

Membership in professional associations and productivity of teachers in Anglo-Saxon universities in Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' membership in professional associations provides opportunities for continuous education because such associations often hold meetings to update teachers on issues to improve their productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon. The study examined the prevalence of teachers having membership in professional associations and the relationship between teachers' membership in professional academic associations and their productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon. The sequential convergent mixed method design was adopted for the study. The sample size of the study consisted of 436 lecturers, 603 postgraduate students, and 20 administrators. A questionnaire and an interview guide were the instruments adopted for the study. The Spearman rho test was used to test the hypotheses of the study, which examined the significant relationship between professional associations and teachers' productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon. The participants were sampled using purposive, proportionate, and convenient sampling techniques. The findings showed that 45.6% of the students do not see their lecturers as productive while 54.4% see them as productive. Furthermore, more of the teachers 61.0% are not members of any professional associations, while 39.0% are members. Despite a low percentage of teachers having membership in professional academic associations, many of them-66.5% (280) opined that membership in professional academic associations is important for teachers while 33.5% (141) said is not important. Thus, it was statistically revealed that membership in professional associations (R -value = 0.280**, p -value = 0.000, < 0.05) significantly and positively correlates with teachers' productivity. Based on the findings, it was recommended that all teachers should at least be a member of one or two professional academic associations as it improves on their research and work output, and provides networking opportunities for members to attend conferences and be updated on the recent developments.

Keywords: Professional development, membership in professional associations, teachers' productivity, universities.

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the most important of any educational system as they contribute to the attitudes of society. They shape the direction and influence to a great extent other educational inputs to achieve the stated goals of education. The extent to which teachers can effectively carry out this duty depends on the quality and quantity of training received by teachers. The quality of educational

outcomes depends to a great extent on the professional development of teachers. In recognition of this enormous role that the teacher plays, Ukeje (2007) observed that the power to heal or kill, build up or tear apart depends particularly on the teacher who is the center of the education process and thus needs to be developed. We live in a global world subject to massive economic,

political, and technological changes. Education is also undergoing rapid transformations under the effects of globalization and teachers are expected to be productive in every new era.

Productivity has become the iconic indicator of institutional prestige as one of the vital resources required by higher education institutions for maintaining, operating, and facilitating development and growth. In higher education institutions, seminars, conferences, in-service training, and publication records are important factors in faculty performance evaluations, research grant awards, salary decisions, and promotion, which allow faculty members to move through the academic ladder (Schimanski and Alperin, 2018). As such, there is a need for constant professional development (PD) of educational stakeholders particularly teachers through various means. Teachers must not only focus on formal development programmes organized by their school for professional development but can associate themselves with informal organizations or associations outside the school comprised of individuals from different cultural backgrounds, institutions, and ways of thinking to learn. It is for this reason that we look at the impact teachers' membership in professional academic associations can have on their productivity.

The effect of globalization and the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning has revealed the need for professional development for teachers in the domain of technology. The acquisition of 21st-century skills by students such as ICT, problem-solving, and critical thinking, as indicated by UNESCO (2015) also requires the professional development of teachers to meet up. Furthermore, the statistics also indicated that the unemployment rate in Cameroon (2020) is 3.62% which has been on a constant increase since 2014 (3.53%). In research carried out by Atem and Besong (2020) on teachers' quality and graduates' acquisition of employability skills in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon, findings showed that teachers' quality has a significant relationship with graduates' acquisition of employability skills.

Etomes and Molua (2019) equally hold that teachers are held responsible for the success or failure of educational organizations because their productivity reflects the productivity of the system. In a study carried out by Etomes (2020) on graduates' employability and career opportunities, the suggestion given by many graduates and employers is the need for institutions of Higher Education to engage in professionalization as a way of curbing graduates' unemployment. Again, in a study carried out by Echari (2018), findings showed that one of the factors responsible for university students' low engagement in their studies is teacher quality.

Lichtsteiner et al. (2015) said membership associations create a healthy member base and stimulate members' engagement and volunteers' activity which are critical in sustaining the associations' legitimacies and collective

performance. Furthermore, Smith (2010) also said teachers' membership in professional associations provides mentorship opportunities that enable some teachers to learn new skills from experienced mentors and provide members with networking opportunities and access to resources. This is to say that when teachers of institutions of higher education belong to a professional association, they are more exposed to access to resources and networking opportunities. Desimone (2009) opines that good professional development for teachers is content-focused, incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory, supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts, uses models and modeling of effective practice, provides coaching and expert support, offers opportunities for feedback and reflection, and is of sustained duration. Teachers' professional development that has shown an impact on student achievement is focused on the content that teachers teach. There are some suggestive findings indicating that professional development that meets the high-quality criteria as described by Jens (2021) may change the teachers' learning and classroom practice Lasway (2021) and that these changes, in turn, may affect the academic performance of students (Cohen and Hill 2000). The concern for teachers' productivity in institutions of higher education in Cameroon posits that Higher education occupies a central position in the educational ladder. Higher education has been placed at the center of transformative learning and for this to occur; teachers must be highly productive which calls on the need for professional development opportunities.

According to Knowles' theory of adult learning (1980), teachers as adults should be given latitude to form their professional development allowing the teachers to determine what direction their professional development will take and how it will greatly increase the success of the teachers in their journey to be lifelong learners. According to the theory of improvement, to enhance teachers' productivity in every organization, professional development for the workers is needed with workers' professionalization occupying a central position in the theory. Benthum et al. (2011) opine that professional development is needed to help workers effectively implement new curricular and pedagogic practices in their classrooms so as to enable their learners to acquire 21st-century skills. From the perspective of the Lifelong learning theory (Handel, 2020), it is indicated that teachers need to engage in continuous learning for professional development because, in the emerging knowledge society, teachers are required to continually upgrade their skills, knowledge, and competencies. Higher education is labor-intensive and knowledge is constantly changing (fluid). Therefore, it is imperative that teachers should constantly engage themselves in learning in order to stay current and acquire new skills, knowledge, and competencies to enhance their productivity thus; there is a need for teachers to embrace

all forms of learning (formal, informal, and non-formal). Teachers' involvement in professional associations and membership in meetings made up of academicians of diverse professional backgrounds and experiences could be fertile ground that could help them ameliorate their pedagogical practices and complement the weaknesses of one-shot in-service training programmes like seminars, workshops, and conferences.

In most higher education institutions in the two English-speaking regions of Cameroon, academic staff especially the novices face challenges in performing their tasks of providing instruction, assessment, and evaluation of students' performance as well as managing the learning environment (Agbor, 2011). As proof of this, in a sample of some students' opinions about the quality of their teachers, some of them described their teachers as well-qualified while some did not. For instance, some students said their lecturers are about 99% below average, lack mastery of subject matter, poor presentation of lessons, lack follow-up spirit, produce poor results, and are lazy. Thus, with this kind of description of some teachers by their students, it is clear that the students' output will be compromised despite effort from the qualified teachers. It should be noted that the 2021 law on higher education has laid emphasis on professionalization, and yet not all teachers are not able to impart to students the skills that can make them integrate into the labour market (OECD, 2005). All teachers by this law are supposed to show high professionalism in their domain. This is because teachers are the guarantors of quality education. In Cameroon, most teachers in Higher education are recruited directly into the university without having to pass through a teacher education programme as seen in other countries with quality education systems. Thus, in this regard, there is a need for teachers to compensate for their weaknesses by not only waiting for the institution to organize professional development programs like seminars, workshops, and conferences but should seek other available means like joining professional academic associations comprising of teachers from several institutions of different cultural background, and learning practices to enhance their learning. It is against this backdrop that researchers are investigating the extent to which professional academic associations influence teachers' productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon.

The main objective of this study is to investigate if membership in professional academic associations is a determining factor of teachers' productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon.

Specifically, this study is guided by the following:

1. To investigate the prevalence of teachers having membership in professional academic associations from Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon.
2. To examine the extent to which teachers' membership in professional academic associations affects their

productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon.

Based on the above objectives, a general hypothesis was tested which verified the significant relationship between belonging to professional academic associations and teachers' productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' productivity is not solely aimed at getting as much work as possible, but performance quality is also important to note. Teachers' productivity changes over time as it is influenced by; education level (change in grade), work discipline, skill acquisition, positive work attitude, high motivation for work, and work environment. Sayantani (2022) indicates that one of the factors that affect teachers' productivity in higher education is self-development. The need for lecturers to improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours while on the job is even more critical now in developing nations than ever before for several reasons. Tertiary institutions are also in constant flux and better productivity from their teachers cannot be over-emphasized. Education is central to the whole process of development and consequently, teachers are central to that process of educational development (Brahma, 2019). Productivity is a measure of efficiency of production which is usually expressed as the ratio of output to inputs used in the production process. When all outputs and inputs are included in the productivity measure it is called total productivity (Quy Huu, 2015). According to Philips and Okoronmah (2020), a more general interpretation of productivity encompasses broader concerns about the outcomes achieved by the public sector. To some, productivity is about working harder and longer hours while for others it is the return from investing more in capital (such as infrastructure and education investment).

Economically, this aspect of teachers' productivity provides baseline estimates for the economic value of improving teacher quality. An alternative way of looking at the derived demand for effective teachers comes from the analysis of the impact of student performance on economic growth. Recent analysis has shown a very close link between the cognitive skills of a country's population and the country's rate of economic growth (Nik-Ahmad, Mohamad and Heiner, 2022). This is to say that when educational systems employ highly qualified teachers, the students benefit from higher learning outcomes which automatically contribute to a nation's economic growth. Consideration of the economic value of teacher quality is especially relevant for the debates about performance pay for teachers and administrators. Barber (2010) in their analysis revealed that school systems around the world that have shown substantial improvement in national economic growth are those with

teachers of high productivity. This implies that improvements in teachers' effectiveness would lead to very large economic gains. As a result of this, the analysis of Hue et al. (2021) suggests that the best school systems do not allow ineffective teachers to remain in the classroom for long. Educationally, in academia, the concept of productivity is regarded as an indication of the success of lecturers which influences promotions, rank, levels, honorariums, and lecturers' benefits (Salman et al., 2018). The teacher is undoubtedly the most important factor for achieving a profitable learning outcome in every school system (Emunemu and Isuku, 2011). The future of any nation, to a very large extent, is contingent upon the quality of its teachers. Therefore, those to be recruited as teachers should be people who have demonstrated some measure of competence in knowledge and skills as well as possess a healthy attitude for the achievement of the schooling objectives.

Although teachers' productivity is used interchangeably with teachers' performance, in this study, attention was paid solely to teachers' productivity. Getange (2016) asserted that variables of teachers' productivity such as effective teaching, lesson note preparation, effective use of the scheme of work, effective supervision, monitoring of students' work, and disciplinary ability are virtues that teachers should uphold effectively in the school system. This is to say that the above aspects are some characteristics of teachers' productivity. Sultana-Mahbuba (2013) in Khan and Abdullah (2019) reiterated that organizational productivity is determined a lot by individual productivity. This is to say that the work output of teachers in higher education institutions in Cameroon has significant implications on the ability of the entire university to attain its goals and objectives. Therefore, to increase organizational productivity, there is a need to pay serious attention to the work productivity of organizational members. Teachers are the most critical factor in determining each level of education's effectiveness and efficiency (UNESCO, 2015). Recently, Etomes and Molua (2019) stated that students' success in the education and learning process is determined by their teachers' work productivity. In every level of education, the productivity of the teachers is of paramount importance. Furthermore, Nwosu (2017) in Etomes and Molua (2019) state that teachers' work and productivity determine success. This implies that if higher education institutions aim to improve their curriculum relevance, program quality, etc. it is imperative that the teachers whose primary function is to teach have to step up in their productivity/work output.

As revealed by Ana and Ardita (2021) evidence shows that productivity is depended on having the right mix of skills, abilities, motivation, and potentialities in achieving the predetermined goal of the institutions. In as much as an enabling environment for the collaborative building of teachers' capacity is very critical, a school environment

that supports or provides programmes for teachers' professional development is critical as well. This is because the more skillful the teachers are, the higher their level of productivity. Looking at subject matter/content knowledge, Goldhaber and Anthony (2007) found that students who had teachers with subject-related advanced degrees performed better than students of teachers without subject training. Today, many universities in Cameroon are largely dominated by assistant lecturers who might have not undergone any training. Therefore, the pedagogic competence of many may be weak which may not give adequate support. This alone, is capable of causing many students to be less engaged in studies cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally. In support of this, Echari (2018), conducted a study on factors responsible for university students' low engagement in studies and the findings showed that poor pedagogic skills of lecturers were the most mentioned factor. Based on this, it is important to note that graduates will hardly gain adequate skills for employability if many of the lecturers training these graduates are unqualified. Thus, this justifies the need for teachers' professional development for better productivity.

According to Shonna (2022), learners' outcomes depend greatly on teacher quality, governments, local politicians and school managers need to foster teachers' continuous professional development in order to cope effectively with ongoing changes and improve the quality of education. Strengthening internal school conditions to promote teachers' professional development is considered an important prerequisite for addressing a continuous stream of changes in their environments, the multidimensional restructuring demands to which they must respond, and the considerable external pressures arising from the tighter "output" controls introduced by accountability policies. Furthermore, promoting the professional development of teachers is also expected to reduce the alienation that bureaucracy may produce.

Teachers' professional development (PD) involves many processes, actions, and mechanisms that are inevitably mediated by the cultural, social, political, and economic features and conditions of each particular context (Tan and Dimmock, 2014 in Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz, 2015). It can be initiated by the teacher or the school system, and can also be something that teachers do individually on their own and following their interests. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2005), professional development signifies any activity that develops an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise, and other characteristics as a teacher. These include personal study and reflection, as well as formal courses. In-service education and training refers more specifically to identifiable learning activities in which practicing teachers participate. The widespread use of the term professional development when referring to training activities reflects

the fact that most teachers see themselves as members of a profession. Just as members of other professions, teachers also need to be involved in a process of learning and reflection to improve their professional practice (Bayar, 2022).

To elucidate, Drew (2023) said professional development activities of high quality have positive effects on teachers' knowledge and instructional practices. With regards to content, high-quality professional development focuses on the specific subject matter that the teacher teaches in class, thereby providing the teacher with a deeper understanding of the subject matter (content), pedagogical strategies to teach that specific content to students (pedagogical knowledge), and how students think and learn the content (knowledge of student thinking). High-quality professional development is tailored to teachers depending on their prior knowledge and level of expertise, is coherent with and responsive to their needs and interests, and is aligned with the curricular requirements and standards of schools, districts, and nations. Finally, high-quality professional development is voluntary and features elements of autonomy and choice (Shonna, 2022). Regarding design features (structure and working dynamics), high-quality professional development provides teachers with; a) active learning opportunities, including activities to engage in exploration, reflection, and discussion; b) contexts for collective participation and collegial sharing; c) constructive and non-prescriptive feedback; and d) sustained follow-up support after program completion (Bautista et al., 2015).

Yoon (2021) opined that professional development that truly fosters teachers' learning and change needs to be intensive and sustained, instead of short and sporadic, involving significant numbers of contact hours over long periods. Teachers are considered the most important in-school impact factor on the quality of students' achievement. From McKinsey's (2004) report on how the world's best-performing school systems come out on top, Barber and Mourshed (2007), stated that the main driver of the variation in student learning at school is the quality of the teachers. Also, based on a large-scale survey on factors influencing learning outcomes of students, Hattie (2009) suggested that the quality of lecturers/teachers has a larger impact on the learning of students than the quality of the curriculum, the teaching methods, the school buildings or the role of parents. As a result of the widely acknowledged importance of teachers, much attention should be given to policies with respect to teacher quality and professional development. Also, according to the Draft Document of Sector Wide Approach to Education (2006), one of its strategic objectives (objective 4) was aimed at ameliorating the management and governance of the education system by defining policy of recruitment and distribution of teachers. In this same document, the improvement of the special

status of teachers of Higher Education was highly recommended. To ameliorate the quality of Higher Education Sub-objective 10, actions to be taken were; putting in place an efficient system of evaluation and valorization of pedagogic activities; creating and putting in place a pedagogic perfection center; putting in place an evaluation system of teachers by students; and putting in place a support fund to pedagogic renovation projects in universities on competitive basis.

All these strategic actions were to ameliorate the quality of teaching in Universities in Cameroon and to support the professionalization of Higher Education. However, ever since these actions were adopted, much still seems to have not been done. For instance, in our universities, the school administration had never given students the autonomy to evaluate their teachers/lecturers, talk less of creating and putting in place a pedagogic perfection center. Therefore, it is expected that within the context of professionalizing Higher Education programmes as it has been articulated in many policy documents, adequate actions must be taken to ameliorate teachers' / lecturers' quality and the actions laid down in objective 4 of the sector-wide approach should be implemented. Out of Cameroon, the OECD (2007) has said that the focus on improving Higher Education quality has led to stronger attention to personalized teaching and learning. The expectations that society has towards teachers and their professionalism are high. In this capacity, teachers are therefore challenged to show extended professionalism and a wider perspective on their role within universities through research and development.

According to the International Society for Technology in Education Educational Technology Standards (2011), while teachers should certainly be encouraged to participate in ongoing, self-motivated learning, self-directed activities should not be used as the primary means of providing teachers with professional development. Instead, they should be used to complement and extend standardized and/or site-based teachers' professional development. Mardle (2016) stated that self-directed teachers' professional development is used when; there are no other organized professional development options; self-motivated and innovative individual teachers need opportunities for learning that are not otherwise available; self-directed activities are part of an overall professional development program that includes standardized or site-based teachers professional development; and supports, incentives and structures are in place to ensure that self-directed teachers professional development is the most effective way to meet teacher needs. Self-directed teachers' professional development is effective when teachers are highly motivated and have the resources at their disposal. Thus, from this model, we expect that it should be adequately used by lecturers in state universities in Cameroon who are sometimes provided with some financial aid by the government for

research purposes.

Hill (2018) said there are many benefits to joining a professional association. Hill (2018) said one of the benefits is that membership in professional associations provides opportunities for teachers' continuous education because such associations often hold meetings to update teachers on issues about their jobs. Another benefit of a professional association for teachers as stated by Hill is that it provides new prospects for its members to fit well into the job market and provides career resources to teachers that help to improve on their productivity. Lichtsteiner et al. (2015) said membership associations should create a healthy member base and stimulate member engagement and volunteer activity which are critical in sustaining the associations' legitimacies and collective performance. This is because successful member management is vital for membership associations and member participation and engagement are constitutional elements of member-based ownership structures and prerequisite to running associations effectively and efficiently. According to Wang and Ashcraft (2014), members determine the overall goal of associations. Therefore, it has become increasingly relevant for membership associations to efficiently and effectively allocate their limited resources in the pursuit of creating a healthy member base.

Smith (2010) said teachers' membership in professional associations provides mentorship opportunities that enable some teachers to learn new skills from experienced mentors. Smith (2010) also added that membership in a professional association provides members with networking opportunities and access to resources. This is to say that when teachers of higher education institutions belong to a professional association, they are more exposed to access to resources and networking opportunities. Adding to Smith's opinion, Hill (2018) most associations also provide some form of professional development and this comes in the form of workshops, online classes, or member-only materials. According to Suter (2012), most concepts that explain the motivation of individuals to act in favor of an association are based on matching principles. The matching principle suggests that an individual's attitude and behavior are best explained by their psychological motivation and their evaluation of how well their relevant motives are fulfilled through affiliation with an association. Thus, it is assumed that individuals enter social relations because they expect to fulfill some needs through intrinsic or extrinsic rewards that underlie the association. Thus, the desire to attain valued ends through the fulfillment of relevant needs motivates individuals to voluntary social action. In the opinion of CPD (2022), he said workers considered joining professional associations for the benefits of self-improvement, education, new ideas, programs, professionalism, and maintaining professional standards. Despite awareness of these perceived benefits, cost and

lack of time were major obstacles for nonmembers to join professional associations (CPD, 2022). Here, one could see that higher education teachers' membership in professional associations would benefit them in many ways.

Handel (2020) called it a seamless education, which means there are no boundaries, and argued that learning should continue throughout life and should be of direct relevance to the needs and life experiences of learners. Successful modern economy and society require citizens with a strong foundation of general education. According to Handel (2020), there is a relationship between lifelong learning and self-directed learning, which is viewed as part of lifelong learning. The term lifelong learning appeals to the researcher because it entails growth, change, and development. This theory is relevant in the study in that higher education is labour intensive and knowledge is constantly changing (fluid). Therefore, teachers must constantly engage themselves in learning to stay current and acquire new skills, knowledge, and competencies to enhance their productivity. This theory is also relevant to the study in that it embraces all forms of learning (formal, informal, and non-formal). Teachers' involvement in professional associations made up of academicians of diverse professional backgrounds and experiences could be a fertile ground that could them ameliorate their pedagogical practices. Thus, the theory has created the awareness that teachers need to engage in continuous learning to improve their professional skills and competencies to better do their job.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study makes use of the sequential convergent mixed method approach in addition to the survey research design. The purposive, proportionate, and convenient sampling techniques were adopted for the study.

Sample

The population of the study comprised the two Anglo-Saxon universities. The sample size consisted of 234 lecturers from the University of Buea, and 202 lecturers from the University of Bamenda giving a total sample size of 436 academic staff from an overall population of 1014 teachers. Regarding post-graduate students, 603 of them were samples from the University of Buea and Bamenda. Finally, for the administrators, 10 were sampled from each University giving a total of 20 administrators (Head of Departments, Deans, and Deputy Vice Chancellors).

Regarding gender, 65.6% (276) of the lecturers are male and 34.4% (145) are female. Based on longevity in service, 41.3% (174) of equal proportion have been in

service for less than 3 years and 4 to 7 years while 2.9% (12) have been working for 8 to 11 years, 3.8% (16) for 12 to 15 years and 10.7% (45) for above 20 years. Regarding professional ranks, 34.4% (145) are assistant lecturers, 58.4% (246) are senior lecturers, 4.5% (19) are associate professors and 2.6% (11) professors. Lastly, based on the University, 53.2% (224) of the lecturers teach at the University of Buea and 46.8% (197) University of Bamenda. This therefore implies that the university has many lecturers who can upgrade their skills and encourage the formation of professional associations to help improve teachers' productivity.

Instrumentation

Instruments of data collection were a questionnaire for lecturers and postgraduate students and an interview guide for administrators were the instruments chosen for the study and this was influenced by the convergent mixed method design indicated in the study design. The data for the study was collected using the face-to-face method which is the direct delivery method and the online method (Kobo method). The reason for using both approaches of data collection was to facilitate the collection of data from both far and near respondents.

The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The descriptive statistical

tools used were frequency count, percentages, and multiple responses set which aimed at calculating the summary of findings for each variable where applicable. On the other hand, the qualitative data derived from open-ended questions and semi-structured interview guides were analyzed using the thematic analysis approach with the aid of themes, groundings/frequency, and quotations. Finally, findings were presented using frequency distribution tables and thematic tables with all inferential statistics presented at a 95% level of confidence interval with alpha set at 0.05 levels, accepting a 5% margin of error. The hypothesis of the study was tested using a non-parametric Spearman's Rho test. This test was used because the data for the variables were not approximately normally distributed as revealed by the Shapiro-Wilk test and the Komogorov test of significance with p -values all less than 0.05.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study present the lecturers' opinions on membership in professional associations, the relationship between belonging to academic associations and teachers' productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon, and administrators' opinions on the relevance of membership to academic associations to teachers.

Prevalence of teachers who have membership in professional associations from Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon?

Table 1. Lecturers' opinion on membership to professional associations.

| Statements | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| I belong to a teachers' syndicate | 68 (16.2%) | 353 (83.9%) |
| I am a member of other associations that bring teachers together to enhance their knowledge in terms of teaching and research | 91 (21.6%) | 330 (78.4%) |
| I am a member of the Association for Talent Development | 132(31.4%) | 289 (68.6%) |
| I am a member of a library association | 253 (60.1%) | 168 (39.9%) |
| Teachers in my department have a research association of which I am a member | 277 (65.8%) | 144 (32.2%) |
| Total response | 821 (39.0%) | 1284 (61.0%) |

In aggregate, the majority of lecturers 61.0% are not members of any academic associations while 39.0% are. Specifically, 83.9% (353) of lecturers said they do not belong to a teachers' syndicate. 78.4% (330) also indicated that they are not a member of other associations that bring teachers together to enhance their knowledge in terms of teaching and research. Similarly, 68.6% (289) of lecturers are not a member of the Association for Talent Development. Furthermore, 60.1% (253) of lecturers are not a member of a library association while 39.9% (168) are. Finally, 65.8% (277) of lecturers are not a member of a research association

while 32.2% (144) are. The relationship between belonging to academic associations and teachers' productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon is depicted in Table 2 with students presenting their opinion of teachers' productivity.

In aggregate, 45.6% of the students do not see their lecturers as productive while 54.4% see them as productive. Specifically, 77.8% (469) of students indicated that the assessment practice of some teachers is not the best in some courses while 22.2% (134) denied it. Similarly, 77.1% (465) also indicate that teachers in my institutions can teach at any University in the world while

22.9% (138) denied it. 67.8% (409) of students agreed to have the ability to create their establishment after graduation while 32.2% (194) disagreed. Also, 67.5% (407) agreed to pass a competitive examination into a professional school after graduation while 32.5% (196) did not. 67.2% (405) of students are sure to get a job after graduation thanks to their lecturers' output while 32.8% (198) disagreed. Furthermore, 65.2% (393) of students opined that course coverage for some teachers

is often inadequate with 64.5% (389) who also accepted that some of the teachers hardly make use of effective teaching strategies. 64.3% (388) of the students indicate that there are courses handled by some teachers with persistent high fail rates. 43.9% (265) of the students also indicated that teacher-student communication in terms of teaching is not effective and 27.0% (163) opined that some lecturers do not master their subject matter well while 73.0% (440) disagreed.

Table 2. Post-graduate students' opinion on teachers' productivity.

| Statements | Collapsed | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| | SA/A | D/SD |
| The assessment practice of some teachers is not the best in some courses | 469 (77.8%) | 134 (22.2%) |
| Teachers in my institutions can teach at any University in the world ** | 465 (77.1%) | 138 (22.9%) |
| I will be able to create my own establishment after graduation ** | 409 (67.8%) | 194 (32.2%) |
| I am sure to pass a competitive examination into a professional school after graduation** | 407 (67.5%) | 196 (32.5%) |
| I am sure to get a job after graduation thanks to my lecturers' output ** | 405 (67.2%) | 198 (32.8%) |
| Course coverage for some teachers is often inadequate | 393 (65.2%) | 210 (34.8%) |
| Some teachers hardly make use of effective teaching strategies | 389 (64.5%) | 214 (35.5%) |
| There are courses handled by some teachers with persistent high fail rates | 388 (64.3%) | 215 (35.7%) |
| It is easy for me to gain access to post-graduate studies** | 372 (61.7%) | 231 (38.4%) |
| Teacher-student communication in terms of teaching is not effective | 265 (43.9%) | 338 (56.1%) |
| From my experience, I do not see mastery of subject matter by teachers of this institution. | 163 (27.0%) | 440 (73.0%) |
| Total response | 3024 (45.6%) | 3609 (54.4%) |

**Items with reversed coding during calculation of MRS.



Figure 1. Perception of membership in professional learning association.

Based on lecturers' perception of membership in professional learning organizations, 66.5% (280) of them in their majority indicated that such membership is important for teachers while 33.5% (141) said is not important for teachers.

Based on administrators' opinions on the relevance of membership to academic associations to teachers, many of them said it enhanced productivity as narrated "I am a member of African Literature Association, a member of Fulbright Scholar Association. Membership in these professional associations is based on your expertise. If you want to belong you must apply. Membership in such associations enhances productivity and knowledge in the field. Because you meet colleagues even online. You attend conferences of those associations. There are

associations that you apply. For example, to become a Fulbright scholar, you need to apply for a scholarship and be a Fulbrighter. I have been on a Fulbright scholarship three times and I have been opportune to teach in five Universities in the USA. It is based on expertise in the sense that when the Fulbright advertises positions you apply. It is very competitive and when they judge you worthy, you win it based on your competence and scientific productivity".

Also, some administrators said membership in academic associations for teachers enhances their growth as reported "It helps define academic programs like attending conferences and congresses. I belong to the Cameroon History Society and we encourage many more teachers of history to join the association. It is of

paramount importance for teachers because such membership can help define academic programs to attend like conferences and workshops. With publications you can submit your documents for change of grade". Furthermore, some administrators said it boasts teachers' personalities and exposes them to learning opportunities

as depicted in the statement *"Every time you step out, you learn a new thing. For example, I belong to the African Studies Association. Whenever the means are available, I have the possibility of traveling. We have a good number of colleagues who are members for example; we have the Cameroon Academy of Young Scientists"*.

Table 3. Administrators' opinion on the relevance of membership to professional associations to teachers.

| Themes | Quotations |
|---|---|
| Enhanced productivity | <p>"I am a member of the African Literature Association, a member of the Fulbright Scholar Association. Membership in these professional associations is based on your expertise. If you want to belong you must apply. Membership in such associations enhances productivity and knowledge in the field. Because you meet colleagues even online. You attend conferences of those associations. There are associations that you apply. For example, to become a Fulbright scholar, you need to apply for a scholarship and be a Fulbrighter. I have been on a Fulbright scholarship three times and I have been opportune to teach in five Universities in the USA. It is based on expertise in the sense that when the Fulbright advertises positions you apply. It is very competitive and when they judge you worthy, you win it based on your competence and scientific productivity".</p> <p>"Also, we have workshops, like we attend the South West History Teachers Association, I am a member of the South African History Teachers' Association, where we meet annually to discuss and improve on our academic productivity".</p> |
| Enhanced growth | <p>"It helps define academic programs like attending conferences and congresses. I belong to the Cameroon History Society and we encourage many more teachers of history to join the association. It is of paramount importance for teachers because, such membership, it can help define academic programs to attend like conferences and workshops. With publications you can submit your documents for change of grade".</p> <p>"It enhances the credibility of teachers. It helps them to gain experience to apply to their personal work and teach students in a better way".</p> |
| Information sources, brainstorming to solve students' problems | <p>"Professional associations for example help a teacher who does not know that some ideas are coming will get to know through the professional association".</p> <p>They are able to talk about challenges not only in their subject area. E.g. Mathematics teachers sometimes meet to discuss problems faced by teachers and how to help them which of course will increase teachers' productivity".</p> |
| Boost personality | <p>"It is the right and duty of any lecturer to belong. It helps them to up their contacts and personality in the academic realm"</p> |
| Exposed teachers to learning | <p>"Every time you step out, you learn a new thing. For example, I belong to the African Studies Association. Whenever the means are available, I have the possibility of traveling. We have a good number of colleagues who are members for example; we have the Cameroon Academy of Young Scientists".</p> |
| Teachers' monitoring | <p>"We have the syndicate for academic staff downstairs, we are not the ones in charge, it's the government. We don't have a Union but we have a union in place put by the government to change the lapses of teachers. That's the difference between unions of other countries and ours. Ours is just here to monitor teachers when/if they don't come to work or come late. The government will query you and send it to the union, but when teachers are not paid or owed arias payment the union is silent because it is set up by the government. Take Nigeria for example university lecturer nationwide just resumed from 7 months of strike fighting for their rights but such cannot happen in Cameroon because the Unions are set by the government".</p> |
| Enhance research output | <p>"It is very important when you talk of career development because it helps to build your network and also helps with collaborative research. For instance, we have the International Society for the Studies of Behavioral Development (ISSBD). It's something that is helping professionals in the psychology department because they give you research opportunities, even teach you like what we are doing there now called the professional development program and it has helped me improve my methodology, publications, and presentations in conferences because we have not been able to get some grants".</p> |

Similarly, some administrators said teachers' membership in academic associations enables them to monitor teachers' punctuality at work as narrated "We have the syndicate for academic staff downstairs, we not the ones in charge, it's the government. We don't have a Union but we have a union in place put by the government to change the lapses of teachers. That's the difference between unions of other countries and ours. Ours is just here to monitor teachers when/if they don't come to work or come late. The government will query you and send it to the union, but when teachers are not paid or owed arias payment the union is silent because it is set up by the government. Take Nigeria for example university lecturer nationwide just resumed from 7 months of strike fighting for their rights but such cannot happen in Cameroon because the Unions are set by the government".

Finally, some administrators added that teachers' membership in academic associations helps improve their research output and identify solutions to students' problems after proper brainstorming with other professionals as depicted in the statement "It is very important when you talk of career development because it helps to build your network and also helps with collaborative research. For instance, we have the International Society for the Studies of Behavioral

Development (ISSBD). It's something that is helping professionals in the psychology department because they give you research opportunities, even teach you like what we are doing there now called the professional development program and it has helped me improve my methodology, publications, and presentations in conferences because we have even been able to get some grants".

Based on the above findings (Table 3), it implies that if all/majority of teachers could become a member in at least one or two academic associations, it could go a long way to improve their productivity because enhanced productivity and growth are the two relevant. The more teachers belong to associations, it widens their horizon of membership in academic associations that many of the administrators mentioned in addition to enhancing research output, boast personality, help in monitoring and exposing them to learning opportunities.

Verification of hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between belonging to professional academic associations and teachers' productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon.

Table 4. Relationship between professional associations and teachers' productivity.

| | | Academic associations | Teachers' productivity |
|----------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | R-value | 1 | .280** |
| Spearman's rho | p-value | . | .000 |
| | n | 421 | 421 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5. Regression estimating the unit of the effect of determinants of professional associations on teachers' productivity.

| | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients | t-test | p-value |
|--|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|---------|
| | B | Std. error | Beta | | |
| Constant | .498 | .152 | | 3.278 | .001 |
| Professional (academic) associations | .023 | .005 | .226 | 4.259 | .000 |
| Model Summary | | | | | |
| R (Multiple coefficient determination value) | .683 | | | | |
| R-square | .440 | | | | |
| Adjusted R Square | .433 | | | | |
| Std. Error of the Estimate | .507 | | | | |
| ANOVA^a | | | | | |
| F- test value | 53.524 | | | | |
| P-value | .000 | | | | |

a. Dependent variable: Teachers' productivity
 b. Predictors: (Constant): Academic associations

Statistically, findings showed that there is a significant, moderate, and positive relationship between academic meetings and teachers' productivity (R -value = 0.280**, p -value = 0.000, < 0.05) (Table 4). The positive sign of the correlation implies that teachers are more likely to be productive when they belong to academic associations. Therefore, the hypothesis that states there is a significant relationship between academic associations and teachers' productivity in Anglo-Saxon Universities in Cameroon was accepted. The findings of our study corroborate with that of Yusuf (2016) who carried out a study on the benefits of professional organization membership and participation in national conferences: considerations for students and new professionals which findings showed that membership in professional associations can provide tremendous career development, skill-building, and professional networking opportunities for participants.

Overall, statistics from the regression analysis show that a unit improvement in academic associations with all other factors held constant results in 0.226 increase in teachers' productivity at a significant level of 0.000 (Table 5). The variability explained by the model was significant (F -test value = 53.524, p -value = 0.000). The total variability explained by the model is 68.3% ($R = 0.683$) while 31.7% was not explained. This implies that aside from academic associations other factors could also contribute to the teachers' productivity not captured by the model.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study showed membership in professional associations has a significant and positive effect on teachers' productivity. In support of the above results, the administrators said membership in professional associations enhance their productivity and growth, boosts teachers' personality and exposes them to learning opportunities, permits the monitoring of teachers' punctuality at work, and help improve their research output and identifying solutions to students' problems after proper brainstorming with other professionals. Despite the above relevance of membership to professional associations for teachers, the majority of them do not belong to any professional associations. The positive relationship between members in professional associations and teachers' productivity as revealed in the findings of our study corroborates with that of Yusuf and Dada (2016) who carried out a study on the benefits of professional organization membership and participation in national conferences: considerations for students and new professionals which findings showed that membership in professional associations can provide tremendous career development, skill-building, and professional networking opportunities for participants. In the same vein, in a study carried out by Walton and Carr

(2012) on barriers to membership in a professional organization for advanced practice nurses, part of the findings showed that membership in professional organizations can bring about positive social change by providing accessible continuing education to membership. As seen from our findings and that of previous researchers, membership in professional associations not only improves productivity through skills development, and career development but also provides networking opportunities for some.

There is a relationship between lifelong learning and self-directed learning, which is viewed as part of lifelong learning. The term lifelong learning appeals to the researcher because it entails growth, change, and development. This theory is relevant in the study in that higher education is labour-intensive and knowledge is constantly changing (fluid). Therefore, teachers must constantly engage themselves in learning to stay current and acquire new skills, knowledge, and competencies to enhance their productivity. This theory is also relevant to the study in that it embraces all forms of learning (formal, informal, and non-formal). Teachers' involvement in professional associations made up of academicians of diverse professional backgrounds and experiences could be a fertile ground that could them ameliorate their pedagogical practices. Thus, the theory has created the awareness that teachers need to engage in continuous learning to improve their professional skills and competencies to better do their job.

There are many benefits to joining a professional association and one of the benefits is that it provides opportunities for teachers' continuous education because such associations often hold meetings to update teachers on issues about their jobs, provide new prospects for its members to fit well into the job market and provide career resources to teachers that help to improve on their productivity. This clearly showed that membership in academic associations has plenty of positive effects on teachers. To support this, the participants in our study said membership in professional associations improves their productivity, growth, and research and also provides opportunities for them to attend conferences. With these kinds of benefits, it is imperative that teachers who are not members of any academic association have to think of joining one that relates to their field of specialty or interest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was recommended that all teachers, irrespective of their professional rank should endeavour to become a member of one professional association because findings showed that membership in professional associations improves research output and work output, and provides networking opportunities for members to attend conferences and be updated on the recent

developments. Finally, teachers should be encouraged to write and publish articles, and book chapters through their professional associations.

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