For almost a decade, the Cameroon education system has been undergoing major reforms with the aim of aligning it to national development goals and international exigencies. In 2010, the government carried out reforms in the secondary school sector introducing Competency-Based Approach (CBA), as one of the major innovations. The reforms aimed to bring about an enhancement of learning outcomes of secondary school students, preparing them for full participation in the 21st century. The reform required teachers to move away from assessment strategies known to constitute a trap for students, leading to high failure rates, and towards friendlier and more accountable strategies with higher chances of school success. This study reveals that this reform did not meet the success rate that was foresaw. Teachers who apply CBA in their daily pedagogic practice, do so with many difficulties, since they do not master it.

The aim of this study is to understand the hindering factors preventing teachers from implementing CBA in their daily pedagogic practice, by examining the causes for their adherence or non-adherence to CBA, their knowledge, attitudes and practices towards the new approach, as well as the strategies that were put in place for the implementation of CBA.

Difficulties and lack of appropriate materials were the main reasons highlighted by teachers who responded they were not applying CBA in class.

The study is of both qualitative and quantitative nature. The researcher worked with secondary school teachers in both French- and English-medium schools from the Yaoundé school area, who apply CBA in their classes. By using cluster sampling technique, 15 teachers were selected to form the sample. A questionnaire of four sections was used to collect data, focusing on the respondents’ demographic and professional backgrounds with reference to their grade, sex, highest academic qualifications and teaching experience; knowledge and awareness of CBA; attitudes and pedagogic practices regarding CBA; and implementation strategies put in place for CBA.
Findings revealed that teachers seemed to be quite knowledgeable and aware of the approach, a crucial aspect when considering their adherence to the reform. Overall, they exhibited a positive attitude towards the reform, closely linked to the reasons they have for liking the approach. Moreover, despite encountering difficulties in the application of the reform, teachers have adhered to it, as shown by the results. Finally, concerning the strategy put in place for implementing the reform, teachers manifested dissatisfaction with the way the reform is being introduced. Some of the causes of their discontent are related to the short duration of training on CBA and poorly qualified trainers.

Based on the results, the researcher provides recommendations towards a more successful reform implementation. For instance, the reorganisation of the pedagogic structure by reducing class sizes, improving teachers’ working conditions, setting a base for a major engagement of teachers in the implementation plan for the dissemination of CBA, among others are pointed out.