

# **"The Impact of Teachers' Competency on the Acquisition of Entrepreneurship Skills by Secondary Technical High School Students in the Upper Sanaga Division of the Center Region of Cameroon."**

**ENDALI Ruth ETOH**

**Faculty Of Education: Curriculum And Evaluation. Department Of Management, University Of Yaounde Yaounde, Cameroon**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This article examines the impact of Teachers' competency on the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by secondary technical high school students in the Upper Sanaga Division of the Center Region. The objective of the study was to determine the effects of Teachers' competency on the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among secondary school students in the Upper Sanaga Division of the Center Region. This study employs a descriptive survey design. Using purposive and simple random sampling techniques, a sample size of 327 students was selected for the study. The tool used for data collection was the questionnaire. The data were analyzed using the Pearson Correlation formula, and the following results were obtained. To support these arguments, we made use of the Social Capital Theory by Putnam (2000) and the Blue Ocean Strategy Theory by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne (2005). There is therefore a significant relationship between Teachers' competency and the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among secondary school students in the Upper Sanaga Division of the Center Region. Based on these findings, as a recommendation, modern technological trends are moving at a fast pace. Therefore, there is a need to review both the curriculum content and stereotypical assessment/evaluation procedures for the secondary technical education sector, as this is paramount if Cameroon is to meet the technical skills required by its technicians for emergence by 2035.

**Keywords:** Teachers' competency, entrepreneurship skills, secondary technical high school students.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurship education is seen as a crucial tool for fostering self-reliance and economic development in Cameroon. However, despite efforts to integrate entrepreneurship education into secondary technical schools, students in the Upper Sanaga Division seem to struggle with acquiring entrepreneurial skills. Cameroon, like many other countries in Africa, faces an alarming rate of unemployment, particularly among its youth, many of whom graduate from technical and vocational schools with limited employability skills (World Bank, 2011). Despite significant investments in technical education, graduates often lack the necessary creativity and entrepreneurial skills needed to succeed in a rapidly changing labor market (Amin & Okonjo, 2010). The Upper Sanaga Division, in the Center region of Cameroon, where secondary technical high schools are prevalent, faces this challenge acutely, as students often emerge from these institutions unprepared for self-employment or entrepreneurship (Anamuah-Mensah & Jato, 2008). One key factor contributing to this problem is the competence of the teachers who are tasked with imparting both technical and entrepreneurial knowledge to these students. Teacher competence, in terms of qualifications, teaching methodologies, and practical experience, directly impacts the development of the entrepreneurial mindset and skills among students (Henson, 2003). Teacher competence is often cited as a key factor in the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills, yet students in these schools seem to lack entrepreneurial drive and practical skills,

even with teachers present. This paradox raises questions about the factors contributing to this outcome. Secondary technical schools in the Upper Sanaga Division serve as critical institutions for equipping students with vocational and entrepreneurial skills. As such, understanding the role of teachers in shaping students' acquisition of entrepreneurship skills is critical to addressing the skills gap and reducing unemployment rates in Cameroon.

## EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies collectively highlight the essential role of teacher competence in fostering entrepreneurship skills among secondary technical high school students, particularly in the Upper Sanaga Division of the Centre Region in Cameroon. The World Bank (2019) underscores the critical role of teachers in technical and vocational education and training (TVET), noting that highly effective TVET teachers develop their students' entrepreneurship skills, leading many students to become self-employed workers. A study by Tazitabong (2023) investigated the influence of teacher competence on students' learning in selected secondary schools in Buea Municipality, South West Region of Cameroon. The research found that teacher competence significantly affects how instruction is delivered, thereby impacting student learning outcomes. In the context of Cameroon, the introduction of entrepreneurship education in public secondary schools has been analyzed to understand its effectiveness. A descriptive survey research conducted by Solomon (2007) examined the introduction of entrepreneurship education in public secondary general schools in Cameroon, highlighting the importance of teacher proficiency in delivering entrepreneurial concepts. The competence of teachers plays a pivotal role in imparting entrepreneurship skills to secondary technical high school students. Solomon (2007) emphasizes that developing entrepreneurship competence among students necessitates mastery of concepts by teachers and political will from administrators.

## PROBLEM

There seems to be a disconnect between the presence of entrepreneurship education and the actual acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by students. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping student outcomes, yet despite their competence, many students still lack the entrepreneurial mindset. Understanding why this gap exists is essential for improving entrepreneurship education in Cameroon. Despite the critical importance of entrepreneurship education, students in the Upper Sanaga Division may not be acquiring the necessary skills effectively. This may be linked to various factors, one of which is teachers' competence. The job market increasingly needs skilled workers; the youth need jobs, but unfortunately, they lack skills. This has increased the unemployment rate in Cameroon to approximately 3.6%, while underemployment rests at 73.3%, as stated in the International Labour Organization (ILO) report (2023). It may interest you to know that the working population in Cameroon is about 15 million, and only a little over 300,000 people work in the public service. Secondary school graduates are hardly able to secure jobs, create jobs, innovate jobs, think in an entrepreneurial manner, or gain secure access to the job market. These reasons all point to the fact that insufficient attention has been given to the secondary education sector in our nation. This article aims to explore the role of teacher competence in the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by secondary technical high school students.

## Research Objective

To examine the impact of teachers' competency on the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among secondary technical high school students in the Upper Sanaga Division of the Center Region.

## Research Question

How does teachers' competency influence the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among secondary technical high school students in the Upper Sanaga Division of the Center Region?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive survey design. Using purposive and simple random sampling techniques, data was collected from 327 students with the help of a questionnaire. The data were analyzed using the Pearson correlation formula, which tests the relationship between how teachers' competence influences the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among secondary technical high school students.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics for teachers' competence			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
30 Our teachers underwent professional training	327	2.28	1.119
31 Our teachers were driving factors for me toward the job market	327	2.46	1.112
32 Our teachers are specialists in transmitting skills	327	2.80	1.070
33 Our teachers master their subject matter	327	2.51	1.205
34 Our lessons measures the specific skill to be acquired by the end of the lesson	327	2.21	1.074
35 Our lessons were more theoretical than practical	327	2.83	1.061
36 The quality of teachers are rightly defined by the plan especially in terms of possession of relevant skills	327	2.93	1.028
37 Our teachers had the capacity to communicate the skills they planned in each lesson	327	3.43	.910
38 Our teachers taught while laying emphasis on specific skills to be acquired	327	2.79	1.089

Source: Field data (2023)

The table above presents the descriptive statistics for various items related to teachers' competence. The item with the highest mean value is Item 37, which has a mean of 3.43, falling within the range of 3.25 to 4.00. This indicates that the majority of respondents strongly agree with the statement in this item. Items 33, 34, 35, 36, and 38 have mean values of 2.80, 2.51, 2.83, 2.93, and 2.79, respectively. These values fall within the range of 2.50 to 3.24, suggesting that the majority of participants agree with these items. In contrast, Items 31 and 32, with respective means of 2.28 and 2.46, lie within the range of 1.75 to 2.49, indicating that the majority of participants disagreed with these items.

Our teachers underwent professional training. Majority of students disagreed with this statement, suggesting that most of their teachers were not committed to continuous professional development or self-improvement in the field of entrepreneurship education. This lack of commitment implies that many teachers may not have stayed updated with the latest teaching methodologies or entrepreneurial trends, which are crucial for effectively imparting practical entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, the response indicates that teachers did not exhibit a growth mindset or a dedication to teaching excellence, thereby failing to create a supportive environment for skill acquisition in entrepreneurship. The disagreement with the item on professional training underscores the need for continuous teacher development, especially in the areas of entrepreneurship education. Teachers should be provided with regular opportunities for training and skill enhancement to ensure they remain up to date with the latest educational methodologies and industry trends.

Our teachers were driving factors for me toward the job market. The majority of students disagreed with this statement, indicating that their teachers did not act as motivating factors for them to pursue careers in the job market. This suggests that their teachers did not play a significant role in encouraging students to seek employment or entrepreneurial opportunities. Additionally, the lack of advice, industry insights, and internship

opportunities further highlights the limited impact teachers had on preparing students for the job market. The responses suggest that teachers were not able to equip students with the necessary career skills or guidance to help them succeed professionally. The students' disagreement with the item about teachers acting as push factors toward the job market points to a gap in career counselling and mentorship. Teachers should play a more active role in guiding students towards career paths, offering valuable advice, and connecting them with industry professionals through internships and other opportunities.

Our teachers are specialists in transmitting skills. Majority of students agreed with this statement, indicating that their teachers were skilled specialists in transmitting knowledge and developing students' entrepreneurial skills. This suggests that most teachers were well versed in their subject areas and were capable of effectively communicating key concepts to students. Consequently, teachers were able to facilitate students' learning and foster skill development, thereby helping students acquire valuable entrepreneurial skills. The results suggest that these teachers were committed to empowering students with the knowledge required to succeed in both their academic and professional lives. While many teachers are seen as specialists in skill transmission and subject matter mastery, there are clear gaps in their professional development, practical application of lessons, and career guidance for students.

Our teachers master their subject matter. Majority of respondents also agreed with this item, implying that their teachers were proficient in their respective subjects. This mastery of subject content is crucial for ensuring that students receive a high-quality education, particularly in areas like entrepreneurship, where a deep understanding of the subject matter is essential for practical application.

Our lessons measure the specific skill to be acquired by the end of the lesson. Majority of respondents agreed with this statement, confirming that lessons were structured with clear goals aimed at helping students master specific skills. This reflects a goal-oriented approach in the curriculum, focusing on measurable learning outcomes. Such an approach ensures that students can assess their progress in acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge required for entrepreneurship and other practical fields.

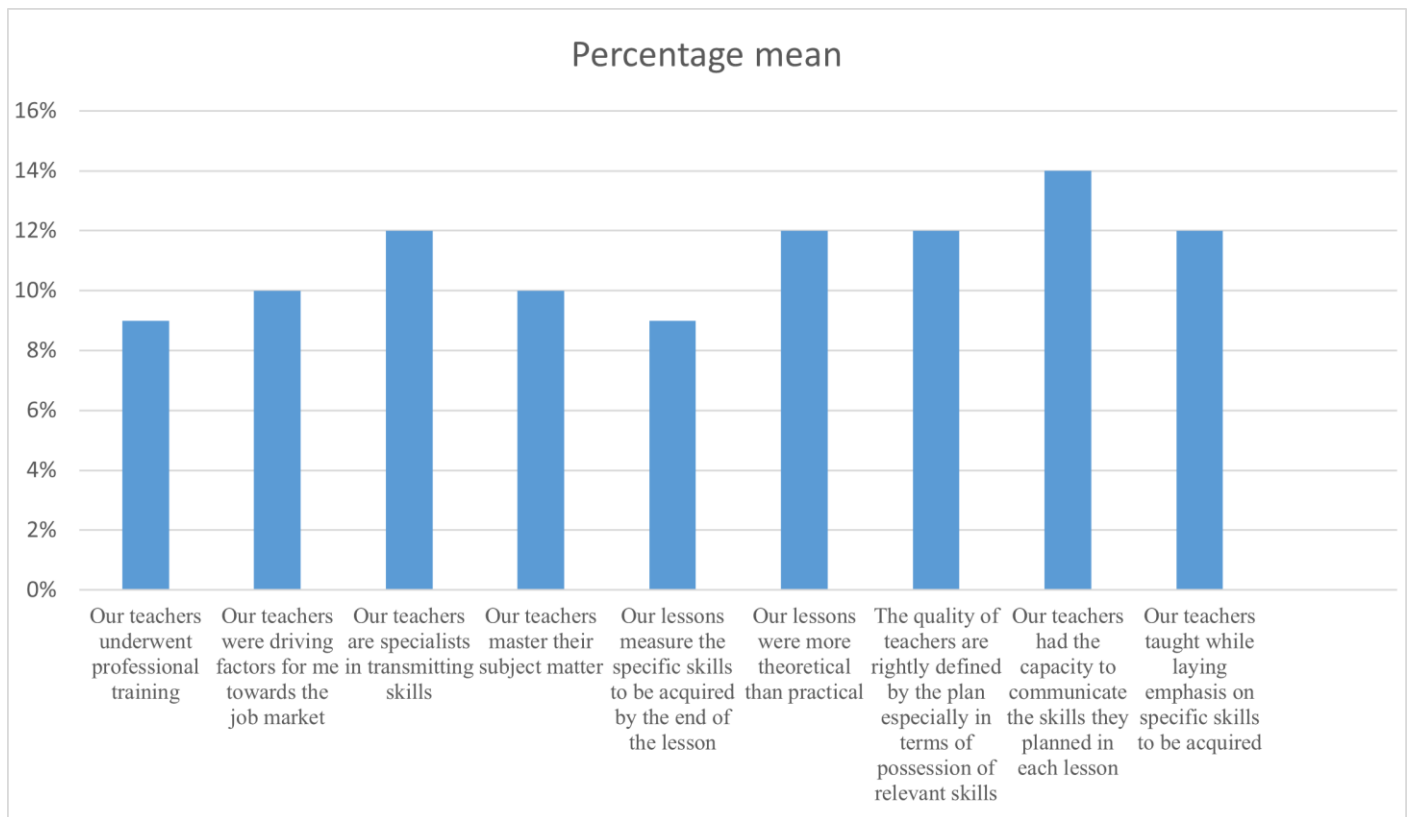
Our lessons were more theoretical than practical. Majority of respondents agreed with this item, indicating that the lessons were more focused on conceptual knowledge and theoretical understanding rather than on practical, hands-on experience. This suggests that the curriculum may not have been sufficiently oriented toward real-world applications of entrepreneurship skills. While theoretical knowledge is important, there seems to be a gap in preparing students with the practical skills necessary to succeed in the workplace or in launching their own businesses. It emphasizes a potential need for greater emphasis on applied learning.

The quality of teachers are rightly defined by the plan especially in terms of possession of relevant skills. Majority of the respondents agreed with this item, indicating that the quality of teaching was correctly evaluated based on the lesson plans, particularly regarding the possession of relevant teaching skills and competencies. This suggests that there is a recognized link between the quality of a teacher's performance and the alignment of lesson plans with the skills required for effective teaching, particularly in entrepreneurship education.

Our teachers had the capacity to communicate the skills they planned in each lesson. Majority of respondents strongly agreed with this item, highlighting that their teachers were skilled at communicating the skills they intended to teach in each lesson. This suggests that the teachers were effective in both lesson planning and delivery, ensuring that students could understand and internalize the skills being taught. This capacity is crucial for effective teaching, especially in subjects that require practical skill acquisition, such as entrepreneurship.

Our teachers taught while laying emphasis on specific skills to be acquired. Most students agreed with this item, indicating that their teachers focused on ensuring that students learned and mastered specific skills. This approach to teaching emphasizes the importance of skill development as a central aspect of the learning process, reinforcing the idea that the acquisition of practical, marketable skills is a key objective of the educational process.

## Descriptive Statistics for teachers' competence



Overall, the average mean value for teachers' competence is 2.69, which falls within the range of 2.50 to 3.24 on the four-point Likert scale. This indicates that majority of participants agree that teachers' competence supports the acquisition of students' entrepreneurial skills in secondary schools in Upper Sanaga Division of the Center region.

## Verification of Hypotheses

### Alternative Hypothesis (Ha)

There is a relationship between teacher competence and the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among secondary technical high school students in Upper Sanaga Division of the Center region.

### Statistical Hypothesis (H0)

There is no relationship between teacher competence and the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among secondary technical high school students in Upper Sanaga Division of the Center region.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is 0.993, which is greater than the critical value of 0.148 at the 0.01 level of significance ( $P < 0.01$ ). This allows us to reject the statistical hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a positive, strong, and significant relationship between teacher competence and the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by secondary technical high school students in the Upper Sanaga Division of the Centre region of Cameroon. In other words, this means that the competence of secondary school teachers is sufficient to facilitate the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in secondary schools in Upper Sanaga.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Lecturers' competence influences the variations that occur in the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by secondary school students in the Upper Sanaga of the Center region. The competence of the lecturer remains



key to how students learn and further apply in life. In this light, according to the World Bank (2008), a growing body of evidence suggests the learning crisis is, at its core, a teaching crisis. For students to learn, they need good quality teachers. The competence of lecturers plays a critical role in the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by secondary technical school students in Cameroon. The ability of educators to effectively impart knowledge, engage students in practical applications, and inspire entrepreneurial thinking can significantly influence the development of entrepreneurial skills among students.

Even though teachers may possess academic qualifications in education, many lack hands-on experience in entrepreneurship. Kuratko (2005) points out that teacher need to have direct experience in entrepreneurship to provide students with authentic insights into the challenges and rewards of running a business. Without this practical knowledge, it becomes difficult for teachers to inspire students or effectively demonstrate the entrepreneurial mindset required for success. In Cameroon, where many students are from communities with limited access to entrepreneurial models, competent teachers who can provide relevant and applicable knowledge can significantly enhance students' entrepreneurial abilities.

The pedagogical competence of lecturers plays a major role in how well students grasp entrepreneurial concepts. Henry et al. (2005) argue that entrepreneurship education should move beyond traditional, lecture-based instruction and incorporate experiential learning, case studies, role-playing, and real-life problem-solving activities. In Cameroon, where the educational system has historically relied on more formal and traditional methods, lecturers who use innovative, interactive teaching strategies can help students internalize entrepreneurial skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and decision-making.

Many students may be hesitant to embrace entrepreneurship due to fear of failure, lack of confidence, or lack of entrepreneurial mindset. Luthans & Youssef (2007) discuss how psychological capital (which includes self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience) is vital in fostering entrepreneurial intentions. Teachers, while present, may not be adequately equipped to build this mindset or to motivate students to take entrepreneurial risks and initiative.

Competent lecturers serve as mentors and role models to their students, especially in a field like entrepreneurship where the practical application of skills is just as important as theoretical knowledge. According to Fayolle (2007), the role of educators in providing mentorship, motivation, and guidance cannot be underestimated in fostering entrepreneurship in students. In Cameroon, lecturers who actively mentor students in the development of business plans, encourage them to participate in entrepreneurial projects, and connect them with local business communities can significantly enhance the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills.

Effective lecturers adapt the entrepreneurship curriculum to local needs and realities, ensuring that it aligns with the socio-economic context of Cameroon. Vesala (2016) argues that for entrepreneurship education to be effective, it must be relevant to the local context, addressing specific regional challenges such as limited access to capital, markets, and infrastructure. In Cameroon, lecturers who understand the challenges faced by local businesses and tailor their teaching to reflect these conditions are more likely to help students acquire applicable entrepreneurial skills that can be used in their communities.

The broader educational and societal environment may not be supportive of entrepreneurial ventures. Fayolle (2007) emphasizes that entrepreneurship education must be supported by an ecosystem that includes mentoring, access to funding, and a culture that values risk-taking and innovation. In many settings, especially rural or underdeveloped Division like Upper Sanaga in Cameroon, the lack of such an ecosystem can stifle students' entrepreneurial aspirations, even when teachers are available to provide guidance.

The competence of lecturers plays a pivotal role in shaping the entrepreneurial skills of secondary technical school students in Cameroon. Lecturers who possess both academic knowledge and practical experience, employ innovative teaching methods, act as mentors, and adapt their curriculum to local realities significantly enhance students' ability to acquire the skills needed to succeed as entrepreneurs. As Cameroon faces high

youth unemployment, improving lecturer competence in entrepreneurship education is a crucial step toward empowering students to create their own businesses and contribute to the country's economic growth.

We might ask ourselves several questions like, why are students not entrepreneurial despite teachers Presence. While many teachers may have the necessary knowledge to teach entrepreneurship, their teaching methods may be too theoretical and lack practical applications that would enable students to develop entrepreneurial skills. According to Vesala (2016), entrepreneurship education should provide practical, hands-on experiences that simulate real business challenges. Without such experiences, students may struggle to translate classroom learning into entrepreneurial action.

The curriculum in many technical and vocational schools often lacks depth in entrepreneurship training, and there may be a shortage of resources to implement effective entrepreneurial programs. As noted by Schaper (2014), the entrepreneurship education curriculum in many countries, including Cameroon, may not adequately cover the practical aspects of starting and running a business. Teachers may not have the resources or the institutional support needed to deliver more engaging, real-world entrepreneurial experiences.

While teachers are present in educational institutions, students may not be entrepreneurial due to a combination of factors, including a lack of practical experience, traditional teaching methods, insufficient curriculum depth, a gap in teacher competency, and psychological and systemic barriers. To enhance entrepreneurial outcomes, it is essential to equip teachers with both theoretical and practical skills in entrepreneurship, shift the focus of the curriculum to active learning, and foster a supportive environment that encourages innovation and risk-taking.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the competence of teachers in secondary technical high schools plays a vital role in the development of entrepreneurship skills among students, particularly in the Upper Sanaga Division of Cameroon (Henson, 2003). As demonstrated by the findings of this study, skilled teachers with appropriate training and pedagogical techniques are crucial for fostering an entrepreneurial mindset in students, which is essential for improving their employability and creativity (Amin & Okonjo, 2010). To address the pressing issue of unemployment and the mismatch between educational outcomes and market needs, it is essential to enhance teacher qualifications, adopt more interactive and hands-on teaching methods, and integrate entrepreneurship education into the curriculum (Anamuah-Mensah & Jato, 2008). By focusing on the professional development of teachers, Cameroon can better equip its youth with the skills necessary for self-employment and innovation, thus contributing to the country's broader economic growth (World Bank, 2011).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are some recommendations to address the issue of the disconnect between the presence of entrepreneurship education and the actual acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by students in Cameroon, particularly in the Upper Sanaga Division:

- Teachers should undergo regular professional development programs focused on entrepreneurship education to improve their skills in teaching entrepreneurial concepts and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset. These programs should include both theoretical and practical approaches, focusing on real-world business applications.
- Implement mentorship opportunities where experienced entrepreneurs or professionals in the field can guide teachers on how to better integrate entrepreneurship into their curriculum.
- Revise the entrepreneurship education curriculum to emphasize not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills such as business planning, financial management, problem solving, and innovation. Students should be given opportunities to work on real-life projects, engage with local entrepreneurs, and solve community challenges through entrepreneurship.

- Establish stronger partnerships between schools and local businesses to create opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience through internships, apprenticeships, and job-shadowing programs. This would give students exposure to the realities of entrepreneurship and the job market. Create a platform for alumni who have successfully ventured into business to share their experiences with students and provide mentorship.
- Move away from traditional lecture-based teaching methods to more interactive, student-centered approaches such as project-based learning and case studies that encourage collaboration, critical thinking, and practical problem solving. This would help students not only learn entrepreneurial skills but also actively apply them.

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