



Journal Homepage: - www.journalijar.com

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/23146

DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/23146>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

TEFL AS A DRIVER OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS TRAINING IN BENIN

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 16 January 2026

Final Accepted: 18 February 2026

Published: March 2026

Key words:-

TEFL, workforce development, skills training, Benin, English proficiency, economy, education policy

Abstract

This study examines the role of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in promoting workforce development and skills training in Benin. As the country's economy expands, the demand for workers with English proficiency continues to grow, yet the educational system faces challenges in providing effective English instruction. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through questionnaires administered to 864 participants, interviews with eight EFL experts, and six classroom observations. The study assesses the current state of TEFL in Benin, identifies workforce development needs, and explores ways to align English language teaching with labor market demands. The findings reveal gaps between English instruction and the communicative and professional skills required in the workplace. Strengthening TEFL could therefore enhance workforce readiness and support economic development. The study recommends improving TEFL programs, strengthening teacher training, and fostering partnerships between educational institutions and industry.

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Introduction:-

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) plays a crucial role in expanding educational and economic opportunities in Benin. In an increasingly globalized world, proficiency in English enables access to higher education, international communication, and employment opportunities in global markets. TEFL programs therefore contribute significantly to improving the quality of language instruction and equipping learners with the skills necessary to participate effectively in the global economy. For educators, TEFL certification provides modern pedagogical methods for teaching English to non-native speakers, moving beyond traditional and often ineffective approaches toward competency-based and communicative teaching practices. By strengthening teachers' professional skills, TEFL helps improve classroom instruction and better prepares students to meet the linguistic demands of academic and professional environments. English language proficiency provides Beninese students with access to international news, academic research, and digital resources, all of which are essential in today's interconnected world. It also enhances employability, particularly in sectors such as multinational business, tourism, international trade, and diplomacy. In major urban centers such as Cotonou, English fluency can significantly improve employment prospects and career advancement.

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Moreover, English proficiency promotes cultural exchange and interaction with diverse communities worldwide, fostering greater intercultural understanding and social integration. For teachers, TEFL certification offers several professional advantages. First, it equips educators with effective teaching strategies tailored to diverse classrooms where English is learned as a foreign language. Second, professional certification enhances teachers' career prospects by increasing their value to employers and opening opportunities for leadership roles and higher-paying positions. Finally, the growing demand for English language instruction in Benin requires well-trained teachers capable of delivering high-quality instruction. At the national level, English proficiency contributes to economic development by attracting foreign investment, facilitating international trade, and strengthening the service sector. As Benin seeks to modernize its education system, TEFL can support ongoing educational reforms that emphasize competency-based learning and practical communication skills. Improved English proficiency can also strengthen diplomatic, academic, and commercial relations with English-speaking countries.

Workforce development and skills training are critical drivers of economic growth in Benin. By addressing existing skills gaps, improving productivity, and preparing young people for emerging industries, skills development initiatives can contribute to sustainable economic transformation. This is particularly important given Benin's large youth population entering a rapidly evolving labor market that increasingly requires technical and digital skills. Effective training programs can enhance youth employability and facilitate the transition from informal employment to more stable and productive sectors of the economy. Aligning education and training programs with labor market demands also helps promote innovation and support the development of higher-value industries. Skills development programs address shortages in key sectors such as construction, mechanics, and technology, where employers often struggle to find qualified workers. Closing these gaps can reduce underemployment and improve economic efficiency. A skilled workforce enhances productivity and economic output. Countries with well-trained workers are also more attractive to foreign investors and international businesses.

Workforce development supports the diversification of Benin's economy beyond traditional sectors, including activities linked to the Port of Cotonou, by preparing workers for emerging industries. Given the country's significant youth population, skills training plays an essential role in helping young people enter the labor market and reducing the number of individuals classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Skills development encourages the transition from the informal to the formal economy and enables workers to adopt new technologies, develop innovative products, and contribute to economic modernization. The government of Benin has implemented several initiatives to strengthen workforce development and human capital. Benin has increased investment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs to equip learners with practical skills required by the labor market. Programs such as FORCE (Vocational Education for the Labour Market), supported by international partners including the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, link training institutions with local businesses to ensure that curricula respond to labor market needs. Vocational training institutions in cities such as Ouidah and Djougou have benefited from infrastructure upgrades and teacher training programs supported by development partners such as the OPEC Fund for International Development. Entrepreneurship education has also been integrated into training programs to encourage innovation and job creation, with support from organizations such as the World Bank. Together, these initiatives aim to build a resilient workforce capable of supporting Benin's long-term economic development.

Research Problem:-

Despite the growing importance of English language proficiency in the global economy, TEFL programs in Benin face several challenges in effectively supporting workforce development and skills training. These challenges include limited educational resources, insufficient teacher training, and inadequate infrastructure. As a result, many graduates lack the language and professional skills required by the labor market.

Problem Statement:-

TEFL programs in Benin are not yet fully effective in promoting workforce development and skills training. This situation has created a mismatch between the skills possessed by graduates and the competencies required by employers, thereby limiting employment opportunities and hindering the country's economic development. Previous studies have highlighted these challenges, particularly the lack of resources, inadequate teacher preparation, and infrastructural constraints affecting English language instruction (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2019 ; Ojo & Adeyemi, 2020).

Research Objectives:-

Main Objective:-

The main objective of this study is to investigate the role of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in promoting workforce development and skills training in Benin.

Specific Objectives:-

- To examine the current state of TEFL programs in Benin and their relevance to workforce development.
- To identify the skills and competencies that TEFL programs should emphasize to support workforce development.
- To assess the effectiveness of TEFL programs in promoting employability and skills training.
- To identify the challenges facing TEFL programs in Benin and propose strategies for improvement.

Research Question:-

How can TEFL contribute to workforce development and skills training in Benin?

Research Hypothesis:-

TEFL can enhance workforce development in Benin by equipping learners with essential English language skills required for global employment opportunities. By bridging the gap between general English proficiency and job-specific language skills, integrating educational technology, and strengthening teacher professional development, TEFL programs can significantly improve learners' communication, problem-solving, and digital competencies needed for success in the global economy. TEFL programs should emphasize English for Specific Purposes (ESP), focusing on professional communication in sectors such as tourism, banking, technology, and international trade.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) tools, mobile applications, and multimedia resources can enhance accessibility and create interactive learning environments. Continuous professional development (CPD), peer observation, and mentoring programs can help teachers adopt innovative teaching practices and improve instructional quality. TEFL can also promote transferable skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, digital literacy, and problem-solving, which are essential for the modern workplace. Several challenges must be addressed to ensure the success of TEFL programs in Benin, including limited technological infrastructure, varying levels of digital literacy among teachers, and the need for stronger institutional support and policy frameworks. By addressing these challenges and implementing innovative strategies, TEFL can contribute significantly to workforce development in Benin by producing graduates with the linguistic and professional competencies required in both local and international labor markets.

Literature Review:-

Overview of TEFL in Benin : Current State and Challenges:-

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Benin is a relatively recent but rapidly developing field. The increasing importance of English in international communication, education, and trade has generated a growing demand for English language instruction across the country. However, despite this demand, the TEFL sector in Benin faces numerous structural and pedagogical challenges. According to Clement (2018, p. 12), TEFL in Benin is characterized by a shortage of qualified teachers, limited instructional resources, and restricted access to technological tools that could enhance language learning. These constraints significantly affect the quality and effectiveness of English language instruction in many schools.

One major challenge is the limited level of government support for TEFL programs. Although English is recognized as an important international language, public investment in English language education remains relatively modest. As noted by Dossou (2022, p. 5), insufficient funding and limited policy prioritization have hindered the development of well-structured English language programs in the country. Another critical issue concerns teacher preparation and professional training. Many English language teachers in Benin have not received formal training in TEFL methodology. Ojo and Adeyemi (2020, p. 10) emphasize that the lack of professional preparation often leads to ineffective teaching practices and unsatisfactory learning outcomes.

The Impact of Untrained English Language Teachers:-

The shortage of formally trained English language teachers constitutes a major obstacle to effective language instruction in Benin. Teachers who lack specialized training in TEFL frequently rely on traditional and teacher-centered instructional approaches that are not always conducive to effective language acquisition. According to Kumar (2020, p. 15), untrained teachers often depend on conventional methods such as rote memorization, grammar-translation techniques, and lecture-based instruction. While these approaches may provide some theoretical knowledge of the language, they rarely promote communicative competence or active student engagement. Furthermore, inadequate training often affects lesson planning and instructional design. Adeyemi and Ojo (2019, p. 20) argue that teachers without professional preparation may struggle to develop coherent lesson plans that support progressive language development. As a result, students may experience confusion and frustration during the learning process. Another important concern relates to assessment practices. Ojo and Adeyemi (2020, p. 10) note that untrained teachers may lack the skills required to design appropriate evaluation tools and provide constructive feedback to learners. Without effective assessment mechanisms, it becomes difficult to monitor student progress and identify learning difficulties.

Consequences for Student Outcomes:-

The presence of untrained teachers in English language classrooms has significant implications for student performance and long-term opportunities. Students may experience difficulties in developing adequate proficiency in the four core language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Kumar, 2020, p. 15). In addition, ineffective teaching strategies and poorly structured lessons can negatively affect student motivation and engagement. Adeyemi and Ojo (2019, p. 20) observe that such conditions may lead to reduced participation, lower academic achievement, and in some cases increased dropout rates. The consequences extend beyond the classroom. In a globalized economy, English proficiency is increasingly associated with employability and career advancement. Students who fail to acquire sufficient language skills may face significant disadvantages in the labor market (International Labour Organization, 2020, p. 10).

Structural Challenges Affecting TEFL Programs:-

Beyond issues related to teacher training, several structural factors continue to affect the effectiveness of TEFL programs in Benin. One major challenge is the lack of educational resources. Many schools do not have sufficient textbooks, audio materials, or pedagogical tools to support effective language learning (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2019, p. 20). This shortage limits teachers' ability to implement interactive and communicative teaching methods. In addition, overcrowded classrooms are common in many schools. Large class sizes make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention and meaningful language practice for students (Kumar, 2020, p. 15). Another constraint concerns infrastructure limitations. According to the Ministry of Education (Bénin, Ministère de l'Éducation, 2020, p. 15), many schools lack adequate classrooms, libraries, and other basic facilities necessary for effective learning environments.

The Urban–Rural Divide in English Language Instruction:-

An additional challenge facing English language education in Benin is the unequal distribution of educational opportunities between urban and rural areas. English language programs tend to be concentrated in major urban centers, while rural communities often have limited access to quality English instruction (Dossou, 2022, p. 5). This urban–rural disparity creates significant inequalities in language learning opportunities. Rural students frequently have fewer chances to develop English proficiency, resulting in a widening gap between urban and rural learners (Kumar, 2020, p. 15). Limited English proficiency may also restrict access to global information resources, including academic publications, digital content, and international educational opportunities (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2019, p. 20). Consequently, rural students may experience reduced academic and professional prospects. Moreover, the lack of educational opportunities in rural areas may contribute to internal migration, as young people move to urban centers in search of better educational and employment prospects (Dossou, 2022, p. 5).

Government Initiatives to Promote English Language Education:-

Despite these challenges, the government of Benin has introduced several initiatives aimed at strengthening English language education. One important policy measure has been the introduction of English as a compulsory subject in secondary schools (Bénin, Ministère de l'Éducation, 2020, p. 15). This initiative reflects the government's recognition of the strategic importance of English in a globalized world. By integrating English into the national curriculum, policymakers aim to provide students with essential linguistic skills that can enhance their academic and professional opportunities. The inclusion of English as a compulsory subject is expected to produce several

benefits. First, it can improve students' language proficiency and enable them to communicate more effectively in international contexts (Kumar, 2020, p. 15). Second, English proficiency can broaden access to higher education opportunities both domestically and abroad (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2019, p. 20). Finally, strong English language skills can increase graduates' competitiveness in the global labor market (International Labour Organization, 2020, p. 10). Nevertheless, the success of this initiative depends largely on effective implementation. Key requirements include adequate teacher training, sufficient educational resources, and effective monitoring and evaluation systems.

The Technology Gap in TEFL Programs:-

Another important challenge affecting TEFL programs in Benin is the limited integration of technology in language instruction. Many schools lack access to computers, internet connectivity, and multimedia resources that could enhance language learning (International Labour Organization, 2020, p. 10). The absence of technological resources restricts teachers' ability to adopt innovative teaching approaches such as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Without these tools, classroom instruction may remain heavily dependent on traditional teaching methods. Limited access to technology also affects student engagement and motivation. Interactive digital tools can provide opportunities for listening practice, pronunciation training, and authentic communication with speakers of English. When such resources are unavailable, students may have fewer opportunities to practice and develop their language skills. Addressing the technology gap therefore requires investment in digital infrastructure, teacher training in educational technology, and the development of locally relevant digital learning materials.

Importance of English Language Skills in the Global Economy:-

The growing importance of English in the global economy further highlights the need for effective TEFL programs. English functions as the primary language of international communication in areas such as business, science, technology, and diplomacy (Adams, 2020, p. 15). Proficiency in English facilitates international trade, investment, and cross-border collaboration. Businesses increasingly require employees who can communicate effectively with international partners and clients (Ojo & Adeyemi, 2020, p. 20). For individuals, strong English language skills can significantly enhance employment prospects and income potential. Dossou (2022, p. 10) notes that graduates with advanced English proficiency often have access to a wider range of career opportunities, particularly in multinational companies and international organizations. Moreover, English proficiency enables access to a vast amount of global knowledge, including academic research, professional training materials, and digital information resources (Kumar, 2020, p. 18).

Workforce Development and Skills Training in Benin:-

In recent years, Benin has implemented several initiatives aimed at strengthening workforce development and improving employability, particularly among young people. One major focus has been the expansion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Programs such as the Azoli initiative provide training and employment support to vulnerable youth aged 15–30, including the development of digital, entrepreneurial, and soft skills. Similarly, the National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategy (2019–2025) aims to significantly expand vocational education, establish new training institutions, and improve teacher training. Additional initiatives include the establishment of Community Digital Centers, which provide training in digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and professional skills. International partners such as the World Bank and GIZ have also supported projects aimed at strengthening vocational education and promoting youth inclusion in the labor market. Despite these efforts, several challenges remain. A significant skills mismatch persists between training programs and labor market demands. Completion rates in vocational programs remain relatively low, and many young people continue to work in informal or precarious employment. According to Nouatin (2021) and World Bank reports (2020; 2024), the main challenges include weak alignment between training programs and private sector needs, limited job creation in the formal sector, and the need to improve training quality and standards.

Overall, while Benin has made significant progress in reforming its education and training systems, further efforts are required to ensure that educational initiatives translate into stable and meaningful employment opportunities for the country's growing youth population.

Methodology

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To investigate the role of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in workforce development in Benin, this study adopts a mixed-methods research design combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The mixed-

methods approach allows the researcher to obtain both statistical evidence and in-depth insights into the experiences, needs, and challenges of TEFL stakeholders. The quantitative component provides measurable data on general trends, teaching practices, and perceptions regarding TEFL programs. The qualitative component allows for a deeper understanding of participants' experiences, opinions, and contextual factors influencing English language education. By combining these two approaches, the study seeks to provide comprehensive answers to both "how many" questions (quantitative) and "why" questions (qualitative) regarding the TEFL landscape in Benin. The study targets three main groups of participants: TEFL teachers, students, and employers. These stakeholders provide valuable perspectives on the effectiveness of TEFL programs, the skills required for workforce development, and the challenges affecting English language instruction.

Research Design : Mixed Methods (Qualitative and Quantitative):-

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative approach is used to identify general patterns, measure perceptions, and analyze the prevalence of teaching practices and challenges affecting TEFL programs. It also helps assess levels of satisfaction with current TEFL practices and their relevance to workforce development. The qualitative approach, on the other hand, provides deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. It allows the researcher to explore the reasons behind specific challenges and to better understand the contextual realities of English language teaching in Benin. By combining these two approaches, the study benefits from the strengths of both methods and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Data Collection Methods:-

Data for this study are collected through **surveys**, interviews, and classroom observations.

Surveys (Quantitative):-

The quantitative data are collected using structured questionnaires administered either online or in paper format. The questionnaires include Likert-scale items, multiple-choice questions, and a few open-ended questions.

Target Participants:-

The surveys are administered to three categories of participants :

- EFL Teachers
- EFL Students
- Employers

Purpose:-

The surveys aim to :

- collect demographic information about participants
- identify the frequency of teaching practices in TEFL programs
- examine perceived challenges and needs (e.g., class size, resources, teacher training)
- assess the perceived effectiveness of TEFL programs in supporting workforce development.

Questionnaire Items:-

The questionnaire is divided into three main sections.

Section 1: Demographic Information:-

This section collects background information about the participants.

Participants are asked to indicate:

Current occupation:-

- a) Teacher
- b) Student
- c) Administrator
- d) Other (please specify)

Level of education or instruction:-

- a) Secondary education
- b) Bachelor's degree
- c) Master's degree
- d) Doctorate

Section 2 : TEFL and Workforce Development:-

This section explores participants' perceptions of the relationship between TEFL programs and workforce development.

Participants respond to the following statement:

TEFL programs in Benin promote workforce development:-

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

Participants are also asked to identify the skills they consider most important for workforce development in Benin, including:

- a) Communication
- b) Problem-solving
- c) Teamwork
- d) Leadership
- e) Other (please specify)

Section 3 : TEFL and Skills Training:-

This section examines the perceived effectiveness of TEFL programs in developing professional skills.

Participants evaluate the following statement:

TEFL programs are effective in providing skills training for employees in Benin:-

- a) Very effective
- b) Somewhat effective
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat ineffective
- e) Very ineffective

Participants are also asked to identify the major challenges affecting TEFL programs, including:

- a) Limited resources
- b) Inadequate teacher training
- c) Poor infrastructure
- d) Limited access to technology
- e) Other (please specify)

Interviews (Qualitative):-

To complement the survey data, semi-structured interviews are conducted with selected participants. The interviews allow for a deeper exploration of participants' perspectives on TEFL programs and their role in workforce development.

Interview Questions:-

The interview questions focus on the following themes:

1. Participants' views on the most significant benefits of TEFL programs for workforce development in Benin.
2. Suggestions on how TEFL programs can be improved to better support workforce development.
3. Identification and explanation of the major challenges facing TEFL programs in providing skills training for employees.
4. Description of successful TEFL initiatives or programs in Benin and the factors that contributed to their success.

5.Recommendations to policymakers and educational stakeholders on how TEFL programs can better support workforce development and skills training.

Classroom Observation:-

Classroom observations are conducted to examine how TEFL practices are implemented in real teaching contexts. An observation grid is used to systematically record classroom practices.

Observation Criteria:-

The following elements are evaluated using a four-point scale:

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Needs improvement

Observation Elements:-

The observation grid focuses on the following aspects:

- Teacher's use of technology
- Quality of teaching materials
- Student engagement and participation
- Opportunities for skills training
- Relevance of lesson content to workforce development

Observation notes are recorded for each of these elements in order to provide qualitative insights into classroom practices.

Results Presentation and Analysis:-

The data collected from surveys, interviews, and classroom observations are analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data are summarized using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data from interviews and observations are analyzed thematically in order to identify recurring patterns and key insights related to TEFL and workforce development in Benin.

Table 1: Questionnaire Result N°1 (864 participants- 100%)

Statement (Demographic Information)	Frequency	Percentage
1. Participant current occupation		
a) EFL Educator	33	3.82%
b) Student	798	92.36%
c) Administrator	11	1.27%
d) Other (specified)	22	2.55%
2. Participant Level of Education		
a) Secondary	508	58.80%
b) Bachelor's	250	28.94%
c) Master's	74	8.56%
d) Doctorate	32	3.70%
Total	864	100%

Source : Field of Investigations, December, 2025

Table 1 displays that Participants current occupations are EFL Educators-33 (3.82%), Students-798 (92.36%), Administrators-11 (1.27%), Others (specified)-22 (2.55%). As far as Participant Level of Education is concerned, Secondary-508 (58.80%), Bachelor's-250 (28.94%), Master's-74 (8.56%), Doctorate-32 (3.70%).

Table 2: Questionnaire Result N°2 (864 participants- 100%)

Statement (TEFL and Workforce Development)	Frequency	Percentage
1. The extent to which participants agree that TEFL programs in Benin promote workforce		
a) Strongly Agree	00	00%
b) Agree	10	1.16%
c) Neutral	190	21.99%
d) Disagree	500	57.87%
e) Strongly Disagree	164	18.98%
2. Skills thought to be most important for workforce development in Benin		
a) Communication	170	19.68%
b) Problem-solving	190	21.99%
c) Teamwork	190	21.99%
d) Leadership	170	19.68%
e) Other (specified)	144	16.67%
Total	864	100%

Source : Field of Investigations, December, 2025

Table 2 shows on the one hand, the extent to which participants agree that TEFL programs in Benin promote workforce, as nobody strongly agreed-00 (00%), 10 respondents agreed (1.16%), 190 respondents were neutral(21.99%), 500 among them disagreed (57.87%), 164 participants strongly disagreed (18.98%). On the other hand, for skills thought to be most important for workforce development in Benin, 170 respondents rated communication (19.68%), 190 of them rated problem-solving (21.99%), 190 among them considered teamwork (21.99%), 170 participants rated leadership (19.68%), and 144 praised Others (specified) (16.67%).

Table 3: Questionnaire Result N°3 (864 participants- 100%)

Statement (TEFL and Skills' Training)	Frequency	Percentage
1. Effectiveness of TEFL programs in providing skills' training for employees in Benin		
a) Very Effective	45	5.22%
b) Somewhat Effective	100	11.57%
c) Neutral	600	69.44%
d) Somewhat Ineffective	100	11.57%
e) Very Ineffective	19	02.20%
Total	864	100%

Source : Field of Investigations, December, 2025

Table 3 displays that Effectiveness of TEFL programs in providing skills' training for employees in Benin, it is noticed: Very Effective, 45 participants (5.22%), Somewhat Effective, 100 respondents (11.57%), Neutral, 600 participants (69.44%), Somewhat Ineffective, 100 respondents (11.57%), Very Ineffective, 19 respondents (02.20%).

Table 4: Questionnaire Result N°4 (864 participants- 100%)

Statement (TEFL and Skills' Training)	Frequency	Percentage
2. The most significant challenges facing TEFL programs in providing skills' training for employees in Benin		
a) Limited resources	171	19.79%
b) Inadequate teacher training	171	19.79%
c) Poor infrastructure	171	19.79%
d) Limited access to technology	211	24.42%
e) Other (specified)	140	16.21%
Total	864	100%

Source : Field of Investigations, December, 2025

Table 4 shows that the most significant challenges facing TEFL programs in providing skills' training for employees in Benin are limited resources-171 (19.79%), inadequate teacher training-171 (19.79%), poor infrastructure-171 (19.79%), limited access to technology-211 (24.42%), Other (specified)-140 (16.21%).

Table 5 : Interview Results (8 Respondents-100%)

Interviewees' Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Benefits of TEFL programs for workforce	8	100%
TEFL programs improvement	8	100%
Providing skills' training for employees	8	100%
Workforce development improment	8	100%
Interviewees' recommendations	8	100%
Total	998	908

Source : Field of Investigations, December, 2025

Table 5 has shown that the eight/8 Interviewees (100%) have demonstratted the most significant benefits of TEFL programs for workforce development in Benin. They also explained the way TEFL programs can be improved to better support workforce development in Benin. These respondents have identified some challenges facing TEFL programs in providing skills' training for employees in Benin, and the way these challenges can be addressed. They all succeeded in described a successful TEFL program in Benin that has promoted workforce development and skills' training andwhat made it successful. Finally, they have formulated recommendations to policymakers and stakeholders to improve TEFL programs for workforce development and skills' training in Benin.

Table 6 : Observation Results N°1 (6 classes observed-100%)

Elements/Criteria	Excellent/ Percentage	Good/Percentage
Teacher's use of technology	00-00%	00-00%
Quality of teaching materials	00-00%	00-00%
Student engagement and participation	00-00%	00-00%
Student engagement and participation	00-00%	00-00%
Relevance of content to workforce development	00-00%	00-00%
Total	00.00%	6

Source : Field of Investigations, December, 2025

Table 6 displays that none of the elements can be considered neither excellent nor good: Teacher's use of technology, 00-00%, quality of teaching materials, 00-00%, student engagement and participation, 00-00%, opportunities for skills' training, 00-00%, relevance of content to workforce development 00-00%.

Table 7 : Observation Results N°2 (6 classes observed-100%)

Elements/Criteria	Fair/ Percentage	Needs Improvement /Percentage
Teacher's use of technology	00.00%	2-33.33%
Quality of teaching materials	00.00%	1-16.67%
Student engagement and participation	00.00%	1-16.67%
Student engagement and participation	00.00%	1-16.67%
Relevance of content to workforce development	00.00%	1-16.67%
Total	00.00%	6

Source : Field of Investigations, December, 2025

Table 7 shows that all of the elements need improvement: teacher's use of technology 2; 33.33%, quality of teaching materials 1; 16.67%, student engagement and participation 1; 16.67%, opportunities for skills' training 1; 16.67%, relevance of content to workforce development 1; 16.67%.

Discussion:-**TEFL in Benin : Opportunities and Workforce Development:-**

The findings reveal a promising yet uneven TEFL landscape in Benin. Most participants (92.36%) are students, indicating a future workforce potentially equipped through English language skills. However, only 3.82% are educators, highlighting a shortage of qualified teachers—a critical barrier to effective instruction and workforce development. Similarly, administrators account for just 1.27% of participants, suggesting gaps in leadership capacity that may limit program management and policy implementation. Educational attainment among participants varied, with 58.8% holding secondary education, 28.94% bachelor's, 8.56% master's, and 3.7% doctoral degrees. These data indicate the need for TEFL programs to target learners across educational levels and offer advanced skills training to support professional development and economic participation.

Challenges and the TEFL Paradox:-

Despite the recognized potential, perceptions of TEFL's effectiveness are largely negative. Over 76% of respondents disagreed that TEFL programs promote workforce development, and only 1.16% affirmed their effectiveness. This disconnect underscores the need for urgent reform, emphasizing skills acquisition aligned with labor market demands. Participants identified communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership as essential competencies, suggesting that TEFL curricula should integrate interactive and collaborative pedagogies to foster these skills. Effectiveness ratings of existing skills training were low, with only 16.79% of participants viewing programs positively. Neutral responses (69.44%) indicate widespread uncertainty and lack of confidence in program outcomes, further highlighting the need for evidence-based curriculum reforms and capacity-building initiatives.

Structural and Pedagogical Constraints:-

Key challenges include limited resources, inadequate teacher training, poor infrastructure, and restricted access to technology. Notably, 24.42% of participants identified lack of technology as the most significant obstacle. Classroom observations corroborate these findings: technology use, quality of materials, student engagement, and opportunities for skills training were consistently rated unsatisfactory. Addressing these constraints requires coordinated efforts: investing in teacher training, integrating technology, developing industry-relevant curricula, and fostering learner-centered approaches. Such interventions can enhance instructional quality, improve workforce-relevant outcomes, and align TEFL programs with global labor market needs.

Implications and Recommendations:-

TEFL programs in Benin must be reoriented to prioritize workforce development and skills training. Key recommendations include:

- Teacher training and capacity-building to improve instructional quality.
- Technology integration to support interactive and digital learning.
- Curriculum reform emphasizing industry-relevant skills, soft skills, and advanced professional competencies.
- Learner-centered pedagogies to increase engagement and promote active learning.
- Industry partnerships to provide practical exposure, mentorship, and employment pathways.

By implementing these strategies, TEFL programs can unlock their potential as catalysts for workforce development, economic growth, and sustainable development in Benin.

Conclusion:-

This study highlights TEFL's transformative potential for workforce development in Benin, while revealing critical gaps in teacher training, infrastructure, and technology. The results of the study have also revealed that the employees are convinced that English language skills are crucial in the hunting of a job and the effective performance of their responsibilities. Irrespective of the technical skills an employee possesses, he needs to possess EFL language for live communication through emails, group discussions, presentations, etc. Strategic reforms focusing on skills development, pedagogy, and labor market alignment are essential. With coordinated action from policymakers, educators, and stakeholders, TEFL can equip learners with the competencies required for global employability, driving both economic growth and sustainable development. In addition, the necessity of imparting in-house language skills and subskills' training programs rather than online training mode is the preference of the participants.

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