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## **Original Research**

### **Role of Professional Associations in Benin Dual Apprenticeship**

Guy Sourou Nouatin\* 

*Faculty of Agronomy, University of Parakou, Republic of Benin*

#### **Abstract**

This paper analyses the involvement and the role played by a professional association in Benin dual apprenticeship. This research utilised a qualitative method using literature analysis with desk research and a semi-structured interview. In total, 56 respondents from staff members of professional associations at local, district and national levels, staff of the public sector, donor agencies and craftsmen were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. To analyse data, I used the theory of institutional change, games models or strategic interactions theory and the conceptual framework of the curriculum value chain of the education programme. Results of the research show that the institutionalisation process of professional associations in the crafts sector started with professional photographers, hairdressers and sewing/cutting in 1950. Professional associations have a strong involvement in the implementation phase of the CQP programme. In the curriculum design phase, they are involved at a moderate level. And in the evaluation phase, they have low involvement. Such involvements in the last two phases can be understood by the low literacy level of most craftsmen who work in the informal sector.

**Keywords:** *Professional associations, institutionalisation process, dual apprenticeship programme, involvement scale, Benin*

\* Author Email: [guy.nouatin@fa-up](mailto:guy.nouatin@fa-up)  
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7713-5267>



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## **Introduction**

The most important challenge faced by public institutions in developing countries while reforming the technical vocational education and training (TVET) is how to match the training programs with the labour market demand. To adjust the TVET system to the international experience from European countries, the Benin government has introduced reforms in 2005 throughout the apprenticeship act 117/2005. The outcomes of these reforms were the institutionalisation of many technical and vocational schools all over the country. To update the TVET system of the country, the traditional apprenticeship has been renovated with a national exam for the certificate of occupational qualification (Certificat de Qualification aux Métiers-CQM) and the dual apprenticeship program which has been implementing since 2003 and gives to apprentices the certificate of professional qualification (Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle-CQP). Hereby, CQM and CQP programs are two apprenticeship programs introduced in the Benin education system. The Benin education system comprises three levels: the first level includes primary education; the second level consists of general secondary education and technical secondary education and the third, tertiary education. Apprenticeship programs are considered a component of the TVET system. The other components of the TVET system are provided in the secondary schools and TVET programs offered at colleges and universities.

The dual apprenticeship differs from traditional ones in the sense that it first takes place partly in the master craftsmen workshops and partly in vocational training centres (UNESCO-BIT, 2013). It is an innovation in the apprenticeship system because most of the firms which provide training work in the informal sector with on-the-job training whereas the dual system requires the duality of the training. According to Walther (2007), the focus of these reforms is to redesign the traditional apprenticeship. In this regard, public institutions work in collaboration with professional associations which represents craftsmen/women. The introduction of this dual system in the Benin TVET system was broadly technically and financially supported by donor agencies (MESTFP, 2016). It refers to a shared responsibility between the state and the private actors/institutions. One of the main actors/institutions from the private sector is professional associations. Professional associations are core actors in the TVET sector due to their position as representative bodies (Bankolé & Nouatin, 2020). In most of the West African countries as in Benin, practitioners of the crafts sector work in

disadvantaged backgrounds with small and household firms/workshop. According to ILO (2005), unions are a way for workers to improve their living and working conditions and those of society at large. Professional associations can be considered as a mean of the development of craft occupation. Hence, they influence to forward their job in the socioeconomic sphere (Kuruvilla et al., 2002).

The study of Gersdorff (1969) shown that professional associations in Africa in the crafts sector existed since the year 1932. He found three categories of professional associations. First, professional organisations which were created in Morocco, Senegal and Madagascar dealt with the business of arts and crafts, the main difficulties and the training. Secondly, craftsmen cooperatives were the most developed organisations in the business of art and crafts. Third, associations were in contrast less expanded. Studying the trade unions in the informal sector, Adu-Amankwah (1999) analysed the case of Ghana in West Africa. The expansion of the informal sector in Ghana was explained by the decline of the formal sector employment and by the emergence of rural informal labour (agricultural activities, fishing and fish processing activities, rural agro-based processing activities, apprenticeship and so on) and urban informal works which are services, construction and manufacturing. Among the trade unions that were established in the crafts sector, there are Timber and Woodworkers Union and Union of Professional Photographers. Both aimed to promote the workers' interests, to regulate their operations through education and to secure national and international recognition of their socio-economic role in national development (Adu-Amankwah, 1999). Chune and Egulu (1999) studied the Kenyan informal sector and indicated some strategies trade unions can adopt. He pointed out the significant contribution of small-scale enterprises to the national economy. As showed by Teal (2016) and Chune and Egulu (1999), the informal sector in sub-Saharan Africa is characterised by very little capital, a low level of technology and skills, low productivity and poor access to services. To save their marginal activities, informal sector workers organized themselves in unions and federations. The most widespread of Kenyan workers was the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU) established in the early 1990s. As strategies, the author recommends carrying out more research on informal sector needs, support reforms in various pieces of labour, extend services in education and training in the informal sector and so on.

The objective of this paper is to find out and analyse the involvement of professional associations in the process of the dual apprenticeship program. In the following section, we first describe the methodological framework used, secondly, we present the historical approach of the professional association in Benin and third, we analyse the involvement of the professional associations in the CQP process.

### Methodology

This research was conducted through a qualitative method using literature analysis and individual semi-structured interviews. First, we applied literature analysis to review the existing literature on the professional associations in the crafts sector in West Africa, especially in Benin. That existing literature is very limited. However, the individual semi-structured interview was used to collect more information about professional associations and their role in the CQP program. In this regard, we interviewed the staff members of these associations, the officials of public institutions, those from donor agencies and the master craftsmen/women.

Three sampling techniques were used: purposive sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling. First, the purposive sampling technique was used to identify some actors, the staff members of professional associations and officials of the public institutions because they collaborated in the process of the implantation of the dual apprenticeship program. Secondly, the snowball sampling technique was applied to find staffs of donor agencies who have shared with Benin their experience in the dual system. It was also applied to reach master craftsmen, members of professional associations who have participated in the program. The convenience sampling technique was used to choose master craftsmen/women who are not members of associations. In total, 56 actors were interviewed (Table 1).

**Table 1**

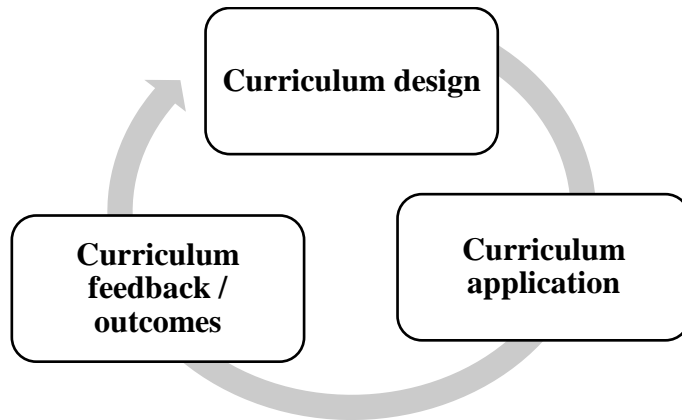
*Matching of Actors Interviewed*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>
Staffs/officials of the public institutions	5
Staffs of donor agencies	3
Staffs of the professional associations	32
Master craftsmen/women	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>

I used a ten-point grading scale on the involvement of professional associations in the dual apprenticeship process to make the content analysis of the results. The four-point grading scale is considered as "weak involvement" of the professional associations. This four-point grading scale includes: (1) "are not involved", (2) "are involved but do not play any role", (3) "play a little role" and (4) "are partly involved". The next three-point grading scale denotes the "medium involvement" of professional associations. Hereby, we graded (5) "play a non-negligible role", (6) "share an equal role with the public sector" and (7) "play a medium role". The last three-point grading scale marks the "strong involvement" of professional associations. We graded (8) "play decisive role", (9) "play important role" and (10) "play strong role".

### **Analytical Framework of the Research**

To analyse the results, I built an analytical framework based on a conceptual approach and two organisational theories. First, I used the curriculum value chain (CVC) introduced by Renold et al. (2015) to analyse the coordination and control process between the education system and the employment system. This conceptual framework involves three phases: curriculum design, curriculum application and curriculum outcomes. The curriculum design illustrates the phase that includes all the step of the curriculum preparation. In this phase, the involvement of professionals and relevant actors is very important to take into account the different sources of innovation. Secondly, in the curriculum application phase, the training delivery takes place in a learning environment. In the third, the curriculum outcomes, the approach consists of assessing the effects and impact of the training program on the youth labour market. In this research, I considered the CVC approach to situate the involvement level of the professional associations in the process of the dual apprenticeship program. Following the three phases of the CVC of the dual apprenticeship program, I stated that professional associations must be involved. The empirical data illustrate the level of involvement of professional associations.

**Figure 1***Curriculum Value Chain*

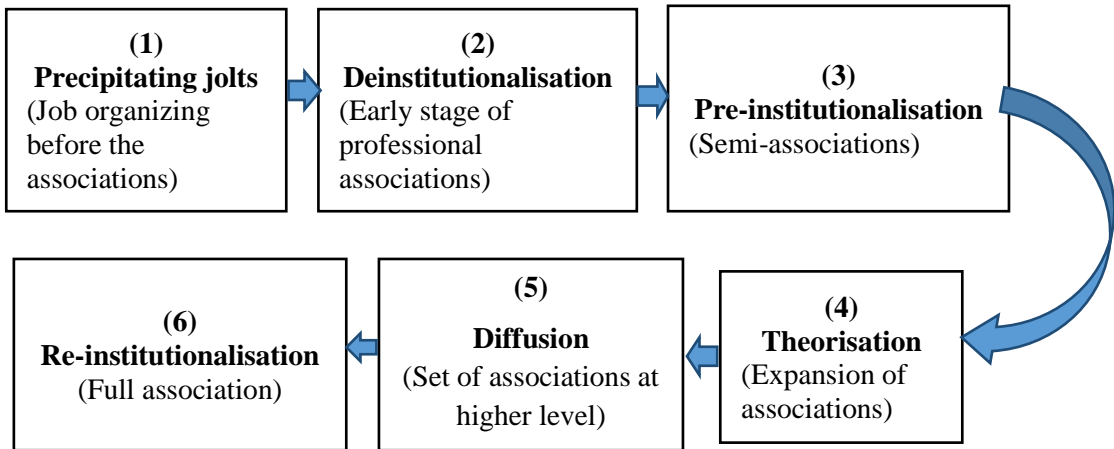
(Source: Renold et al., 2016, p. 8)

The analytical framework has also used the change theory developed by Greenwood et al. (2002). This theory was used to analyse the role of the professional associations in the accounting profession in Canada. According to Greenwood et al. (2002), professional associations become strong regulatory agencies and they play an important role in theorizing change. The first stage is the destabilisation of the practices through social, technological and regulatory events (precipitating jolts stage). The common practices become inefficient to face the challenges. The second stage is the deinstitutionalisation in which new actors and members integrate the associations. The existing actor or local entrepreneurship forwards their status. New ideas point at the needs to involve new actors who can translate new ideas to new practices. The third stage is called pre-institutionalisation in which professional associations innovate independently and seek viable responses to locally solve their problems. In the fourth stage, the theorisation consists of developing and specifying the innovative practices in the organisation for wide adoption. The fifth stage involves the diffusion of innovation of new practices. While the innovation is widely adopted, it arises re-institutionalisation considered as the full institutionalisation stage of professional associations: this is the sixth stage. Hence, professional associations become strong or full institutions that set new values and new practices. Through this process, the public authorities play the function of regulatory agencies. Using this theory, we postulated that professional

associations are involved in the dual apprenticeship process whether their organisations or institutions are strong. Thereby, the theory was been used to analyse the process of the institutionalisation of professional associations, whether they are strong.

**Figure 2**

*Institutionalisation Process of Professional Associations*

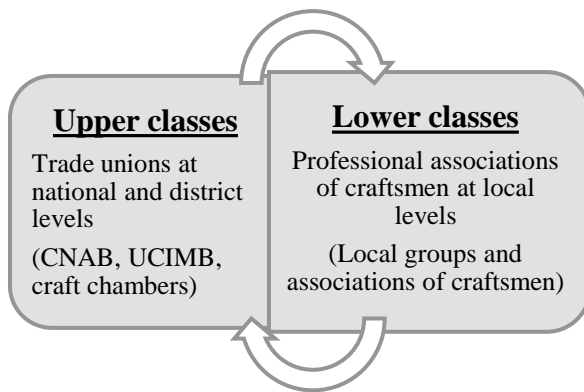


(Source: Adapted from Greenwood et al., 2002)

The games models or the strategic interaction theory was applied in sociology to analyse the interactions in the secular stratification classes. Elias (1991) states that "upper classes" are dominant groups that can influence less dominant groups, considered as "lower classes". This structure of the social classes shows that each of the disparate class plays a specific role according to their position. Based on the stratification classes developed by Elias (1991), we postulated that professional associations at the national and district levels belong to the upper classes which represent the affiliated associations and groups in the making-decision with public institutions. The lower classes are those who work in the collaboration with individual firms and the representative bodies at the national level. In this second class, we include an association at the local level. Both classes interact with each other in the process of the dual apprenticeship to defend their interests and to improve the living conditions of the workers.

**Figure 3**

*Professional Associations Analysis Framework in Benin Crafts Sector*



(Source: Adapted from the game models by Elias, 1991)

In the next sections, we first start the presentation of the results with the description of the institutionalisation process of the professional associations in the Benin crafts sector. We follow the change theory of Greenwood et al. (2002). Secondly, we present their involvement in the process of the dual apprenticeship system throughout the curriculum value chain (CVC) approach. Due to ethical considerations, we used pseudonym or initials to name the participants in the research. In the discussion section, we analyse and debate the results based on the three theoretical approaches used.

### **Results**

Along the following subsections, I present the major results of the study.

#### **Historical Approach of the Professional Associations in Benin Crafts Sector**

The existing literature on the professional associations in the Benin crafts sector is essentially provided by the study of Davodoun (2003) and Davodoun (2006). Data used in this subsection regarding the historical approach of the professional associations were collected from these sources.

According to Davodoun (2003), the associative engagement in the crafts sector in Benin refers to two main periods. First, professional associations have been emerged dating back to the period from 1950 to the year 1990. Professional associations in that period were less developed due to the limits on freedom of expression. Secondly, the



period after the year 1990 marks the beginning of the democratic system. In that period, professional associations greatly increased in the crafts sector.

***Period From 1950 to 1990: Establishment of the Professional Associations for the Improvement Occupational Working Conditions***

This first period of the institutionalisation process involves two sub-periods: the period from 1950 to 1986 which can be considered as "precipitating jolts" or destabilisation phase of professional associations. According to Davodoun (2006), the first trade union had been established by professional photographers in 1950 and legally in 1969. The focus of their association aimed to promote photography careers and to set a unique value price for all the Beninese photographers. In 1983 and 1984, professionals from sewing/cutting and hairdressers respectively established their associations to provide an overview of the reunification process and to find solutions for their occupational performance issues. This period can be considered as the second stage of the institutionalisation process which is deinstitutionalisation. We used applied the deinstitutionalisation phase to this period because the two associations created in sewing/cutting and hairdressers aimed to create a global frame for the reunification of the professionals. Sewing/cutting association had been legally enrolled in 1986. All of the two associations were been installed in Cotonou, the economic capital of the Republic of Benin (Davodoun, 2006).

The second sub-period of the institutionalisation process of professional associations is from 1987 to 1990 when many successful initiatives were been carried out focussing on new occupational challenges such as credits and loans. This period can be considered as the pre-institutionalisation stage of the professional association in the Benin crafts sector. Nevertheless, it is found that the electronic technicians association set in July 1987 did not have a long existence due to the management issues. In the same period, professional hairdressers had dissolved their old association for management issues by creating the Benin union of hairdressers in January 1989 (Davodoun, 2006).

***Period After 1990: Process for Full-Institutionalisation of Professional Associations***

The second period of the development and consolidation of professional associations in the Benin crafts sector ranges from 1990 up to date. This period was marked by the establishment of the craftsmen organisations at regional and national levels. The main

organisations are the national federation of craftsmen in Benin (FENAB<sup>1</sup>), the national union of chambers in Benin (UCIMB<sup>2</sup>) and the national confederation of craftsmen in Benin (CNAB).

### ***Establishment and Development of the National Federation of Professional Associations***

The national federation of craftsmen in Benin (FENAB) was created in September 1993 with the support of the association of the prevention of juvenile delinquency (APDJ<sup>3</sup>). FENAB was created to provide mutual support to professional associations to help them to set and promote permanent communication among associations, to strengthen their collaboration with public institutions and donors and to work for the creation of the crafts chamber. Due to the lack of collaboration with associations at the local level, the lack of financial resources and the leadership challenges, the staff of FENAB faced difficulties to play decisive roles. FENAB was revitalized in December 1996 with 61 memberships associations. Two partner agencies provided their technical assistance: the technical support agency for craftsmen (BAA<sup>4</sup>) and the technical support unit (CAT<sup>5</sup>). Through the supports from these associations, craftsmen were been organized in local associations which were led to join the federation. The success of this strategy had influenced the emergence of professional associations. Due to this expansion of professional associations within the foundation of the national federation of professional associations, we considered the creation of the federation as the theorisation stage of the institutionalisation process.

### ***Foundation of the National Crafts Chambers and the National Confederation of Craftsmen as the Diffusion Stage***

Considered as the biggest representative body of craftsmen, FENAB was been involved in the committee which organized the policy-making process for the creation of the crafts chambers in Benin. With the support of the Swiss Department for Development and Cooperation, the national crafts chambers (UCIMB) was established in December 2003, through act No. 557/2003, under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, Literacy, Crafts and Tourism (MCAAT)<sup>6</sup>. Crafts chambers are public institutions represented by 95 percent of the staff members from professional associations and 5 percent from individual firms. The general workshop on the election of UCIMB staff was held in August 2009 and the staff members were first instructed in

May 2010 by the Benin government. According to the current structure of government, UCIMB is a public institution under the charge of the Ministry of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Employment Generation (MPMEPE<sup>7</sup>). UCIMB is the national institution of chambers set in the six regions in Benin: Alibori-Borgou; Atlantique-Littoral; Mono-Couffo; Ouémé-Plateau; Atacora-Donga; and Zou-Collines. The focus role of UCIMB is to provide training, advisory, accreditation services to craftsmen firms and to ensure the functionality of the trade union.

CNAB is a recent representative body of the craftsmen in Benin which was created in April 2008. The initiative of the CNAB organisation was undertaken by the existing professional associations and the federation of craftsmen. The focus of the CNAB is to promote craft occupations and to work to safeguard the interests of the craftsperson. According to the national classification of crafts, the craft occupations are shaped into eight classes which involve eight federations. Hence, the first member of CANB is represented by all the eight federations of craft occupations. The second category of the members is from ninety-eight the crafts chambers. The third category of CNAB members involves professional association at district and local levels. In the partnership with public institutions, CNAB acts to develop the crafts sector, to discuss tax relief for the benefit of craftsmen and their access to contracts with the public sector; and to lead to the public-private partnership.

At the time when UCIMB and CNAB have led to the national representation of the craftsmen, their creation is considered as the diffusion stage of the institutionalisation process of professional associations. Before analysing the full-institutionalisation stage of the professional associations, it is important to study the involvement in the process of the introduction of innovative practices. Here, the innovation is dual apprenticeship because master craftsmen are not used to training apprentices in the alternative process as it is suggested throughout the dual system introduced in traditional apprenticeship.

### **Involvement of Professional Associations in the Dual Apprenticeship Process in Benin**

To develop this subsection, we considered the curriculum value chain (CVC) as it was illustrated above. Professional associations in Benin play important role in the three phases of the dual apprenticeship processor CQP program. For each phase, we evaluated the participation of the private sector.

### ***Involvement Level of Professional Associations in the Curriculum Design for CQP Program***

In the introduction phase of the dual apprenticeship in Benin, the government with the technical and financial support of donor agencies, especially Swisscontact, developed occupational standards. Professional associations delegate their members to participate in the design process by providing their skills in the job analysis. Figure 4 presents the responses of the resource persons interviewed regarding the level of participation of professional associations.

#### **Figure 4**

*Perception of the Participation of Professional Associations in the CQP Curricula Design Phase*

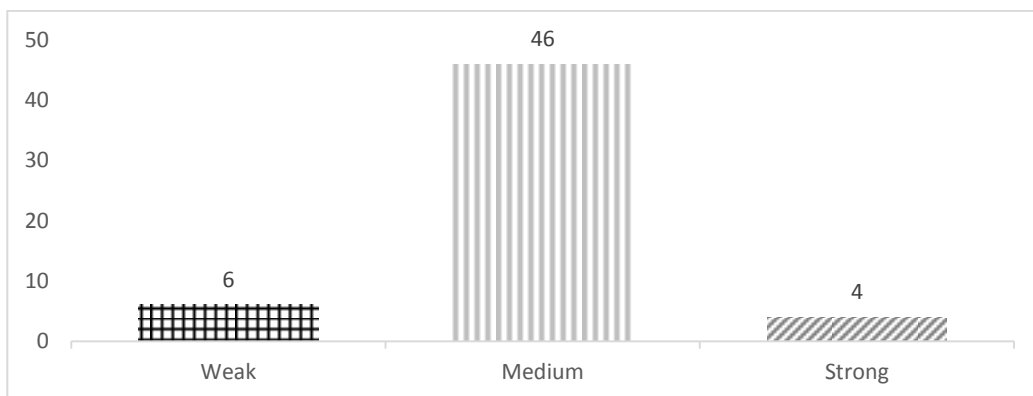


Figure 4 shows that the involvement of professional associations is moderate in the curriculum design phase for the CQP program. In the curriculum design phase for CQP, craft occupations were developed through performance-based training, using develop a curriculum (DACUM) method. DACUM method consists of two workshops that involve 8 to 12 experts (Yokossi, 2016). According to many interviews, the workshops were organized by Swisscontact and public institutions involving some professionals. Craftsmen who participated in these workshops were selected from their trade unions according to their work experiences. Their participation contributes to the job analysis and in the definition of the standards of qualification. Craftsmen who participate must be at least 10 years of work experience. A good literacy level is required. Globally, most of the craftsmen in Benin are low literacy level because they were trained while

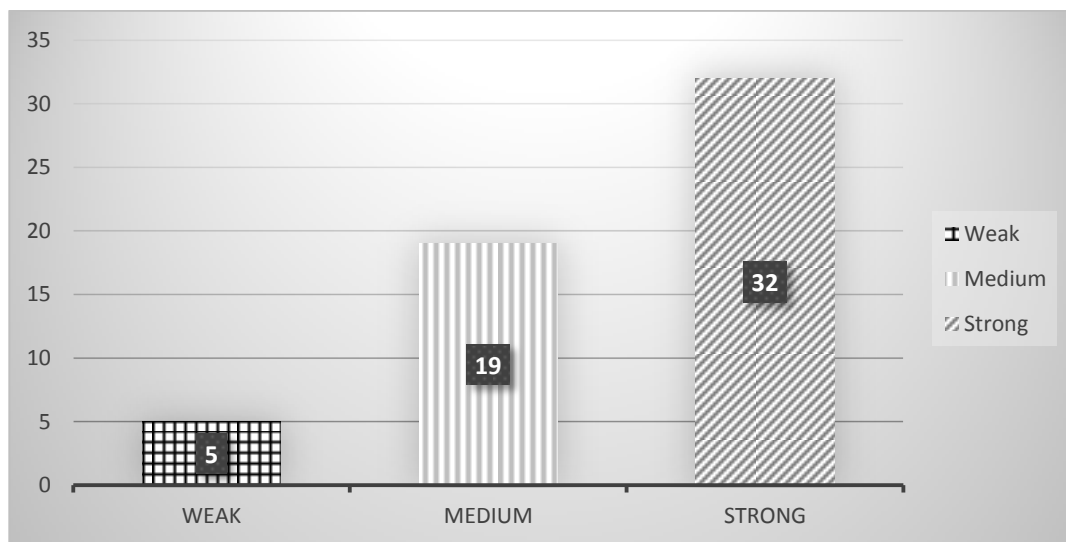
living in disadvantaged backgrounds. Hence, most of the professionals who participated in the workshops are not from small and household enterprises which are more developed in Benin.

### ***Involvement Level of Professional Associations in the CQP Implementation Phase***

This phase leads to the training provision which has two components. The first component of the CQP program is vocational training in the training centres which provides general education and specific contents in the respective occupations. The second component is the work-based training offered by master craftsmen in workplaces. Hence, the CQP application phase requires the commitment of professional associations. Figure 5 evaluates the involvement of professional associations in the implementation phase of the CQP program.

**Figure 5**

*Perception of the Participation of Professional Associations in the CQP Application Phase*



Through figure 5, it is observed an optimal involvement of the professional associations in the CQP application. They play a core role in the CQP student enrolment by making awareness of master craftsmen and by collecting the application

files. They are also involved in the entrance test procedure. After the students' enrolment, FODEFCA, in collaboration with the Department of TVET, matches the CQP students to the training centres. Professional associations provide trainers under the solicitation of the staffs of vocational training centres. Each educational group for CQP must have three categories of trainer: lead trainers<sup>8</sup>, local trainers/instructors<sup>9</sup> and educational supervisor<sup>10</sup>. According to a staff member of a professional association in the district of Parakou:

Teacher provision is an important role played by professional associations at the district level. We are not entitled to provide teachers but this results from the partnership between staffs of vocational training centres and professional associations. Before we select craftsmen, we must be ensured that he/she belongs to an association at the local level. Otherwise, the trainer is recruited by the training centre. We do not agree with the fact that trainers do not belong to an association. We defeat this practice to encourage craftsmen who are in associations and who pay their membership fees. (C. staff member, Parakou, 2019)

Through this quote, it is noticeable that professional associations have substantial power in the CQP implementation by providing trainers to vocational training centres and by training CQP apprentices in the workshops. Furthermore, professional associations are involved in the evaluation process for CQP cohorts. In this process, craftsmen participate in one commission, either for evaluation forms or for the supervision of summative evaluation or other evaluation tasks.

Even though actors have a positive perception of the involvement of professional associations in the CQP application, those who have low perception argue that CQP is implemented with the marginal involvement of craftsmen. One of the staff of the Professional association asserts the following: "In the implementation of the dual training, only the training centres steer profits from the training contracts by FODEFCA. Master craftsmen do not receive any wage from the dual system. Those who provide training receive insufficient wage" (J. staff member, Parakou, 2019). Besides, it is reported that most of the staff members who participate in the workshops with public institutions are more interested in the remuneration. See the following quote:

We have participated in many workshops and roundtables for craftsmen. I did not observe any change at all. I hope most of the staff members are more interested in the money they receive from their participation in such public events. I made this remark through our participation in the public workshops in which we have been involved. People [other staff members] are interested to know how much we will be paid at the end of the event. In this regard, we do not focus on the main objective; we do not play our role which is to direct attention to the global interest of the craftsmen/women. (W. staff member, Parakou, 2020)

The participation of the craftsmen in the public events through their associations favour inclusive decision-making by both, public and private institutions. However, this quote shows that craftsmen representative bodies are likely to focus on their profit. In this regard, craftsmen/women develop strategies to defeat each other during the election of the staff members at local, district and national levels. C. a master craftsman in hairdresser asserts the following quote:

It is a great deal when we must elect or change the staff members in our trade. Potential candidates strive to be elected by using money to corrupt fellow members. When you have money to share with other members to receive their support, you will be elected. Sometimes, some of them refer to magic religious practices to be elected. (C., master craftsman, Parakou, 2019)

Referring to this quote, we realize that money can influence the formation of professional associations because staff members are elected in exchange for money instead of their abilities and projects for the wellbeing of their association. Therefore, that can harm the performance of the staff members' role which consists of saving collective interests. In other words, staff members used the money to influence their election and once elected, they focus only on their interests rather than the interests of their association fellow members.

### ***Involvement Level of Professional Associations in the CQP Outcomes Evaluation***

The third phase of an education program is to evaluate to improve the quality of the training and to ensure positive incomes for the graduate students from the training program. In the CQP process, Swisscontact has revised the framework documents for the improvement of the training. We evaluated the craftsmen involvement in this phase

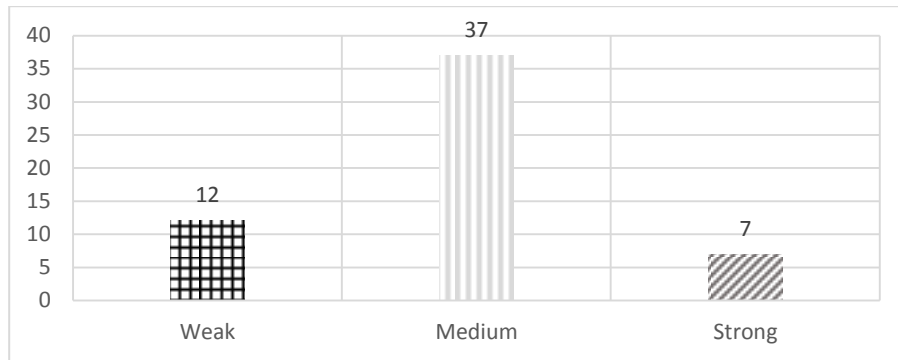
**Figure 6***Perception of the Participation of Professional Associations to the CQP Evaluation Phase*

Figure 6 shows that the involvement of professional associations is moderate in the evaluation of the CQP outcomes and the update of the program performance. Professional associations are not those who decide to update the curriculum for CQP schemes. However, their involvement in this phase leads to direct attention on the weaknesses trainers and master craftsmen have drawn. As practitioners, training providers participate in program improvement.

**Discussion**

Through this paper, two major points can be discussed based on the change stage of institutional change by Greenwood et al. (2002) and Games' models or strategic interactions theory by Elias (1991). The first point we discuss is about the institutionalisation process of professional association whereas the second point lies in the strategic interaction among professional associations.

In the first stage of institutional change, it is stated that events occur to reform the old practices. In the Benin crafts sector, craftsmen faced challenges in the competitiveness and sustainability of their occupations. The historical approach of professional associations showed that craftsmen have built their organisations/trade unions to defend their interests and to improve their living and work conditions. Schurman and Adrienne (2013) think that informal economy workers in Africa had organized themselves before the attracting attention of trade unions. The earlier



professional associations were created from 1950 to 1989 in photography, sewing/cutting and hairdressing worked for the security of their occupation and for improving their job performance. By applying the change theory developed by Greenwood et al. (2002), the proprieties of stages (1) precipitating jolts, (2) deinstitutionalisation, (3) pre-institutionalisation of the institutional change, showing that many other events, actors and institutions had contributed to the growth and development of professional associations. The advent of the democratic system marks the beginning of further organisations of craftsmen. Due to the freedom of expression, many associations have emerged. Later in 1993, FENAB was established and in 1996, it was revitalized with the support of public institutions, donors and NGOs. the foundation of professional associations at the national level, crafts chambers in 2003 and CNAB in 2008 marks the (4) theorisation and (5) diffusion of the institutionalisation process.

Stage 6 of the institutional change theory by Greenwood et al. (2002) and the theory of the strategic interaction by Elias (1991), draw attention to the roles of professional associations through their partnership between public institutions and the business sector, professional associations work with public institutions to undertaken reforms. Through the introduction of the dual apprenticeship or CQP program, professional associations in collaboration with their members have been involved in the process of the three phases of the curriculum value chain. Data analysis showed that professional associations have more power and are more involved in the implementation phase of the CQP program. The study of Bridgford (2017) showed that in Africa, many countries such as Senegal, Morocco and so on commit social partners to combine their efforts to strengthen skills development.

Most challenges faced by professional associations are about the leadership and the management of resources. The leadership challenge between staff members of professional associations affects the welfare of the management of the members. Hence, each staff member acts depending on his/her ability to influence other members. Moreover, there is strong interaction among staff members/members on the one hand and the other hand between professional associations and public institutions. The same result was found by Moeti-Lysson and Ongori (2011) who found that there is a significant relationship between the members and the union. These strategic relationships among staff members and with individual firms are observed while

selecting craftsmen to participate in the specific committees for the CQP process and while delegating staff members to participate in the workshops at national and international levels. Hence, many craftsmen think that professional associations are politicized. Such perception is shared by Rajesh and Manoj (2014) who found in their study that workers are less satisfied with the functioning of trade unions.

### **Conclusion**

The professional associations in the crafts sector have emerged in Benin although their existence dates back from the period before the independence. This research was undertaken to evaluate their involvement and their core role in the dual apprenticeship system in Benin. To conduct this research, we adopted a qualitative method using literature analysis and semi-structured interview to collect data from 56 participants. Through the historical background of professional associations in the crafts sector, the research has shown that the institutionalisation process of professional associations in the crafts sector started with professional photographers, hairdressers and sewing/cutting in 1950. Through the theory of institutional change, it is noticed that the emergence of professional associations in Benin was observed from the democratic system. Many associations which were created before this period were reformed and consolidated by professional associations at local, district and national levels.

Moreover, the first national association was the federation which was created in 1963 and reformed in 1996. Crafts chambers have been created by the government in 2003 in the collaboration with public institutions and Swisscontact. In 2008, the national confederation of craftsmen (CNAB) was established by the existing associations and the eight federations of craftsmen to promote and develop their business. Based on the curriculum value chain, it is found that professional associations have a strong involvement in the implementation phase of the CQP program. However, in the curriculum design phase, they are involved at a moderate level whereas, in the evaluation phase, they have low involvement. Such involvements in the last two phases can be understood by the low literacy level of most of the craftsmen who work in the informal sector. Beyond the perception of workers on the role of their organisations, further research must take into account the perception of master craftsmen on the dual apprenticeship or CQP reform.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Fédération Nationale des Artisans du Bénin
- <sup>2</sup> Union des Chambres Inter départementales des Métiers du Bénin (UCIMB)
- <sup>3</sup> Association de Prévention de la Délinquance Juvénile (APDJ)
- <sup>4</sup> Bureau d'Appui aux Artisans (BAA)
- <sup>5</sup> Cellule d'Appui Technique (CAT)
- <sup>6</sup> Ministère de la Culture, de l'Alphabétisation, de l'Artisanat et du Tourisme (MCAAT)
- <sup>7</sup> Ministère des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises et de la Promotion de l'Emploi (MPMEPE)
- <sup>8</sup> Formateur principal
- <sup>9</sup> Formateur endogène
- <sup>10</sup> Formateur de suivi

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