



## Staff Motivation and Remuneration Policy within Catholic Technical and Vocational Education Institutions in Yaoundé

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**ABSTRACT :** Catholic education in CameroonIts origins lie in the German colonial period (Ngongang, 2010). Since the 1990s, it has suffered the effects of the economic crisis, experiencing sometimes significant declines in student numbers, which have led to school closures. The COVID-19 crisis has further weakened the finances of these educational institutions. Hence the numerous staff strikes observed in this sector of education throughout Cameroon. According to David C. McClelland's acquired needs theory, and identify ways to adapt these policies to optimize the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of teachers and administrative staff, in a context marked by a strong vocational dimension and budgetary constraints. Therefore, To what extent do the compensation policies currently applied in Catholic technical and vocational schools in Yaoundé meet the dominant motivational needs of staff (need for achievement, belonging, and power)? The overall objective of this study is to assess the extent to which the compensation policies in force in Catholic technical and vocational schools in Yaoundé satisfy the motivational needs of staff. The study therefore hypothesizes that current compensation policies in Catholic technical and vocational schools in Yaoundé do not sufficiently incorporate elements of staff motivation. To test this hypothesis, the methodological approach is primarily quantitative. The snowball sampling technique, deployed in three schools, allowed for the interviewing of 62 staff members. The administered questionnaire, structured around salary, bonus, and other incentive elements, allows for an assessment of the motivating factors of the compensation policy. As a result, the study concludes that the three needs developed by McClelland, namely The needs for achievement, belonging, and power are not sufficiently considered in compensation planning for staff at the Catholic colleges targeted by our study. According to this data, more than half of the respondents feel they are not sustainably motivated.

**KEYWORDS :** Need, Catholic, Motivation, College, Remuneration.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

A reading of Gravissimum Educationis reveals that the Catholic Church considers education to be a fundamental right of the human person. (Mengolo, 2016). This is why it defined the normative and human framework within which Catholic education generally operates and within which staff must work in particular. Following this, the Church's social doctrine laid the groundwork for the salary framework. According to this framework, three indicators must be considered for better planning of teacher compensation in Catholic schools: equity, adherence to common rules, and cross-sectoral analysis.

Catholic education in CameroonIts origins lie in the German colonial period (Ngongang, 2010). Since the 1990s, it has suffered the effects of the economic crisis, experiencing sometimes significant staff reductions that have led to school closures. Among these effects are the staff's discontented behaviors. In reality, even though Catholic education dominates the performance rankings in private education in Cameroon, a real problem persists in these educational sectors regarding the long-term motivation of their staff. On November 12, 2015, for example, after a three-week strike, Catholic primary school teachers stormed the hall of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Douala. They were there for yet another demonstration against salary cuts and what they considered to be deplorable working conditions.

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in Cameroon in 2019, the budgetary and financial crisis has worsened. On May 21, 2020, Father André Marie Nko'o Edjimbi, Vicar General of the Diocese of Yaoundé, issued a statement addressing the budgetary problems linked to the coronavirus. The closure of schools and the extension of the academic year for exam classes have led to an

"inevitable" reduction in salaries. "How can we ensure, in this context, the salaries of staff and the various taxes and other operating expenses ? That is the question," added Father André Marie Nko'o Edjimbi in his May 21 statement, inviting the entire educational community of Yaoundé to prayer and reflection.

According to the guidelines of the Diocesan Directorate of Catholic Education in Paris (2022), remuneration is "the most important instrument for achieving justice in labor relations. A fair wage is the legitimate fruit of labor." Chauchard (1989) asserts that remuneration, as a motivating factor, should enhance employee recognition and allow them to position themselves professionally and socially. This means that remuneration in general, and wages in particular, are important sources of employee motivation (Tabet Derraz and Selhami, 2014). The concept of motivation itself has "a short history, but a long past" (Ebbinghaus, 1908). Its origins can be found in the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers (c. 400 BC). From the hedonism of Thrasymachus to the rationalism of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and later Descartes and Hobbes, motivation, its origins, and its mechanisms have been of great interest to the scientific community.

In this modern era, motivation is defined as the hypothetical construct used to describe the internal and/or external forces that produce the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of behavior (Vallerand & Thill, 1993). It is the process that determines how energy is used to satisfy needs (Pritchard & Payne, 2003). Our behavior is, in principle, determined by a whole series of needs (Sprenger, 2002). Maslow summarized these numerous needs into five categories of basic needs (see Maslow, 1954). Among researchers of human motivation, the American psychologist D. McClelland (1985, 1987) occupies one of the most prominent and significant positions. This study focuses on his approach, as his work has had a significant impact and received a high citation index for half a century. In *The Achieving Society*, published in 1961, then in 1964 and reissued in 2010 and 2020, he identified three factors of lasting motivation that he believes we all have: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power.

According to him, people highly motivated by affiliation ardently desire to belong to social groups. They also seek to please others and tend to accept the opinions and preferences of others. Thus, for greater involvement in compensation planning, many factors come into play. Regarding the need for achievement, he indicates that these individuals feel intense impulses to reach goals that involve a high level of challenge, and do not oppose them taking calculated risks to achieve them. According to him, these individuals generally prefer working alone to being in the company of others and they like receiving feedback on the tasks they perform. McClelland uses as examples in his theory the need to win cases and be recognized as a lawyer, and to paint a famous picture as a painter. (McClelland; 1961, 1964, 2010). Finally, he believes that those with a strong need for power highly value social recognition and seek to control others and influence their behavior, often for selfish reasons.

For better implementation in terms of compensation elements, it is essential to support them in their quest for power through salary, paid leave bonuses, punctuality bonuses, and AP, DE, and Principal bonuses. Furthermore, certificates of excellence and motivation, as well as letters of motivation and congratulations, not forgetting promotional items, will be invaluable, allowing them to assert their sovereignty and power. Here, we understand that these individuals need tools and elements necessary to establish their status, authority, and above all, their self-esteem. Thus, promotional items will affirm their status, distinguishing them from others, as will perks, bonuses, and certificates of both motivation and congratulations. Note that all of this contributes to raising their self-esteem and the reputation so dear to them, guaranteeing a promising status. Therefore, To what extent do the remuneration policies currently applied in Catholic technical and vocational education establishments in Yaoundé meet the dominant motivational needs of staff (need for success, affiliation and power)?

The overall objective of this study is to assess the extent to which current compensation policies in Catholic technical and vocational schools in Yaoundé meet staff motivational needs (need for achievement, belonging, and power) according to David C. McClelland's acquired needs theory, and to identify ways to adapt these policies to optimize the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of teachers and administrative staff, within a context marked by a strong vocational dimension and budgetary constraints. The study therefore hypothesizes that current compensation policies in Catholic technical and vocational schools in Yaoundé do not sufficiently incorporate elements of staff motivation. To test this hypothesis, we employ a methodological framework. The results of this framework are discussed.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

To test our hypothesis, we adopted a hypothetico-deductive approach. The study is quantitative. This data collection technique allows researchers to analyze behaviors, opinions, or even expectations in quantity (N'da; 2018). This research technique uses questionnaires or panel surveys to collect data for analysis. The goal is often to draw statistically measurable conclusions. Quantitative research makes it possible to prove or demonstrate facts by quantifying a phenomenon. We want to quantify the extent to which sustainable motivation factors are considered in the compensation planning of permanent staff.

For the purposes of this study, the study population consists of teachers in Catholic technical and vocational colleges. These teachers are generally of two types: those with permanent contracts and those on temporary contracts. The latter category is mostly comprised of civil servant teachers who work part-time in private schools to supplement their income. In reality, this category is not of great interest to us. Ndjebakal (2019) conducted an interesting study on the professional involvement of teachers on temporary contracts. One of his findings clearly shows that the need for professional development among this category of staff, when met in

private Catholic colleges, has a positive impact on their engagement. Furthermore, it is difficult to see them participating in the protests and expressions of discontent among teachers in private Catholic schools. Therefore, it is the permanent teachers who constitute our accessible population.

Therefore, given methodological and budgetary constraints, and the often limited time available, we are obliged to work with an accessible sample of our population. To this end, we have chosen three Catholic secondary schools in Yaoundé: Collège Jeanne Alega, CETI des Bénédictins du Mont Fébé, and CETI Sacré-Cœur de Mokolo in Yaoundé. An investigation often requires the use of a sampling method. The technique used here is the snowball sampling method. Thus, We were able to interview 65 permanent teachers at random. While not strictly representative, this sample aims to be characteristic of the general trends observed. This procedure refers to what is known as "convenience sampling": it is "a method by which the units available at the time of data collection are included in the sample for practical reasons" (Varkevisser, 1993). Thus, for our study, a sample of 65 individuals was initially planned, but ultimately only 62 questionnaires were fully and correctly completed.

The questions addressed the three needs theorized by McClelland regarding motivation. By linking these needs to the field of compensation, we operationalized them around questions of salary, bonuses, and other incentives. Data collection took place in May 2025. It was preceded in December 2024 by a preliminary fieldwork phase focused on familiarizing ourselves with the site and establishing contact with certain stakeholders. We administered our questionnaires within the premises of the targeted Catholic schools. However, we should note that some teachers preferred to take the questionnaires home and return them the following day. They were in the minority.

For the data processing, the questions were coded to allow for weighting. This enabled us to generate a table of numerical data, which will be used for calculations. To analyze our data, we used a method called quantitative analysis. The analysis of the quantitative data from the survey questionnaires in our various institutions will be carried out using statistical techniques with the help of SPSS and Excel software. This involves conducting both exploratory analysis and confirmatory analysis. The exploratory analysis consists of identifying the frequency tables for the different indicators in the survey questionnaire.

Like any research project, ours was not without its challenges. We encountered instances of reluctance from some participants who were unwilling to fully provide answers. Others were unavailable for interviews. However, thanks to methodical strategies, we were able to achieve our objective. The production of scientific knowledge requires, first and foremost, adherence to a framework designed and approved by the scientific community. To achieve this, the researcher must meticulously follow a set of essential steps for the scientific rigor of the research. These steps are fraught with difficulties that the researcher must overcome in order to produce sound scientific work. Ultimately, it was an enriching and fascinating experience. This methodological approach yielded results.

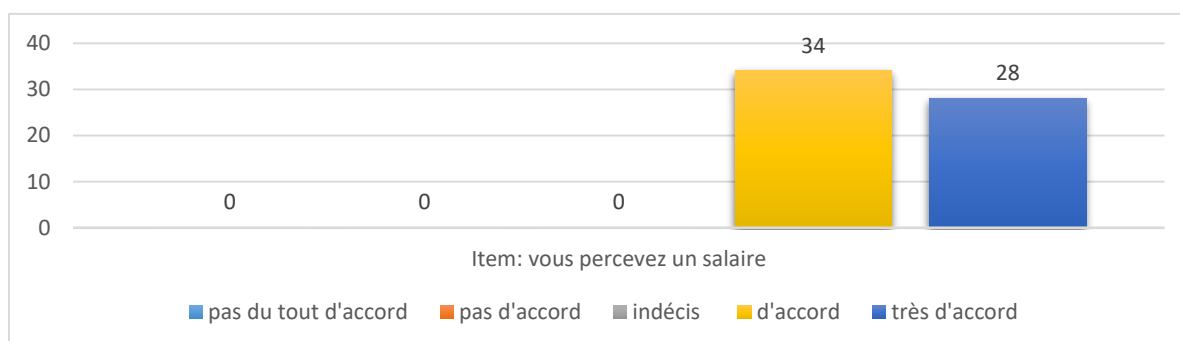
### 3. RESULTS DISCUSSED

The concept of motivation is one of the key issues in the managerial function, therefore it belongs to the Managers must ensure that employees do not give up but instead increase their efforts as much as possible by adopting genuine ideas and policies to motivate them at work. It often happens that people work feeling they have to.

#### 3.1. Salary as a factor in taking into account membership needs in the remuneration of Catholic technical and vocational colleges

The salary received remains the primary motivating factor. This graph shows that all 62 respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that, fundamentally, as permanent staff members, they receive a salary. This is the compensation the school pays for the services each of them provides. This is formalized by an employment contract.

Chart 01 : Employee salary perception



SourceField investigations, May 2025

Salary, or compensation in its broadest sense, is one element of employee motivation. But it's far from the only one: everything that allows employees to develop in their roles (clear job descriptions and objectives, training, quality management,

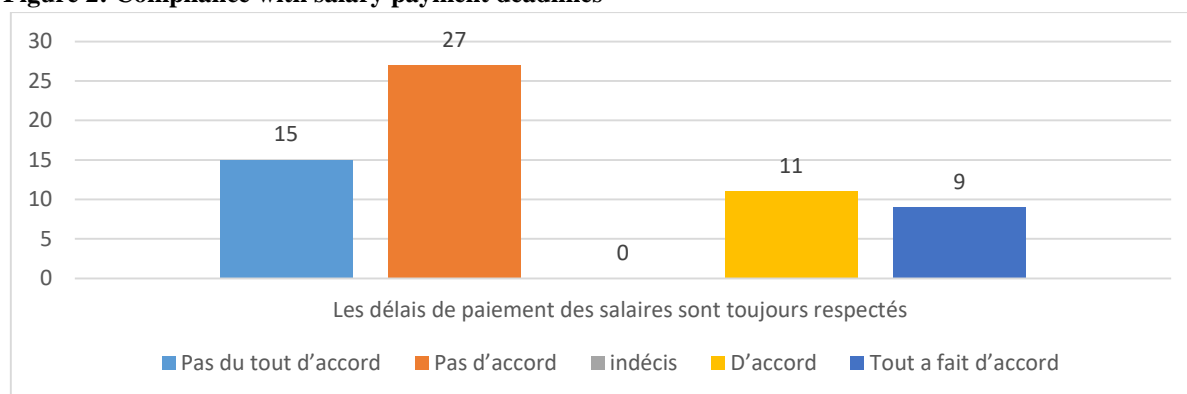
recognition, etc.) and to integrate into the overall company project (atmosphere, working conditions, shared strategy and vision, pride in belonging, etc.) is just as fundamental. This is what a study conducted by Opinion Matters for ADP reveals.

The authors of this study, however, qualify this figure: "But money is not the only motivating factor, and it is interesting to note that more than half (53%) of those surveyed do not consider it their primary driver." This contrasts sharply with a 2021 Gallup study that revealed only 20% of employees worldwide are engaged in their work.

A low salary can be a source of demotivation. Compensation is motivating when it is based on market conditions, the employee's needs, or their own perception of their worth. Conversely, it is motivating if it is fair and aligned with the job's mission, with ambitious but achievable objectives. Compensation is particularly motivating when structured as a package, with a fixed base (even if slightly below market rates) for both individuals and the collective (fixed group benefits), and variable components for individuals and/or the collective.

It is more effective when it is paid in accordance with the deadlines and frequency stipulated in the employment contract. According to the field data presented above, the payment schedule for salaries is not always respected. Some of our permanent staff believe that salaries are often paid beyond the deadlines specified in their employment contracts.

**Figure 2: Compliance with salary payment deadlines**



Source: Field investigations, May 2025

The end of the month, eagerly awaited by employees, is synonymous in the workplace with salary payment. However, this is far from being the norm for all employees. Indeed, the legal framework in Cameroon allows employers some flexibility in setting the salary payment date, which explains the differences observed between companies. The Labor Code does not stipulate any fixed date or deadline for salary payments. Therefore, there is no legally mandated deadline for salary payments, regardless of the sector of activity or the type of contract. Thus, there is no deadline for salary payments in the construction industry, nor is there a specific payment deadline for salaries in Catholic schools.

However, the Labor Code does establish a requirement for regularity: employees must be paid at regular intervals. This requirement ensures that employers do not allow excessive time to elapse between salary payments. The rules governing the frequency of salary payments vary according to employee categories, so that for:

- For salaried employees paid monthly, the pay date is at least once a month. Furthermore, the employer cannot delay payment for more than one month between pay periods.
- Non-salaried employees are paid at least twice a month, with a maximum interval of 16 days between payments. This includes seasonal, temporary, and home-based workers.
- Traveling salespeople, representatives or agents receive commissions which must be paid to them at least every 3 months.

Within these maximum time limits between two payment deadlines, payment can be made closer to the due date without any issues. In Cameroon, the employer is therefore generally free to determine the salary payment date, but once set, they must adhere to the established payment schedule. This salary schedule is a customary practice within the company. In educational institutions, it is usually agreed upon at the time of hiring and is sometimes included in the employment contract of permanent staff.

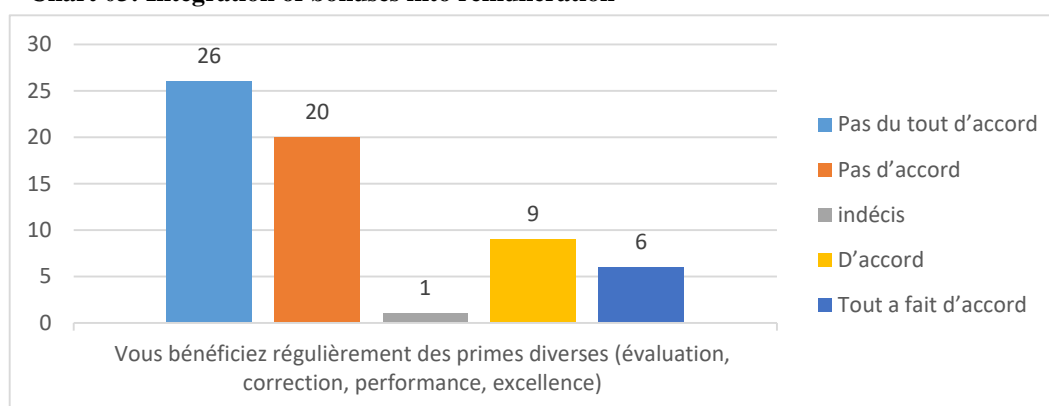
Furthermore, the employer must pay wages on working days unless payment is made by bank transfer. It should be noted that requiring employees to return to their workplace outside of working hours to receive their pay would be considered an abuse of power. However, to motivate staff in Catholic technical schools, salary alone is not enough. The compensation policy must also include bonuses.

### **3.2. Bonuses as a means of poorly addressing the need for academic success in the remuneration of Catholic technical and vocational colleges**

Bonuses in secondary education can be given individually or collectively. They refer to a salary supplement. They can be financial or in kind. Initially, more than half of our respondents (N=46) stated that they do not regularly receive bonuses. This

suggests that bonuses exist, but are not awarded regularly. Granting individual bonuses empowers staff and fosters autonomy. Each individual then becomes aware of their impact on the company's results and feels valued.

**Chart 03: Integration of bonuses into remuneration**



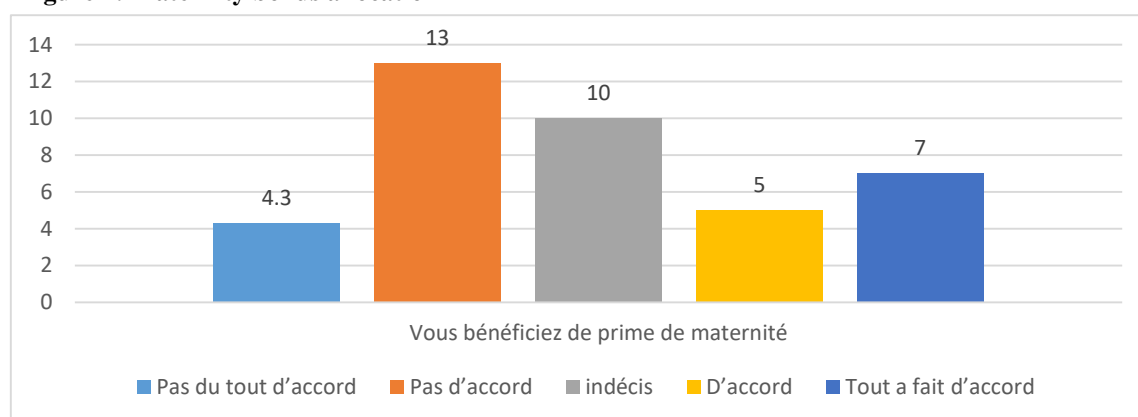
Source : Field surveys, May 2025

An individual bonus policy must be carefully considered to be honest and fair. Before deciding on the type of bonus to award, it's important to know which indicators to base it on. A bonus shouldn't be given arbitrarily. It's essential to first meet with each employee to jointly determine the parameters on which the bonus will be calculated. The bonus then plays a role in setting objectives and motivating the team to achieve them. One of the most important bonuses is the maternity bonus.

Indeed, over the past fifty years, maternity protection in the workplace has progressed in both legislation and practice. Attitudes have also evolved in favor of women workers' rights during their reproductive years. Despite this progress, most women, even in private education, continue to encounter a fundamental problem at some point in their professional lives: unequal treatment in employment due to their role in reproduction.

Women feel the effects of this discrimination all the more acutely as more and more of them hold salaried jobs for longer periods. Indeed, the rapid increase in women's participation in the workforce is one of the most remarkable changes of the last fifty years.

**Figure 4: Maternity bonus allocation**



Source : Field surveys, May 2025

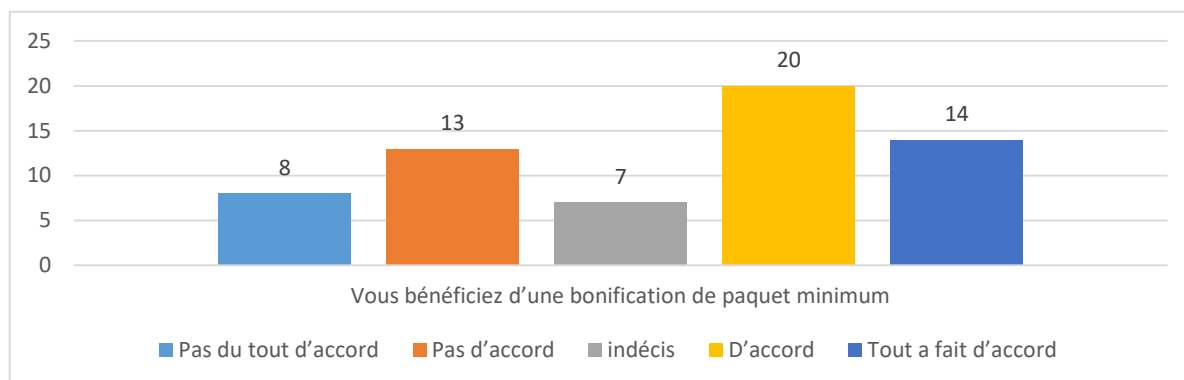
According to our field survey, opinions differ on the issue of maternity leave benefits. The high number of undecided respondents is due to the fact that many are male. This bias may also partly explain the significant number of our respondents who believe they do not receive maternity leave benefits, even though it is true that new management policies extend maternity leave benefits to both men and women.

Two generations ago, women most often entered the workforce after the age of 20, with many stopping work a few years later to raise their children. In 1950, the global female labor force participation rate was 59 percent in the 20-24 age group and 54 percent in the 30-34 age group; it remained more or less at this level in subsequent age groups up to age 49, before declining rapidly. By 1990, the pattern of a woman's lifetime labor force participation had changed: many began working between the ages of 20 and 30, the peak in labor force participation occurred between 30 and 40, and the decline began at age 50. In other words, a growing number of women were employed at the age of motherhood.

### 3.3. Other improvements in addressing the power needs within Catholic technical and vocational colleges

In 2019, Minister of Basic Education Laurent Serge Etoundi Ngoa explained that "the rules of decentralization require our municipalities to carry out the tasks that were previously performed by our departments. Therefore, the budgets allocated for the minimum supply package are naturally directed towards the municipalities." The contents of this package depend on the number of students in the municipality, according to statistics provided by the district education office. The minimum supply packages, which were already available at the town halls, were withdrawn at the last minute without any explanation or information regarding their return date. Those who are more optimistic, however, suggest cash flow problems at the national level and hope that everything will return to normal.

**Chart 5 : Minimum package bonus**



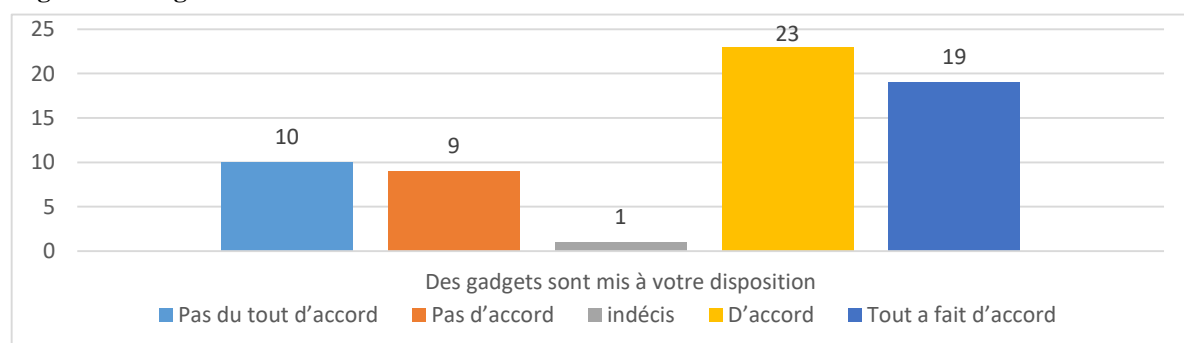
SourceField investigations, May 2025

The circular of July 24, 2000, concerning the practical arrangements for supplying schools with teaching and learning materials, established the operational framework. The minimum package was then provided centrally and distributed to schools via the various decentralized services, but administrative burdens and difficulties in executing supply contracts never ensured that the materials arrived in schools on time. This continued until 2010, when the budget line item allocated for the minimum package was sent to mayors in the form of a box, according to Article 20 of the decree of December 31, 2010, issued by the Minister of Basic Education.

The term "minimum kit" refers to an envelope containing a set of teaching and learning materials that is given to each public school at the beginning and middle of the school year to ensure the effective start and normal functioning of teaching activities. In principle, the contents of the minimum kit include teacher preparation notebooks, boxes of chalk, ballpoint pens, envelopes, paper clips, pushpins, cardboard folders, graph paper, reams of paper (first and second type), a box of glue, and first aid medication. The contents of the kit vary from one school to another.

Furthermore, competition between businesses has become fiercer in recent years. In almost every sector, it seems very difficult for entrepreneurs to find loyal customers. In such a competitive environment, distributing memorable items to recipients would be an excellent marketing strategy. This article explores reasons to offer promotional gifts to your clients.

**Figure 6: Gadget attribution**



Source : Field survey, May 2025

Once you've acquired a few clients, it's important to implement an effective plan to retain them. In this regard, offering customized items branded with your company logo is a good idea. Depending on your needs, you can find personalized polo shirts. These items can be shared not only with your staff but also with your clients. They are useful accessories that suit everyone perfectly. Available in a variety of colors, shapes, and materials, you'll have no trouble finding the right one. In addition to polo shirts, there are other accessories you can personalize to build customer loyalty. Among the most popular are:



- The caps ;
- Personalized bags ;
- Calendars ;
- Customized pens ;
- Personalized wallets ;
- Keychains ;
- Etc.

When well-designed, promotional items serve as small tokens of appreciation for employees. Even more importantly, they represent a powerful communication tool for the company offering them. By carefully selecting your gifts, you enhance your company's brand image. Even with a limited budget, you can easily find original items that will effectively promote your business to the public. With personalized fashion accessories, for example, you can delight your clients while simultaneously promoting your company to the public.

By distributing original, useful, and durable promotional items to your permanent staff, you significantly increase your chances of reaching a much wider audience than your existing customer base. This strategy allows you to quickly convert prospects into loyal customers. Simply choose your gifts carefully, and you're all set. In short, distributing personalized items is now a powerful communication, prospecting, and customer loyalty tool for businesses. By integrating this solution into your marketing strategy, you can boost your revenue in record time.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This article addressed the consideration of motivational factors in the compensation policies of Catholic technical colleges. The sole paradigm used in the motivation analysis is that of David McClelland. Our results, derived from a primarily quantitative methodology, show that the three needs identified by McClelland—namely, the needs for achievement, affiliation, and power—are not sufficiently taken into account in the compensation planning of staff at the Catholic colleges targeted by our study. According to these data, more than half of the respondents feel they are not sustainably motivated. Therefore, it can be assumed that, for lack of a better option, they do not resign. However, they would not hesitate to do so if another employer offered them a better compensation policy. Compensation is more often a means of maintaining a well-staffed organization, and not solely a means of motivating employees.

According to Jack Welch (former CEO of General Electric) in his book "Winning" (2005), Charles Ames, the former CEO of Reliance Electric, reportedly said, "Show me a company's compensation policy, and I'll tell you how its employees behave!" Indeed, compensation is a key motivator for employees. And motivation impacts performance. Motivation at work encompasses the energy, involvement, and effort an employee puts into their daily work. Compensation, if well-designed, is one of the factors (though certainly not the only one) that increases employee motivation.

In older models, worker motivation was not a factor. Professionalism dictated that employees perform their work correctly because it was only fair, given the compensation they received.

The current model perhaps distinguishes between two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. It concludes that the two are separate, that adopting extrinsic motivational methods with intrinsically motivated workers can make the task mundane, and vice versa. According to research by Edward Deci, in some cases, using salary as a motivator can negatively affect the development of intrinsic motivation. To quote the article: "There are conditions under which tangible rewards do not necessarily undermine intrinsic motivation, but the evidence clearly indicates that strategies that focus primarily on the use of extrinsic rewards do indeed run a serious risk of diminishing rather than promoting intrinsic motivation." However, the associated risk depends heavily on the nature of the employer-employee relationship, the employee's professional interests, and their preferences.

Human resource management is increasingly taking on a strategic role in the managerial organization of Catholic education worldwide and in Cameroon. It focuses on the most important resource: the human factor. This conception of the human factor considers it as capital to be made profitable and an investment on which many Catholic specialists in work psychology, management, and sociology have focused their research on productivity and performance at work. These studies reveal that remuneration is not a fundamental variable of the human resources function within Catholic institutions.

Indeed, according to the Church's social doctrine, motivation is understood more as an attitude inferred from the behaviors, perceptions, and beliefs observed in someone. These behaviors, perceptions, and beliefs are themselves the product of learning acquired by the individual through contact with various conditions or factors in their environment. The motivation of Catholic staff is rooted in Catholic identity (Roman Congregation for Catholic Education; 2022). Sustained motivation for the Church is grounded in Catholic identity, love of neighbor, fear of God, and the ongoing commitment to dialogue between employer and employee.

In the declaration *Gravissimum educationis*, the Church offered "fundamental principles" for Christian education, especially in schools. First, education, as the formation of the human person, is a universal right: "All men of any race, age, or condition possess, insofar as they enjoy the dignity of the person, an inalienable right to an education that corresponds to their proper vocation, conforms to their temperament, to the difference of the sexes, to national culture and traditions, and at the same time is

open to fraternal exchange with other peoples to promote true unity and peace in the world." For the Catholic Church, the goal of true education is to form the human person with regard to their highest end and the good of the groups to which they belong and in whose service they will be engaged as adults. This is why values of patience, tolerance, foresight, higher interest, and the good of others are instilled permanently in both the learner and the teaching staff.

Faced with such a socio-constructivist environment, a docile and understanding staff is produced, prioritizing the well-being of the community. Such staff can therefore be sustainably motivated not by remuneration, but by the doctrinal framework that the ecclesiastical environment has successfully instilled in them. Since education is a right of all, the Catholic Church, in its doctrine, has called upon everyone to take responsibility for it. For its part, the Church has a duty to educate, "especially because its function is to proclaim to humanity the way of salvation, to communicate to believers the life of Christ, and to help them, through constant attention, to attain the full flowering of this life of Christ. To her children, the Church is thus bound, as Mother, to provide the education that will inspire their entire lives with the spirit of Christ."

Since Catholic staff are either lay or religious, the Church's social doctrine and Vatican guidelines on the matter reveal the rigid framework within which the lasting motivation of Catholic staff can be built. Thus, one can read in Congregation for Catholic Education, Circular Letter to schools, universities and educational establishments, September 10, 2020, states that the Catholic lay educator in schools, particularly in Catholic schools, "carries out a task which implies an undeniable professional aspect but which cannot be reduced to that. It is assumed within the framework of his supernatural Christian vocation. He must therefore live it effectively as a personal vocation in the Church and not only as the exercise of a profession."

For consecrated persons, that is, religious, "educational commitment, whether in Catholic schools or elsewhere, is a vocation and a way of life, a path to holiness, a demand for justice and solidarity, especially towards the poorest young people, threatened by various forms of deviance and risk. By dedicating themselves to the educational mission in schools, consecrated persons help to bring the bread of culture to those who need it most." Consecrated persons, "in communion with the Pastors, therefore fulfill a vital ecclesial mission in schools because, in educating, they collaborate in evangelization" (Congregation for Catholic Education, Circular Letter to Schools, Universities and Educational Institutions, September 10, 2020).

For the Church, the entire school community is responsible for implementing the school's Catholic educational project as an expression of its ecclesial character and its integration into the Church community. As for Catholic schools, the conciliar declaration marks a significant turning point because, in line with the ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium*, the school is conceived therein not so much as an institution, but as a "community." The defining characteristic of the Catholic school is not only to pursue "the cultural aims and human formation of young people," but also to "create for the school community an atmosphere animated by an evangelical spirit of freedom and charity."

Among all members of the school community, teachers stand out due to their particular responsibility in education. Through their ability and pedagogical skills, as well as their lived experience, they are the ones who ensure that the Catholic school fulfills its educational mission. Indeed, in a Catholic school, the teacher's service is a ecclesiastical munus and office (cf. can. 145 CIC and can. 936 §§ 1 and 2 CCEO). It is therefore necessary for the school, in accordance with Church doctrine, to interpret and establish the parameters required for teacher recruitment. This criterion applies to everyone, including administrative staff. The competent authority is thus obligated to inform prospective employees of the school's Catholic identity and its implications, as well as the responsibilities they have in promoting it. Should the hired individual fail to comply with the conditions of the Catholic school and its membership in the ecclesiastical community, the school will take appropriate measures. Dismissal may also be ordered, taking into account all the circumstances of the individual case.

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