

Original Research Article

An Evaluation of the Assessment Practices and Remedial Teaching in the Implementation of Automatic Promotion Policy in Primary Schools of the South West and West Regions of Cameroon

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Abstract

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The study set out to evaluate the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy in primary schools. The study was guided by two objectives which are: to evaluate the extent to which assessment practices and remedial teaching affect the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy in primary school in the South West and West regions of Cameroon. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 432 teachers and, 72 Head Teachers were selected to participate in the study through random sampling. Purposeful sampling was used to select 18 sub-divisional Inspectors in the six chosen divisions. Quantitative data was collected from teachers, head teachers and pedagogic inspectors while qualitative data was collected by the researcher through observation of teaching in selected class five classrooms in the six divisions covered by the study. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 25 with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistics while the qualitative data was analysed thematically and the findings displayed in tables and pie charts. The findings showed that the assessment practices used in the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy are inadequate leading to a poor implementation. Remedial teaching is not adequately carried out as far as the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy is concern. Based on these, it was generally recommended that adequate instructional material should be provided to teachers for effective implementation of educational policy and policy makers should pay important attention to supervision of teaching and in-service training.

Keywords: Automatic Promotion, Evaluation, Implementation, Policy, Primary school, South West region, West region

INTRODUCTION

The Report of the Sector-Wide Approach to Education (2006) presented significant levels of wastage in Cameroon Educational system. It revealed that at the Primary School level, only 55% of a given age completed the primary cycle. In addition to this, Fonkeng (2006)

reported that in Cameroon, the school system continued to suffer from inefficiency witnessed in repetition of classes and poor pass rates in official examinations with large differences in performance between urban and rural schools. To address this situation and reduce educational

wastage, the government of Cameroon through the Ministry of National Education initiated with the assistance of the African Development Bank the Education Project II in 2001. This project had as its main objective to experiment on the reduction of repetition of classes in primary schools to about 10% through the introduction of Competency-Based Approach to teaching, remedial teaching and automatic promotion in primary schools in the country (Fonkeng, 2006). This study is concerned with the evaluation of the implementation of two aspects – remedial teaching and assessment - of the automatic promotion policy adopted by the government and implemented since 2012 in Primary schools in the Southwest and West regions of Cameroon (MINEDUC, 2004, 2005)

Problem Statement

Primary education is a human right, consequently every child deserves to be educated and trained to develop her/his numeracy and literacy capacity to be able to express her/his self clearly and concisely. The importance of this was the goal set by world leaders at the global education forum in Jomtien (2015) and reaffirmed in the global Sustainable Development Goals (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The attainment of this goal will result to a world community where each individual can articulate their needs and all make themselves heard on all issues of human-interest relegating ignorance and all its consequences on human life and the life of the universe to history. However, the present situation is far from the desired in that the largest pockets of the world's population are still to receive basic education. Several initiatives are being pursued by various nations who are signatories to the above international covenant with varying degrees of success. The Cameroon government embarked on a policy of automatic promotion in Basic Education as a means to achieve universal primary education, but the results have been far from expectations as many children are yet to be enrolled into schools and among the enrolled attrition, repetitions and poor academic performance is still rife. Despite government efforts completion rates for primary education have fluctuated in recent years, increasing from 49.5 in 2006 to 65.5 in 2019 (UNESCO, 2019). Given this situation the researcher decided to investigate the use of assessment practices and remedial teaching within the ambit of the automatic promotion policy to determine their contributions to its successful implementation.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do the assessment practices used by teachers help in the implementation of Automatic

Promotion Policy?

2. To what extent does remedial teaching help in the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy?

Review of Related Literature

Educational wastage

A major problem in primary schools in developing countries is educational wastage which results from failure to manage the educational system in a manner that enables students and pupils to complete their education within the time frame prescribed by the syllabus. Dennison (1984) states that in spite of the disparagement from many quarters, performance in public examinations is still the most reliable indicator for success or failures of schools in their primary function of educating children in the elements of literacy, numeracy and some knowledge and understanding of our intellectual heritage. The concept of efficiency as applied to educational achievements combines both qualitative and quantitative variables and relates inputs to outputs. The output of an educational system is mainly concerned with the cognitive achievements and attitudes of the same pupils some years later. One indicator of internal efficiency according to Mark (2001) is the progress rate through the system. In practical terms, the problem of educational efficiency has two internal dimensions: the flow of students through the system (with minimum waste) and the quality of learning achieved in the system. Wastage in the flow of students is manifested quantitatively in the form of dropouts and repetitions while the quality of learning is determined by the inputs of the educational system (Bray, 1981).

The second part of educational efficiency, the quality of learning and its trade-offs with the quantitative aspects, is much more controversial and ambiguous. A major problem in primary schools in developing countries is educational wastage resulting from failure to manage the educational system such that it enables students to complete school within the time frame prescribed by the syllabus. An efficient educational system should enable students to graduate within the standard frame. If students spend more than the time normally required, there is wastage in the educational system. In reality, no educational system is 100% efficient as there are always failures and dropouts. This does not mean that things should be left as they are; otherwise there will exist unchecked economic, social and psychological costs detrimental to the development of a nation. There are many ways to measure the efficiency of an educational system. Measurement models range from primitive to very sophisticated ones (Bray, 1981).. A primitive model for example, will indicate the ratio between the number of pupils in class and the number of pupils who graduated 6 or 7 years later. The more sophisticated true cohort

models study one particular group of students, following them over a long period through each phase of school and computing the proportion of promotions failures and dropout for each class.

A 2004 study conducted in Cameroon by the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEBUB) among primary schools reported that 49% of Cameroonian children in the third year of primary school struggled to read, while 27% could not read at all, demonstrating the urgent need for Cameroon to improve the quality of its education (World Bank, 2014). According to Endeley (2016) if Cameroon hopes to meet its objective of achieving emerging market status by 2035, it must invest in human capital, starting with improving the quality of its primary education by enhancing achievement in literacy. While access to basic education has improved considerably in Cameroon, with primary completion rates jumping from 53% in 2001 to 80% in 2011, academic performance in Cameroon has nonetheless declined. In Fonkeng's (2006) view the above situation may have accounted for the high repetition rates which triggered the initiation of the policy of automatic promotion also known as collective promotion by the government in order to minimize wastage. If students' literacy level is low, in most cases it implies difficulties in the acquisition of knowledge and skills in other subjects. Automatic promotion is a widespread but controversial educational practice both in developed and developing countries. It has sparked off debates on its effect on literacy and numeracy. Proponents of automatic promotion argue that it minimizes wastage (Ndaruhutse, 2008) but if not properly handled it may instead lead to wastage where pupils are not learning.

Automatic promotion may have serious effects on achievement in literacy, which needs to be assessed. However, the implementation of automatic promotion and its effects on literacy may differ according to school characteristics. Marks et al., (2000) reported that students attending private non-Catholic schools were significantly more likely to stay on at school than those attending state schools while Buckingham, (2000a) also asserted that students from independent private schools were more likely to achieve higher end of school scores.

Policy and Implementation

UNESCO (2013) views policy as a broad statement that sets out the government's main goals and priorities in line with the constitution. According to Ezeani (2006) policy is the proposed course of actions which the government intends to implement in respect of a given problem or situation confronting it. This study adopts the definition of policy by Ezeani because the policy of automatic class promotion was formulated by the government of Cameroon to confront the problem of high repetition rates in primary schools. Hoy and Miskel (1996) assert that

policies are not only formulated but are also programmed, monitored, communicated and evaluated. Policy making is a special instance of decision making in which issues revolve around policy matters. Mbua (2003) argued that if policies are poorly framed, they appear like directives. The policy of automatic promotion is a broad statement. In view of the fact that education is a process which needs to be sustained, its practice is largely influenced by educational policies. Therefore, Mbua (2003) holds that because education is dynamic and not static, educational policies must also be dynamic. Given that it is the responsibility of the government to provide education to its citizens, the educational practices have to be guided by the educational policies put in place by the government.

According to Paudel (2009), implementation literally means carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing or completing a given task. In the same vein Khan and Khandaker (2016) say policy implementation involves translating the goals and objectives of a policy into action. In addition, (Ikelegbe, 2006; Ikechukwu and Chukwumeka, 2013) propose that policy implementation is the process of translating a policy into actions and presumptions into results through various projects and programmes.

Arguments in support of the policy as a better alternative to grade retention fall into three broad categories namely; enhancing education quality, improving internal efficiency of education and personal development of students/learners. Ndaruhutse (2008) asserts that the Automatic Promotion Policy enhance the quality of education in that repetition does not improve the achievement of the low-achiever, nor does it reduce the range of abilities, since each grade will carry the retained student into the next year as a result of a difference in ability. Moreover, Chimombo (2005) confirms that retaining students leads to crowding in classrooms, leading to high student-classroom ratios and high student-teacher ratios thus lowering the overall quality of education. Chen et al. (2010) add that automatic promotion fosters equity in learning outcomes especially between male and female students and between rural-urban settings. In terms of improving internal efficiency of education, Verspoor (2006) and Ndaruhutse (2008) argue that the policy has the ability to save costs for both governments and households since it reduces if not eliminates grade repetition, increases survival and completion rates (by reducing student dropout rates) and increases the number of years low achieving students spend in school. Xia and Kirby (2009) opine that automatic promotion increases personal development of learners by showing that grade repetition is noted as having adverse effect on students' self-esteem and motivation. In like manner, retention stigmatizes students and impairs their natural ability to relate with their peers. This more often than not culminates into alienation of the students in question,

thus resulting in eventual their exiting of the schooling cycle. Furthermore, Eide and Showalter (2001) says that repeating grades prolongs the actual school completion time as well as time to engage productively in the labour market, which represents a monetary cost to students over their life-cycles.

Conversely, Turner (2011) asserts that learners who fail but are then promoted automatically or socially, might develop what he termed learned "helplessness". Learned helplessness is a condition in which a learner does not feel that he/she is capable of achieving a goal, and, as a result, stops trying. If a learner sees that his/her teachers seem to accept his/her failing, he/she might stop trying. Lowering the floor for achievement, a particular grade level leads to the lowering of the ceiling as well, while a raised floor leads to a raised ceiling. Critics of the automatic promotion system charge that by promoting the unqualified, schools are adjusting their curriculum and assessment to the needs and standards of the learners, when, in fact, learners should be adapting to school standards. They see the function of the school as that of leading learners, not to follow them. A number of studies have singled out serious problems with automatic promotion policy, especially those related to learners' low performance compared to other African countries, for example, the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 2004). Also, Manacorda (2012) argues that repetition can improve academic achievement by exposing low performing students to additional teaching and by allowing them to catch up on the curriculum and the content of teaching. He added that grade retention may also help to make classes more homogeneous in achievement and therefore easier to teach by improving the match between peers in the classroom.

Assessment Practices

Assessment provides feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and gives students a measure of their progress. As Brown (1990) maintains, two major functions can be pointed out for classroom assessment. One is to show whether or not the learning has been successful, and the other one is to clarify the expectations of the teachers from the students (Brown, 1990). Assessment is a process that includes four basic components: 1) Measuring improvement over time. 2) Motivating students to study. 3) Evaluating the teaching methods. 4) Ranking the students' capabilities in relation to the whole group evaluation. Looking at these four components of assessment, it is imperative that within the context of automatic promotion, teachers have to adopt assessment strategies that will motivate the underachievers to improve in their learning and not to demoralize them. It is equally important for the teachers to assess their instructional methods if they are yielding

the expected results, especially within the context of automatic promotion, that learners irrespective of their scholastic achievement are promoted to the next class.

According to Hammond (2006), the use of appropriate assessment strategies in the context of the Automatic Promotion policy is important because it enhances students' learning. Given that most students tend to focus their energies on the best or most expeditious way to pass their tests, it is imperative that the assessment practices of teachers should help to manipulate the kinds of learning that takes place. For example, assessment strategies that focus predominantly on recall of knowledge will likely promote superficial learning. On the other hand, if we choose assessment strategies that demand critical thinking or creative problem solving, we are likely to realize a higher level of student performance or achievement. In Cameroon, one of the pedagogic approaches is problem-based learning and competency-based approach. Therefore, in achieving the goals and objectives of the educational system, the use of appropriate assessment strategies cannot be over emphasized. Hammond (2006) says that good assessment can help learners become more effective self-directed learners. As indicated above, motivating and directing learning is only one purpose of assessment. Well-designed assessment strategies also play a critical role in educational decision-making and are a vital component of ongoing quality improvement processes of the lesson, course and/or curriculum level.

Remedial Teaching

Jamie, Ronald and Phipps (2000) opine that any learner required to take remedial classes should not feel ashamed. These classes only help learners gain a better understanding of a particular subject. By reviewing and focusing on the basics, students become better prepared to keep up with advanced classes. The question that arises is whether successful completion of remedial classes guarantees student's success in college. Foster et al. (2011) think that research suggests that bridge programs that integrate basic skills and remedial education with higher-level content or technical training can produce substantially better results than traditional remedial programs. Remedial teaching helps students identify difficult learning areas and bridge the gaps in their learning progress by providing supplementary information throughout the course of study (Dirk and Bart, 2013).

Boone et al. (2015) suggest that learners who master the foundational skills of reading early in lower classes continue to make positive academic gains while learners who lag behind in literacy skills in primary 1 just fall further as their schooling continues. Therefore, it's very important that teachers make sure that learners are reaching the grade-level benchmarks and provide

remedial teaching where necessary to support pupils to become successful readers. The curriculum also has to be designed to progressively build upon competencies so that pupils attain competencies that will contribute to their success. Therefore, it is really important the teachers work to ensure all pupils are achieving. The remedial program focuses on individual learners and their progress towards the benchmarks. Endeley (2010) takes the point further by arguing that if automatic promotion must be adequately implemented, the school environment must receive input to enhance proper implementation. Schools together with teachers and parents should arrange alternative remedial programs for underachieving students. Muralidharan (2013), corroborates the above propositions stating that the provision of remedial support to struggling learners after the normal school day has been shown to work in several settings. Furthermore, Sahito et al. (2017) assert that remedial support means 'providing a remedy or cure' to where it is most needed. Therefore, the main aim of the remedial support is to provide a remedy based on the lack of competencies and skills identified from the learners' homework books, class exercises and test books.

Theoretical Review

The educational system in Cameroon is highly centralized with policies and implementations strategies hatched at the top and handed down for implementation with a chain of actors appointed to ensure successful implementation through the process of instructional supervision. Therefore, Gregory's (1970) Top-down theory of policy implementation is appropriate for the study

The top-down implementation approach is a clear cut system of command and control from the government to the project which concerns the people. Programme evaluation data is aimed at enabling policy makers to make adjustments to policy, and Stufflebeam's (1971) model is also relevant in this study. The top down approach is the rational comprehensive approach to planning. It is consistent with overhead democracy where elected officials delegate implementation authority to non-elected public servants. Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), Nakamura and Smallwood, (1980), and Mazmari and Sabatier, (1983). They describe the act of putting policies into action as a hierarchical operation of a centrally defined policy plan. The theory focuses on the ability of the decision makers to create clear policy goals and management strategies during policy implementation, basing itself on the logic that a motion has been formulated by a central council. The essence of the theory is based on the premise that there is a direct correlation between a policy and an actual outcome, that is the policy is the input and the implementation the actual output. Implemented through a chain of

command, it suggests that bureaucratic measures will be put in place to guarantee that policies will be properly carried out. Gregory (1970) opines that with the top-down approach, policies are implemented that the citizens might not understand which might also circumvent their rational preference. When this happens, top-down becomes a tactic and not a strategy for implementation. In other words, within the context of our study, when educational policies are initiated and implemented using the top-bottom approach, the goals and objectives might be difficult to attain since the implementers of the policies might lack adequate understanding of the entire policy.

The top-down theory of policy implementation can be used to understand what happens at the level of the Ministry of Basic Education where the policy of automatic class promotion was formulated and in schools where the policy is being implemented. This theory is relevant to the study in that the policy of automatic promotion was implemented using the top-bottom approach whereby the policy was initiated and/adopted at the level of the ministry. The Ministry of Basic Education empowers education officials in the external services to supervise the implementation of her policies, including the policy of automatic class promotion. As a consequence, teachers who are the implementers of educational reforms were not consulted and this may account for one of the reasons why the policy of automatic promotion may not be adequately practised at the grassroots level (the classroom). In reality, many of the teachers are unable to say what actually the policy of automatic promotion is as well as the pedagogic approaches to ensure its effective implementation.

Stufflebeam (1971) appeals to educational leaders because he emphasizes the importance of producing evaluative data for decision making. Stufflebeam's model provides a means for generating data relating to four stages of program operation; context evaluation which continuously assesses needs and problems in the context to help decision makers determine goals and objectives; input evaluation, which assesses alternative means for achieving those goals to help decision makers choose optimal means; process evaluation, which is the focus of this research, monitors the processes both to ensure that the means are actually being implemented and to make the necessary modifications; and product evaluation, which compares actual ends with intended ends and lead to a series of recycling decisions. implicitly,

According to Robinson (2004), this model was developed to connect evaluation with program decision-making. It focuses on the role of the evaluation in providing information to improve the quality of decisions made by stakeholders. According to Fritzpatrick et al, context evaluation plays an important role in planning

decisions that determine the needs and problems of students. On the other hand, input evaluation is about selecting appropriate educational strategies to solve problems and achieve the desired outcomes. Also, process evaluation provides feedback related to the implementation of the program. It has two main functions: first, to provide information to the external stakeholder who would like to learn more about the program, and second, to help program evaluators to interpret the program's outcomes (Gredler, 1996). Lastly, product evaluation assesses the program's quality and finds out whether a program should be continued, repeated, or extended goals and objectives.

METHODS

The cross sectional survey design was used for the study. This design was the most appropriate as it allowed the researcher to collect survey data from a large group of teachers, some head teacher's and pedagogic inspectors concerning their assessment practices and their engagement in compensatory teaching. This survey was corroborated by qualitative data from observation of classroom teaching by the researcher. The qualitative data helped to bring in the informed views of administrators whose responsibility is to oversee the teaching and learning interaction as they supervise the teachers and their teaching to ensure the quality of instruction and completion of syllabuses in line with the policy of automatic promotion. The observation data helped to bring in firsthand information by a neutral person, of how teaching was carried out in selected classes. Data from these sources strengthened the survey data and gave the finding more validity.

The study population was made up of all the teachers, pupils, head teachers and Pedagogic Inspectors of primary schools in the South West and West Regions of Cameroon. Through the use of random sampling, 432 teachers were selected to participate in the study and a questionnaire was used to collect their opinions. Purposive sampling was used to select 72 head-teachers and 18 Sub divisional Inspectors in Fako, Meme, Kupe Muanenguba, Koung-Khi and Mifi divisions who participated in the study. Through convenient sampling 5 schools were selected for observation and 3 observations were done in class 5 of each school. Survey data was analysed using SPSS 25 with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistics and findings were presented using tables and figures and all inferential statistics were presented at 95% Confidence Interval (CI). The qualitative data (from observation) were analysed thematically.

FINDINGS

Research Question one: To what extent do the assessment practices of teachers help in the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy?

A below average number of teachers making up a weight of 47% were of the opinion that assessment practices used in the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy were adequate while a slightly above average number 54.8% reported that assessment practices were not supportive enough of pupils' learning and consequently leading to their poor academic performance. In total, out of the eleven indicators teachers reported positively on five; that the assessment practices motivate underachievers to study harder 99.4%, that teacher assessments are good in the context of the Automatic Promotion Policy 91.0%, that they constantly carry out assessment as recommended by automatic promotion policy 97.7% and that teachers are not satisfied with assessment practices provided for in the policy.

Conversely, a greater majority of teachers reported that assessment practices were not good enough to enable pupil improve their learning and consequently, academic performance as 75% reported that official assessment practices embedded in the policy do not help teachers identify learners weaknesses, 91.0% complained that the assessment practices demands a lot from the teachers and prevent them attending to other important teaching and learning tasks, 96.6% were of the opinion that teachers do not carry out the number of assessment prescribed by the text, 76.0% were not satisfied with the assessment practices put in place by the text, 73.4% were of the opinion that teachers don't constantly provide feedback to parents of underachieving and 68.4% agreed that the large class sizes of pupils cause teachers to compromise the assessment practices. (Table 1)

Lay private schools with a weight of 97.5% and confessionnal schools with a weight of 96.7% significantly implemented assessment practices in line with automatic promotion policy more than public schools 46.6% ($P < 0.05$). Table 2

Head teachers in their majority were not satisfied with the implementation of the policy on automatic promotion 59.3%, and they all reported that they did not have the text on the policy. Figure 1

Comparatively, all the head teachers did not have a text on the Automatic Promotion Policy, and this trend was not quite different from that of Pedagogic Inspectors as thirteen out of the sixteen interviewed did not have the text on automatic promotion. Figure 2

Therefore, the opinions of teachers concerning assessment practices and those of head teachers and

Table 1. Teachers' Description of Assessment Practices used in the Implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree and agree	Disagree and strongly disagree
The assessment practices put in place by the text effectively identify pupils' weaknesses and strengths.	14.7%(52)	10.2% (36)	29.7%(105)	45.5% (161)	24.9% (88)	75.1% (266)
The assessment practices are good in the context of the Automatic Promotion Policy.	44.9%(19)	46.0% (163)	4.0% (14)	5.1%(18)	91.0% (322)	9.0% (32)
The assessment practices demand so much from the teachers that they hardly carry out remedial teaching.*	3.4% (12)	5.6% (20)	45.2%(160)	45.8%(12)	9.0% (32)	91.0% (322)
The number of pupils in class makes teachers compromise their assessment practices.*	31.9%(13)	36.4% (129)	19.5%(69)	12.1% (43)	31.6% (112)	68.4% (242)
The assessment practices motivate underachievers to study harder.	49.2%(14)	50.3% (178)	0.10%(1)	0.3% (1)	99.4% (352)	0.6% (2)
Teachers constantly carry out assessments as recommended by Automatic Promotion Policy.	57.3%(23)	40.4% (143)	1.1% (4)	1.1%(4)	97.7% (346)	2.3% (8)
Teachers constantly carry out assessment at the end of each lesson and mark pupils' books to identify underachievers	19.2%(68)	12.4% (44)	37.3%(132)	31.1%(10)	31.6% (112)	68.4% (242)
Teachers constantly carry out weekly assessment to identify under achievers	13.3%(47)	13.0% (46)	37.6%(133)	36.2%(128)	26.3% (93)	73.7% (261)
Teachers do not carry out the number of assessment as prescribed by the text.*	2.0% (7)	1.4% (5)	50.0%(177)	46.6%(15)	3.4% (12)	96.6% (342)
Teachers constantly provide feedback to parents of underachievers pupils after assessment.	15.0% (53)	11.6% (41)	46.3% (164)	27.1%(96)	26.6% (94)	73.4% (260)
Teachers are not satisfied with the assessment practices put in place by the text.*	49.2% (174)	26.8% (95)	13.8% (49)	10.2% (36)	76.0% (269)	24.0% (85)
MRS	29.8% (1162)	28.4% (1106)	20.6% (802)	21.2% (824)	47.0% (1832)	54.8% (2062)

*MRA; reversed conceptual polarization

Table 2. Teachers' Description of Assessment Practices used in the Implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy by School Type

School type	Stats	Implementation of automatic promotion policy with respect to assessment practices		Total based on MRS
		Adequate	Inadequate	
Public	N	1394	1598	2992
	%	46.6%	53.4%	
Confessional	N	606	21	627
	%	96.7%	3.3%	
Lay Private	N	268	7	275
	%	97.5%	2.5%	

χ^2 -test: $\chi^2=63.84$; $df=2$; $P=0.000$.

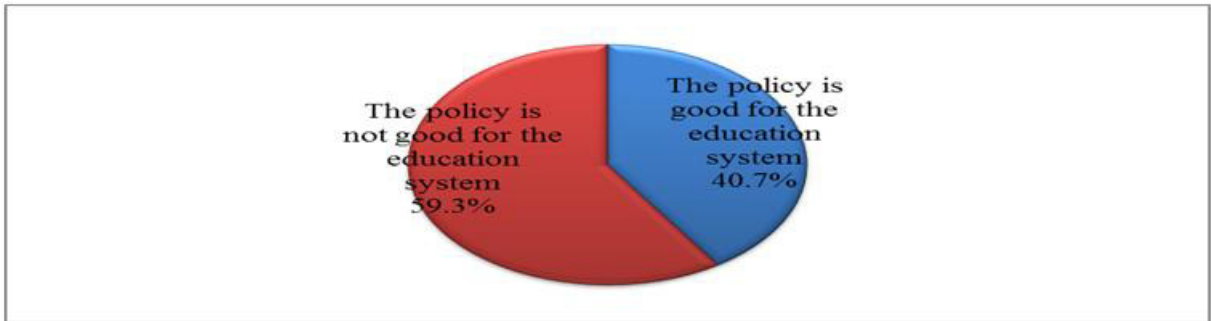
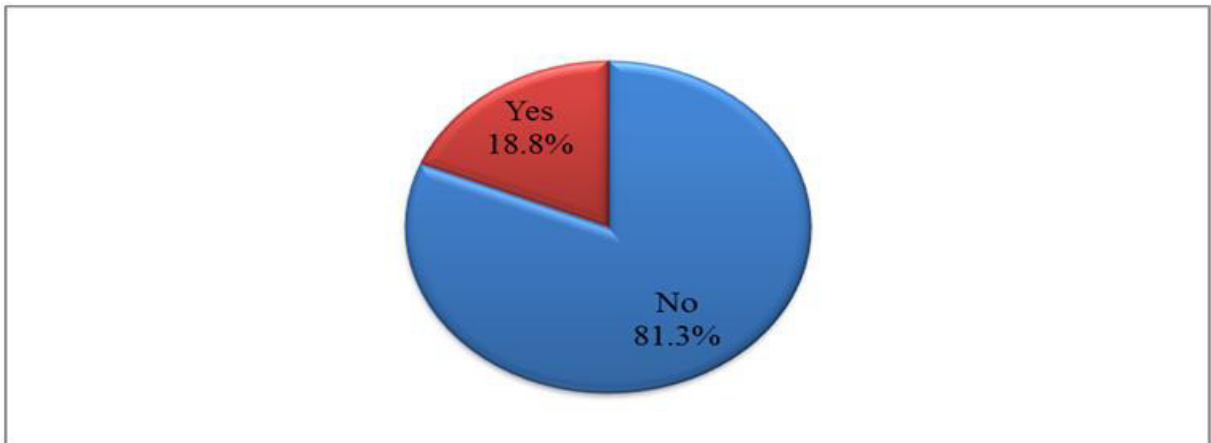


Figure 1. Head teachers' stance on the Implementation of Automatic Promotion Policy



N=16

Figure 2. Pedagogic Inspectors Possession of Automatic Promotion Policy Text

Table 3. Observation on Assessment Practices

Teaching materials	Observed		Not observed		Remarks
	n	%	N	%	
The teacher assesses pupils at the end of each lesson	27	30.0	3	3.3	Teachers mostly give oral and hand board assessment
The teacher marks pupils books at the end of each lesson	10	11.1	20	22.2	Even teachers who give written evaluation ask pupil to mark themselves and some do not even mark
The assessment at the end of the lesson respect evaluation norms	5	5.6	25	27.8	At the end of the lesson the time allocated for evaluation is always insufficient
MRA	42	46.7	48	53.3	

Pedagogic Inspectors clearly indicate that the necessary documents and consequently knowledge of the policy and how it should be implemented was not available to those in charge of follow up and training to ensure the successful implementation of the policy.

The general practice observed was that teachers

hardly evaluated pupils during teaching.. The few who gave classroom evaluation did not have enough time to check if pupils were working individually or not. Therefore, a majority (58.2%) of teachers and pedagogic inspectors were not satisfied with teacher's assessment practice and the data from observation (46.7%) supported their opinions. Table 3

Table 4. Teachers' Description of Remedial Classes in the Implementation of Automatic Promotion Policy

Items	Stretched			Collapsed		
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree and agree	Disagree and strongly disagree
I organise extra lessons for learners promoted below average.	13.6% (48)	10.2% (36)	51.4% (182)	24.9% (88)	23.7% (84)	76.3% (270)
I constantly inform parents of pupils below average on the need for extra classes.	11.6% (41)	20.3% (72)	38.7% (137)	29.4% (104)	31.9% (113)	68.1% (241)
I often give extra help in class to struggling pupils.	45.2% (160)	46.6% (165)	3.1% (11)	5.1% (18)	91.8% (325)	8.2% (29)
I carry out remedial classes for pupils promoted below average.	20.9% (74)	10.7% (38)	42.9% (152)	25.4% (90)	31.6% (112)	68.4% (242)
I hardly carry out remedial classes because they are not motivated.*	44.9% (159)	33.6% (190)	15.0% (53)	6.5% (23)	78.5% (278)	21.5% (76)
At times, when teachers carry out remedial teaching, it hardly meets the needs of the pupils.*	43.5% (154)	35.9% (127)	12.1% (43)	8.5% (30)	79.4% (281)	20.6% (73)
We hardly organise extra lessons for struggling pupils because of large class size.*	28.8% (102)	38.4% (136)	20.3% (72)	12.4% (44)	67.2% (238)	32.8% (116)
The curriculum provides room for teachers to organise extra classes for underachievers.	1.4% (5)	1.1% (4)	54.2% (192)	44.2% (153)	2.5% (9)	97.5% (345)
Enough resources are provided to teachers to effectively organise extra lessons for underachievers.	1.4% (5)	2.5% (9)	41.5% (147)	54.5% (193)	4.0% (14)	96.0% (340)
The community (parents) empowers teachers to carry out after school classes for underachievers.	50.6% (179)	38.4% (136)	6.2% (22)	4.8% (17)	90.0% (315)	11.0% (39)
MRS	26.2% (927)	23.8% (842)	28.6% (1011)	21.5% (760)	50.0 (1769)	50.0% (1771)

*MRA; reversed conceptual polarization

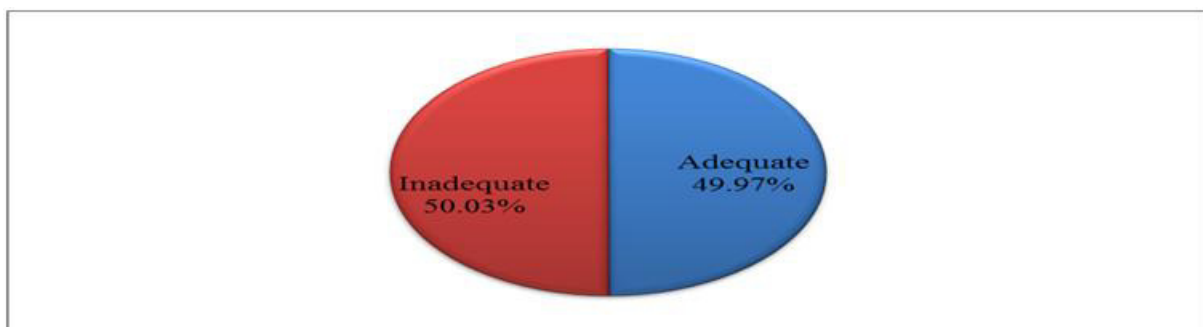


Figure 3. Teachers' Opinion on Remedial Classes in the Implementation of Automatic Promotion Policy

Research Question two: To what extent does remedial teaching help in the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy?

The general data shows that less than 50% of teachers (49.97%) perceived remedial classes in the

implementation of automatic promotion policy as adequate while slightly more than half of them (50.05%) reported that remedial teaching was inadequate in the implementation of the policy. In all, out of the ten indicators teachers reported on eight as follows. 76.3% of them report that teachers do not carry out remedial

Table 5. Teachers' Opinion on Remedial Classes in the Implementation of Automatic Promotion Policy by School Type

School type	Stats	Implementation of Automatic Promotion Policy with respect to remedial classes		Total based on MRS
		Adequate	Inadequate	
Public	N	1317	1403	2720
	%	48.4%	51.6%	
Confessional	N	325	245	570
	%	57.0%	43.0%	
Lay Private	n	127	123	250
	%	50.8%	49.2%	

χ^2 -test: $\chi^2=1.13$; $df=2$; $P=0.567$

Table 6. Observation on Remedial Teaching

Teaching materials	Observed		Not observed		Remarks
	N	%	N	%	
The teacher identified underachievers after marking their books at the end of the lesson	3	5.0	27	45	Teachers hardly mark books at the end of the lesson
The teacher take particular care for pupil who failed the class assessment	1	1.7	29	48.3	
MRA	4	6.7	56	93.3	

teaching for the promoted underachieving pupils, 68.1% do not inform parents of these pupils of the need for remedial classes by their children, 68.4% do not hold remedial classes for underachieving pupils, 78.5% do not carry out remedial classes because they do not attract any financial remuneration, 79.4% reported that the few remedial classes held do not address the needs of the pupils, 67.2% report that remedial teaching is not done due to the large class sizes, 96% report that there is a paucity of the resources needed to implement remedial teaching and 97.5% agreed that the curriculum does not provide room for the practice of remedial teaching. Table 4, Figure 3

The adequacy of remedial classes in the implementation of Automatic Promotion Policy was not significantly dependent on school type ($P>0.05$). Table 5

Both male and female teachers were observed individually in their various classes without discrimination. The general observation was that teachers hardly gave class assignments at the end of the lesson. Though the trend for observation and teachers' perception weighted more towards inadequate practices of remedial classes, observation was more severe with weight of 93.3% as against 50.03% for teachers. Table 6

DISCUSSION

In relation to assessment practices, findings revealed that

a significant proportion of the respondents indicate that the assessment practices used in the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy are inadequate. Teachers characterized their assessment practices as time consuming, not able to identify pupils weaknesses, that the sheer number of assessments to be given prevents them from providing feedback to learners and, especially underachievers and that the large class sizes compromise the quality of assessments and deprives them of the opportunity of keeping parents informed of their children's' progress (especially those in need of compensatory teaching). Thus, it is evident that assessment practices do have a significant role to play in the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy in primary schools in Cameroon. Despite the important role that assessment practices are expected to play in the implementation of any automatic promotion policy, findings indicate that teachers are dissatisfied with the official requirements for formative assessment as required by the policy and sanctioned by the curriculum. Consequently, these assessments do not show whether learning has taken place or clarify the expectation of teachers from learners (Brown, 1990).

With respect to remedial teaching and implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy, findings of the study reveal that more than half of the teachers sampled indicate that remedial teaching is not adequately carried out as far as the implementation of the Automatic Promotion Policy is concerned. Some of the possible

reasons for many teachers not adequately carrying out remedial teaching include the lack of sufficient resources to effectively organise extra lessons for underachievers and the curriculum does not provide room for teachers to organise extra classes for underachievers, confirming Endeley's (2010) proposition that if automatic promotion must be implemented, the school environment must receive input to enhance proper implementation. Our findings are contrary to that in Ethiopia (2002) where, findings showed that all teachers provided extra support to students who scored below average in the form of tutorial classes despite their workload. In another study carried out by Asio and Jimenez (2020) on the effect of remediation activities on grade 5 pupils' academic performance in technology and livelihood education (TLE), the results showed that pupils in the experimental group that received remediation performed significantly higher than pupils in the control group who did not receive any remediation. The insignificant amount of remedial teaching means that pupils are deprived of the benefits of compensatory teaching highlighted by (Dirk and Bart, 2013) who argue that it helps students identify difficult learning areas and bridge the gaps in their learning progress by providing supplementary information throughout the course of study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is generally recommended that the text of the Automatic Promotion Policy should be made available to pedagogic inspectors and head teachers to enable them to effectively exercise their role in the supervision of instruction, and to classroom teachers of primary schools in the national territory to enable know what is expected of them in the teaching and learning process. The teaching timetable should be reorganised to provide time for compensatory teaching either during the day or after school hours. In line with the provisions of the policy, teachers should be motivated (paid) for carrying out remedial teaching. Pedagogic Inspector, head teachers and teachers should receive continuous in-service training to increase their knowledge and know-how in implementing the policy. The necessary resources required for its implementation should be made available to the teachers.

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