

SOME SCHOOL FACTORS OF POOR PERFORMANCE BY STUDENTS IN GCE ADVANCED LEVEL ECONOMICS IN CAMEROON. (CASE STUDY OF KUMBA CENTRAL SUB-DIVISION)

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to investigate some determinants of the poor performance of students in GCE A-level Economics. The study was motivated by reports from the GCE Board revealing poor performance by students in Economics which stood at 40%, 25%, 37%, 42% and 45% between 2001 and 2005 respectively, as compared to other disciplines. The objective of the study was to identify factors which influence students' performance in GCE A-level Economics. Data was collected from 100 randomly selected Lower and Upper Sixth Economics students and 14 teachers from three selected Secondary High Schools in Kumba. The data was analysed using the Chi-square (χ^2) test of independence at 5% alpha level of significance. The results revealed that the poor performance of students at the GCE A-level Economics was due to their Mathematical skills, students' attitude towards Economics, the dominant use of lecture method, poor guidance-counselling, teacher's competence and lack of prescribed Economics text books.

Key words: students' performance, GCE A-level, Economics.

RÉSUMÉ

La présente étude a pour but d'examiner les facteurs déterminant la médiocre performance des élèves au GCE A Level Economie. Elle a été motivée par les rapports obtenus de la Direction du GCE faisant état de la constante performance médiocre des élèves en économie dont les résultats statistiques sont présentés ainsi qu'il suit: 40%, 25%, 37%, 42% et 45% entre 2001 et 2005 respectivement, comparés aux autres disciplines. L'objectif était d'examiner les facteurs qui influencent la performance des élèves au GCE A Level Economie. Les données ont été recueillies auprès d'un échantillon aléatoire de 100 élèves des classes de première et de terminale en Economie et de 14 enseignants issus de trois établissements secondaires de la ville de Kumba au Cameroun et analysées à l'aide du test d'indépendance du khi deux au seuil de signification de 5%. Il ressort des analyses que la performance médiocre des élèves au GCE A Level Economie est liée aux déficit de connaissances en mathématiques, à l'attitude des élèves envers l'économie, de la prédominance de l'usage de la lecture du cours comme méthode d'enseignement, à l'orientation approximative des élèves, au professionnalisme approximatif des enseignants et à l'absence de manuels d'économie pour les élèves.

Mots-clés: performance des élèves, GCE A Level Economie

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Economics in Secondary Schools in Cameroon is slowly becoming part of everyday life. In the French-speaking sub-system, dominated by general education, no taught discipline from the first to the seventh forms refers to Economics. However, it is the English speaking sub-system which tries to take up the challenge of introducing the teaching

of Economics in Form 3. An attempt to harmonize the training syllabus in the two sub-systems, led to the introduction of the teaching of Economics in the French-speaking sub-system. This justified the opening of the Economics section in the Higher Teachers' Training College of Yaoundé for the training of teachers specialised in the teaching of Economics in Secondary Schools. This venture was short lived because the section was closed after graduating only four batches of students.

This attitude towards the teaching of Economics in Secondary Schools is seen in the achievements of students of the English speaking sub-system who have the courage to enlist in the subject. Their individual results are catastrophic in various diploma examinations. The most significant being the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level, compared to results obtained in other subjects. In the last few years, there have been developments in approaches to educational assessment by the government and some examination boards. This educational practice has encouraged assessment policy. Also, the monitoring of standards within the country provides effectiveness in the educational system.

Hence, this research is an attempt to investigate some determinants of students' poor academic performance in GCE Advanced Level Economics

Context

Education is an important enterprise as it is very indispensable in the well being of any society. Any education system, be it western or traditional is aimed at providing individuals who are useful both to themselves and the society in which they live. Tambo (1989) says education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the ability, attitude and forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he/she lives.

The quality of education the youths of every nation receive is essential to its development. Conscious of this, the Cameroon Government constantly makes efforts to improve on the standard of education of its citizens. Economics is related to divine dispensation, skill in management of the household, production, distribution, and consumption of commodities. Wannacot (1982) puts it as the study of how people make their living, how they acquire their food,