur et les autres membres du groupe peuvent avoir des intérêts personnels, ce qui est tout à fait normale. Les groupes sont dont dans l`impératif d`assurer le respect des objectifs préalablement définir. Dans notre groupe par exemple, pour assurer le respect de l`objectif principale du groupe, nous avons mis sur pied une stratégie visant à communiquer l`objectif a tous les membres du groupe de façons claire et précis de tel sorte que tout un chacun saura quoi faire à son niveau (P5).

Honnêtement il se passe que nous travaillons en présentiel et en ligne. Parfois lorsque les objectifs n`étais pas atteint, j`ai formulait les documents numériques et je partageais dans le groupe WhatsApp. Donc je faisais l`effort de finir 80% de programme (P11).

The alignment of with the goals and objectives of the preparatory groups which is mainly the training of candidates for entrance examinations remains the major concern of these groups. In order to gain competitive advantage over the competitors, a good number of the preparatory groups have focus their attention on improving the success rate of candidates in these entrance examinations.

Sub-theme 2: Source of employment for graduates and under-graduates

The relevance of the preparatory groups in the context of Cameroon is far from being questionable. Although this activity falls under the umbrella of the informal sector which most of the times is neglected and is in the hands of individuals, a good number of participants argues that the preparatory groups serves as a source of employment to those graduates, post graduates and under graduates who finds it very difficult to integrate the formal sector. A participant stated that;

En réalité les groupes de prépas offrent une opportunité d`emploi pour les jeunes Camerounais qui après leur parcours scolaire et académique ont du mal in s`insérer dans le milieu professionnel. Bien que le gouvernement a consentis des efforts depuis la dernière décennie pour réduire le taux de chômage pour les jeunes, le phénomène reste et demeure d`actualité. La preuve en est que majorité des groupes de prépas sont créer par les étudiants et les anciens étudiants qui après l`achèvement de leur parcours universitaire non rien trouver de bon. Donc à mon nom personnel, je pense que c`est une source d`emplois (P1).

Participant 2 also shares the view that preparatory groups are a source of livelihood to a good number of youths.

> *Preparatory groups are actually a source of employment to a good number of Cameroonian. I think that most of the graduates who open graduation from universities finds difficulties in integrating the public service most of the times turns their attention to the informal sector. In these groups, young Cameroonians like me are recruited as staff, teachers, and many others. It helps us to be able to do one or two things and not always depend on our parents all the times. So in my opinion, preparatory groups are a source of employment for graduates even though it is a stable employment (P2).*

For participant 7, preparatory groups permit a good number of youths to become independent and not always to depend on some body for their basic needs

> *Effectivement se préparer est un technique que j`encourage pour ceux à la recherche d`emplois parce que on peut avoir le diplôme mais n`est pas avoir toute la connaissance nécessaire. Alors le savoir et le savoir-faire se donne dans les groupes de prépa parce que en classe tu peux avoir négligé tel aspect du cours. C`est dont dans le groupe de prépa qu`on essaie de répéter puisse que c`est en fait un groupe de répétition, d'exercice en exercice pour que le jour de l`examen le candidat puisse être au niveau requis. Donc on peut dire le groupe de prépa donne un emploi temporel au diplômés, doctorants et toute jeun qui a du mal à s`insérer quelque dans la fonction publique. Il y a ceux qui travaillent comme enseignant, comme agent publicitaire et autre. Ceci les permet d`être capable de joindre le deux bout. Donc d`une manière ou d`une notre ça donne de quoi manger à certain qui n`n'ont encore rien à faire (P7).*
>
> *Oui oui parce qu`il y a bonne nombre de gens qui vivent de ça. Ils ont une femme a nourrit, ils ont les enfants et grâce à l`activité il parvient à tirer leur épingle de jeux (P11).*

Sub-theme 3: Qualified teachers and staff

The relevance of a group or an organisation depends on its ability to produce quality and updated products, solutions and services. For any organisation to be up to the task and meet up the need of the society, the workers need to be qualified and committed to the course of the organisation. As such, the relevance of the preparatory groups largely depends on the quality of the teachers and the staff. This is because the teachers are at the centre of training. The teacher is tasked with the responsibility of impacting knowledge and skills required for the success of the candidates. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that qualified teachers account for the relevance of the preparatory groups as they will provide the necessary methodology to the candidates. This view can be justified by the following participants verbatim.

For participant 2, the domain of the preparation of candidates is not regularise. So to him any one can teach.

> *Bon hm hhh hh … ça me faire ris. La prépa concours au Cameroun déjà d'un c`est un domaine qui ne pas règlementer. Dont n`importe qui est libre de venir faire ce qu`il veut bon c`est ne pas un Domain qui est encadrer. Sa faire que au niveau du personnel enseignant, ça dépend du l`humeur de promoteur. Il peut juger que je suis par exemple son frère, même si tu n`as pas qualité à enseigner il peut dit que bon vient tu faire tel ou tel chose. Mais il y a qu`à même des groupes qui se démarque parce que eux qu`a même ils sont rigoureux bien que c`est beaucoup plus le diplôme qui prime. Ils voient beaucoup plus le diplôme sans prendre en compte la pratique. C`est à dire que les approches que les enseignants utilisent pour transmettre les savoirs. Pour eux, dès que tu es doctorant, dans leur tête ce que tu es déjà apte pour enseigner. Il ne cherche pas à savoir si tu es doctorant, tu as qu`à même eu la possibilité d`enseigner quelque part avant. Chez eux ce que tu es doctorant tu travail, donc ce un peu ça (P2).*

For participant 1, all the teachers who intervenes in his preparatory groups are qualified teachers reason being that majority are products of the advanced training schools.

> *Hhh je dirais que les enseignants qui interviennent dans mon groupe sont qualifiés. Déjà qu'en philosophie, mon argument publicitaire est que c`est le groupe de majors qui forme les majors. Moi-même à la sortie de l`école normale j`étais le major de ma promotion. Donc en CO l`enseignant qui donne cours est doctorant en psychologie et enseignant de sciences de l`éducation. Donc en CO il est suffisamment caper pour la tâche et lui-même étant sortir de la même école (P1).*

> *En fait dans notre groupe c`est ne pas n`importe qui qui intervient surtout quand il s`agit des enseignants là on est méticuleux dans notre choix. Les enseignants qui travaillent avec nous sont ceux sortie tout droit de ces grandes écoles (P12).*

The information collected from the participants in the study revealed that they have a divergent view as far as the quality of teachers and staff is concern. Some participant argues that people who intervene in the preparatory are not always qualified. They argue that at times some body is recruited to teach on the basis that he or she is a master or PhD student. They even went ahead to say that some are recruited basing on affinities. In contrast, some participants argue that in their groups, they have qualified teachers as majority of their teachers are products of the professional schools.

Sub-theme 4: Financial stability of members

The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that preparatory groups ensures financial stability to an extent to the promoters and other staff through the fees paid by the candidates for

their training. Some participants stated that the registration of candidates is 5000frs while the training fees ranges from 50000frs for short term training (3 months) and 100 000frs for long term training (minimum 1 year). This money permits the promoters, the teachers and the staff to be able of solving one or two problems in their personal lives. This can be justified by the following verbatim of the participants on the issue.

Participant 12 argues that financial stability is not really certain as it all depends on the number of candidates that one might have during a training session.

> *La stabilité financière hhhh. Je dirais que c`est aléatoire parce que ça dépend de nombre de personne qui ont sollicité la formation dans votre groupe. Pour qu`on sollicite votre groupe il faut qu`il est impérativement un nom. La stabilité financière varie d`une année à une autre parce que il y a des années au j`ai eu 5 candidats, je eu des recommandations et le gens envoyait leurs enfants dans mon groupe. La stabilité financier est relative parce que l`argent qui en découle ne résout pas tous vos problèmes mais ça vient qu`à même vous aider dans pas mal des taches (P12).*

Participant 3 believes that there is no financial stability since the money one obtained from the candidates only help to solve an immediate problem and nothing more. She thinks that one cannot solely depends on the preparation for a living.

> *Pour ce qui est de stabilité financier il est difficile de le dire. Je vous ai dire que bien que ce groupe existe depuis quelque temps maintenant, c`est n`était pas orienter vers la formation de candidats. Donc connaissant le contexte financier de notre pays, on ne peut donc pas dire qu`il y a une stabilité financière. Preuve en ai que les groupes qui sont dans le domaine bien plus avant nous rencontre le même problème. Stabilité financier haha … il y a n`as pas (P3).*

Another participant argues that as far as financial stability is concern, it was before that they could talk of that but today with the multiplication of the preparatory groups, it is very difficult to tell.

> *Actually financial stability …. I don't think it is possible today. At first it was possible to talk of financial stability because one could only rely on the preparatory groups for a living. During these days, the phenomenon of preparing candidates was not yet vulgarised. But today it is very difficult to make a step without seeing something talking about preparation of candidates. Many people have dive into the thing not because of their desire to help candidates but simply for economic reasons. So financial stability … it is not more possible (P2).*

Sub-theme 5: Candidate`s satisfaction

Satisfaction is the driving force behind all the initiatives in the preparatory groups. The promoters are tasked with responsibility of training candidates for entrance examinations into advanced

schools of training. One of the mission of these groups is to ensure the satisfaction of the candidates in particular and families in general. It is revealed that succeeding in an entrance examination in the context of Cameroon is seen as a life achievement. The importance candidates and families have of these groups has gradually increases over the last couple of years. Candidates and families have a lot of expectation when it comes to the training of candidates by these groups. This is because they believe that these groups can help them to achieve their goals. It thus becomes an imperative for the promoters and other members of the groups to ensure candidates satisfaction. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that a good number of them are satisfied with the contribution of the preparatory groups. This is backed up by the various verbatim extracted from the participant's interviews.

> *Humm oui j`en reçois des encouragements et les remerciements presque tous les jours. Que ça soit ceux qui ont réussi et même ceux qui ont échoué. Même ceux dans des écoles de formation me contacte parfois pour qu`on travaille également. Dont si là-bas chez eu ils ont les difficultés ils peuvent également me contacter pour qu`on travaille ensemble. Dont que j`en reçois de témoignages presque tout le temps. Ceci dire les candidats dans l`ensemble sont satisfaite de la qualité de l`enseignement et même de suivi qui se vit dans les groupes de prépa concours (P6).*
>
> *La satisfaction de candidat je pense ils sont satisfaits. Je dirais que la satisfaction de candidat ne se résume pas à la réussite au concours. La preuve en est qu'il y a les candidats qui sont partie dans d`autres groupes mais on finir par rentrer. Comme l`enseignant de mathématique qu`on a ici les candidats vient parce qu`il est bon. La satisfaction bien que c`est ne pas a 100% mais il existe (P10).*
>
> *J`ai reçus quelques témoignages pour quoi parce que j`ai un exemple palpable d`un candidat qui avait échoué une année et l`année suivant il ne pas revenir sauf qu`il a utilisé les anciennes ressources de l`année précédant pour l`année suivant et il a réussir au concours de l`école normale. Donc la satisfaction de candidats je le mesure à partir de résultats que j'obtiens. Donc c`est une satisfaction également mitiger (P1).*
>
> *Talking about the satisfaction of the candidates, I can say that it is not 100%. They are candidates and families who are really satisfy with what we are doing and they even go ahead to manifest their joy and satisfaction. They are times when the candidates after the exam come or call us through the phone to thank us for what we are doing. Other parents even encourage us by giving us gift as sign of satisfaction and recognition. But they are some who are not satisfy for one reason or another. But at our own level, we do what we can to make sure that all our candidates are satisfied (P2).*

Theme 4: Sustainability of the preparatory groups

The sustainability of preparatory groups refers to the ability of the groups to stand the test of time. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that the sustainability of the preparatory

groups constitutes one of the top priority of the promoters and the managing staff. This consist of developing strategies intended to facilitate the durability of this project. Looking at the importance of these groups and the fact that the government of Cameroon will continue to use entrance examinations as the gate way to professional schools, it becomes very clear that the activity will still be existing irrespective of what happens. A good number of participants argues that in order to ensure the sustainability of the groups, they are required to develop adaptation strategies, practice decentralisation in decision, develop strategies to overcome competition, nurture their future ambitions etc. The analysis of the participant`s interviews as far as sustainability of the preparatory is concern permitted us to identify a number of sub-themes. These sub-themes are examined below.

Sub-theme 1: Adaptation strategies by the groups

The informal world is always characterised by the fact that there is an absence of a regulatory framework or mechanism in charge of managing the activities of individuals or groups of individuals in this sector. People developed their own personal initiatives to adapt and be able to survive in such an environment. The preparatory groups are not left aside as they are found in the informal sector. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that for the promoters to ensure the sustainability of the preparatory groups, one of the things they need to do is to develop adaptation strategies which can permits them to overcome challenges. As such, the promoters have prioritised long term decision making, decentralisation of decisions, emphasised on advertisement strategies as ways through the groups can adapt to the unstable environment. Below are some of the extracts of the participants which can be used to support this view. In collecting the opinions of the participants on the matter, participant 5 stated that:

> *Oui je pense que ça va durer. Étant donné qu'on lance les concours chaque année, dont ces apprenants auront toujours besoin de faire recours à la prépa concours. Dans ce cas, ces groupes pourront répondre à ces exigences. Ça veut tout simplement dire que aussi longtemps l`admissibilité a la fonction publique sera sanctionner pas le concours, cette activité durera toujours (P5).*

Regarding the adaptation strategies, participant 1 argues that one of the strategies consists of initiating repetition classes for students preparing for official examinations like the Baccalaureat, the Advanced Level etc. it also consists of reducing the training tuition.

Ok bon concernant les moyens généralement utiliser par ces groupes pour s`adapter ils font recours particulièrement au cours de remise à niveau. Ils organisent les ours de remise à niveau au secondaire et d`autres également qui organise au supérieur. Ça faire que pendant la période de prépa concours, c`est sont dont ceux-là qui viendront en particulier meubler leur effective. Dont il développe les cours de remise à niveau un peu de partout. Au côté de préparer les candidats uniquement pour le concours, ils organisent les cours de remise à niveau pour survivre. Ce ci vise à le préparer psychologiquement pour la prépa concours vue que en organisant ceux cours la, de temps en temps les communications sont faites en rapport avec la prépa concours et il y a des stratégies comme par exemple comme tu es dans le groupe tu ne vas plus payer le frais d`inscription. Ou par exemple si le frais de la formation c`est 50.000 on va t`enlever 10.000 parce que tu faire déjà partir du groupe. Dont il y a cette stratégie qui amène déjà soit l`élevé soit l`étudiant avoir une idée sur le groupe qu`il droit choisir s`il désire dont préparer un concours (P1).

Also participant 12 argues that to ensure the sustainability of the group, they developed a number of strategies.

En fait pour assurer la pérennité de notre groupe on emploi un certain nombre de stratégies. C`est à dire qu`il y a des pratiques mis sur pied dans l`optique d`immortaliser cette projet. Pour ce fait, on ne se focalise pas uniquement dans la préparation de candidats au concours d`entrer dans les grandes écoles. Nous faisons aussi dans l`aide scolaire ou encore répétition des élèves. Nous sommes conscients se limiter uniquement au concours ne nous aideras pas. On offre aussi de formation en entrepreneurial étant donné que c`est ne pas tout le monde qui sera admise à la fonction publique du pays. Donc on donne de compétences pratiques à ces enfants-là. C`est à dire comment aider l`enfant à s`intégrer dans un contexte socio-économique peu favorable (P12).

For participant 8, as part of the adaptation strategies, a number of groups are planning to move forth to a training centre where they don`t only offer training to candidates but also to individuals in need of skills.

Pour ce qui est des stratégies d`adaptation dans les groupes préparatoires, certain groupe ont pour ambition de transformer leur groupe de prépa en école de formation. Donc ceci demande une certaine dynamique chez le promoteur pour dire qu`il faut être dynamique pour passer de groupe de prépa a une école de formation. Alors pour survivre également certain groupe essaye de s`allier aux autres. C`est à dire le mettre ensemble pour que la ressource disponible en terme d`enseignant qui y`est moins de dépense. Cette stratégie est visible dans les groupes. Que d`avoir chacun un enseignant, on recrute un seul enseignant et nous tous on envoie nos candidats dans la salle de cours (P8).

Sub-theme 2: Partnerships with other groups and the outside world

Partnerships has been proven as an important method through which public and private organisations can survive in a competitive, unstable and changing environment. While the

environment has become very dynamic as a result of the economic fluctuation, preparatory groups are thus required to seek for partnerships and collaboration both within and without. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that most of these groups solely depends on partnerships to survive. This can be illustrated by the following extracts from the participant`s interviews.

> *Sur ce point-là ils ont qu`à même de partenariat. J`ai déjà eu à assister à ce genre d`échange ou par exemple le groupe est spécialisée dans la prépa concours scientifique et qu'un candidat qui faire par exemple ENAM ou ERIC vient. Bon ils ont le partenariat qu`a même dont le quota que chacun est censé recevoir quand il apporte un candidat (P4).*

> *Nous collaborons avec les autres groupes. La prépa concours ouvre la voie à l`intelligence à travers c'est donner aux candidats. Donc pour les partenariats on s`assure qu`on collabore avec les autres groupes. Le but ici est hors mis de la compétition qui se vit ici au jour du jour il faut qu`à même avoir un ou deux groupes ou on peut envoyer nos candidats en cas de besoin. Donc il est difficile de s`en sortie seul. Par exemple un candidat peut venir chez nous qu`il veut faire la douane et comme nous on n`est préparé pas la douane on l`envoie à cote. Donc c`est comme ça. L`objectif d`abord c`est la réussite de l`enfant et ça ne sers a rien de bloquer un enfant si tu sais que tu ne vas lui donner juste parce que tu veux l`argent (P1).*

> *Effectivement j`ai un ainé qui prépare plus de filière et concours plus que moi. Donc je travaille en collaboration avec lui. Maintenant je suis en partenariat avec presque tous les groupes. Ce que je faire dans la stratégie publicitaire c`est de signer des partenariats avec les autres groupes des lors ils avaient un candidat il m`appelait et on s`entendait sur les modalités de gestion de ce candidat-là. Moi je récupère le candidat et le partenaire a un côté part sur ce que le candidat donne comme frais. C`est vise versa pour dire que moi je faire aussi la même chose quand j`ai un candidat à ma porter que je ne forme pas dans cette domaine (P7).*

Sub-theme 3: Future ambitions for the groups

The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that a good number of groups has future ambitions and plans which they intend to realise. Majority of the participants interviewed revealed their desire to move from a preparatory where the focus is on the preparation of candidates to an open group which offers a variety of training opportunities for individuals who wants the training. The promoters intend to move from the preparation of candidates to a centre whereby training can be offered in computer engineering, marketing, banking, insurance, organisational management, transport and logistics, software engineering etc. This can be justified by the following respondent`s verbatim extracted from the interviews.

> *Dans la logique, l`idée derrière le groupe de prépa c`est de un jour devenir un institut. Pour des groupes qui ont des objectifs et qui sont bien structurer. Leur intérêt ne pas*

seulement l`argent qu`il gagne à l`instant même, pour des groupes bien structurer leur projection c`est devenir des instituts ou passer de groupes de prépa a l`institut de formation ainsi de suite. Dont logiquement c`est ça le projet pour les groupes bien structurer. Pour des groupes qui n`ont pas cette penser ils ont une courte durée de vie, c`est à dire dès qu'il n`y a plus les candidats c`est finir (P1).

Pour nos ambitions futures, nous voulons sortie du cadre éducatif et même s`étendre dans l`industrie et l`agriculture avec le temps. Comme je disais au début c`est une communauté et dans cette communauté on a l`ambition de flouter de ce qui se trouve sur notre chemin et qui peut nous aider à aller de l`avant. Pour un début on a commencé avec le cadre éducatif parce qu`il fallait commencer quelque part. Avec le temps on va toucher plusieurs domaines. C`est sera une sorte de centre de formation un peu en tout si tout se passe comme prévue (P6).

Les ambitions pour le futur reste et demeure l`idée centrale dans la penser de bon nombre de promoteurs de groupe de prépa. Vous savez le plus difficile est de commencer une activité mais dès que c`est faire l`attention tourne à comment se maintenir et se développer au fil des années. Mon intention est de migrer d`un simple groupe de prépa a un institut professionnel qui donne des formations dans plusieurs domaines. Il y a des exemples comme le groupe Kalata et Intelligentsia Coopération qui ont commencé comme des groupes préparatoires mais aujourd`hui offre de formation en ingénierie, en gestion et marketing, en sante et bien d`autres (P10).

Sub-theme 4: Systematic innovations in the groups

Systematic innovations constitute a vital mechanism through which the preparatory groups can sustain for a longer period of time in a dynamic and changing environment. While the economic, social and environmental tendencies are not always favourable, the promoters are therefore required to ensure the sustainability of the preparatory groups by being open, innovative, creating, effective in decision making, good managerial practices and leaderships to make sure that they can turn the fortunes up-side-down. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that the systematic innovations is a strong determinant. This can be justified by the following verbatim extracted from the participant`s interviews.

Ici je peux dire que la prise de décision c`est généralement le promoteur hein. Dont suivant sa vision, sa politique, c`est lui qui sait ce qu`il veut. Dont ou j`ai eu à travailler c`est le promoteur qui donne les directives (P3).

Hahn … nous sommes ouvert aux contributions allant dans le sens d`améliorer notre groupe. C`est pour cette raison que on partage la vision du groupe avec le candidat de telle sorte que même s'il nous apporte des idées on essaie de prendre en considération. Donc on ne refuse rien si tu as une idée tu apportes surtout quand l`idée est vraiment innovant. Si l`idée scie avec la vision même du groupe on adopte donc c`est comme ça (P5).

On peut dire que la qualité de services qu`on offre aux candidats est louable parce que d'un les enfants ne se plaint pas et de deux les parents aussi sont satisfaites. Donc en plus de la formation on les suivre et également on assure le développement personnel de tout chacun. Ce qui fait qu'a cote de la préparation on assure aussi le développement moral de nos candidats (P9).

Sub-theme 5: Quality of the service offered to the candidates

Another factor which determines the sustainability of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of learning and training is the quality of the service proposed to the candidates by the preparatory groups. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that the quality and nature of the services proposed will always have an impact on the training of candidates. Also, the ability of the groups to stand the test of time large depends on the appreciation the candidates have of the quality of the training they received. This can be justified by the following verbatim extracted from the participant`s interviews.

Déjà pour que l`enseignement soit de qualité il faudrait que le personnel enseignant également soit qualifié. Si le groupe a cette possibilité d`avoir les enseignants hautement qualifier je pense que l`enseignement que les candidats auront probablement seront de qualité. Dont le rapport qualité prix si je peux dire ainsi dépend de la qualité des enseignants. Si le corps enseignant à cette faciliter à transmettre la connaissance facilement perceptible par les candidats (P1).

On peut dire que la qualité de services qu`on offre aux candidats est louable parce que d'un les enfants ne se plaint pas et de deux les parents aussi sont satisfaites. Donc en plus de la formation on les suivre et également on assure le développement personnel de tout chacun. Ce qui fait qu'a cote de la préparation on assure aussi le développement moral de nos candidats (P9).

Theme 5: Management of the preparatory groups

Preparatory groups unlike other organisations is a complex structure which requires a lot of concentration and attention from the promoters and the governing staff. The desire to prepare candidates for entrance examinations has for over the last decade becomes a must do issue looking at the candidates who seek for the preparation each year. It is believed that this growing desire in students and at times in parents is caused by the fact that all the public institutions cannot absorb all the graduates from state and private institutions. As such, the management of these complex structures requires the promoters to make use of good managerial practices and leadership skills capable of enabling the achievement of the predefined objectives. By this we mean that the

promoters must make use of corresponding managerial practices such as good leadership, effective decision making, communication strategies, collaboration, corporation, motivation, creativity, equity and equality etc. The analysis of the participant`s interviews showed that the management of the preparatory also accounts for the effective training of the candidates for entrance examinations. A total of 4 sub-themes were identified from the participant`s interviews which are explained below.

Sub-theme1: Organisational structure of the preparatory groups

The organisational structure of the preparatory groups is a key determinant of the success of these groups in the training of candidates for entrance examinations in Cameroon. This entails the promoters to set up communication strategies, practice good leadership style, promote effective participation for all, improve on the decision making ability in the groups, enhance collaboration and corporation between the various actors of the groups, and set up advertisement strategies capable of increasing the visibility of the groups. The analysis of the respondent`s interviews revealed that organisational structure in the group is commensurate of the success of the group in the training of candidates. This can be justified by the following verbatim from the participants.

According to participant 1, the organisation of the group is done in a hierarchical order. At the top we have the promoter, and at the least we have the candidates. He stated that:

> *Ok quand on parle de coordonnateur, je coordonne les activités mais j`ai les partenaires qui le font aussi. Bon c`est comme une association ou il y a quelqu`un a la tête, il y a le secrétariat, la trésorerie et consort. Maintenant sur le terrain nous avons de gens qui travaillent avec nous comme nous sommes encore sur les tables. Il y a plusieurs tables pour le gens qui veut travailler avec nous. A l`extérieur c`est ainsi mais à l`intérieur on s`arrange pour avoir les enseignants qualifier pour transmettre la connaissance (P1).*

For participant 5, the organisation of the preparatory group necessitates the involvement and intervention of each and every one. This is why he stated that:

> *Bon certes la gestion managériale diffères d'un groupe a un autre. Bon il y a dans certaines groupes ou c`est bien structurer ou il y a un responsable, c`est à dire le promoteur du groupe. Il a donc essayé de décentraliser les taches. Donc chaque membre a une tache spécifique à réaliser. Bon dans d`autre c`est centraliser. Donc le promoteur il gère carrément tout au niveau de la programmation, u niveau de solde des enseignants, pratiquement il gère tout. C`est ci dire, la gestion managériale varie d`un groupe a un autre. Mais dans un bon nombre de groupe c`est beaucoup plus une gestion centralisée ou le promoteur est au centre de tout, ou encore il est la plaque tournant dans ces*

différents groupes. A part qu`a même les groupes qui ont déjà les moyens de leur politique mais pour les jeunes groupes qu`on voit un peu de partout c`est trop centraliser (P5)

Ok bon déjà, ayant eu la chance de travailler dans plusieurs groupes, il y a dans certain cas ou le promoteur lui il est le seul maitre. C`est dire au niveau de la programmation c`est lui, au niveau du marketing c`est lui. Il a tendance à tout faire seul. C`est ne pas souvent facile. Mais dans d`autres, si je peux citer le nom Intellect formation, là c`est bien organiser. Il y a le promoteur qui est là, qui cordonne de façon nationale. Il y a un chargé de communication dont pour dire de façon vulgaire celui qui s`assoie au niveau de la table pour attirer la clientèle. Il y a dont maintenant un préfet d`étude, donc celui qui est essentiellement, donc son rôle c`est juste cordonner les activités d`apprentissage. Voir si le programme est couvert, est ce que le suivi u niveau de la progression ça marche. Ainsi de suite ainsi de suite. Donc pour dire que dans certaines c`est centraliser et dans d`autres c`est décentraliser (P7).

For participant 3, preparatory group is an initiative intended to achieve predefined goals and objectives. She argues that:

Un groupe de prépa est en fait une initiative qui vise à répondre aux besoins de candidats qui souhaite se faire former pour le concours d`entrer dans les grandes écoles. Dans notre groupe, la gestion est beaucoup plus décentraliser pour dire que ça n`en dépend pas d`une seule personne. C`est un groupe constituer des enseignants sortis de l`école normale et dans d`autres grandes écoles du pays qui assure la formation de candidats. Donc tout un chacun a un mot à dire dans la gestion du groupe (P3).

Sub-theme 2: Achievement of predefined goals and objectives

Goals and objectives are seen as the driving force behind any initiative in profit orientate and non-profit orientate organisations. In the preparatory groups the objective is to prepare candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training. The achievement of these goals and objectives requires the execution of a number of activities considered to be indispensable for success of the groups. These activities involve most the pedagogical activities of teaching and learning. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that the achievement of the stated objectives requires the intervention of a good number of people as well as the execution of a number of activities. This can be justified by the following verbatim extracted from the participant`s interviews.

For participant 2, the achievement of the predefined goals and objectives is the fruit of a number of sacrifices.

Bon déjà il faut déjà se poser la question est ce que au début il y a un objectif qui se poser. Parce que j`ai qu`a même eu à faire cette remarque-là. Je me suis rendu compte

que beaucoup se lance dans la préparation de candidats par satisfaire le besoin de candidats. Ça peut être dur au faite que les temps sont durs. Beaucoup de gens entre dans la prépa pas pour répondre aux besoins des apprenants c`est peut-être s'ils peuvent déjà trouver leur gagne-pain, bon la ça le suffit. Bon généralement certain non même pas l'objectif à teindre. Leur préoccupation réelle c`est est ce que les enfants ont payé l`argent. Il y a d`autres qui essaie de se fixer les objectifs pour dire que bon voilà voilà voilà. Il y a d`autres qui se démarque qu`a même et qui réussissent à atteindre leurs objectifs mais d`autres pour de raison personnel il s`en fou carrément (P2).

En fait l`objectif majeur de ce groupe reste et demeure la préparation de candidats au concours d`entrer dans les grandes écoles. Tout tourne au tour de comment préparé ces candidats qui sollicitent notre aide. L`atteinte des objectifs qui est donc la réussite de candidats est au centre de notre préoccupation. Tout ce qui est mis en œuvre dans le groupe a pour but de favoriser la réussite de candidats (P3).

En fait je veux répondre à la question de comment faire pour produit la meilleure copie au concours parce que au concours c`est ne pas seulement de réussir mais d`être parmi les meilleurs. Justement l`objectif est alors de donner les outils nécessaires à cette apprenant ou a cette candidate pour qu`il puisse réussir et être le meilleur. Hhh un autre objectif est de donner les stratégies au cas où quelqu`un réussit à l`orale donner les techniques pour qu`il réponde aux questions a l`orale avec confiance. Bien que l`objectif est centrer sur la réussite même des candidats mais l`accent est mis sur comment être parmi les meilleurs (P12).

Sub-theme 3: Nature and cost of training

The preparation of candidates for entrance examinations is seen by many as a very complex activity. Unlike other organisations, the promoters of the preparatory groups are tasked with the responsibility to make sure that the predefined goals and objectives are achieved in time and in due course. This requires them to be strict and dynamic in their approaches of managing the groups. It is said that the training is divided into long term and short term training and each has its own cost. The cost of the training also varies from one group to another. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed the following.

Chez nous il y a le vague à courte terme et le vague a longue terme. La première vague ont un taux qu`il paye au début de la formation. Il y a ceux qui vient pour la première vague et d`autre pour la deuxième vague. Certes nous tous nous sommes conscients que quand les élevés partent composer le baccalauréat ils ont une aspiration (P12).

Concerning the cost of the training, participant 2 argues that it varies from one group to another and also the duration of the training.

Actually the training of candidates is divided in to two phases. We have the long term session and the short term session. Regarding the short term session, it is for a maximum period of three months. The cost of this training is fixed at 50,000frs which can be paid

in instalments. In contrast to the short term training, the long term training is generally for a period of one year. This is for candidates who want intensive training. Here, the group do all what it takes to satisfy the expectations of the candidates. The cost of this training session ranges from 100,000frs and above. It is equally paid in instalments. So, in our group, the nature and cost of training is divided into two. So, it is left on the candidates to choose the one that suit him/her (P2).

Sub-theme 4: Challenges encountered in the course of the preparation of candidates

Challenges constitutes part and parcel of modern days' organisations. Be it the preparatory groups or not, they are always obstacles which the organisations always face which tend to hinder the achievement of the predefined objectives. The first challenge that preparatory groups faces lies in the fact that they operate in the informal sector which in our context is not regularised. This means that each promoter needs to develop his or her own adaptation strategies to be able to survive. The analysis of the participant`s interviews revealed that these groups faced a number of challenges as seen below.

Bon déjà concernant les défis bon hehehe… d`abord dans un premier temps c`est au niveau des apprenants. Bon vue que les programmes de concours parfois on dit niveau terminale mais on se rend parfois compte que ça prend d`autres notions du cycle universitaire. Dont ça fait que quand tu as en face de toi un enfant qui vient de la terminale et celui qui es déjà en fac, dont tu dois t`arranger à le mettre pratiquement au même niveau. Dont que c`est à ce niveau que le défis se situe (P3).

Bon au niveau des infrastructures, les promoteurs qu`a même prennent des dispositions pour qu`on ait les infrastructures pour travailler. Parfois à ce niveau il n`y a pas vraiment un problème a moins ceux qui ont les infrastructures ou il y a souvent les concours. Comme par exemple au lycée de Ngoa-Ekelle. Parce que quand il y a un concours au lycée de Ngoa-Ekelle, on ait obligé d`annuler le cours ou soit d`aller chercher chez les voisins ainsi de suite ainsi de suite (P6).

Etant donné que nous sommes encore dans le début, le défis majeur qu`on rencontre ce essentiellement financier. Pour ce qui est de salle de cours on se bat toujours à trouver une salle pour pourvoir faire le cours mais parfois on a du mal à gérer cela. Pour surmonter le défi lie au finance on s`assure que tout un chacun contribue un taux maximum pour démarrer les activités. Pour aussi parler à ce défi on se charge à enseigner nous même le candidat et évite de recruter les enseignants (P11).

En terme de défis, je peux dire que le première défis c`est le défis lie à la gestion financière. Parfois un candidat va s`inscrire, il commence le cours et quand il faut déjà payer le frais il disparaitre pendant qu`il a déjà faire cours. Il y a la question lie au finance qui pose d`énorme problème. Il y a beaucoup qui vient jongler la pour ne pas payer la totalité de frais de préparation. En dehors de ces enjeux, il y a enjeux de la ponctualité. Un candidat qui prépare un concours et qui est en retard au cours de prépa est ceux sur je commence pendant la formation. Le dire que lorsqu`on veut vraiment

préparer un concours et qu`on est sérieux, on droit être l'a l`heure et tous les jours. Donc il y a l`absentéisme qui est un véritable défi à relever. Un autre défi est le découragement. Bon nombre de candidats vient avec des idées préconçus comme quoi on achet le concours, que vraiment pour réussir c`est difficile et alors là je suis obligé de passer à un réarmement moral le dire bon voilà c`est possible si et seulement si vous vous conformer à un certain nombre des choses et consignes. Donc en termes de défis voilà déjà trois. Je peux également relever la disponibilité parfois des enseignants pour assumer le cours que je ne pouvais pas gérer (P1).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, PERPECTIVES, CONSTRAINTS AND CONCLUSION

In the previous chapter, we presented the results of the findings gotten from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data. This include the results of the descriptive and inferential statistics for the quantitative study and the content analysis for the qualitative data. The simple linear regression analysis was used as the statistical test for the quantitative data while for the qualitative part, content analysis including biographical information was used to analyse and interpret the data. The present chapter therefore focusses on the discussion of the results of the findings in bit to link it with the previous studies either within or out of the context of this study. It responds to the research questions, objectives and hypotheses of the study as well as also summarises the key findings in terms of the relationships which do exist between the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and leaning in Cameroon. The chapter further reveals how the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of the preparatory groups will have an upper hand in the preparation and training of candidates in the Cameroonian context. The main purpose of conducting the discussion is to compare and contrast the results of this study with those of our predecessors. The discussion is done in line with the research hypotheses of the study. This chapter also put forwards a number of recommendations to the government, the professional schools and the promoters of these groups to explain some strategies aim at improving on their productivity in terms of candidates training. The chapter ends with perspectives for further studies as well as the constraints and limitations of the study.

Discussion of the results of the findings of the study

The present section of the study focusses on the discussion of the results of the findings of the study. Discussion of the results consists of reporting the findings in relation to the existing literature and major theories of the study. The purpose of discussing the results of the study is to show whether the results are convergence or divergence with that of our predecessors in the domain. The discussion also helps to how the theoretical framework of the study can be used to argue out clearly the results of the study. Here, the discussion is thus made in line with the research hypotheses of the study. This consists of the effect of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and

sustainability of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Effect of the Effectiveness of preparatory groups on the training of candidates

The results of the findings related to the effectiveness of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in to advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon revealed that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups is a strong and positive predictor of candidates' training or preparation for entrance examinations. Basing on this result, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted which states that there exists a statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. This indicates that the preparation of candidates largely depends on the effectiveness of the preparatory groups. Considering that these groups are informal education projects which purpose is to help and assist candidates willing to prepare themselves before going in for the exam, it effectiveness therefore depends on its ability to incorporate something corresponding managerial practices such as decision making, communication, collaboration, leadership, etc. which are key determinants of project effectiveness. The result obtained in hypothesis one are in line with the works of our predecessors who came to similar conclusions regarding the importance of the effectiveness of the project in achieving project`s objectives and positive outcomes.

Olson (2008), argued that effectiveness is linked to doing things in a right way. To him, it is an external type of measurement. The project effectiveness therefore is the ability of the process to satisfy the requirements, objectives, and priorities related to clients in a construction industry. This result places the project effectiveness at the center of any initiative in the organization. Projects unlike preparatory groups have a set of objectives to achieve. The achievement of these objectives thus, largely depends on the effectiveness of the project managers as well as the promoters in the preparatory groups.

Similarly, Samset (2003), in his study, found out that effectiveness measures the realization of the project`s purpose, aim, objective, or the project`s long term consequences. The effectiveness of a project has to do with the degree of achievement of the predefined objectives and goals of the project. This consist of looking into it that the intervention achieved the predefined objectives of

the project. It is seen as the extent to which the intervention or action achieved or is expected to achieve its goals and objectives. Project effectiveness criterion assist in understanding the degree to which an action is achieving or has achieved its goals and objectives. The perception authors have of project effectiveness is similar to what is happening in the preparatory groups in Cameroon. The promoters at this stage are given the burden of achieving the goals and objectives of the preparatory groups at all cost which is the effective training and preparation of candidates for entrance examinations.

In a study by OECD (2002), the found out that project effectiveness provides an insight to whether an action, a task or an activity has attained the planned results/outcomes, the process through which it was done, the decisive factors in the process as well as unintended effects. This implies that project effectiveness according to OECD has a larger role to play in the achievement of the organisational goals and objectives. Furthermore, Olsson (2006), in a study on project effectiveness, considers effectiveness as the measure of the long-term effects of the project and as performing the right things. This result is a proof that project effectiveness unlike the effectiveness of the preparatory groups have a long term impact on the career success of the candidates.

In the same light, OECD (2000), argues that the effectiveness criterion in project evaluation permit practitioners to ask questions such as to what extent has the objectives of the project been achieved? The project effectiveness criterion equally seeks to determine the factors that influence the realization or non-realization of the goals and objectives of the project (Davis, 2014; Mir & Pinington, 2014). In a similar study by Ika et al., (2012), they found out that the most common indicator used in evaluating project effectiveness is "how well the project`s product satisfies users` need". The efficiency and effectiveness project evaluation criteria are also recommended by the OECD to evaluate international development projects and programs (Chianca, 2008). These two criteria focus on the evaluation of objectives, outcomes and processes of a project. The effectiveness of the preparatory groups in Cameroon therefore takes into consideration the achievement of predefined objectives.

The consistency with the results found by previous studies which all revealed that project effectiveness is a strong and positive indicator of the project success outlines the importance of project effectiveness. These results are thus in convergence with the results of this study which clearly indicates that the effectives of the preparatory groups have an upper hand on the training

of the candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. As such, the promoters who are considered as the brain behind the initiative and on whom the effectiveness of these groups relies are therefore required to ensure the achievement of the primary objective of the groups which is the training of candidates. To do this, they are thus required to ensure effective decision making in the groups, communication, collaboration, corporation, good leadership and also set up the content of the training programs. All of these and many others will go a long way to ensure the effectiveness of the preparatory groups.

This result can be understood from two theoretical point of view. The theoretical lenses through which this result can be understood is that of the change theory as advocated by Carol Weiss (1995) and Kurt Lewin`s "unfreeze-change-refreeze model of change (1951). The theory of change advocated by Carol Weiss (1995) is based on the assumptions that many programs are difficult to evaluate because they are poorly articulated. To Weiss every steps in an intervention is as important as the first and the final step. As such, evaluators need to look at the mini steps if they want to achieve the long term outcome. She sums her discussion in four steps considered to be indispensable when evaluating a program or a project.

Carol Weiss defined the theory of change as a way to describe the set of assumptions that explain both the mini-steps that is susceptible of leading to the achievement of the long term goal and the connections between program activities and outcomes that occur at each step of the way (Weiss, 1995). Weiss based her discussion on the fact that stakeholders and designers of complex community programs and projects must be specific about the theories of change guiding their initiatives and equally suggested that doing so would automatically improve their overall evaluation plans as well as strengthen their ability to claim credit for outcomes that were predicted in their initiatives. She further emphasised that stakeholders should "lay out the sequence of outcomes that are expected to occur as the result of an intervention, and plan an evaluation strategy around tracking whether these expected outcomes are actually produced" (Weiss, 1995). Her interest in evaluation was basically to examine the goals that the program itself promulgated. The ultimate goal of evaluation is to promote decision making as it ensures a drastic change in the future of a program or a project. The contribution of Carol Weiss in the development of the theory of change is very visible. It is believed that since the publication of Weiss`s book, the use of planning and evaluation using theories of change has greatly increase among researchers, project

and program managers, philanthropies, government agencies, international NGOs, the UNO as well as a lot of many other organisations in both the developed and less developed countries.

Kurt Lewin developed the unfreezing-change-refreezing model of change. The unfreezing is the initial phase of the change progression. The existing situation bas to be disrupted before any change initiative be implemented. Cummings, Bridgman and Brown (2016) describes this as the contravention of the current situation before building up a different operational way. The change according to Kurt Lewin is the transition phase. It is believed that it at this point that individuals began to understand the change process and start looking for different ways of operation. They start behaving and acting in a manner that will support the new program. Levasseur (2001) argues that time and communication are two important components that will drive change to take place successfully. The third and last phase of Lewin theory of change is refreezing. This occur when the change has taken place to ensure that the new program can be sustained (Kaminski, 2011). This phase must be carefully handle if not the program will be short-lived. This is why Shirey (2013) argue that the external marks of readiness to refreeze include a steady organisational chart, reliable job descriptions etc. therefore, unfreezing-change-refreezing are basic assumptions on which the theory relies.

This change model thus, indicates that evaluating the effectiveness of the preparatory groups by the promoters or any other third party is a vital tool for the growth and development of these groups since the evaluation provides the framework for effective decision making. Weiss and Lewin in their efforts to understand how the evaluation of projects and programs can enhance its growth and development came to the conclusion that change is the right path to take in any program or project. The promoters in order to measure the effectiveness of the preparatory groups are required to conduct a reality check which aim is to identify pitfalls in the groups. This will go a long way to enhance the growth of these groups and also ensure the effective preparation of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Effect of the Efficiency of preparatory groups on the training of candidates

The results of the findings revealed that the efficiency of the preparatory is a strong and positive predictor of the training of candidates. Basing on the results of the simple linear regression analysis, it is shown that the efficiency of the preparatory groups is a predictor of the training of candidates for entrance examinations in advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

As such, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted which states that there is a statistically significant relationship between the efficiency of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon such as ENAM, IRIC, ENSPY, and ASMAC etc.

In project management, project efficiency entails the rational utilisation of the project resources to achieve the predefined goals and objectives as well as achieve desirable outcomes which are generally acceptable to all the project stakeholders. This indicates that the preparation of candidates passes through the use of the available resources. These resources include infrastructures, instructional materials, human resources, financial resources and even informational and temporal resources. It thus appears that the promoters of the various preparatory groups have the burden of looking into it that all these resources are rationally used so as to enhance the training of the candidates. This is so because the candidates are top priorities in these groups and their satisfaction conditions the growth, development and survival of the preparatory groups. This result converges with the previous studies in project management where the scholars found out that efficiency is a key determinant of project success.

In a study conducted by Arazi, Mahmoud and Husin (2011), in Malaysia, the results show that quality of finished projects, construction cost and construction time are the three most valuable criteria considered crucial by the respondents for evaluating project performance from current practice in Malaysia. The results of this study further reveal that quality of finished projects, construction cost and construction time are the most important performance criteria given high priority by clients in evaluating the performance of construction project. These results indicate that the efficiency of project take into consideration the utilization of project resources. The project manager therefore is responsible of using the minimum resources to achieve greater outcomes. In a similar study carried out by Olson in 2008, found out that efficiency is related to producing direct outputs and effectiveness is related to the additional value for owners and clients. This implies that efficiency look after what is achieved, how it is achieved, when it is achieved with whom it is achieved and the cost of the action. The promoter of the preparatory group unlike the project manager must ensure the rational and objective utilization of the available resources so as to achieve maximum outcomes using less resources.

Furthermore, Eikland in 2000, carried out a study to understand how efficiency can be addressed in construction projects. He found out that efficiency in a construction project is link to the cost and time used. High efficiency therefore implies that the project uses a minimum resource, time and cost to produce specific results in a project. The results of this study shows that project efficiency requires project managers to take into consideration the time, the money and the other resources to achieve high outcomes in a project. Previous studies (Ngacho & Das 2014; Xu & Yeh, 2014; Dvir et al. 2006), came to the conclusion that project efficiency is a means used to measure how economic resources and other resources are converted to tangible and desired project`s outcomes or results. Project efficiency according to these authors seeks to measure and evaluate how resources (material, financial, human, temporal) are used to achieve desirable outcomes in a project. Also, Haass and Guzman in 2019 conducted a study to understand how efficiency as a performance criterion in project performance evaluation can be perceived. They found out that the project success largely depends on the ability of the project managers to effectively and efficiently use the available resources allocated for the realization of the project. This is so because the resources might not be proportionate to the size of the task to be realized thereby requiring the project manager to make use of good practices to achieve better results.

Again, Samset in 2003, defines efficiency as the degree to which project outputs have delivered as planned and in line with the budget. It may happen to be cheaper, quicker and with better quality. Correspondingly, OECD (2000), perceived project efficiency as a measure of ratio between inputs and the outputs. Meanwhile Youcef, et al., (2015), argues that the term efficiency signifies the act of using least costly resources possible in order to achieve desired outcomes and results. OECD (2000), suggested some considerations by asking the following questions: were the activities cost-efficient? Were the objectives achieved on time? Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives? The efficiency criterion makes use of indicators such as scope, time, cost and quality (Zidane et al., 2012). The project efficiency criterion equally indicates whether or not the project met its schedule, budget as well as quality metrics. It is necessary for any project manager to evaluate the use of resources in project in order to avoid the wastage of resources. Thus, the efficient criterion in project evaluation ensure an efficient use of available resources.

Correspondingly, Love and Holt (2000) in in their study revealed that most organizations should learn to accept the rework as part of their operation. The study included two construction projects performed by the same contractor using different types of procurement methods. The results revealed that on the design part, the rework occurs when the activities and materials order are not similar to the original contract thereby making it difficult to be realized on the agreed time. On the construction side, one of the factors which may cause rework might be a simple mistake by the worker such as installing a door incorrectly.

Finally, Othman (2006) in a study found out that the coordination from all parties involved in a project is essential for the achievement of project success. He believed that having a good connection and understanding as well as collaboration between the parties involved (client, main contractor and subcontractor) is very important in achieving project success and avoiding disputes and misunderstandings which might escalate into legal actions against each other.

The results of the various studies above show that project efficiency is one of the key criteria of project success. The success of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates therefore depends on the ability of the promoters to efficiently use the available resources in the groups. This will go a long way to facilitate the achievement of the predefined goals and objectives using minimum resources and also produces results which are generally acceptable to all the actor involved in the preparation.

This result can also be discussed from a theoretical lens. As such, the theory of the ecology of organizations developed by Hannan and Freeman in 1989. The ecology of organisations as advocated by Hannan and Freeman is based on the assumption that the ecology of the organisation largely depends on the context and the environment in which the enterprise and its members operate in question. In this regards, Hannan and Freeman (1989) suggests that the means to sustain the environment, which is favourable for the organisation`s activities and operations need to be designed. Managers in an organisation are hereby required to set up a management system capable of enhancing productivity in the organisation and most importantly handling elements which may affect the success of the organisation. Hannan and Freeman in their findings adopted four principles guiding organisational ecology. This include; adaptation, selection, inertia, and constraints principles. This theory as advocated by Hannan and Freeman helps us to understand that the development of the adaptation strategies by the different preparatory groups can enhance the growth and development of the groups. The promoters are therefore required to select from a

list of alternative course of actions so as to ensure the efficiency in the preparatory groups. Since preparing candidates is a complex activity, ensuring its efficiency might appear to be a daunting task to the promoters of the preparatory groups. For this and many other reasons, the promoters are hereby required to look into it that resources are rationally used to avoid wastage of time and resources very precious for the preparation of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Effect of the Relevance of preparatory groups on the training of candidates

The data collected and analyzed revealed that the relevance of the preparatory groups is a strong and positive predictor of the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in advanced schools of training. The results of the simple linear regression revealed a very strong and positive linear relationship between the independent variable (relevance of the preparatory groups) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). Basing on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted which states that there is a statistically significant relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. This result was obtained after careful analysis of both the quantitative and the qualitative data. This indicates that the training of candidates largely depends on the attention the candidates and the society attributes to these groups. It is observed that over the past years, the phenomenon of the preparation of candidates for entrance examinations has been on an increase.

Although this activity is not specific only to the Cameroonian context, the rate at which it has gain ground over the last decade is very alarming. It is argued that the growth of this activity in Cameroon is attributed to the fact that the government over the years has intensifies it strategies of recruiting graduates and post-graduates into the public service through entrance examinations and admission tests. For this reason, succeeding in an entrance examination is henceforth seen as a life achievement. As such, parents, families and candidates constantly seeks for extra-academic follow-up to prepare themselves psychologically and intellectually before the examinations. This has further intensified the importance and impact of the preparatory groups in the Cameroonian context. This result converges with the previous works of scholars on project relevance as an evaluation criterion in project management.

In a study by Samset (2003), found out that discussing on the relevance criterion in project management point out that it is the overall assessment of whether a project is in harmony with the needs and priorities of the owners, the intended users as well as other attested parties. The relevance of a project entails the satisfaction the project stakeholders derives from the project. This is all about looking at the immediate effects of the project as well as the long term impact of the project on the project stakeholders. This is so because a project unlike the preparatory group is a goal oriented activity which is intended to achieve a set of predefined objectives within a given timeframe using specific resources. As such, the project managers as well as the promoters of the various preparatory groups are thus required to ensure customer`s or candidate`s satisfaction by ensuring their success in entrance examinations. According to Omid Haass and Gustavo Guzman (2019), project relevance is equally known as business success. The relevance of the project as an evaluation criterion is concerned with the wider organization or institution (the firm, consortium, government), sponsoring the project, and its long-term viability.

Recent studies (Ika et al., 2012; Mulller & Turner, 2007; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007). Mir and McLeod et al., (2012), Shao et al., (2012), argues that this criterion considers the accomplishment of strategic objectives and benefits as well as the impacts on the markets and competitors, business development or expansion, and the ability to react to future opportunities and challenges. This indicates that the relevance of project relies on its ability to satisfy immediate and long term expectations of the project stakeholders.

Correspondingly, in a study carried out by Davis (2014), found out that the project relevance as an evaluation criterion takes into consideration the project team gains, learning, motivation and lessons learnt which can be applicable to the ongoing or future projects. Evaluating the relevance of a project permit the project manager and project team members to identify the importance of the project to the project managers, sponsors, customers and beneficiaries and any other person concern by the project.

In a similar study conducted by Maylor et al., (2006), found out that project relevance relates to the impact of the project to the society. Evaluating the relevance of a project therefore requires the project managers to consider the achievement of the goals and objectives in relation to the expectations of project members. The above results demonstrate that project relevance provides the importance of the project to individuals, groups or the community.

Furthermore, Ika et al., (2012), in a study on project evaluation came to the conclusion that project relevance is important in determining the success or the failure of a project. To them, project relevance permits us to determine how successful the project, the immediate and long term impact, the lessons learnt and the areas of improvements. In the same light, Pinnington (2014) found out that project relevance as a performance evaluation criterion in project management and evaluation seeks to understand how resources are being used and how these resources helps in achieving the stated goals and objectives of the project as well as meet the expectations of the project manager, the sponsor, the customers and the beneficiaries.

Finally, in a study conducted by Shao et al., (2012), on project management and evaluation found out that project evaluation is a process which consists of reviewing all the processes and phases of the project to see what has been done, how it has been done, who has done it, and with what resources. This process requires the project manager to make use of the project performance evaluation criteria which include effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact, and sustainability of the project. Shao and his colleagues came to the conclusion that project relevance addresses the question of customer`s satisfaction in a project. The relevance of the Preparatory groups unlike in projects seeks to address the satisfaction candidates derives as the result of their preparation in these groups.

This result can also be explained from a theoretical lens. The result obtained in the hypothesis three can be thus explains by the general system theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy developed in 1969. The appreciation that an outcome is not explained simply by parts but that the relationships between and among those parts and their environment (context) are important eventually led to the formulation of system theory (Frye & Hemma, 2012). The system theory states that a system is a series of interrelated and interdependent parts interwoven such that any movement or action on one part affects the whole system. This holds on to Aristotle's dictum that "a whole is greater than the sum of its parts". It holds that no single aspect or part of the system planned to enhance the system's objective is more important than the other. They all function fully to enable each other to achieve the stated objectives.

Furthermore, this theory states that a system is a series of interrelated and interdependent parts interwoven such that any movement, intervention or action on one part affects the whole system. According to Tanah (2015), a system is a unit with a series of interrelated and inter-dependent

parts such that the interplay of any part affects the other. The basic idea here is that the parts of anything are so related and dependent that the interaction of anything affects the whole. In this light, the system theory affirms that the preparatory group as an open system is made up of different components, departments, and activities geared towards the attainment of the defined vision. All these components must function as one, regarded as the same and important in realizing the vision. This view is shared with the fact that knowing one part of a system enables us to know something about another part (Kuhn, 1974). The goal of the system theory is systematically discovering a system's dynamics, constraints, conditions and elucidating principles (purpose, measure, methods, tools, and many others) that can be discerned and applied to systems at every level of nesting and in every field of achieving optimized equability.

Ludwig described two main systems, the close and the open system. A closed system is one where interactions occur only among the system components and not with the environment, while an open system is one that receives input from the environment and/or releases output to the environment (Walonick, 1993). The open system best describes the preparatory groups since every preparatory groups relates and interacts with other systems such as the economic, political and social systems in the society. The environment provides key resources that sustain the organization and promote change and survival while institutions supply the society or environment with goods and services.

As such, the preparatory group is seen as a simple consists of interrelated parts. This interdependent relationship between the various components of the system provides a framework for understanding the relevance of the preparatory groups in relation to the training of candidates for entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Effect of the Sustainability of preparatory groups on the training of candidates

The results of the data collected and analyzed revealed that sustainability of the preparatory groups is indispensable for the training of candidates. The results of the findings revealed a positive and very strong linear relationship between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning such as IRIC, EMIA, ASMAC, Public Works etc. Basing on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted which states that there exists a statistically strong and positive relationship between the sustainability of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for

competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The participants of the study revealed that the nature and quality of training provided by the preparatory groups largely depends on their ability to stand the test of time.

It is argued that sustainability refers to the ability of the various preparatory groups to persist over time. It is the ability of the preparatory groups to stand the test of time. Sustainability is used as a performance evaluation criterion to understand how the ability to overcome competition and all the internal and external variables affecting the training can be overcome by the promoters and the managing staff. This requires the promoters and the managing staff to develop adaptation strategies such as partnerships, corresponding managerial practices, good leadership, effective participation, advertisement, quality training, offering trainings other than preparing candidates only etc. so as to survive in a competitive environment where each and every one strive to survive. This result further portrays the necessity for the preparatory to have sustainable plans and project which can take the group from a simple preparation groups focused on "shadow education" to a more open group providing trainings and impacting individuals with necessary skills and competences required in the professional world. This result is in line with the results of previous studies on project sustainability in both the developed and less developed world.

In a study by Danish and Senjyu (2020), on project efficiency and sustainability indicators, argued that sustainability goes beyond basic statistics and has to cover multi-dimensional aspects. These dimensions include energy production, distribution, delivery, consumption and also consider technological efficiencies, the pillars of sustainability are economic, social, institutional, technological and environmental. The results of their study indicated that project sustainability is seen as a key factor in the success of a project. To them, project sustainability looks after aspects such as distribution, delivery, consumption, energy production and many others. Sustainability is therefore focused on the strategies of adaptation which can allow a project irrespective of nature and type to overcome the time constraints. In a similar study carried out by Dobrovolskiene (2018), found out that sustainability as a performance criterion seeks to address the harmony of the economic, social and environmental aspects. This means that sustainability requires an effective control and management of the environmental, social and economic variables susceptible of affecting the growth and development of a project. Unlike the project managers, the promoters of the preparatory groups have the burden to control and management these variables if they want to

be successful in the training of candidates. This requires them to make sure that the economic, the social, the environmental, the political, the legal and even the political factors are favorable for the growth and development of the groups.

Correspondingly, in a study carried out by Muller and Turner (2007), found out that this criterion of project evaluation is related to the extent to which the project`s results maximize inter-generational welfare and maintenance of the environment, rather than solely maintenance of the economy productive base. Elaborating on the results of Muller and Turner, project sustainability is therefore an initiative intended to make sure that the immediate and long term expectations of the project stakeholders are met. This requires the project managers to make sure that strategies of adaptation such as good leadership, good governance and management are used in the project or program so as to facilitate it success. Previous studies, Ngacho and Das, (2014), and Ika et al., (2012), in their respective studies also arrived at similar results. Thus, project sustainability requires the monitory and control of external variables which might affect the growth and development of the project.

Correspondingly, in a study by Youcef, et al., (2015), found out that sustainability of a project questions whether the benefit of a project will continue once the sponsors and investors ceased to fund the activity. To them, project sustainability questions the ability of the project to survive once the sponsors and the investors are not more part of the project. This usually happens when the project deliverables are finally handed to the final beneficiaries for utilization. The big question which always arises when the sponsors and the investors are no more is whether the project will stand the test of time. To overcome this, the project managers, the sponsors and even the investors are tasked with the responsibility to ensure the durability of the project by developing adaptations strategies.

Furthermore, in similar studies conducted by Tatikonda and Rosenthal (2000), and Ika et al., (2012), found out that the sustainability criterion is mostly relevant in development projects, that deals with a range of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political concerns, which most of the times happens during the implementation of project as well as after the completion of the project. The sustainability criterion falls under the subjective approach in project evaluation. To these authors, project sustainability looks after the external variables which can affect the execution of the project and also the outcomes of the project. This is so because it might happen that the external variables such as the economic, social, environmental, cultural, legal, political

factors etc. does not favor the growth of a project. Unlike the project, preparatory groups are likely to face this similar problem although it might be at a different level. The promoters of the preparatory groups are thus required to look into it all these variables are controlled so as to ensure the growth and development of the groups.

Finally, in previous studies carried out by OECD (2000) and Samset (2003) found out that sustainability as a criterion of project performance evaluation permits the project practitioners to ask questions such as: to what extent did the benefits of a project continue after the donor funding ceased? What were the major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project? These questions are considered to be indispensable to any project managers. The first question tends to analyze how the project beneficiaries or the end users will make use of the project once the sponsors, project managers and investors are no more. The second question seeks to look at those variables whether internal or external which can affect the growth, success and development of a project. The promoters of the preparatory groups are faced with the same dilemma. They are thus required to put up adaptation strategies which will help them to survive despite the increase rate of competitors. Among these strategies, most of the promoters has developed a long term vision of moving from a preparatory group to an open training center or institution whereby their focus is not only on preparing candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training but also impacting candidates with entrepreneurial skills which can facilitate their socio-professional integration in the society.

The above result can also be visualized from the theoretical lens of the sustainable leadership theory developed by Avery in 2005. According to Avery (2005) for organisations to ultimately take into account the needs of all the stakeholders, managers are required to establish the concept of sustainable leadership development, integrate it into the organisation and implement sustainable leadership attitude since the leader is key to the transformation of the organisation. Avery (2005), cited by Yaohua Liao (2022) was the first to introduce the concept of sustainable leadership into the field of organisational management. He proposed a new concept of sustainable leadership based on comparing the differential impact of the two development models of capitalism, that is; the British American model and the Rhine model on the leadership style of managers. He summarised his approach into 19 elements.

Avery (2005) pointed out that sustainable leadership means having long-term decision-making skills, enhancing systematic innovation, developing a loyal and committed team, and also providing high quality products, services and solutions to all the stakeholders within and outside the organisation. This is intended to balance the relationship between people, profits, and earth and promote the sustainability of the enterprise through corresponding management practices. He advocated that organisational sustainability takes into consideration the brand and reputation of the organisation, the customer satisfaction, financial transparency and accountability, long term shareholder value and long term stakeholder return. For this to be possible managers unlike promoters in the preparatory groups are required to practice systematic innovations, enhance staff commitment and engagement and ensure the provision of quality services and solutions to the customers and the end users. This is visually true with the preparatory groups in Cameroon who are required to make use of corresponding management practices such as systematic innovations, good leadership, staff commitment, and provide quality training to the candidates so as to survive in a competitive environment where everyone strives to survive.

For the promoters of the preparatory groups to ensure the sustainability of the groups, they are required to ensure key performance drivers as advised by Avery (2005) which consists of intrinsic motivation for all the actors in the groups, self-management, team orientation and identity, a positive and enabling organisational culture, knowledge retention and sharing as well as trust at all levels in the groups. Also, the sustainability of the preparatory groups in the context of Cameroon requires the promoters to ensure good leadership culture, recruitment and retention of talented workers, training and development opportunities for individuals, internal succession planning, respect, diversity and inclusion, good governance and accountability, ethics and virtues, long term ambition, organisational change, environmental responsibility, shared purpose and vision, stakeholders involvement, social responsibility, and little interference of the outside world in the running of the group`s activities.

Recommendations/Suggestions

The results of the findings of the present study revealed that the preparatory groups have a statistically strong and positive influence on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. Preparatory groups, which is an aspect of shadow education has for the past decades being useful to the candidates

willing to prepare themselves for entrance examinations and admission test in Cameroon into professional schools and colleges of the country. The participants of the study revealed that the training of candidates is based on the effectiveness, the efficiency, relevance and sustainability of these groups. Basing on the above findings, we therefore recommend to the government, the professional schools, the promoters, the candidates and all those involves in the preparation of candidates the following:

- The results of the findings revealed that the effectiveness of the preparatory is a determinant of the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations in to advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. Bearing in mind that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups largely conditions the training of candidates as well as their success in entrance examinations and admission tests, it is thus recommended that the promoters, the professional schools and the government should develop a regulatory framework guiding the creation and existence of these groups in the context of Cameroon. Effectiveness is seen as the ability of the preparatory groups to achieve the predefined goals and objectives.

Education is seen as a vital tool for economic growth and development as Nelson Mandela once said "to destroy a country, one doesn't need the atomic bomb but simply to corrupt the educational system of the country". The show the important role of education in the society. The government of Cameroon who is the sole provider of education is thus advice to develop a regulatory framework so as to take hold of this practice. This regulatory framework will help in the first place to recognize the activities of these groups and in the second place to effectively control what is happening in these groups. Through the development of a regulatory framework guiding the creation and existence of these groups, it will go a long way to combat the "clandestine" nature of most of the preparatory groups in Cameroon.

Also, it is recommended to the advanced schools and colleges to carefully analyze the programs or curriculum in use in these groups. The content of the training programs used by the preparatory groups has an impact on the success of the candidates in to these advanced schools and also on their behavior. It is thus recommended that the professional schools and colleges should develop a program on which these examinations will be set. This will help to fight against the current practices in the preparatory groups whereby the promoters and the "prefet d`etude" defines their own programs by themselves.

Again, the findings revealed that the training of candidates largely depends on the determination of the various actors in these groups. As such, it is thus recommended to the promoters of the preparatory groups to look forward towards harmonizing the training programs so as to enhance the effectiveness of these groups. The achievement of the predefined goals and objectives largely depends on the organization and structure of these groups. The promoters, the staff and all those involves in the process are advised to involve everybody in the running and management of the group. In doing so, the effectiveness of the preparatory groups will be enhanced and thus improve the quality of the training candidates received from these groups.

- The efficiency of the preparatory groups is related to the use of resources to achieve predefined goals and objectives. Basing on the results of the findings, we thus recommended that the promoters of the preparatory groups should efficiently utilized the available resources so as to achieve the predefined objectives. This therefore requires the promoters to maximize the use of resources. While efficiency is the ability to use less resources to achieve bigger results or maximum outputs, it becomes an imperative for the promoters to make sure that all the resources (financial, human, material, temporal, and information) are efficiently utilized.

In terms of the management of the financial resources, the results of the findings revealed that it is a crucial resource in the groups which necessitates transparency and accountability. Thus, the promoters, and all those involves in the management of the finances are required to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of this resource. This requires the promoters to make sure that each and every one goes back with a minimum pay package as compensation to efforts mobilized in the groups. The accountability in the management of the financial resources requires the promoters to make sure a single individual is in charge of this or that task in the group. Meaning that more than one person should not find themselves performing a similar task. This will go a long way to enhance the efficiency of the preparatory thereby impacting the quality of training candidates receives from these groups.

Also, the results of the findings revealed that majority if not all the preparatory groups does not have permanent infrastructures to carry out the training. The findings revealed that most of these groups go to nearby colleges, primary schools and high schools, both public and private to negotiate for classrooms where they can organize the training. This at times appears to be a daunting task for many groups especially during the period when academic activities are still going

on in these schools. As such, it is therefore recommended that the promoters should ensure the infrastructural dispositions either by permanently constructing classrooms or by permanently renting buildings where the teaching and learning process can take place. This will help to avoid a situation whereby candidates are idle because the classes are not available.

- The results of the findings also revealed that there is a very strong and positive relationship between the relevance of the preparatory groups and the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The relevance of these groups takes in to consideration candidate's satisfaction as well as the immediate and long term impact on the society. Basing on the findings, it was therefore recommended that the government, the educationists, professional schools should look forwards to monitoring and controlling the activities of these groups. While succeeding in an entrance examination has become the dream of every Cameroonian, preparatory groups has gain prominence over the past years. Many families and candidates sees these groups as the only means through which they can secure their entrance into these advanced schools without bribing nor corrupting. As such, the society sees these groups as an assurance to secure their entrance into the prestigious training schools of the country especially for financially unstable families. Thus, due to this growing in prominence from these groups, the government, professional schools, stakeholders and educational communities are advised to incorporate this activity in the formal education as it is the case in most countries like France and England where these groups are recognized institutions helping the state in its mission of assuring quality education as well as employment for all.
- The results of the findings also revealed that the training and preparation of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon also depends on the sustainability of these groups. A good number of the participants of the study argued that preparing candidates is a very tedious and complex initiative which requires the promoters and managing staff to make use of corresponding managerial practices so as to ensure the sustainability of the activity. While it was revealed that these groups are informal education projects which operates in the informal sector which, in our context is very much neglected, each group or promoter needs to develop managerial strategies capable of ensuring the growth and durability of the group. In relation to these findings, recommendations were made to the government, professional schools, stakeholders and educational communities which if they are implemented will guarantee the sustainability of these groups and even make them more credible.

In terms of sustainability of the preparatory groups, it is recommended that the government should formalize this activity. This process of formalization consists of making sure that the activity of training or preparing candidates is not more the affair of individuals but that of the state. This involves developing a regulatory framework and standard for the creation and existence of these groups. This will go a long way to ensure the sustainability of the preparatory groups. Also, with the growing importance of shadow education both in the developed and less developed countries, it is crystal clear that this activity will never come to an end. It becomes a necessity for the government to set up this regulatory framework governing the creation and existence of shadow education in Cameroon.

Also, basing on the results of the findings, we thus recommend that the professional schools should go ahead to create preparatory groups within their institutions where candidates can recycle themselves before going in for the entrance examinations. This will be less costly for the candidates since it is a governmental initiative and will also help to raise income. Professional schools like ENAM, EMIA, IRIC, Public Works, ASMAC, etc. which are highly solicited can go ahead to create this form of shadow education within their campuses. This is naturally the case in most developed countries such as U.S.A. where candidates are required to prepare themselves before going in for the SAT and ACT admission tests. Similar, in England, it is argued that the grade system which used to be the only base on which candidates were selected and admitted in prestigious training schools, colleges and even universities has not been trustworthy for the simple reason that some families or even students bribes their way out. For this reason, candidates are required to undergo one-year intensive training upon graduation from the secondary schools so as to be ready for the admission test into these prestigious training schools, colleges and universities.

Again, we recommend that in order to ensure the sustainability of this activity in Cameroon, it is thus essential for the government, professional schools, stakeholders, and educational communities to set up an observatory organ in charge of organizing the training of candidates such as the JAMB in Nigeria, and the GMAT which is practiced by state universities in more than 83 countries worldwide.

Perspective for further studies

The present study focusses on the evaluation of informal education projects in the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning

in Cameroon. The study took as case study the preparatory groups in Cameroon. Considering the growing importance of "shadow education" in Cameroon, it thus appears that further study can be carried out to analyze the impact of "shadow education" on student performance in secondary schools and colleges in Cameroon. Shadow education is a form of education which take place out of the formal system and it is mostly carry out by individuals. A good number of families are of the view that to succeed in an entrance examination or in an official examination, one need to receive extra-academic follow-up so as to be psychologically and morally prepared to deal with the stress and complexity of these examinations. As such, parents decide to enroll their children in preparatory groups for collective training or simply hire teachers to teach their peers in the evening. Whether individually or collectively, all is known as shadow education. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. Further studies can be carried out on the following topics;

- The impact of "shadow education" on the performance of students in public secondary schools and colleges in Cameroon.
- A comparative analyzing of the performance of train and untrained students in competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.
- Commercialization of examination preparation for admission into advanced schools of training in Cameroon: A consideration of the Caliskan and Callon marketization model.
- Analysis of the implications of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.
- The impact of managerial practices on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon: Case of the preparatory groups in Yaoounde.

All these studies if carried out will help to shed more light on shadow education in Cameroon and provide a better understanding of the implications of the shadow education on students' performance both in secondary schools and colleges and in competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Constraints/Limitations of the study

It has been revealed that constraints and limitations are known to be part and parcel of research. Conducting a research project is considered to be a very challenging endeavor. The success of a researcher in writing a research project lies on his/her ability to be patient, perseverance, endurance, determination, auto-regulation, and to keep going even when he/she is submerged by challenges and obstacles. In the present study, the researcher encountered a number of constraints and limitations which ranges from the accessibility of the participants, administrative bottlenecks to financial constraints. Below are some of the constraints and limitations faced in the course of the execution of this research project.

Accessibility of participants: Accessing participants in the study was proven to be a very challenging endeavor. This is because majority of the participants were not willing to participate in the study. This came as a result of the fact that many misinterpreted the purpose of the study and instead considers the research to be an inquiry. Due to this, they became very resistant to participate in the study. Consequently, the researcher had to take much time than plan for the fieldwork since the researcher had to explain the purpose of the study over and over again to the participants and convince them of the confidentiality of their responses.

Language constraint: Language barrier was another challenging factor for both the researcher and the participants. This study is conducted in Yaounde and the city is inhabited in larger part French speaking Cameroonians. This problem arises as the result of the fact that majority of the participants in the study has French as their first language. This did not ease or facilitate the research process as the researcher had to put in additional efforts and means during the fieldwork. As such, we had to translate the instruments of data collection in the first place and we also had to explain some concepts that the participants appear not to understand.

Administrative bottlenecks: Administrative procedures proves to be a challenging issue to the researcher. This study seeks to evaluate the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for entrance examinations in to advanced training schools in Cameroon. During the fieldwork, we noticed that majority of these groups operates in a clandestine manner. By the time we went for the fieldwork, things were not really made easier for us as the staff members categorically refused to attain to us on the pretext that only the promoters can give the adequate information required for the study. We had to book a number of rendezvous to meet the promoters for them to give us

the go ahead to collect data in their groups. This was really time consuming as the researcher had to wait for weeks to have the verbal authorization from the promoters of these groups.

Documentation: The availability of documents related to the studied phenomenon in the Cameroonian context proves to be a challenging issue in the course of conducting this study. This is as a result of the fact that the phenomenon of shadow education though an old initiative, much is not done on it in Cameroon. The preparatory groups which falls under the shadow education also suffers from lack of literature in the context of Cameroon. This was really challenging as the researcher had to focus on majority of books and articles written out of Cameroon to understand the phenomenon. So absence of national documents on the studied phenomenon was really challenging for the researcher.

Financial constraint: Another that difficulty encountered in the course of this study is the financial difficulty. This is because that researcher had to rely principally on personal resources to realize this research project which at times appears to be insufficient. This was challenging as the researcher did not have the sufficient fund to effectively carry out the project. This might have affect the quality of the results of the findings.

Proposed model for the evaluation of "preps" groups

Considering the growing importance of the activity of preparing candidates for competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon, there is an urgent need to develop a context-based model that can be used to monitor the successes in these groups. The proposed evaluation model will assess the performance of the preparatory groups based on the following four key criteria: efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of the activity. Efficiency focuses on the extent to which the resources (material, financial, and human) are rationally used. It focuses on cost-effectiveness, budget variance, timeliness of the implementation, resource utilization rate, administrative overhead cost, data sources, and evaluation methods.

Effectiveness addresses will help to measure the extent to which the group achieved its intended outcomes, goals and objectives. It centers on achievement of group objectives, reaching of target beneficiaries, stakeholder satisfaction, quality of outputs, and changes in beneficiary outcomes. Relevance tackles the group alignment with the needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries, the local context or even national goals. Sustainability focuses on mechanism put in place to ensure the group survival. It involves institutional capacity, financial stability, policy support etc.

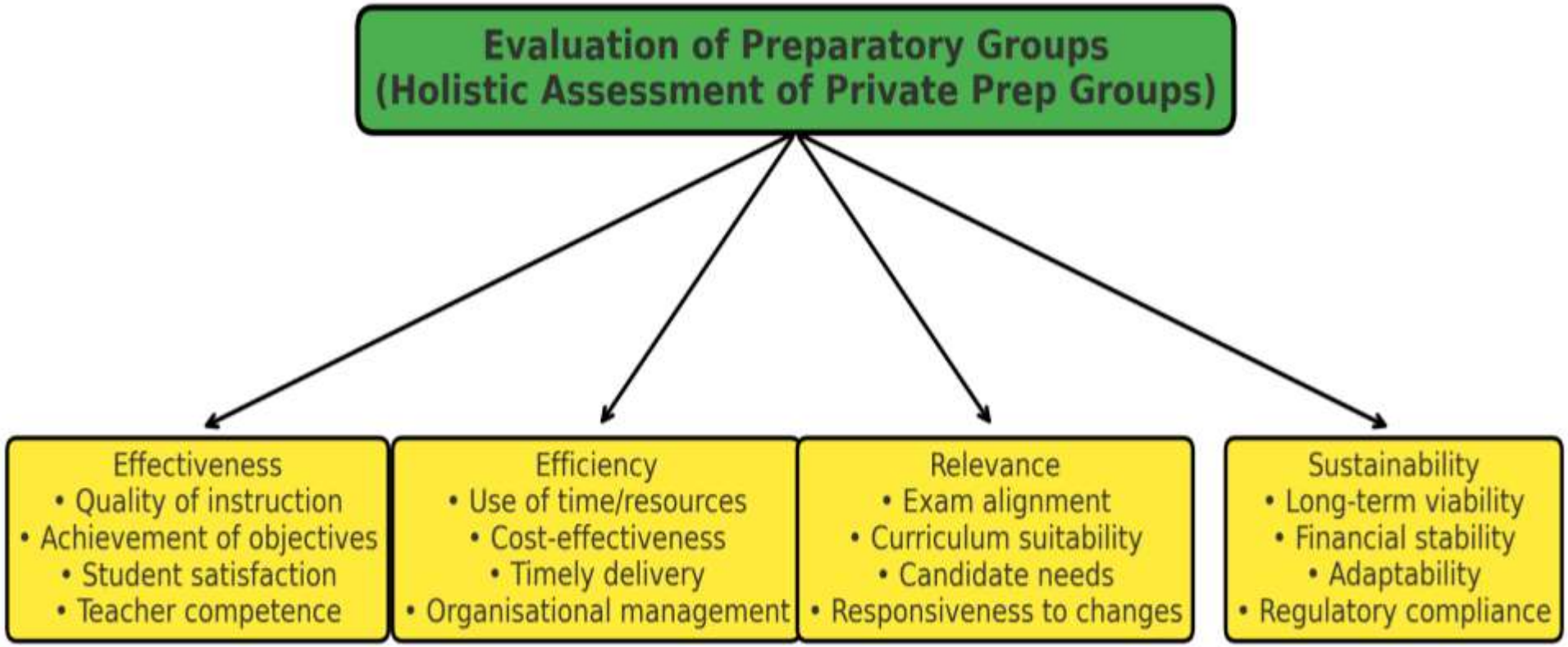


Figure 35: Proposed model for the evaluation of Preps groups

CONCLUSION

The current study has examined the impact of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. This focused on the case of the selected preparatory groups in Yaounde. Preparatory groups constitute an important aspect of the informal education project. These educational project falls within the framework of "shadow education". Shadow education is a form of education which take place out of the formal system of education. It is regarded as a sort of additional support and extra-academic follow-up intended to help students and candidates preparing for entrance examinations as well as official examinations. Shadow education is a form of repetition classes which aim to improve on the performance of students as well as their retention capacity. The purpose of this form of education which take place out of the formal system is to assist candidates and students who are in need of follow-up and academic assistance. While the practice of shadow education has become viral in the Cameroonian context, this activity is not specific to the context of Cameroon. In the developing countries like England, France, Germany, India, Korea, Canada, United States of America etc. this practice is also visible there. In France for example, shadow education has considerably gain ground with the vulgarisation of the "Groupe de Prepa Concours" throughout the country. This is because succeeding in an entrance examination into the so called "Grandes Ecoles" is seen as a life achievement for a good number of families. In England, the story is quite similar to that of France. In the U.S.A, admission to some of the professional institutions and even public universities and colleges requires extra academic efforts which are provided not by the educational system but by individuals and specialised organisations though recognised by the state.

In Africa, the story is quite the same though with some specificities. Countries across the Saharan Desert following the aftermath of accession to self-rule and independence thought it wise to introduce competitive entrance examinations and admission tests as the only means through which candidates and students can be selected and admitted into different advanced schools of training and learning. This arises as a result of the fact that the government finds it extremely difficult to absorb all the graduates, under graduates and the post graduates produced by the system. As such, the only means through which equity and equality of access could be ensured is by introducing the

competitive entrance examinations and admission tests as the gate way to these advanced schools of training and learning.

The state of Cameroon, some years after granting self-rule and independence decided to follow the footsteps of other African countries by introducing competitive entrance examinations and admission test as the only means through which candidates could be admitted into the advanced schools of training and learning such as ENAM, IRIC, HTTC, ENSPY, ASMAC, etc. This came as a result of the fact that the government of Cameroon unlike other African countries finds it absolutely very difficult to absorb all the products of the educational system. Thus, competitive entrance examinations and admission test were seen by the government as the only means through which equity and equality could be ensured between all the social classes of the population. In doing so, the government of Cameroon awfully failed to set up preparatory classes which will prepare these candidates and make sure that they are up to the task before going in for the examinations and admission test.

Due to the absence of a public mechanism aim at preparing candidates for entrance examinations and admission tests, individuals and groups has seized the opportunity and embark on the creation of preparatory groups whose purpose is to assist candidates going in for these examinations and admission tests. The emergence of the preparatory groups in Cameroon can be traced as far back as the year 1990 – 2000s. This marked the period when students from medical schools and other administrative and engineering schools came together to set up repetition classes. At first, these classes were simply repetition classes mostly for university students. The purpose at this time was to assist university students both academically, intellectually, morally and psychologically. These repetition classes from the beginning gave the candidates the tips on how the answer examination questions as well as how to behave in the university milieu.

As time goes on, these medical students, and students from schools of administration and engineering decided to diversify their training opportunities. As such, they decided to introduce the concept of preparatory groups or “prepa concours” which does not only focus on preparing candidates for university exams only but also to train and assist candidates going in for competitive entrance examinations. Thus, preparatory groups were created to assist candidates who are preparing for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning of

the country. The phenomenon of preparatory groups or "prepa concours" reached its peak in the year 2010. This was followed by the multiplication of preparatory groups across the national territory. This came following the believe in the different social classes that the key to a decent life is by joining the public service. Thus, it became the dream of every Cameroonians to secure his/her passage into one of these schools.

From the period 2010 till date, it is hard to walk for a distance without seeing a sign board advertising the activities of these groups. These groups have become partner's number of the candidates preparing for competitive entrance examinations. This is so because the entrance examinations have become too selective and the number of seats made available by the government has been on a decrease. Hundreds of thousands of Cameroonians are thus required to compete for a limited number of seats. For example, in an entrance examination into ENAM whereby only one hundred seats are available, more than 15000 Cameroonians register for it. This situation has really increase the level of competition to the extent that some families who are financially stable and socially connected seek for illegal means to ensure the admission of their peers into these advanced schools.

Preparatory groups or "groupe de prepa concours" have given a new dimension to shadow education in Cameroon. This activity falls within the framework of shadow education since it is an informal form of education though not fully recognised by the state but is doing a very good job. These groups have fill the gap created by the educational system. The government organises entrance examinations but does not organise top-up classes for candidates to be ready for the examinations. Thus the preparatory groups offer the most needed support to the candidates as it helps in preparing them for entrance examinations.

The present study on the evaluation of informal education projects in the training/preparation of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon comprised of five chapters. Chapter one is known as the introduction which dwells on all the articulations of an introduction in a research work. It cut across the backgrounds of the study, the justification and the statement of the problem, the research purposes, questions and hypotheses of the study as well as the significance, the delimitation and the operational definition of key concepts of the study. Chapter two is entitled critical literature review of the study which is divided into three parts, that is; the conceptual, the empirical and the theoretical literature review of the study. The conceptual review of literature explored the various concepts of the study such as competitive

entrance examinations and admission tests, preparatory groups, shadow education, project management and evaluation, informal sector etc. The empirical review of literature focused on the various project performance evaluation criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impacts and sustainability of the project while the theoretical review of literature focused on the major theories retained for the study such as theory of change, sustainable leadership theory, organisational ecology theory, and the open system theory. Chapter three is known as the methodological framework of the study which described the research approach, procedures of sampling, data collection strategy and data analysis strategy. The chapter also explored the evaluation model adopted in the case of this which is the logical framework model. Chapter four focused on data analysis, presentation and interpretation which consists of both the quantitative and the qualitative data analysis, presentation and interpretation. Chapter five is known as the discussion of the findings, recommendations, perspectives and constraints of the study. It discussed the results of the findings in relation to previous findings, draws some recommendations, developed perspectives for further studies as well as outlined the constraints and obstacles faced in the course of the realisation of this research project.

This study addressed the impact of the preparatory groups in the training of candidates for entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. To do this, a central research question was developed which states that to what extent does the preparatory groups influence the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon? To answer the central preoccupation of the study, the researcher adopted a mixed research approach which consisted of combining the quantitative and the qualitative research approach, based on the explanatory sequential research design. The study is conducted in Yaounde. The researcher worked with the promoters, staff, teachers, candidates and ex-candidates of the preparatory groups which were purposefully sampled from the target population. As such, a total of 515 participants were retained for this study. Since the study opted for mixed research approach, two instruments was selected for the collection of data from the field. A close ended questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data which was administered to the promoters, staff, teachers, candidates and ex-candidates in the preparatory groups. For the qualitative part, a structured interview guide was administered to the promoters, the staff and the teachers in the preparatory groups to collect qualitative data. The data collected from the field was both analysed quantitatively for the quantitative data and qualitatively for the qualitative data.

Statistical data analysis techniques more precisely the simple linear regression was used to analyse the quantitative data, assisted by the SPSS, version 22. For the qualitative part, the content analysis was used to analyse the in-depth interviews of the participants. The study also adopted the logical framework as an evaluation model since it focused on the inputs, the activities, the outputs, the outcomes and the impacts. The analysis of the quantitative and the qualitative data collected from the field with the use of close ended questionnaire and structured interview guide led to the following results.

In the first research hypothesis, the researcher seeks to examine the impact of the effectiveness of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The regression analysis was used to accept or refute the relationship between the independent variable (effectiveness of the preparatory groups) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). The results revealed that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups exerts a significant and positive influence on the training of candidates with R^2 =14.0, F-statistic = (1,513) = 83.718, p = 0.000, B = .331 and t-statistic = 9.122, p =0.000. Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted which states that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

In the second research hypothesis, the researcher seeks to examine the impact of the efficiency of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The regression analysis was used to accept or refute the relationship between the independent variable (efficiency of the preparatory groups) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). The dependent variable was therefore regressed on the independent variable (IV2). The independent variable (efficiency of the preparatory groups) significantly predict the training of candidates. The results revealed that the effectiveness of the preparatory groups exerts a significant and positive influence on the training of candidates with R^2 = 051, F-statistic = (1,513) = 27.657, p = 0.000, B = .226 and t-statistic = 5.259, p =0.000. Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted which states that the efficiency of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

In the third research hypothesis, the researcher seeks to examine the effect of the relevance of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The regression analysis was used to accept or refute the relationship between the independent variable (relevance of the preparatory groups) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). The dependent variable was therefore regressed on the independent variable (IV3). The results show that the independent variable (relevance of the preparatory groups) significantly predict the training of candidates. The results revealed that the relevance of the preparatory groups exerts a significant and positive influence on the training of candidates with R^2 = .221, F-statistic = (1,513) = 145.770, p = 0.000, B = .470 and t-statistic = 12.074, p =0.000. Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted which states that the relevance of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

In the fourth and last research hypothesis, the researcher seeks to examine the effect of the sustainability of the preparatory groups on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into the advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon. The regression analysis was used to accept or refute the relationship between the independent variable (sustainability of the preparatory groups) and the dependent variable (training of candidates). The dependent variable was therefore regressed on the independent variable (IV4). The results show that the independent variable (sustainability of the preparatory groups) significantly predict the training of candidates with R^2 = .183, F-statistic = (1,513) = 114.683, p = 0.000, B = .427 and t-statistic = 10.709, p =0.000. The results revealed that the sustainability of the preparatory groups exerts a significant and positive influence on the training of candidates. Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted which states that the sustainability of the preparatory groups has a significant and positive effect on the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced schools of training and learning in Cameroon.

Basing on the above results of the findings, the researcher formulated a number of recommendations directed towards the government, the professional schools, the preparatory groups and the candidates. These recommendations are advanced below.

It was recommended that regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the preparatory groups, the government and professional schools should create a regulatory framework sanctioning the creation and the existence of these groups. To the promoters of the groups, it was recommended that they should use corresponding managerial practices to ensure the effectiveness and the efficiency of the preparatory groups. Concerning the relevance of the preparatory groups it was recommended that the promoters and any other attested parties should ensure candidates satisfaction and regarding sustainability of the groups, it was recommended that the government should incorporate this activity into the formal system of education.

Besides the recommendations, the researcher ended by advancing perspectives for further studies so as to enhance the understanding of the phenomenon. The study also identified some constraints and challenges which the researcher encountered in the course of realisation of the project such as lack of documentation on the topic, accessibility of the participants, administrative bottlenecks, financial, as well as language barrier.

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APPENDICES

Appendix one: Research questionnaire (English version)

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail - Patrie

UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I

FACULTE DES SCIENCES DE L'EDUCATION

DEPARTEMENT DE CURRICULA ET EVALUATION
…….

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work - Fatherland

UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTEMENT OF CURRICULIUM AND EVALUATION
…….

Research questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I am **MOUNCHIKPOU MOUICHE LOUDI**, registration n0 19Y3395, A PhD Student in the Department of Curriculum and Evaluation (Educational Management), specialized in conception and evaluation of educational projects, Faculty of Education at the University of Yaoundé 1. At the end of the doctoral training, the student is expected to write and defend a thesis in partial fulfillment of the Program. The current study focusses on *"**Evaluation of preparatory groups in the training of candidates for competitive entrance examinations into advanced training schools in Cameroon. Case of the preparatory groups in Yaounde."*** *All* information received remain confidential with the researcher and your privacy shall be appropriately secured in line with Cameroon law no 91/023 of December 1991. The questionnaire is designed to collect data strictly for academic purposes. Please answer directly and fully as possible.

Please tick (√) in the box corresponding to your most preferred respond: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Preparatory groups

S/N	Statements	Responses				
Section A: effectiveness of preparatory groups		**SA**	**A**		**D**	**SD**
1	The content of the training programs are defined by the respective professional schools					
2	There is a good organizational culture in your group					

3	The admission rates into various professional schools is very satisfactory in your group					
4	Your group make sure that candidates are morally and psychologically prepared for the exam					
5	Promoters makes use of sustainable leadership in the group					
6	Preparatory groups ensures career success of its candidates					
7	Your group ensures a good and conducive teaching and learning environment for all.					
8	The group does everything to achieve the goals for which it was set up					
9	The group possesses quality and permanent infrastructures which accommodate all the candidates					
10	The promoters makes use of the 21st century communication skills in the running of the group					

B. Efficiency of the preparatory groups

No	Items	SA	A	D	SD
11	Your group involves all the stakeholders in the running of the group activities				
12	There is rationality in the allocation of all the resources in your group				
13	The group ensures budget adherence which is the respect of the program`s overall budget				
14	There exist transparency in financial transactions in your group				
15	There is always Accountability in financial transaction in your group				
16	The activities of your group are cost-effective				
17	Your group ensures the respect of timeline required for the long term or short term training of candidates				
18	Your group provide quality and updated didactic materials to enhance the teaching and learning process				
19	Your group ensures partnership with the outside, both national and international non-governmental organizations				
20	Your group welcomes both constructive criticisms and innovative ideas for the sake of its growth and development of the group				

C. Relevance of the preparatory groups

No	Items	SA	A	D	SD
21	Your groups ensures the alignment with the goals and objectives for which it was set up				
22	Your group provides institutional incentives to all the staff				

23	Your group provide candidates with relevant and specific methodology on how to tackle questions				
24	Preparatory groups maximizes the chances of candidates to succeed in an exam.				
25	Preparatory groups provides employment to a good number of graduates who finds it difficult to integrate the public service				
26	Equity and equality of access is ensured to all the candidates, teachers and staff				
`27	Your constantly receives praises from successful and unsuccessful candidates and even parents				
28	Preparatory groups ensures candidates satisfaction				
29	Your group provide training opportunities both in French and in English (bilingual)				
30	Your group possess highly qualified teachers who are products of these professional schools or holders of Masters and PhD degree				

D. Sustainability of the preparatory groups

No	Items	SA	A	D	SD
31	Your group practices decentralization of decision through the delegation of responsibility				
32	Your group keep in touch with candidates in the profession and in the professional milieu				
33	Your group put on adaptation strategies to overcome challenges and ensures its sustainability				
34	Your group have long term impact on candidates` academic and career paths				
35	Your group make sure they create a committed staffs ready to help achieve group`s objectives				
36	Preparatory groups ensures effective staff participation, a mechanism for sustainability.				
37	your group makes use of corresponding management practices like ethical conduct, high social responsibility etc.				
38	Your group makes long term decision, a determinant for its sustainability				
39	Your group support systematic innovations from the staffs aimed towards its growth				
40	Your group provides high quality services and solutions to the candidates preparing for entrance exams				

E. Preparation/training of candidates

No	Items	SA	A	D	SD
41	Preparation and training are key to success in any exam, competitive or not.				
42	Preparation is basically on the essential elements related to the exam.				
43	All the preparatory groups have a unanimous training program.				
44	Preparatory groups control external variables capable of affecting the training process.				
45	Preparation is well organized to make sure that it satisfies the needs of the candidates				
46	Candidates who prepare themselves in this group tend to perform better than those who do not.				
47	The training take place in an organize, safe and conducive classrooms				

48	The duration of the training varies depending on the needs and expectations of the candidates				
49	The group provide hand outs and other learning materials to candidates to facilitate training				
50	The training take the candidates one step closer to succeeding in a competitive exam				

F. Socio-demographic Information

51. Name of the group……

52. Position occupied: ☐ Promoter ☐ Staff ☐ Teacher ☐ Candidates ☐ Ex-candidates

53. Age: 18-25 ☐ 26- 30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41- 50 ☐ 51 and above ☐

54. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

55. Number of Years in the group: 0 – 1 ☐ 2-4 ☐ 5 – 7 ☐ 8 – 9 ☐ 10 and above ☐

Thanks for your assistance.

Appendix two: Research Questionnaire (French Version)

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail - Patrie

UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I

FACULTE DES SCIENCES DE L'EDUCATION

DEPARTEMENT DE CURRICULA ET EVALUATION
…….

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work - Fatherland

UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTEMENT OF CURRICULIUM AND EVALUATION
…….

Questionnaire de recherche

Chers Répondent,

Je suis **MOUNCHIKPOU MOUICHE LOUDI**, matricule **19Y3395,** étudiant doctorant au Département de Curricula et Evaluation (Management de l`Education), spécialisé en conception et évaluation des projets éducatifs, Faculté de Sciences d`Education à l`Université de Yaoundé 1. A la fin de formation doctorale, l`étudiant est appeler à rédiger et de soutenir une thèse de doctorat en guise de fin de parcours. La présente étude porte sur *"**L`évaluation des projets éducatifs non-formels dans la formation des candidats aux concours d`entrée dans les grandes écoles au Cameroun. Cas des groupes de prépas concours de la ville de Yaoundé**.***". Toutes les informations reçues restent confidentielles avec le chercheur et votre identité sera dument préservée conformément à la loi no 91/023 de Décembre 1991. Le questionnaire est conçu pour collecter des données à des fins strictement académiques. Veuillez répondre aussi directement et complétement que possible.

Veuillez cocher (√) la case correspondant à votre réponse préférée: Tout à fait d`accord (TFD), D`accord (D), Pas d`accord(D) et Pas du tout d`accord (PTD).

Groupes de prépas.

S/N	Items	Réponses				
Section A: Efficacité des groupes de prépa		**TFD**	**D**		**PD**	**PTD**
1	Le contenu des programmes de formation est défini par l`école professionnelle					
2	Votre groupe dispose d`une bonne culture organisationnelle					
3	Le taux d`admission dans les différentes écoles professionnelles est très satisfaisant dans votre groupe.					
4	Votre groupe s`assure de la préparation morale et psychologique des candidats avant l`examen.					
5	Les promoteurs font usage d`un style de leadership durable dans le groupe					
6	Les groupes préparatoires assurent la réussite professionnelle de ses candidats.					

7	Votre groupe assure un environnement propice d`enseignement et apprentissage pour tous.					
8	Votre groupe met tout en œuvre pour atteindre les objectifs pour lesquels il a été crée					
9	Le groupe dispose des infrastructures permanentes et de qualité qui accueillent tous les candidats					
10	Les promoteurs utilisent les compétences de communication du 21e siècle dans la gestion du groupe.					

B. Efficience des groupes de prépa

No	Items	TFD	D	PD	PTD
11	Votre groupe implique toutes les parties prenantes dans la gestion des activités du groupe.				
12	Il y a une rationalité dans l`allocation de toutes les ressources du groupe				
13	Le groupe s`assure du respect du budget global				
14	Votre groupe faire preuve de transparence dans les transactions financières.				
15	It y a toujours une responsabilité dans les transactions financières dans votre groupe				
16	Les activités de votre groupe sont rentables				
17	Votre groupe s`assure du respect des délais requis pour la formation à long terme et à court terme des candidats.				
18	Votre groupe fournit du matériel didactique de qualité pour faciliter le processus enseignement et apprentissage				
19	Votre groupe assure le partenariat avec le monde extérieur, partenaires nationaux et internationaux.				
20	Votre groupe reste ouvert aux critiques constructives et les idées novatrices pour sa croissance et son développement.				

C. pertinence des groupes de prépa

No	Items	TFD	D	PD	PTD
21	Votre groupe s`assure de l`alignement avec les buts et objectifs pour lesquels il a été créé.				
22	Votre groupe offre des incitations institutionnelles à tout le personnel				
23	Votre groupe fournit aux candidats une méthodologie pertinente et spécifique sur la façon d`aborder les questions.				
24	Les groups préparatoires maximisent les chances des candidats de réussir à un examen.				
25	Les groupes préparatoires offrent un emploi a bon nombre de diplômés qui ont beaucoup de mal à trouver un emploi				

26	L`équité et l'Egalite d`accès sont assurées a tous les candidats, enseignants et personnels.				
`27	Votre groupe reçoit constamment des éloges de la part des candidats retenus et non retenus et même des parents.				
28	Votre groupe veille à ce que les candidats soient toujours satisfaits à la fin de la formation				
29	Votre groupe offre des possibilités de formation en Français et en Anglais.				
30	Votre groupe dispose des enseignants hautement qualifiés issus de ces écoles professionnelles et titulaires d`un master ou d`un doctorat.				

D. Durabilité des groupes de prépa

No	Items	TFD	D	PD	PTD
31	Votre groupe pratique la décentralisation de la décision par la délégation de responsabilité.				
32	Votre groupe reste en contact permanente avec les anciens candidats même dans leurs lieux de service.				
33	Votre groupe met en place des stratégies d`adaptation pour surmonter les défis et assurer la pérennité du groupe.				
34	Votre groupe a un impact à long terme sur les parcours académiques et professionnels des candidats.				
35	Votre groupe assure la création d`un corps des personnels engager prêt à contribuer à atteindre les objectifs du groupe.				
36	Votre groupe assure une participation efficace du personnel en tant que mécanisme de durabilité				
37	Votre groupe utilise des pratiques de gestion correspondantes telles qu`une conduite éthique, une haute responsabilité sociale, etc.				
38	Votre groupe prend des décisions à long terme, déterminant clé de sa pérennité.				
39	Votre groupe accompagne les innovations systématiques du personnel en vue de sa croissance.				
40	Votre groupe fournit des services et des solutions de haute qualité aux candidats qui se préparent aux examens.				

E. Préparation/formation de candidats

No	Items	TFD	D	PD	PTD
41	La préparation et formation sont les clés du succès à tout examen, compétitif ou non.				
42	La préparation porte essentiellement sur les éléments essentiels lies à l`examen.				
43	Tous les groupes préparatoires ont un programme de formation unanime.				

44	Les groupes préparatoires contrôlent les variables externes susceptibles d`affecter le processus de formation				
45	La préparation et la formation sont bien organisées pour assurer qu`elles répondent aux besoins des candidats				
46	Les candidats qui se préparent dans ce groupe ont tendance à mieux performer que ceux qui ne le font pas				
47	La formation se déroule dans des salles de classe organisées, sures et propices				
48	La durée de la formation varie en fonction des besoins et des attentes des candidats				
49	Le groupe fournit des documents et d`autres matériels d`apprentissage aux candidats pour faciliter la formation				
50	La formation rapproche les candidats de la réussite à un concours				

F. Information Sociodémographiques

52. Position occupé : Promoteur ☐ Staff ☐ Enseignant ☐ Candidat ☐ Ex-candidat ☐

53. Age: 18-25 ☐ 26- 30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41- 50 ☐ 51 and above ☐

54. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

55. Nombre d`année dans le groupe : 0 – 1 ☐ 2-4 ☐ 5 – 7 ☐ 8 – 9 ☐ 10 ans et plus ☐

Merci pour votre participation!!!

Appendix three: Structured interview guide

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail - Patrie

UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I

FACULTE DES SCIENCES DE L'EDUCATION

DEPARTEMENT DE CURRICULA ET EVALUATION
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DEPARTEMENT OF CURRICULIUM AND EVALUATION
.....

A structured interview guide

Identification of the participants

1. Name of the participants…….

2. Sex…….

3. Age……

4. Name of the group……

5. Position occupied… teacher, promoter, staff…….

6. Residential area……

7. Number of years in the group……

General overview of the preparatory groups

- Management
- Organization
- Objectives and goals
- Challenges

Theme one: effectiveness of the preparatory groups

Sub themes:

- Content of the training program
- Admission rates
- Career success
- Permanent infrastructures
- 21st skills
- Candidates satisfaction

Theme two: Efficiency of the preparatory groups

Sub themes:

- Rational use of the available resources
- Stakeholders involvement
- Cost-effectiveness of activities
- Accountability and transparency of financial transactions
- Constructive criticisms and innovative ideas
- Budget adherence
- Partnership and staff's incentives

Theme three: Relevance of the preparatory groups

Sub themes:

- Alignment with the goals and objectives
- Competitive advantage
- Qualified teachers
- Source of employment
- Financial stability
- Equality and equity
- Quality assurance

Theme four: Sustainability of the preparatory groups

Sub themes:

- Decentralized decision making
- Adaptation strategies
- Committed staffs
- Corresponding management practices
- Systematic innovations
- Future plans
- Quality services and solutions
- Long term decision

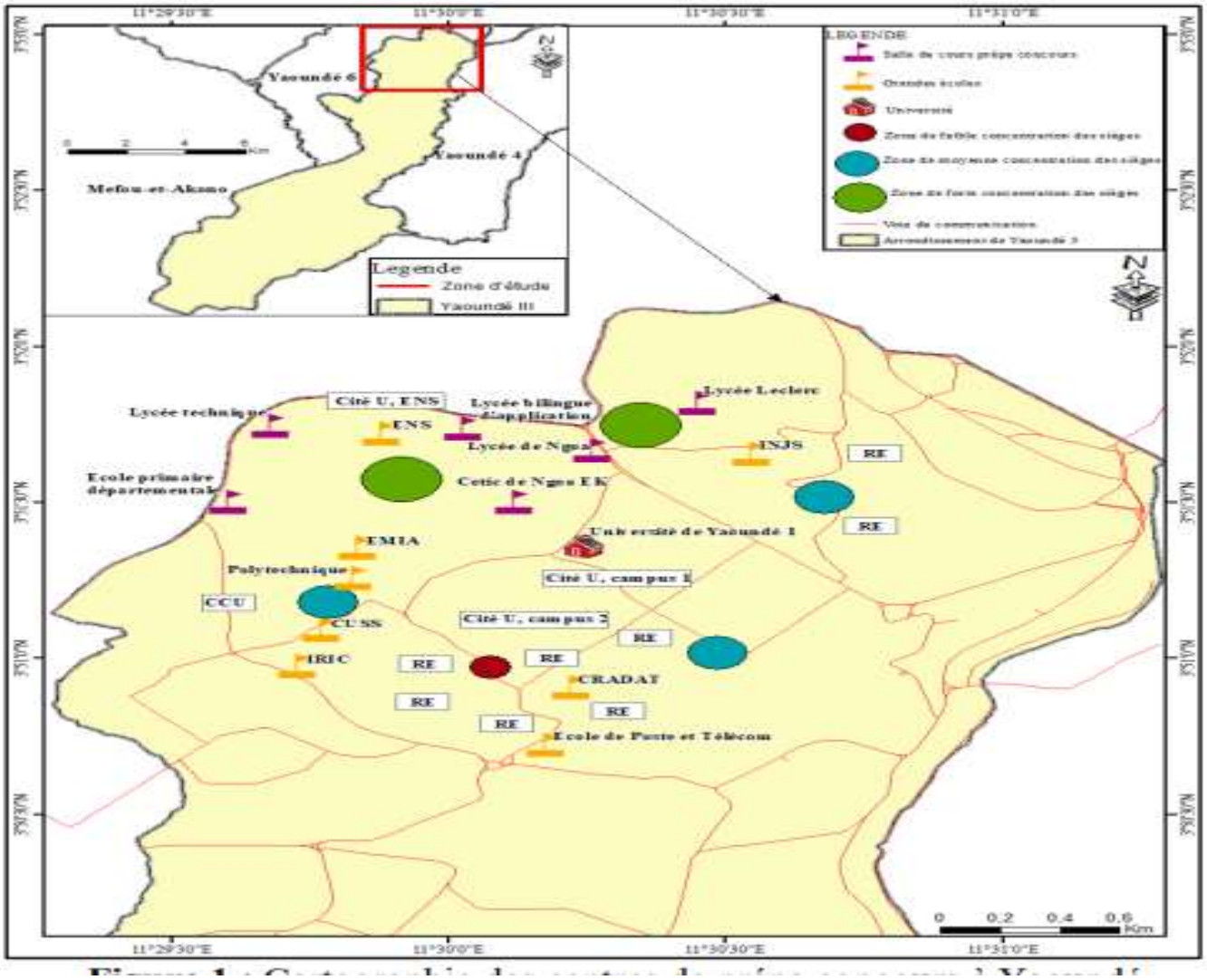
Theme five: Competitive entrance examination

Sub themes:

- Competitive nature of entrance exams
- Eligibility conditions
- Management
- Connection
- Meritocracy
- Favoritism

Thanks for your kind participation!!!!!!!

Appendix four: Map distribution of preparatory groups in Yaounde



Source: Lionel and Loudi, 2024, p. 161.

Appendix five: Research authorization

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix - Travail - Patrie
UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ I

CENTRE DE RECHERCHE ET DE FORMATION DOCTORALE EN SCIENCES HUMAINES, SOCIALES ET ÉDUCATIVES

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace - Work - Fatherland
The University of yaounde I

POST GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR THE SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

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Réf : 23 · 0782 /UYI/CRFD_SHSE/TTJP/mma

ATTESTATION DE RECHERCHE

Je soussigné, Professeur TSALA TSALA Jacques Philippe, Coordonnateur du Centre de Recherche et de Formation Doctorale en Sciences Humaines, Sociales et Éducatives de l'Université de Yaoundé I, certifie que Monsieur **MOUNCHIKPOU MOUICHE Loudi**, Matricule **19Y3395**, est inscrit en cycle Doctorat/Ph.D au Centre de Recherche et de Formation Doctorale en Sciences Humaines, Sociales et Éducatives de l'Université de Yaoundé I.

L'intéressé doit effectuer des travaux de recherche en vue de la préparation de son diplôme de Doctorat/Ph.D sur le thème « **The evaluation of informal educational projets in the preparation of candidates for higher school's competitive entrance examinations in Cameroon : case of the preparatory groups in Yaounde** ».

Je vous saurai gré de bien vouloir mettre à sa disposition toutes les informations susceptibles de l'aider dans son travail.

En foi de quoi, cette attestation de recherche lui est délivrée pour servir et valoir ce que de droit.

Yaoundé, le 30 JUIN 2023

Le Coordonnateur du Centre de Recherche et de Formation Doctorale en Sciences Humaines, Sociales et Éducatives

Jacques Philippe TSALA TSALA
Professeur Titulaire