

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-59070

Title: TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES IN BENIN: FROM COLONIAL LEGACY TO TEACHER TRAINING CHALLENGES

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		X		
Techn. Quality		X		
Clarity				X
Significance			X	

Reviewer's ID: JPR- 212

Detailed Reviewer's Report

General Assessment:

This manuscript addresses a highly relevant and important topic: the historical evolution and current challenges of teacher training colleges in Benin. The paper's central argument—that the colonial legacy continues to shape the structures, curricula, and practices of these institutions, resulting in a gap between training and the needs of the national education system—is compelling and well-worth investigating. The author demonstrates a solid understanding of the relevant theoretical frameworks, drawing on functionalist theories, school effectiveness theories, and theories of innovation and change, as well as dependency and cultural imperialism theories. The inclusion of detailed tables listing public and private teacher training institutions in Benin is a valuable contribution, providing concrete context for the analysis.

However, the manuscript suffers from significant weaknesses that prevent it from reaching its full potential and meeting the standards of a scholarly journal. These include a lack of methodological rigor and transparency, a weak presentation and analysis of results, an over-reliance on description rather than critical analysis, and significant formatting and language issues. The paper reads more like a policy brief or a report than a rigorous empirical study. The manuscript requires major revisions to strengthen its methodological foundation, deepen its critical analysis, and improve its presentation.

Major Issues:

1. Methodological Weaknesses and Lack of Transparency:

- The methodology section (Page 4) describes a "mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative)" but provides very little detail on how the research was actually conducted. Key information is missing:
 - **Sampling:** How were the 60 education system stakeholders selected? What was the sampling strategy (purposive, snowball, convenience)? How were the directors, inspectors, teachers, and ministry officials recruited? What were the inclusion criteria?
 - **Data Collection Tools:** The paper mentions "Documentary research," "Questionnaire," and "Observation grid" but does not describe these tools. What were the specific questions asked? What was the structure of the questionnaire? What was observed and how? Without this information, the study cannot be replicated, and the validity of the findings cannot be assessed.
 - **Data Analysis:** The paper mentions "Cross-tabulation of data collected via the questionnaire" and "Content analysis" but does not explain how these analyses were

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conducted. How were the qualitative data coded? What were the categories? How were the quantitative data analysed (descriptive statistics, inferential statistics)? What software was used?

- **Ethical Considerations:** There is no mention of ethical approval, informed consent, or how data confidentiality was ensured. This is a significant omission, especially given the involvement of human participants.
- **Triangulation:** How were the different data sources (interviews, questionnaires, documents) triangulated to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings?

2. Weak Presentation and Analysis of Results:

- The "Results" section (Pages 7-8) is extremely brief and presents findings as a list of statements (R1-R6) without any supporting data, evidence, or elaboration. For example, R3 states: "In Benin, there is a process of periodically closing public teacher training colleges." This is a significant claim that requires evidence: Which colleges? When? Why? Under what circumstances? No data are provided to substantiate this claim.
- There is no presentation of quantitative data from the questionnaire. The paper mentions that questionnaires were administered to 60 stakeholders, but no results from these questionnaires are presented. What were the responses? What were the frequencies and percentages? This is a critical omission.
- The qualitative data from interviews are not presented in a systematic way. There are no quotes, no thematic analysis, and no coding framework. The findings appear to be assertions rather than evidence-based conclusions.
- The tables (Tables 1-4) are useful for providing context but are not analyzed. The author should discuss what these tables reveal about the structure and distribution of teacher training institutions in Benin.

3. Lack of Critical Depth and Original Contribution:

- The paper is largely descriptive. It describes the history and structure of teacher training colleges but does not critically analyze the underlying power dynamics, political economy, or institutional barriers that perpetuate the identified challenges.
- The theoretical framework is presented but not effectively integrated into the analysis. The author lists several theories (functionalism, school effectiveness, innovation, dependency) but does not systematically apply them to interpret the findings. For example, how do dependency theories help explain the specific challenges facing Beninese teacher training colleges today? How does the functionalist perspective illuminate the gap between training and the needs of the education system?
- The paper does not engage critically with the existing literature on teacher education in Benin or West Africa. There are very few citations to empirical studies on this topic. The references are mostly to classical theoretical works (Durkheim, Parsons, Vygotsky, Piaget) rather than to contemporary research on teacher training in the African context.

4. Weaknesses in the Discussion and Recommendations:

- The discussion section (Page 8) is brief and largely reiterates the findings without providing a deeper interpretation. It does not adequately address the implications of the findings for policy and practice.
- The recommendation to create a "Teacher Training University / Pedagogical Institute" is a bold and potentially valuable proposal. However, it is presented without sufficient justification or analysis. What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of this approach? How would it address the specific challenges identified in the study? What are the resource implications? A more detailed feasibility analysis is needed.
- The conclusion is very brief and does not adequately summarize the main findings or their implications.

5. Significant Formatting and Language Issues:

- The manuscript has numerous formatting issues, including inconsistent spacing, missing spaces after punctuation, and irregular paragraph breaks.
- The tables are poorly formatted and difficult to read. For example, the table on Page 6 (Table 4) is a jumbled list of private institutions without clear organization.

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- The language is often awkward and imprecise. There are numerous grammatical errors and instances of awkward phrasing (e.g., "the quintessential crucible," "putting things into perspective").
- The references are inconsistently formatted and contain errors (e.g., "Hattie, J. (2009.)Visible learning" – missing space; "Durkheim, E. (1922)" but cited as 1910 in the text).

Minor Issues:

- **Abstract:** The abstract is quite long and could be more concise. It also contains a question ("Do these teacher training colleges... contribute to Benin's development?") that is not clearly answered in the abstract.
- **Introduction:** The introduction is somewhat rambling and could be more focused. The research questions and objectives are not clearly stated until later in the paper.
- **Theoretical Framework:** The theoretical framework section is lengthy but does not clearly explain how the various theories will be used to analyze the data. A more focused and integrated approach would be beneficial.
- **Hypotheses:** The hypotheses are stated but not clearly operationalized. How will each hypothesis be tested?
- **Tables:** The tables should be numbered and referenced in the text. The sources should be clearly indicated.

Specific Comments for the Authors (for a Major Revision):

To transform this manuscript into a publishable journal article, the author should address the following points:

1. **Strengthen the Methodology Section:** Provide a detailed account of the research design, sampling strategy, data collection tools, and data analysis procedures. Include information on ethical considerations and triangulation.
2. **Present and Analyze Data Systematically:** Present the quantitative data from the questionnaires in tables (frequencies, percentages). Present the qualitative data from interviews with illustrative quotes and a clear thematic structure. Provide evidence to support each finding (R1-R6).
3. **Deepen the Critical Analysis:** Use the theoretical framework to interpret the findings. Critically analyze the power dynamics, political economy, and institutional barriers that perpetuate the challenges identified.
4. **Engage with the Literature:** Cite more empirical studies on teacher education in Benin and West Africa. Position the study within the existing scholarly conversation.
5. **Strengthen the Discussion and Recommendations:** Provide a deeper interpretation of the findings. Justify the recommendation for a "Teacher Training University" with a feasibility analysis. Discuss the implications for policy and practice.
6. **Correct All Formatting and Language Errors:** Proofread the manuscript carefully to correct all grammatical and formatting errors. Ensure that tables are properly formatted and references are consistent.
7. **Add a Clear Conclusion:** Summarize the main findings and their implications. Suggest directions for future research.

Conclusion:

This manuscript addresses an important topic and has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the literature on teacher education in Benin and West Africa. However, in its current form, it is more of a policy report than a rigorous empirical study. The methodological weaknesses, the superficial presentation of results, and the lack of critical depth are significant barriers to publication. A major revision, including a complete re-analysis and a more rigorous presentation of the data, is required. The recommendation is for major revision.