

Integration of LMD System in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Challenges and Prospects

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ABSTRACT: *This paper focus on the integration of LMD system (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it shpuld be noted that the LMD system in DR Congo has been a significant process in the higher education sector. This change was put in place to align education levels with international standards and promote student mobility and academic qualifications globally. The reform involved the adoption of new curricula based on the LMD structure, with particular attention paid to the professionalization of higher education and the alignment of curricula with the needs of the labor market. In addition, the introduction of the LMD system has also encouraged the development of research and innovation, as well as the creation of closer links between higher education institutions and the private sector. However, despite these advances, challenges remain, particularly with regard to institutional capacity, financial resources, and the need to ensure the quality and relevance of curricula. In summary, the integration of the LMD system in the Democratic Republic of Congo represents an important step towards improving higher education, but its long-term impact will depend on the ability to address the ongoing challenges and ensure effective and balanced implementation across the country.*

KEYWORDS: Integration, LMD, DR Congo, Challenges, and Prospects.

INTRODUCTION

The LMD system (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) is a higher education reform that aims to harmonise education systems in Europe and around the world. It is characterized by a structuring of the courses into three levels: Bachelor's degree (Bac +3), Master (Bac +5) and Doctorate (Bac +8). This system has been designed to promote student mobility, recognition of diplomas and international cooperation. As far as the integration of the LMD system in the Democratic Republic of Congo is concerned, it is of great importance for several reasons. First of all, the adoption of the LMD system would allow the Democratic Republic of Congo to align itself with international

standards in higher education, thus facilitating the recognition of Congolese diplomas on a global scale. This would offer Congolese students greater mobility and attractiveness in the international job market. In addition, the integration of the LMD could contribute to improving the quality of higher education in the DRC.

Background of LMD system in DR Congo

Since then, higher education in the DRC has undergone a considerable change in both quality and quantity. Otherwise, Congolese universities have managed, in a complicated context, to meet the demands of the labour market, to satisfy the needs of the socio-economic sector in terms of human resources, to establish a new policy to break definitively with the colonial legacy in terms of education and to adapt to the demands of the international environment, by supporting this reform. Lison and Jutras (2014) stressed that this reform requires teachers to engage in it with a researcher's posture, and to develop their pedagogical skills in order to design effective practices and implement innovation. At the first reading on the subject of research in university pedagogy, we noted that this research paradigm owes its theoretical development over the last decade to several researchers (Loiola & Romainville, 2008). According to Lison and Jutras (2014), when pedagogical research takes place in the context of an educational paradigm shift, education becomes a subject of a constructivist and socioconstructivist chronology, for North African or European countries, to be combined in a sociocognitive perspective in America. In such a context, the implementation of the LMD system in our institutions is essentially aimed at introducing a new practice centred on learning "Learning by doing." (Dewey, 1938).

An innovative logic that thinks of breaking with the classic system. This approach seems to introduce an active and transmissive pedagogy that revises teachers' roles and practices, but it refocuses students to position them as actors engaged in innovation. Indeed, the implementation of a pedagogy oriented towards interactivity seems to constitute a real professional challenge for teachers (Frenay, Galand, & Laloux, 2009). According to St-Pierre, Bédard, and Lefebvre (2012), this system must set up student-oriented teaching, by offering training that is sometimes based on professional skills, and other times, on the contextualization of learning, which goes beyond the circle of disciplinary compartmentalization, oriented towards the transfer of know-how, and, based on a coherent and innovative evaluation system, while imposing local coordination of work between teachers. From these characteristics, we can deduce from the work of Lison & Jutras (2014, p. 3) that: "pedagogy calls for a psychological and sociological knowledge of those who learn, an understanding of their learning methods and their mental processes" (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1990).

In a completely a priori sense, teacher-student relations are more modified in an environment where learning is no longer based on the importance of knowledge, but on the methods that support this learning (Lamote & Engels, 2010). However, consultation between teachers is focused on moderating these methods and developing new training courses. The mission of the LMD system

is thus expressed in the concepts of learning, research, and autonomy, involvement, experience, and considerable knowledge construction (Mandeville, 2009). The LMD system came about by switching from the old traditional system to target the implementation of new quality apprenticeship programs with logistical equipment in line with the demand (Paquay, 2007). Certainly, this system marks its place in Congolese higher education, to make the tangible and prized reality of undisputed change.

History of LMD system in DR Congo

At the launch of the 2021-2022 academic year, the Minister of Higher and University Education, Muhindo Nzangi Butondo, indicated that the LMD system should be applied from this academic year. It is with this in mind that the latter reminded the academic community of his commitment to the generalization of this system in accordance with the law on the matter but also with the recommendations of the EiE General Assembly adopted by the Council of Ministers. The aim is to offer training that is more adapted to the needs of the labour market and to strengthen the international competitiveness of Congolese universities. Although progress has been made in the implementation of the LMD in DR Congo, challenges remain, particularly with regard to access to higher education for the entire population and the adaptation of training programmes to the specific needs of the country.

Evolution of higher education in DR Congo

Higher education in the Democratic Republic of Congo has undergone significant evolution over time. During colonization, higher education in the DR Congo was primarily focused on training local elites, often according to the educational standards of the colonial power. Institutions of higher learning were limited and reserved for a small portion of the population. After gaining independence in 1960, DR Congo sought to develop its own education system, including higher education, in order to meet national needs. In recent decades, there has been a significant expansion in the number of universities and institutes of higher learning in DR Congo, reflecting the growing demand for higher education among the population.

The challenges of LMD integration in DR Congo

The integration of the LMD system in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) faces several challenges. Adaptation of infrastructure: Higher education institutions in the DRC may require physical accommodations, such as adapted classrooms, equipped laboratories, and resource centers, to comply with the requirements of the LMD system. Teacher training and qualification: Teachers need to be trained to adapt to the LMD system's unique pedagogical methods and assessment approaches, which may require significant investments in faculty professional development. Harmonization of curricula: Existing curricula will need to be aligned with the framework of the LMD system, while ensuring the quality and relevance of the training provided. Administrative and Quality Management: Implement effective management systems to monitor

student progress, manage admissions and prior learning validation processes, and ensure the quality of programs and degrees awarded.

Prospects for a successful integration of LMD system in DR Congo

For a successful integration of the LMD system in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), several perspectives can be considered: Engage all relevant actors: It is essential to involve all stakeholders, including higher education institutions, government, teachers, students, and international partners, in a constructive dialogue to develop a common roadmap. Capacity building: Invest in training and capacity building for academic and administrative staff to adapt to the requirements of the LMD system and promote a culture of quality and excellence in higher education. Curriculum review: Adapt curricula to make them compatible with the LMD framework while taking into account national needs in terms of socio-economic development and skills required in the labour market.

Establishment of quality assurance mechanisms: Establish evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms to ensure the relevance and value of the programs offered, as well as the credibility of the degrees awarded. Resource mobilization: Pay particular attention to the mobilization of financial resources, both domestic and international, to support the investments needed to adapt infrastructure, train staff, and modernize pedagogical practices. By adopting a collaborative, transparent and country-driven approach, the DRC can successfully meet the challenge of integrating the LMD system and improve the quality and relevance of its higher education.

Expected impacts of LMD system integration in DR Congo

The integration of the LMD system in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is expected to have several significant positive impacts, including: Improving the quality of higher education: The shift to the LMD system aims to strengthen the quality of higher education with a focus on competency-based learning, continuous assessment, and adapting programs to the needs of the labor market. Increased international mobility: Compliance with European standards would facilitate the mobility of students, researchers and teachers between national and international institutions, thus promoting the exchange of knowledge and openness to the world. Enhanced program relevance: The adoption of the LMD system would allow curricula to be tailored to local socio-economic needs, thus providing graduates with a better fit with the demands of the labour market. Better recognition of diplomas: The degrees awarded would be in line with international standards, improving their recognition and value in the global job and higher education market.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although the integration of the LMD system in the DRC faces significant challenges, it presents critical opportunities to improve the quality of higher education, strengthen the relevance of curricula and foster international openness. With sustained commitment and appropriate investments, the DRC could benefit from this transition to the LMD system to develop

quality higher education and train competent students adapted to the needs of the national and international labour market.

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