



Research Article

Attaining Educational Objectives in Secondary Schools in Cameroon's Kupe-Muanenguba Division: Are Administrative and Fiscal Reform Efforts Making a Difference?

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ABSTRACT



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As a means of tailoring practice to enhance the attainment of educational objectives at minimal cost, Cameroon's educational system, like those of many other countries, is undergoing modification through the implementation of policy reforms that have had diverse impacts on the educational landscape. This study investigated the extent to which ongoing administrative and fiscal reforms influence the attainment of educational objectives in secondary schools in the Kupe-Muanenguba Division of Cameroon. Guided by Goal Setting Theory, which posits that clearly defined and challenging goals enhance performance, the study examined whether governance reforms aimed at improving administrative efficiency and financial governance are being effectively implemented, and whether they facilitate measurable improvements in areas such as civic values, bilingualism, vocational skills, and infrastructure. A correlational survey design was used, with questionnaire as means for data collection. Data were collected from 193 teachers across government and mission schools and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings indicate that while educational objectives are moderately attained overall ($M = 3.10$), critical areas such as bilingual education, vocational training, and digital integration remain underdeveloped. Administrative reforms were rated as moderately implemented ($M = 2.75$), with notable gaps in leadership and teacher development, while fiscal reforms showed a higher level of implementation ($M = 3.50$), particularly in financial accountability. Statistically significant positive correlations were found between both administrative ($r = .363, p < .01$) and fiscal reforms ($r = .421, p < .01$) and the attainment of educational objectives, highlighting the importance of governance reforms in school improvement. To fully realise these benefits, the study recommends prioritising capacity-building for school leaders and teachers, especially in transformational leadership and digital pedagogy, and strengthening bilingual and vocational education through targeted language support and contextually relevant skills training. The findings provide practical insights for policymakers and education stakeholders aiming to enhance reform outcomes in Cameroon and other Sub-Saharan African contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

The attainment of educational objectives is a critical concern for national development and human capital formation, particularly in low and middle-income countries. In many countries in Sub-Saharan African, national governments, driven by increasing demand and the need to enhance access, equity, and quality has introduced wide ranging reforms that are geared toward strengthening school governance, promoting accountability, and ensuring that resources are put to optimal use at school level (World Bank, 2008). These efforts tie with broader goals of educational decentralisation, which aim to bring decision-making within the reach of local stakeholders and communities to improve relevance and responsiveness (Mekolle, 2024).

Education reform can be seen as the deliberate, systematic, and purposeful modification of educational standards to mirror societal values, carter for inefficiencies, and ready students for the future. It has to do with significant changes in educational laws, standards, methods, and policies that define a nation's school system (Mekolle & Manjo, 2025; UNESCO, 2021). In Cameroon, educational reform is intended to address weaknesses across various dimensions of the system, including administration, financing, curriculum, and pedagogical practices. Administrative reforms have often entailed changes in leadership structures, processes, policies, and practices that no longer align with the system's evolving vision (Cameron & Green, 2015). Concurrently, fiscal reforms have sought to improve educational outcomes through enhanced budgetary control, financial transparency, and

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increased school-level autonomy in managing both public and community-contributed resources, alongside the adoption of innovative financing mechanisms that leverage new sources of funding (Lumadi, 2020).

Where implemented effectively, these reforms are expected to create enabling environments for teaching and learning, thereby supporting the achievement of curriculum goals, reducing dropout rates, and improving student outcomes. However, secondary schools, which play a pivotal role in preparing learners for higher education and the workforce, continue to struggle with challenges such as inadequate funding, limited infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and shortages of qualified personnel (Republic of Cameroon, 2020). In Kupe-Muanenguba Division, like in other regions in Cameroon, the implementation and impact of reform policies remain inconsistent, bringing to mind questions as to how effective and sustainable reform efforts are. This study looks at how local actors view the administrative and fiscal reforms currently being implemented in secondary schools, and whether they make any difference in attaining the educational objectives that guide school operations in Kupe-Muanenguba Division. The study's relevance lies in its contribution to the ongoing discussions around educational governance and reform in Cameroon; its recommendations offer insights into the measures necessary for reforms to yield meaningful and equitable results.

Historical Context and the Conceptual Frame of Education Reform in Cameroon

Cameroon has witnessed a remarkable trend in educational reforms in alignment with shifting national priorities, global development agendas, and the need to address the sectorial challenges that have been experienced with time. Mekolle and Manjo (2025) detail successive reforms in the education system from independence to the present, with highlights made on curricular and pedagogic transformations. From an administrative and fiscal standpoint, Cameroon's education sector, at one point defined by its highly centralised structure, began embracing reform by the 1990s, in response to both internal inefficiencies and external pressures from the outside world, international development partners, and structural adjustment policies (Republic of Cameroon, 2009). Key global initiatives such as the Education for All movement, the Dakar Framework for Action, and the Structural Adjustment Programmes underscored the need to expand access to quality education while improving efficiency in resource management. These global pressures, coupled with national efforts, led to a wave of administrative and fiscal reforms, especially following the 1996 constitutional amendments that introduced decentralisation as a core national development strategy.

The 1998 Education Framework (Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998) anchored these reforms by outlining goals for intellectual, moral, civic, and vocational development and defining the roles of various stakeholders (school administrators, teachers, parents, students, economic operators, local authorities, etc.) in educational financing and governance. Section 12 of the law specifies that education is to be funded through a combination of state budgetary allocations, contributions from education partners, local authority appropriations, and other legal sources (Republic of Cameroon, 1998).

Further policy direction was provided by the Education Sector Strategy (2006–2011; 2013–2020) (Republic of Cameroon, 2006; 2013) and the Decentralisation Law No. 2004/017 of 22 July 2004, which transferred administrative and financial responsibilities to local councils and communities (Republic of Cameroon, 2004). These policies have one goal; to strengthen school governance by promoting collective management among

school principals, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), school management boards, and municipal authorities. Notwithstanding, the success of these reforms has been far from being the same across regions, basically due to differences in institutional capacity, coordination, and funding flows.

In recent years, policy instruments, namely the 2023–2030 Education-Training Sector Strategy (Republic of Cameroon, 2023a), National Development Strategy - 2020–2030 (Republic of Cameroon, 2020), Continental Education Strategy for Africa - 2016–2025 (African Union Commission, 2016), and the Sustainable Development Goals - 2015–2030 (United Nations, 2015) have thrown more weight to the importance of inclusive, equitable, and quality education. In the same manner, decree No. 2023/223 of 27 April 2023 (Republic of Cameroon, 2023b) have added more impetus to decentralisation through its provisions that bestow power to local councils to manage secondary school infrastructure, allocate resources, and oversee policy implementation based on local needs. These frameworks have vociferated the need for resources to be available in a sufficient manner and for persons responsible over them to ensure that they are managed properly so as to bring about the desired learning outcomes. The frameworks also stress the need for transparency in financial practices, alignment of curriculum with labour market demands, and stakeholder accountability.

Over time, changes in educational administration have largely focused on making school governance more effective by encouraging inclusive decision-making, strengthening the skills of school leaders, and shifting responsibilities from central authorities to local levels. At the same time, financial reforms have emerged in response to chronic funding shortages, with efforts directed toward involving local communities, ensuring fair distribution of resources, and promoting openness in how school funds are managed. Importantly, policy analysts caution that reform strategies must move beyond one-size-fits-all models and instead embrace contextual adaptation (Kaori, 2014). This is especially relevant in Kupe-Muanenguba Division, where schools face unique challenges and priorities. Though situated within the national education framework, secondary schools in the division have adopted locally responsive strategies to meet their educational goals more effectively.

Notable changes in school administration across the region include a growing emphasis on transformational leadership, more active participation from various stakeholders, and a stronger role for parents in school-related matters. Interviews with school principals reveal specific reform efforts such as banning corporal punishment and arbitrary fee drives, supporting pregnant learners to remain in school in alignment with child protection and inclusive education principles (Cameroon MINESEC, 2022), streamlining practice against clear school mission statements, and strengthening teacher professional development through targeted training initiatives. School-based governance has been further bolstered through active PTAs and collaboration with local NGOs. In terms of school finances, recent reforms have focused on strengthening transparency and accountability. Practices like insistence on all fees to the schools to be deposited into bank accounts which can be verifiable, limiting the amount to be given by parents' associations (e.g., setting them at 25,000 FCFA per student) and issuing each student with a unique identification number which can be used in the tracking of administrative and financial information have been adopted. Such measures aim at being very fair and facilitate to direct funds to those priorities, such as instructional materials and facility upgrades, and staffing.

These reforms taken together indicate a movement towards educative forms of government that are more responsive and more decentralised. They desire to make learning more effective and

help to strengthen accountability, as well as to encourage the achievement of school-based objectives. When referring to secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division, educational goals include the intellectual, civic, moral and vocational education of students, the inclusion of digital tools in the educational process, the “safe and clean school” programme, infrastructure development, the advancement of STEM subjects, the increase in the scope of technical and vocational education (TVET) and the development of bilingualism in official languages (English and French) and indigenous tongues, including Akóṣṣē, the language of the Bakossi people (Mekolle & Kinyuy, 2025; Republic of Cameroon, 1998). However, with all these efforts, little empirical evidence exists on the level of implementation and the impact on education outcomes. This poses the necessity of conducting research on the implications of administrative and financial reforms on the attainment of the educational goals guiding school operations in the division.

Theoretical Background

The research of the present paper relies on the Goal Setting Theory, which was developed by Edwin Locke in the 1960s, and then further elaborated alongside Gary Latham. Fundamentally, the theory implies that individuals would always do a better job when they are aiming at attaining certain goals which are difficult than when they are pursuing less-defined and less demanding goals. It points out five features that increase the effectiveness of goals, including comprehension, difficulty, devotion, feedback and administrative intricacy (Locke & Latham, 2002). These values aid in making people stay motivated, concentrated and determined in their quest to achieve the desirable outcomes. They should be large and ambitious goals that cause effort but at the same time realistic in order not to frustrate people. Frequent appraisal is also necessary because through it individuals and organisations can monitor the progress and make the appropriate changes as they go on.

Goal Setting Theory provides a useful framework in examining how schools can leverage the power of formulation of clear, measurable goals in order to push genuine change. In secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division, the desired outcomes in specific areas of interest, like improved learning conditions and results, an updated infrastructure, an enhanced science, technology and vocational programme and the encouragement of bilingual and indigenous languages education serves as the parameters of success. These initiatives should be supplemented by such administrative and financial changes as decentralisation of decision-making, bringing more transparency to school financial matters, and facilitating the increase of stakeholders’ engagement in the process. Ideally, these reforms must assist schools to establish clear set priorities, keep focused with frequent feedback, and develop an atmosphere of collective commitment among the educators, students, and administrators. The theory is applied in the research to determine whether indeed these transformations are establishing the right environment to achieve the desired outcomes or the failure to meet the targeted expectations is the weakness in the implementation processes of the reforms.

Statement of the Problem

Attaining educational goals is central to the overall success of any education system, and there can never be an exaggeration of its relevance. When schools are able to meet their objectives, the effects go far beyond the classroom, extending to contribution to stronger civic engagement, economic development, and greater social cohesion (UNESCO, 2016; Republic of Cameroon, 1998). In Kupe-Muanenguba Division, however, reaching these educational targets continues to be a major challenge, despite the ambitions laid out in national policies like the 1998 Education

Law. Research conducted in the area points to noticeable gaps in how schools are performing in relation to their stated goals. Reports from teachers, for example, suggest that many students struggle with foundational academic skills, particularly in areas like critical thinking and analytical reasoning. These shortcomings are often reflected in poor examination results and raise concerns about the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning processes (Mekolle & Kinyuy, 2025).

Schools’ demonstrable inability to effectively achieve their key objectives is occurring at a time when considerable reforms have been initiated to improve educational service delivery. The persistent underperformance raises critical concerns about the effectiveness and depth of these reforms, which appear to be more symbolic than transformative, especially given the significant contextual challenges, such as weak community engagement in school governance, limited financial autonomy, inadequate banking facilities, and poor internet connectivity and communication networks. Despite the growing body of literature on school performance in Cameroon (e.g., Abety & Ndamsa, 2025; Yaro & Yufela, 2021), research has not systematically examined the influence of administrative and fiscal reforms on the actual attainment of educational objectives. This constitutes a critical research gap that this study seeks to address. The findings are expected to support school leaders, education administrators, and policymakers in identifying effective reform strategies, addressing gaps in implementation, and enhancing accountability frameworks—all of which could increase the potential of reforms to promote the achievement of intended educational objectives.

Study Objectives

The research objectives that steer this study were two-fold:

1. To find out the extent to which ongoing administrative reforms increase achievement of educational objectives in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division.
2. To determine the degree to which existing fiscal reforms are playing the role of supporting the achievement of educational goals in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division.

Hypotheses

1. Ongoing administrative reforms are lacking in a significant association with the achievement of educational goals in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division.
2. The existing fiscal reforms do not play any significant role towards achievement of educational goals in secondary schools, Kupe-Muanenguba Division.

Empirical Review

International studies provide cases of important lessons that can be learned on the effectiveness of administrative and financial reforms in educational outcomes; lessons that are very crucial when considering the assessment of similar endeavours in Kupe-Muanenguba Division. In Nigeria, Alagbu (2017) studied reforms in educational administration and planning towards the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Although these policies were ambitious, there was the problem of success which was dampened by corruption, poor infrastructure, low funding, lack of continuity in the policies, and incompetent staff. Such barriers posed a challenge towards achieving education goals and an emphasis on good leadership and active political will to spearhead significant changes was highlighted accordingly.

Thailand has a little bit different view. In the work by Haruthaithanasan (2017), the impact of administrative reforms on the school performance was investigated with regard to such aspects as the effectiveness of leadership, motivation of teachers, and the student achievement level. It was found that the reforms enhanced the morale of teachers and the functioning of

organisations, though they were not very affective on the real learning outcomes of students; which were based on the structural equation modeling. This was the most important lesson that the reforms in administration and instructions must be coordinated to deliver actual changes in success.

Chile performed better, in comparison. Murnane et al. (2017) evaluated the impact of the Preferential School Subsidy Law (SEP), which was focused on the improvement of funding support to disadvantaged students with the help of specific funding and enhanced accountability. The reforms resulted in high improvement in student test scores and contributed to the reduction of the income-related achievement gaps. This case pins to how focused financial interventions, when combined with oversight mechanisms, can lead to measurable improvements; a pattern that may be of informative value to fiscal policy in Kupe-Muanenguba.

Duan et al. (2022) evaluated the results of school finance reform in Arkansas in the U.S. Although the reforms led to the lessening of certain disparities, gains were unequal. Districts with fewer resources and higher proportions of minority students often remained among the lowest performers. The research indicates that on the one hand, fiscal reforms can help to minimise inequality, but they are not the eradication of the problem, structural challenges should also be solved to achieve better results in reducing achievement gaps.

Further evidence from the U.S. by Jackson et al. (2014) presents a more long-term view. Their analysis of finance reforms dating back to the 1970s found that sustained increases in per-student spending significantly improved educational attainment, future earnings, and even reduced poverty among students from low-income backgrounds. This is the impact of the strength of persistent investment in education. This is what Lafortune and colleagues (2016) confirm. Their research showed that after 1990, reforms that were directed to boosting funding in low-income school districts led to gradual improvements in student performance. The slow but steady progress shows the importance of patience and long-term commitment when implementing reforms.

Collectively, these studies identify some few common themes which are instrumental in knowing what makes an educational reform work; the administration should run well and leadership is the mark of success; the approach taken regarding money should be fair and accountability systems should support it, and, above all, long term investment and consistency in policies is the key to conducting any real progress. Such lessons have implied that education reforms should not necessarily be properly planned and sufficiently funded but must be adapted to the context on a long-term basis and in receiving continuous check-ups to achieve a substantial impact on achievement of education goals.

Although the reviewed studies can help a great deal towards the understanding of this topic, there are a number of research gaps in them that this study seeks to address. The current base of the literature remains abroad, and there is hardly any empirical evidence being generated from Central African countries like Cameroon. Such studies are extensive in the scope of the study and methodological aspects; however, these mostly capture national-level changes or a broad-scaled policy initiative and thus fail to provide a perspective on the localised educational structure and the interaction of reforms and results at the sub-national or divisional perspective. Moreover, much of these publications do not isolate those effects of administrative reforms (or fiscal reforms) per se but too often these are lumped together with other elements of educational reform packages. This paper fills these gaps by conducting a self-contained analysis of the degree to which the continuing administrative reforms and the fiscal

reforms affect achievement of the education aims of Kupe-Muanenguba Division. By so doing, the study adds empirical richness to the efforts of reform evaluation in Sub-Saharan Africa where engineered and evidence-based policy research in this form is extremely limited.

Methodology

Research Design

A correlational survey research design was adopted for this study. The design was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data from a representative sample and statistically determine the strength and direction of associations between the variables without manipulating them. Data was collected with the help of structured questionnaires and was analyzed with the help of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, as it is a conventional method of analyzing a correlational study in the field of educational research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design can be very helpful in the investigation of naturally occurring variables, in the cases where one would be interested in determining trends or correlations, not causes and effects. It also allows for broader generalisation of results in case the sampling is done efficiently and increases the robustness of the conclusions that are stated about the relationship between the variables (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The correlational survey design involved in this study provided a good platform to test the measure to which the governance reforms are associated with the achievement of educational goals in the study region.

Area of the Study

The research took place in Kupe-Muanenguba Division which is located in Cameroon's South-West Region. This administrative division has three sub-divisions i.e., Tombel, Nguti and Bangem. All these sub-divisions are a combination of semi-urban and rural societies. The economy in the area is predominantly agricultural whereby most people depend on food (cocoyam, cassava, etc.) and cash crop (cocoa and coffee) farming. Simultaneously, there are many publics as well as mission managed secondary schools in the division. All of these schools vary in size, the quality of infrastructure, and the extent of available resources, which makes the educational landscape a diversified situation that is quite suitable to conduct a study of the ways in which the reforms are occurring.

The selection of Kupe-Muanenguba to undertake this research has a number of reasons. To begin with, it is actively involved in current reform processes in the country regarding education. Second, it is among the least researched areas in that respect. Third, it is known to be one of the most underserved divisions as far resources to education are involved. In such settings where access to funding, infrastructure, and personnel is often limited, implementing innovations successfully can help reduce inequities, improve learning environments, and make more efficient use of scarce resources. These characteristics make Kupe-Muanenguba a compelling case for assessing how educational reforms are being put into practice and how effective they are in helping schools meet their objectives.

Population of the Study

The study focused on teachers working in government and mission secondary schools across Kupe-Muanenguba Division in Cameroon's South-West Region. Based on the latest data provided by the Divisional Delegation of Secondary Education (2024), there are 37 functioning secondary schools spread across the three sub-divisions in the area. Together, these schools employ approximately 724 teachers. These educators play key roles not only in delivering the curriculum but also in managing school operations and putting educational policies and reforms into practice.

Although background information regarding the types of reforms in place and the general objectives guiding school operations was initially gathered from school principals to support the contextual framing of the study, the actual research population consisted exclusively of teachers. Teachers were preferred as the primary respondents because they play a central role in the operationalisation of administrative and fiscal reforms, and they directly influence the attainment of educational objectives through instructional practices. Their firsthand, day-to-day experiences provided the most reliable and relevant insights into how reforms are implemented and how they impact school outcomes.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study drew its sample from a total of 200 teachers working in selected government and mission secondary schools across Kupe-Muanenguba Division. To ensure fair representation across the three sub-divisions and between the two types of schools (government and mission), a stratified random sampling method was used. Teachers within each stratum were selected randomly to reduce bias and give high chances that the results would have been generalised in the wider body of teachers in the division. A sample of 200 teachers was chosen based on the table that has been developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and indicates that such a figure is suitable in case of a population consisting of several hundreds of people. Such sampling methodology did not only enhance the external validity of the research, but it also made sure that the data can represent the reality of the implementation of the reform on the school level (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Instrument

The information of the research was collected in the form of a structured questionnaire titled “*Teachers’ Perceptions of Reforms and School Success*.” The research tool was well designed to determine the opinion of teachers on the manner in which the administrative and financial reforms are being implemented, and perception on the level of improvement towards the achievement of major educational aim in the secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division. The questionnaire was designed with 28 closed-ended questions that were categorised into three sections. Section A was devoted to simple demographic data like gender, the years of experience in teaching, and the type of school. Section B had 15 items which were in a bid to evaluate the perceptions of the teachers concerning the degree to which administrative and fiscal reforms had been implemented. Section C contained 10 items assessing respondents’ views on the achievement of important educational objectives, such as student academic performance, civic responsibility, development of infrastructural facilities, and so on.

Section B was rated on a 5-point Likert scale of 1-5 (Very Low to Very High); this gave space to the people to specify their view of the level of reform implementation. Section C used a similar 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), to assess the level of agreement with items related to school performance and goal accomplishment. This format enabled the subjective opinions to be analyzed numerically, making it suitable for both descriptive and inferential statistics. A pilot testing of the same questionnaire in a similar environment but not within the study area was required in order to establish its reliability and absence of ambiguities. The split-half reliability was also used to determine internal consistency by correlating the responses on odd and even numbered items. The achieved reliability coefficient was $r = .81$, which presupposes a high level of internal consistency (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The standardisation of the data collection was achieved with the help of a single well-

structured questionnaire, allowing for precise and contextually valuable results thanks to the respondents.

Data Collection Process

The research was administered between May and September 2024 wherein a team of trained research assistants was hired to carry out the data collection of the study. The research assistants were taught with a good background in social science research prior to carrying out the data collection of the research. The study commenced by collecting secondary data through considering related policy directives, scholarly articles and journals in order to enhance a good historical and theoretical background of the study. There was also a series of informal consultation with school principals to get some background information on the kind of reforms undertaken and the overall goal that directed school operations. This was followed by the collection of primary quantitative data using the Direct Delivery Technique, where printed questionnaires were delivered in person to teachers across the selected government and mission secondary schools. This face-to-face approach promoted personal engagement, encouraged high participation, and allowed respondents to seek clarification where needed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Official authorisation was secured from the Divisional Delegation of Secondary Education, and permission for data collection was obtained from school principals. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, and 193 were correctly completed and returned, yielding a 96.5% response rate, which was considered adequate for the study’s analytical needs.

Throughout the data collection process, ethical standards were strictly upheld. Teachers’ participation was entirely voluntary, and each respondent was informed of the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any stage, and the confidentiality of their responses. No personal data were obtained, all of which was utilised only during research activities. Consent statements were clearly provided in each questionnaire and only those respondents who consented voluntarily could go through the survey. This action assisted in establishment of an environment of respect and trust and this enhanced ethical basis of the research.

Procedure for Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was implemented by both descriptive and inferential examples of statistics; the main instrument was IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 21). Means (M) and standard deviation (SD) were applied as descriptive statistics to compare teachers’ perceptions towards achievement of education potential and how well the administrative and fiscal changes were made within the selected schools. These steps supported to interpret the data in the system of the Likert scale and at the same time provided clear impression of overall trends and patterns. The findings were stated in clearly categorised and clearly labeled tables that made comparisons easier and provided significant gems of knowledge. Such methodology aligns with the methods known to analyse ordinal Likert-type data within the framework of educational study (Boone & Boone, 2012).

To be able to think deeper into the level of interpretation, inferential statistics were also employed in order to substantiate the hypotheses presented by the study. In particular, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) has been used to test the connection between the two independent variables i.e. administrative and fiscal reforms and the dependent variable which was the achievement of the education objectives. The selection of Pearson r was based on the fact that the data were considered interval-level and the relationships under research were considered to be linear (Pallant, 2020). Significance level of p was set at < 0.01 in order to have high confidence in the results.

These augmentative descriptive and inferential procedures enabled the work not only to give out a description of the trends but also evaluated whether the observed results had statistical significance or not, thus stimulating improvement in the quality of the results in terms of reliability and clarity.

Findings

The results are introduced with respect to the research objectives and hypotheses in the study. The section begins with teachers' evaluations of how well educational objectives are being met in secondary schools within Kupe-Muanenguba Division. This is followed by an analysis of how administrative reforms are being implemented, and the results of hypothesis testing to determine whether these reforms are making a measurable impact on educational outcomes. The same structure is then applied to fiscal reforms. The section concludes with a summary that reflects on the central research question, tying together the key results from across the study.

Attainment of Educational Objectives in Secondary Schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Depicting Teachers' Opinion on Attainment of Educational Objectives of Secondary Schools

Opinion Statement	M	SD	Decision
Students uphold strong moral values in their interactions within and outside the school environment	3.10	0.80	Divided
Students exhibit civic responsibility (e.g., through participation in school and community-based activities)	3.80	0.70	Agreed
I effectively integrate digital tools into teaching and learning processes.	3.00	0.85	Divided
The school maintains a safe learning environment	3.70	0.65	Agreed
The school maintains a clean environment	3.60	0.60	Agreed
Students actively engage in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) related subjects	3.20	0.75	Divided
Students acquire vocational skills	2.20	0.80	Disagreed
Students demonstrate intellectual growth (e.g., through problem-solving, inquiry, and critical thinking)	3.00	0.80	Divided
There is noticeable improvement in school facilities	3.10	0.85	Divided
Students communicate in both English and French	2.30	0.75	Disagreed
Average	3.10	0.76	Moderate

Likert scale range (M): Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.49), Disagree (1.50 – 2.49), Divided (2.50 – 3.49), Agree (3.50 – 4.49), Strongly Agree (4.50 – 5.00)

The statistics presented in Table 1 show that the overall level of attainment of educational objectives in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division is moderate, with an average mean score of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 0.76. Teachers agreed that students generally demonstrate civic responsibility, and that schools maintain safe and clean learning environments, indicating some success in social and environmental aspects of schooling. However, divided opinions were observed in key domains such as

digital integration, intellectual growth, moral development, STEM engagement, and infrastructure improvement. This suggests variability or inconsistency in how these goals are being achieved across schools. Notably, teachers disagreed that students acquire vocational skills or effectively communicate in both English and French, pointing to gaps in bilingual and vocational training components of the curriculum. These results highlight that while some foundational objectives are being met, critical areas tied to 21st-century competencies and national policy priorities, such as bilingualism, vocational education, and digital learning require stronger implementation strategies and support systems for improved attainment.

Research Objective 1: To find out the extent to which ongoing administrative reforms increase achievement of educational objectives in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division

Division

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on Teachers Appraisal of Level of Implementation of Administrative Reforms in Secondary Schools

Observed reform	M	SD	Level of Implementation
Use of transformational leadership practices such as staff empowerment and shared vision	2.10	0.75	Low
Stakeholder (e.g., parents, teachers and students) engagement in school administrative decisions	3.10	0.80	Moderate
Observation of the ban on corporal punishment in school	3.00	0.70	Moderate
No more arbitrary fee drive	3.00	0.65	Moderate
Support for pregnant learners to remain in school	2.90	0.75	Moderate
School activities and administrative practices being guided by mission statement	3.10	0.70	Moderate
Teacher professional development through training and workshops	2.20	0.85	Low
Involvement of The Parent-Teacher Association in school governance	3.00	0.75	Moderate
Collaboration with local NGOs to support educational initiatives	2.30	0.80	Low
Average	2.75	0.75	Moderate

Likert scale range (M): Very low (1.00 – 1.49), Low (1.50 – 2.49), Moderate (2.50 – 3.49), High (3.50 – 4.49), Very High (4.50 – 5.00)

The statistics presented in Table 2 show that the overall level of implementation of administrative reforms in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division is moderate, although uneven, with an average mean score of 2.75 and a standard deviation of 0.75. Teachers perceive those reforms such as the ban on corporal punishment, involvement of stakeholders and the PTA, and alignment with school mission statements are being implemented to a moderate degree. This reflects a level of administrative structure and policy consciousness in school leadership. However, key strategic reforms such as the use of transformational leadership, professional development for teachers, and partnerships with NGOs are rated low, indicating significant gaps in areas that could have a transformative impact on school governance and teacher effectiveness. The low mean scores in these areas suggest limited support mechanisms and insufficient leadership capacity to drive meaningful change. In conclusion, while some reform policies are taking root in school administration, there remains a need for stronger leadership practices, teacher support systems, and external collaboration to ensure more comprehensive and sustainable implementation of administrative reforms.

Findings on Research Hypothesis 1

H01: Ongoing administrative reforms are lacking in a significant association with the achievement of educational goals in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division.

Table 3: Correlation between Implementation of Administrative Reforms and the Attainment of Educational Objectives in Secondary Schools

		Administrative Reforms	Attainment of Educational Objectives
Administrative Reforms	Pearson Correlation	1	.363**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	193	193
Attainment of Educational Objectives	Pearson Correlation	.363**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	193	193
**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).			

The results in Table 3 indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between the implementation of administrative reforms and the attainment of educational objectives in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division ($r = .363, p < .01$). As such, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that administrative reforms when effectively implemented can contribute meaningfully to achieving the intended outcomes of secondary education in the division. The moderate strength of this relationship suggests that while reforms are helpful, their effectiveness depends on consistent and comprehensive application, especially in leadership, stakeholder involvement, and teacher support structures.

Research Objective 2. To determine the degree to which existing fiscal reforms are playing the role of supporting the achievement of educational goals in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on Teachers Appraisal of Level of Implementation of Fiscal Reforms in Secondary Schools

Observed reform	M	SD	Level of Implementation
No more arbitrary fee collections in school.	3.00	0.70	Moderate
School fees deposited into traceable bank accounts	3.10	0.75	Moderate
PTA levy per student within the approved limit	4.60	0.65	Very high
Unique student identification numbers used for financial monitoring	3.80	0.70	High
Transparency in financial transactions related to school funds	3.20	0.80	Moderate
Traceability in financial transactions related to school funds	3.30	0.75	Moderate
Average	3.50	0.73	High

Likert scale range (M): Very low (1.00 – 1.49), Low (1.50 – 2.49), Moderate (2.50 – 3.49), High (3.50 – 4.49), Very High (4.50 – 5.00)

The statistics presented in Table 4 show that the implementation of fiscal reforms in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division is relatively high, with an average mean score of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 0.73. Teachers generally perceive that significant progress has been made in enforcing fiscal discipline and accountability mechanisms within schools. Notably, the statement regarding the PTA levy being kept within approved limits received the highest rating (M = 4.60), indicating strong compliance with official financial guidelines. Similarly, the use of unique student identification numbers for financial monitoring scored high (M = 3.80), suggesting an emerging culture of data-driven financial oversight. Meanwhile, responses concerning financial transparency, traceability, and the elimination of arbitrary fee collections all fell within the moderate range (M = 3.00–3.30), pointing to partial implementation or room for improvement in how financial information is shared and verified. Overall, the data indicates that core aspects of fiscal reform are taking hold, especially in regulated fee structures and banking practices. However, enhancing transparency and full traceability of school financial transactions remains necessary to achieve a more robust and trustworthy fiscal management system.

Findings on Research Hypothesis 2

H02: The existing fiscal reforms do not play any significant role towards achievement of educational goals in secondary schools, Kupe-Muanenguba Division.

Table 3: Correlation between Implementation of Fiscal Reforms and the Attainment of Educational Objectives in Secondary Schools

		Fiscal Reforms	Attainment of Educational Objectives
Fiscal Reforms	Pearson Correlation	1	.421**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	193	193
Attainment of Educational Objectives	Pearson Correlation	.421**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	193	193
**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).			

The statistics presented in Table 5 indicate a moderate positive correlation ($r = .421, p < .01$) between the implementation of fiscal reforms and the attainment of educational objectives in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division. This correlation is statistically significant, suggesting that improvements in fiscal transparency, accountability, and regulation are associated with better realisation of educational goals. Given that the average level of fiscal reform implementation was rated high ($M = 3.50$), and attainment of educational objectives remained at a moderate level ($M = 3.10$), the data imply that fiscal reforms are contributing positively, though not overwhelmingly, to educational success. These findings reject the null hypothesis that “Current fiscal reforms have no significant influence on the attainment of educational objectives...”, and instead support the conclusion that effective fiscal governance, especially practices such as PTA levy regulation, traceable banking, and transparent transactions plays a meaningful role in improving educational delivery. The moderate strength of the correlation also suggests that while fiscal reforms matter, other factors (e.g., administrative practices, instructional quality, and community engagement) likely also influence educational outcomes and should be addressed concurrently for greater impact.

Summarily, the study found that both administrative and fiscal reforms positively and significantly influence the attainment of educational objectives in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division. Administrative reforms showed a moderate correlation ($r = .363$), while fiscal reforms had a slightly stronger correlation ($r = .421$) with attainment educational objectives. Although attainment of objectives remains moderate overall ($M = 3.10$), the results suggest that effective implementation of governance reforms, particularly in financial accountability and leadership practices, plays an important role in improving education. However, further efforts are needed to strengthen key areas such as teacher development, bilingual education, and digital integration to achieve higher outcomes.

Discussions

The findings of this study reveal that the overall attainment of educational objectives in secondary schools in Kupe-Muanenguba Division is moderate, with significant variation across specific domains such as moral development, STEM engagement, bilingual proficiency, and vocational training. While teachers agreed that students generally exhibit civic responsibility and that schools maintain clean and safe environments, they expressed divided opinions on students’ intellectual growth and digital literacy, and disagreed on the attainment of bilingual and

vocational education objectives. These findings indicate there are national imperatives concerning an imbalance in educational policy execution as well as hint that problems remain relative to curriculum delivery, infrastructure, and support systems of learners (Republic of Cameroon, 2023; Mekolle & Kinyuy, 2025).

In case of administrative reforms, the study revealed that it was carried out moderately general, although the degree of advancement differed in individual parts. The changes that were done, including raising stakeholder participation and implementing the corporal punishment ban were relatively nicely carried out. But more important issues such as transformational leadership, teacher professional growth and NGO cooperation got reduced scores by the respondents. These findings are consistent with previous studies which reveal that reforms in education in Sub-Saharan Africa have been largely affected by poor institutional capacity, inadequate training and poor leadership development (World Bank, 2008). The state of statistical analysis has proven that attainment of educational objectives has moderate though significant correlation with administrative reforms ($r = .363, p < .01$). It implies that the performance of schools gets better in the case when the practices of administration, and, in particular, participatory and supportive leadership, are successfully implemented. The same is proven by Haruthaithanasan (2017).

The implementation level on the fiscal side was quite high as indicated in the study. Practices like setting clear limits on PTA contributions, making school fee deposits via bank accounts that are easy to trace, as well as employing student ID numbers in order to keep track of them, have been embraced in large scale. These are practices that coincide with national policies which seek to enhance transparency and promote the decentralisation of education finances management (Republic of Cameroon, 2020; Lumadi, 2020). The relationship between fiscal reforms and the achievement of educational objectives was also positive and statistically significant ($r = .421, p < .01$), which supports the view that transparent and accountable financial practices bring significant contribution to school outcomes. The finding is in accordance with the studies of Murnane et al. (2017) and Lafortune et al. (2016) who found that quality and equity in education may be improved through well-aimed purposes of financial reformation.

Although such encouraging findings can be regarded, the moderate value of the correlations suggests that administrative and fiscal reforms exclusively can be insufficient to achieve educational objectives fully. Motivation of teachers, availability of learning infrastructure as well as digital tools and participation of the community are also other crucial factors that play a significant role. Specifically, poor performance in such spheres as vocational training and bilingual education indicates the structural loopholes that are to be addressed by more extensive, case-specific interventions (UNESCO, 2016; Haruthaithanasan, 2017). The effectiveness of the current initiatives would probably not be very high without a series of coordinated efforts that unify funding, leadership development, continuous training, and supervision.

In short, although administrative and fiscal reforms in Kupe-Muanenguba Division have contributed to establishing a base to lift the educational standards, they have demonstrated undoubtedly effective only on the condition of consistency, responsiveness to the contexts they are placed in, and assertive stakeholder participation. The results provide support to the concept stressed by Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 2002) which implies the necessity of reforms being strictly formulated in accordance with the determined educational objectives. This orientation leads to the direction of use of resources, assists in tracking progress, and encourages long-term advances. To make a

difference, education outcomes require investments in capacity-building, inclusion in governance and routine assessment by education stakeholders so that change can be realised by producing equivalence in the outcomes of learning.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore how ongoing administrative and fiscal reforms are affecting the achievement of educational objectives in secondary schools across Kupe-Muanenguba Division. The findings show that, overall, schools are making moderate progress toward these goals. However, important areas like bilingual education, vocational training, and digital integration remain underdeveloped and need more focused attention. While administrative reforms are being implemented to some extent, the study uncovered significant gaps, particularly in the promotion of transformational leadership, opportunities for teacher development, and active collaboration with key stakeholders. These areas will require stronger commitment and strategic investment if reforms are to make a deeper and more lasting impact on educational outcomes in the division. Fiscal reforms, on the other hand, showed a higher level of implementation, particularly in areas of financial accountability and transparency. The correlation analysis confirmed that both administrative ($r = .363$) and fiscal reforms ($r = .421$) significantly influence the achievement of educational objectives, reinforcing the critical role of governance structures in shaping school outcomes.

Despite the positive correlations, the moderate nature of both reform implementation and outcome attainment suggests that existing efforts, while meaningful, are not yet fully transformative. Achieving comprehensive educational improvement requires a more integrated and sustained approach; one that addresses leadership development, strengthens teacher capacity, ensures equitable resource allocation, and reinforces accountability at all levels. This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the separate impacts of administrative and fiscal reforms. It further offers practical insights for education stakeholders by demonstrating the value of decentralised leadership, participatory governance, and transparent financial practices in improving school performance. For policymakers, the study reinforces the need for targeted investment in leadership development and financial infrastructure, and for monitoring mechanisms that ensure reform policies are translated into tangible outcomes at the school level. These contributions are not only relevant to Cameroon but also to broader efforts across Sub-Saharan Africa to enhance educational quality through effective reform implementation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Ministry of Secondary Education, in collaboration with local education authorities, intensify capacity-building initiatives for school leaders and teachers, particularly in the areas of transformational leadership, digital pedagogy, and inclusive instructional practices. Professional development programmes should be continuous, practical, and context-specific, with emphasis on leadership training, innovative classroom strategies, and the use of digital tools. Given the low scores on teacher development and digital integration, such investments will enhance teachers' ability to implement reforms effectively and improve the intellectual and technological competencies of students.

Secondly, there is a need to strengthen the institutional framework for bilingual and vocational education in secondary schools. The study showed that students struggle to communicate in both official languages and lack adequate vocational skills. To

address this, curriculum delivery in both English and French should be reinforced through targeted language support programmes, including after-school language labs and peer tutoring systems. At the same time, vocational training programmes should be expanded, adequately resourced, and linked to local economic activities to ensure their relevance and sustainability. This will better align education with Cameroon's national development goals and labour market demands.

Third, both the government and school authorities need to strengthen financial transparency and accountability at the school level. Although fiscal reforms have made some progress, more concrete steps are needed to ensure school funds are fully traceable and spending is consistently monitored. This could involve introducing digital tools for financial reporting, conducting regular audits of school accounts, and publicly displaying financial statements so communities can see how resources are being used. Bringing strength to these systems would not only instill confidence among stakeholders but also contribute to making sure that the available funds will be invested in most imminent teaching and learning requirements.

Lastly, effective reform needs wider and more organised involvement in school governance, especially from parents, community leaders, and NGOs within the immediate society. Although the research established some degree of stakeholder engagement, this engagement was moderate in most cases. The work of collaboration must be purposeful and supported in order to have reforms actualise effectively. Parents and teacher associations, as well as the school management boards, are recommended to receive training, and more instructions on how to actively engage in the management and decision-making processes of any given school. At the same time, local NGOs should be encouraged to support schools by providing learning materials, infrastructure, or training for staff. This broad-based design would help to promote a common responsibility and a better local responsiveness of reforms thus making them more sustainable with time.

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