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Functioning Logics of Secondary Education Establishments and Failure of the General Baccalaureate of High School Pupils in the Me Region in Cote D' Ivoire

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Abstract

Failing the baccalaureate is a problem that has challenged the Ivorian education system for decades. Even today, the baccalaureate remains inaccessible to a large segment of high school students. This phenomenon challenges as much by its persistence as by its extent. Thus, the present research aims, through the case of high school students in the Mé region, to analyze the link between the logic of functioning of high schools and failure in the baccalaureate. This objective was achieved through a mixed study with a quantitative and qualitative component, conducted during the 2020/2021 school year by means of a direct administration questionnaire to a sample of 276 repeating high school students and by semi-structured interviews with the actors of the school system. In particular, parents of students, teachers, educational supervisors, and resource

persons involved in the implementation of the region's secondary education policy. The results of the study indicate that failure in the baccalaureate results from defective capacity building of trainers, weak psychosocial follow-up, a failure to collaborate on the initiative of trainers with the families of high school students, and a lack of individualized pedagogical follow-up and remediation of school difficulties. In view of the prominence of the logics of operation of high schools in determining failure in the baccalaureate, there is an urgent need to identify empirically appropriate mechanisms for school support, which would make it possible to reduce substantially the failure rates. This aspect, which was not addressed by the study, is a limitation that potentiates future reflections.

Keywords: Functioning Logics, Failure in the Baccalaureate, Psychosocial Follow-Up, Socio-Educational Animation

1. Introduction

Failing the baccalaureate very often leads to social failure because of the socio-economic losses it causes. According to UNESCO (2000) ^[44], no nation can have a modern, open and truly prosperous economy if the majority of its workforce cannot complete secondary education, hence the urgency of promoting and revitalizing the secondary education in developing countries. Aware of this reality, the Ivorian public authorities have given priority to secondary education within the national education system. The democratization of primary education and the promotion of secondary education were the main challenges of an education system marked by under-enrolment, on the verge of political independence (Ayewa, 2004) ^[3]. The will of the public authorities to make secondary education a priority axis of human and social development is reflected in the importance of the financial, infrastructural and human resources mobilized for this education sector. The budget allocated to general secondary education has always represented a relatively high proportion of public expenditure on education, on average 30% of the budget allocated to education from 1960 to 1990 (World Bank, 2005) ^[4]. In addition, to promote secondary school enrollment and access to the baccalaureate, the State paid attention to the training of trainers, by creating by decree n°64-40 of January 9, 1964, the higher normal school, having its mission is the initial professional and pedagogical training of general secondary teachers and supervisors. The voluntarist policy of the Ivorian State in favor of the education system initiated upon accession to the rank of sovereign nation made it possible to obtain appreciable results in the baccalaureate until 1989/90 when the success rate reached the record level of 52% (MENFB, 2000). However, since the 1990/91 school year, the baccalaureate examination has been an obstacle in the path for several high school students. Baccalaureate performance has since affected the internal efficiency of the secondary education system, as less than half of high school students graduate successfully (MEN, 2009). Thus, following the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (1990), Côte d'Ivoire adopted a program for the development of secondary education in its educational policies, the major axes of which concerned, the mobilization of public resources, the increase in reception capacities, the improvement of the quality of training and pedagogical supervision (CONFEMEN, 2008) ^[7]. In addition, to guarantee the various sectors of the education system a

common instrument for policy and programming of actions, the country adopted in 1997 its first National Development Plan for the Education-Training sector (PNDEF 1998-2010) following the law no. 95-696 of September 7, 1995 relating to education.

At the financial level, the investments, which in 2007 represented approximately 8% of total education expenditure against 0.8% in 1992, made it possible to increase school infrastructure and to extend secondary education to several social strata (Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, World Bank, Fast Track Initiative, 2011) ^[39]. However, the strengthening of the institutional framework of education and the substantial mobilization of financial, infrastructural and human resources have not been followed by an improvement in performance at the baccalaureate since 1990/91. Success rates remained relatively low and rarely exceeded 30% over the period 1991-2011 (MEN, 2009; MENET, 2013). Thus, with a view to restoring the education system to its fundamentals and ensuring a solid foundation for its development, the Ivorian State has drawn up a Medium-Term Action Plan for the Education/Training Sector (PAMT 2012-2014) ^[23] which deals with issues ranging from early childhood education to higher education, giving priority to primary and secondary education (MEN, METFP & MESRS, 2011). The country then embarked on a program to promote secondary education with funding of 208.7 billion FCFA, thus placing Côte d'Ivoire among the countries with high public expenditure per high school student. In 2013, the unit cost in general high school was 63.2% of GDP per capita against an average of 40% for ECOWAS countries (Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, UNICEF & Dakar Pole of IIEP-UNESCO, 2016) ^[40]. The increase in public financing of secondary education has been followed by a remarkable development in infrastructure, a dynamic of schooling and an increase in the Baccalaureate pass rate. Over the period 2011-2020, gross enrollment rates increased from 41.10% to 50.80% in the first cycle and from 25.40% to 35.00% in the second cycle (MENET, 2012; MENET-FP, 2018). In addition, the national success rate for the general baccalaureate has increased from 20.25% in 2011 to 40.08% in 2020 (MEN, 2016; MENET-FP, 2021).

In 2011, the government reorganized the Ivorian territorial administration into 31 administrative regions, by order n°2011-262 of September 28, 2011. Considering this reorganization, the Ministry of National Education carried out an administrative reorganization in 36 directions regional offices, including the regional directorate of Adzopé, for the Mé region (MENET, 2013). Located in the south of Côte d'Ivoire, the Mé region is experiencing a less pronounced deficit in the educational offer, judging by the increase in school coverage during the period 2012 to 2020. In 2012/13, we there were 26 secondary schools, 462 classrooms, 29,284 students, 1,213 teachers (MENET, 2013). Continuing accelerated growth, the region's school infrastructure doubled, reaching in 2019/20, 59 establishments, 979 classrooms, 54,491 students and 1,783 teachers. In 2019/20, the region had a gross secondary school enrollment rate of 66.70% against a national average of 58.6% (MENET-FP, 2020), with a staff ratio of around 40 high school students/room in terminal classes, in public secondary (DRENA, 2021). In addition, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2011-262 of September 28, 2011 transferring state powers to local authorities, the Mé Regional Council allocated in 2020 approximately 35% of annual education

expenditure to the secondary education.

Notwithstanding the financial, material, human, institutional and infrastructural resources deployed for the benefit of education in general secondary education, failure to pass the general baccalaureate persists in the Mé region and the failure rate remains relatively high. Indeed, since the erection of the Regional Directorate of National Education of Adzopé in 2011, the baccalaureate failure rates have remained above the national average and especially above the rates of most regions south of the country. Over the period 2012/13 to 2019/20, the national baccalaureate pass rate increased from 33.62% to 40.08%. On the other hand, the success rate for the general baccalaureate for the same period in the region fell from 35.00% to 28.74%. For the 2020 baccalaureate session, the failure rate of high school students in the Mé Region was around 71.26%, which implies that just over 07 out of 10 high school students failed their exam (MENET, 2014; MENET-FP, 2021). The importance of the failure rate in the baccalaureate in this region, with multiple and multifaceted causes, resulting in the loss of public resources mobilized for schooling, requires concern. Admittedly, the association between social origin and school failure is one of the facts best established by the sociology of education. However, it has been shown that internal variables, those that characterize the school environment, also play a role in the construction of educational and social inequalities (Meuret, 1999) ^[31]. These may be general characteristics of the organization of schooling or characteristics of schools (Duru-Bellat, Mons and Suchaut, 2004) ^[11]. From one class to another, from one establishment to another and from one geographical area to another, pupils experience different educational and school situations linked to the type of organization of the school establishment and the classes or even teachers' pedagogical practices. Thus, this article aims to answer the following questions:

- How do the logics of operation of high schools in the Mé region determine the failure of high school students at the baccalaureate?
- How does the quality of the animation of school life contribute to the construction of this failure?
- To what extent do the school support systems in place increase the chances of failure in the baccalaureate?
- How do evaluation practices contribute to building the failure of high school students in the baccalaureate?
- To what extent does the defective capacity building of trainers contribute to this failure?

Based on this questioning, the objective of this article is to analyze the impact of the logic of operation of high schools in the Mé Region on failure in the general baccalaureate.

2. Methodology

2.1 Geographical Area and Social Units Surveyed

This study was carried out during the period from April to June 2021 in the Mé region¹. Our investigations focused specifically on six geographical areas, including the departments of Adzopé, Akoupé, Alépé, Yakassé-Attobrou and the sub-prefectures of Agou and Affery. This choice is

¹Formerly part of the Agnèby Region, this region located in the south of Côte d'Ivoire was born thanks to the new administrative division of Côte d'Ivoire, by Decree No. 2011-263 of September 28, 2011 on organization of the national territory into Districts and Regions.

motivated by the existence of a general secondary school welcoming since the 2011/12 school year, high school students candidates for the baccalaureate. In addition, the choice is justified by the low success rates in the baccalaureate and the relatively high number of high school students repeating the terminal. Indeed, for the 2015/16 to 2018/19 school years, the final year classes recorded around 30% of repeating high school students and 42% in 2019/20. In terms of performance, the region had a failure rate of 71.20% in the 2020 baccalaureate, compared to a national average of 59% (MEN, 2016; MENET-FP, 2018; MENET-FP, 2020). The basic survey concerned high school students who had failed the baccalaureate in the Mé region and re-enrolled in the final class in a high school in the region, teachers who had held at least one final class in a high school in the region, and technical support staff for education-training. Also concerned by this study were the heads of establishments and their deputies, the general secretary of the regional directorate of education, the parents of pupils, and the presidents of school management committees.

Table 1: Summary of the composition of the quantitative sample

Establishments / Localities	Number of repeaters	Proportion of repeaters	Sample of 50% repeaters
Adzopé Modern High School	179	33%	89
Agou Modern High School	68	12%	34
Alépé Modern High School	86	16%	43
Akoupé Modern High School	98	18%	49
Affery Municipal High School	59	10%	30
Yakasse-attobrou Municipal High School	61	11%	31
Total	551	100%	276

Source: Our April 2021 survey

In addition, purposive sampling was favored for qualitative sampling. Thus, the actors were chosen on the basis of their position in the region's secondary education system, or their involvement in the operation of the establishments. These include, in particular, parents of students, teachers, educational supervisors, school facilitators, and resource persons involved in the implementation of public policy for secondary education in the region.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques and Tools

The field survey extended over a period of three months (April to June 2021) through the interview and the direct administration of the questionnaire. It began with the passing of the questionnaire to the 276 high school students selected in 06 high schools in the Mé region. The intended questionnaire included a corpus of about thirty items structured in two sections. The first relates to the identification of respondents, their socio-demographic characteristics (sex, age, level of education and socio-professional category of parents). The second section focuses on the link between the operating logics of secondary schools and the failure of high school students in the baccalaureate, in particular the variables relating to the quality of the animation of school life, the school support systems, and the practices of ratings. Then, the initially semi-structured individual interviews targeted the heads of the schools and their deputies, the presidents of the management committees of the schools, the secretary general of the DREN, the pedagogical inspectors, the high school teachers, the technical support staff for education (educator, guidance inspector, education inspector) and

2.2 Sampling

The study required the use of qualitative sampling through rational choice and quantitative sampling through the proportional stratified random technique. With regard to quantitative sampling, the approach consisted in forming a representative sample of the 551 students repeating the terminal class, during the 2020/21 school year following a failure in the 2020 baccalaureate session. Thus, in order to have a representative sample of the target population, which would allow easier generalization of the results, the sampling rate retained is 50%. Because the larger the sample size, the better chance it has of reflecting the image of the target population. Thus, the quantitative sample amounts to 276 high school students. Within each high school, it was necessary to obtain a complete list of students repeating the final year who represented the different strata of the target population, the sampling frame. Samples were first formed for each of the strata taking into account their proportion in the population of repeaters, then assembled to make up the overall sample.

parents of pupils. These interviews, lasting an average of one hour, were conducted using the theme-based interview technique. The themes structuring the interview guide concerned the organization and animation of school life; the quality of supervision and psychosocial monitoring; the degree of communication and collaboration on the initiative of the trainers with the families of the high school students; individualized educational monitoring systems; and remedial mechanisms for the benefit of high school students in difficulty. Also discussed were teacher evaluation practices and capacity building for trainers. In addition, the individual interviews were usefully supplemented by group interviews, which made it possible to compare the representations of the respondents on the link between the logic of the functioning of the establishments and the failure of high school students in the baccalaureate. The qualitative research strategy made it possible to carry out 80 individual interviews and 09 focus groups.

2.4 Data Processing

The sociological orientation of our study led to the use of thematic content analysis for analyzing the qualitative data from the interviews. According to Lamoureux (2000), from observed and noted facts, the researcher draws general ideas, which can lead to an explanatory model. Thus, the thematic analysis consisted of transcribing the interviews in "Microsoft Word 2016" digital format; isolate the themes relating to the operating logics of high schools; choose for each theme the keywords that best summarize them. Then, cut the text into extracts and extract the information deemed relevant to the objective of the research; note in the margin

of each analyzed extract all the key words indicating the related theme; classify the text extracts in the corresponding thematic folders. In short, the content analysis made it possible to understand the possible relationships between the logics of operation of high schools and failure in the baccalaureate. Statistical analysis was applied to the data from the questionnaires. The "Excel 2016" software was used to establish descriptive statistics (flat sorting), then to extract graphs. These flat sorting and these graphs made it possible to paint a broad outline of the target population.

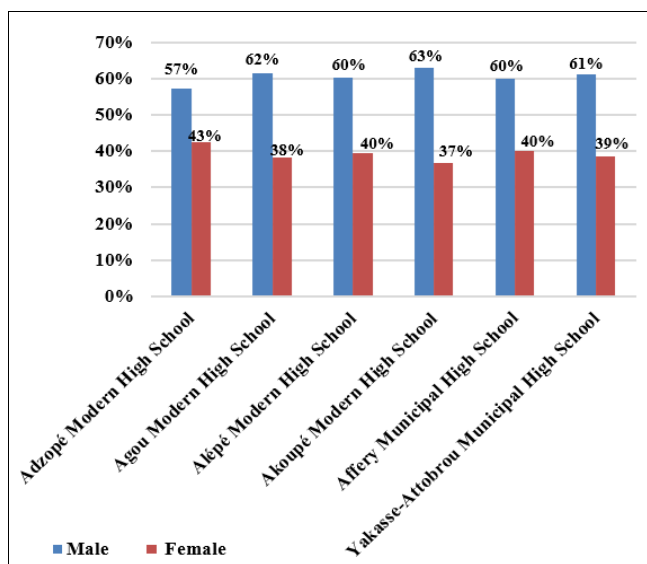
2.5 Analysis Method

Social determinism was used as a method of analysis. Indeed, in the field of sociology, social determinism illustrated by the work of Durkheim (1894) [10] is a paradigm according to which social facts result from the social constraint which is exerted on the actors without most often, they are aware of it. In fact, sociological work aims to bring to light the variables that determine these social behaviors. Bourdieu cited by Alpe *et al.* (2007) [2] conceives of determinism as "a principle of sufficient reason", according to which "nothing that is, is without reason for being". Consequently, the scientific activity, particularly sociological, is to "give reason for what is". In this article, social determinism teaches the fact that the wishes of high school students are insufficient to account for the failure of the baccalaureate. It must be admitted that impersonal external forces contribute to the occurrence and persistence of this failure and it is these forces (the logic of operation of high schools) that must be analyzed.

3. Results

3.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics of High School Students

3.1.1 Sex

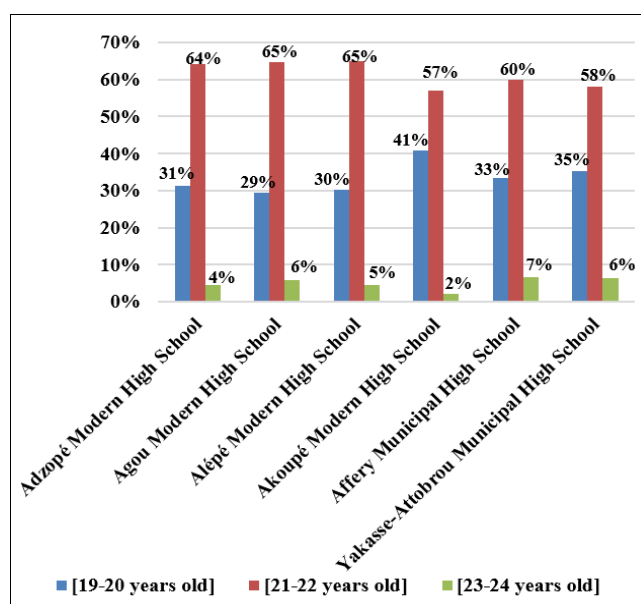


Source: Our survey, April-June 2021

Graph 1: Distribution of high school students by gender

Generally speaking, boys represent on average 61% of the population surveyed against 39% of girls. This predominance of the male sex is representative of the educational situation in Ivorian secondary education, which for several decades has been illustrated by differences in schooling between girls and boys. Girls are even less educated than boys, and the disparities widen over the cycles. According to RESEN (2015), while the population aged 3 to 24 is evenly distributed between girls and boys (49.70% and 50.30%, respectively), the level of education attained by each gender is clearly differentiated. Indeed, after primary school, the gap widens in favor of boys. It is noticeable already in college (where they are 1.4 times more likely to be educated than girls) and is accentuated in high school (where their chances are 1.6 times higher).

3.1.2 Age

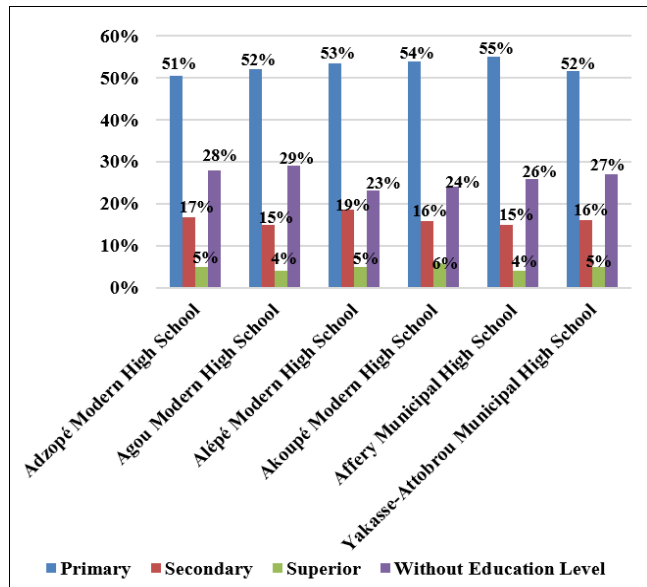


Source: Our survey, April-June 2021

Graph 2: Distribution of high school students by age group

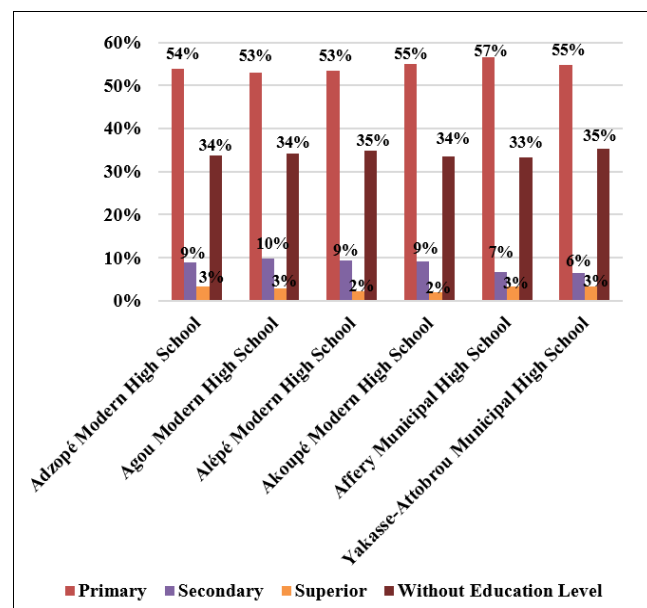
The age of the high school students in the sample is between 19 and 24 years old. The majority age group is that of 21-22 years and represents on average 62% of the workforce. Indeed, the law n°2015-635 of September 17, 2015 places the age of basic schooling (CP1 to 3ème) from 06 to 16 years old. This assumes that a student progressing within the prescribed period should reach the terminal class at 19 years old. If we stick to the aforementioned texts, 67% of high school students surveyed are in a situation of academic delay from 02 to 04 years old, due to multiple school repetitions.

3.1.3 Parents' Level of Education



Source: Our survey, April-June 2021

Graph 3: Distribution of high school students according to the level of education of the father

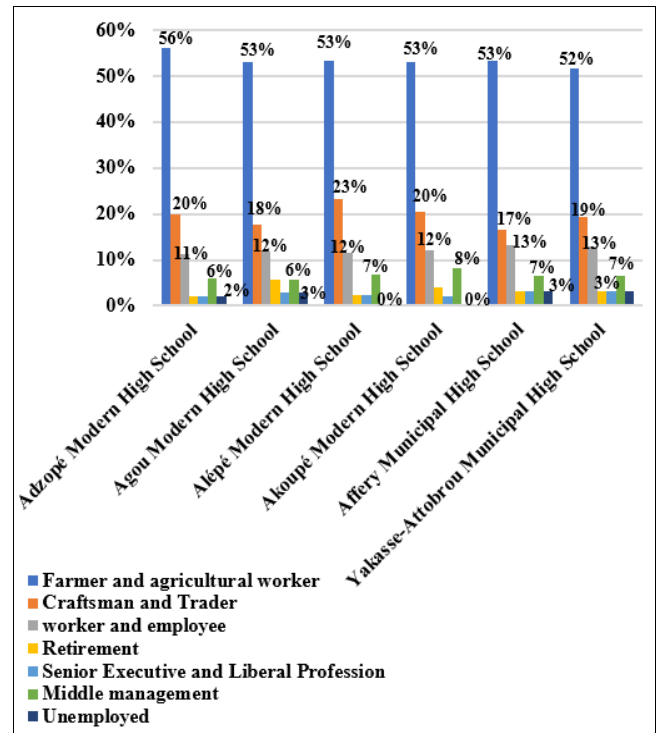


Source: our survey, April-June 2021

Graph 4: Distribution of high school students by mother's level of education

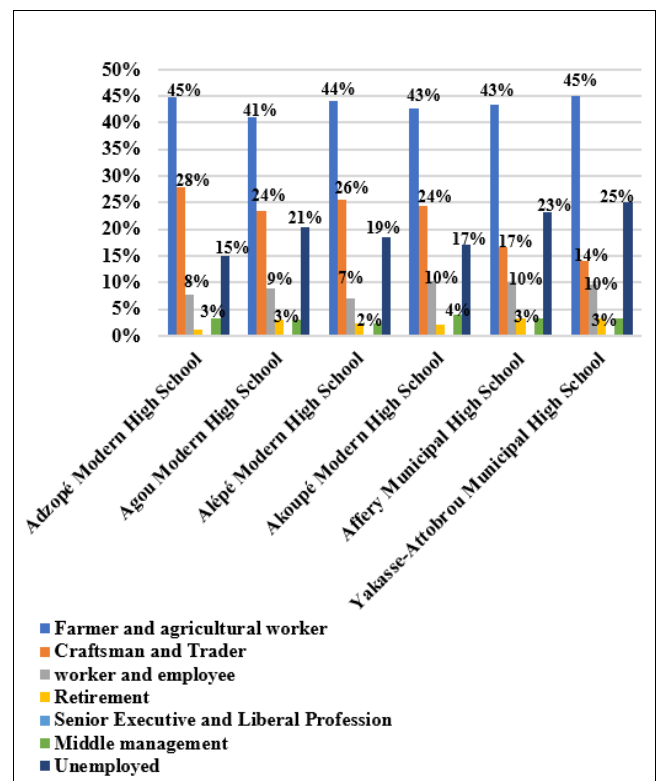
The level of study affects the intellectual capacity of parents to make decisions in favor of schooling and to act on school support. Graphs 02 and 03 reveal a low level of education for the majority of parents of high school students surveyed. This state of affairs could constitute a socio-cultural handicap for these pupils. Indeed, 53% of high school students surveyed have a father with a primary education level and 56% of them have a mother with a primary education level. On average, 30% of high school students surveyed have parents with no level of school education, unable to read or write.

3.1.4 Socio-Professional Category (CSP) of Parents



Source: Our survey, April-June 2021

Graph 5: Distribution of high school students according to the socio-professional category of the father



Source: our survey, April-June 2021

Graph 6: Distribution of high school students according to the socio-professional category of the mother

Graph 05 shows that most pupils come from families whose father is a farmer or agricultural employee (54%). The children of artisans or merchants, workers or employees represent respectively (21%) and (12%) of the workforce. Graph 06 shows that a large proportion of secondary school students have mothers who are farmers or agricultural workers (45%) and artisans or traders (24%). The strong presence of fathers and mothers in the category of farmer and agricultural employee is justified by the fact that the Mé is an agricultural region, located in a forest zone with abundant rainfall, where food crops and cash crops are grown. Data from the General Population and Housing Census (2014) indicate a predominantly agricultural working population made up of more than 50% young people.

3.2 From the Operating Logics of High Schools, to Failure in the General Baccalaureate

3.2.1 Organization and Animation of School Life

According to circular n°080/ MEN/DESAC of August 4, 2011, school life relates to all the measures, mechanisms and extracurricular activities complementary to the educational enterprise. The aim of an adequate organization and animation of this school life is to create and guarantee the best conditions of academic success for all learners while preparing them for citizenship. The animation of school life therefore covers supervision and psychosocial monitoring, the animation of socio-educational activities, the management of schooling and support for educational activities.

3.2.1.1 Lack of Supervision and Psychosocial Monitoring

From the perspective of this study, psychosocial follow-up is assessed by the frequency of discussions initiated by teachers and technical support staff in education to identify the difficulties and their origins and then attempt to find corrective solutions. However, the results of our survey indicate that teachers and supervisors are reluctant to initiate discussions about the learning difficulties of their high school students. Indeed, only about 05% of high school students have often had discussions with teachers or supervisors about social and academic difficulties. On the other hand, a large proportion (81%) of high school students on average say they have never had such discussions with the trainers. Mr. N. S., Educator at Akoupé Modern High School recognizes the very low frequency of individual exchanges between high school students and their supervisors in these terms:

“Since the year surpassed, school year 2018-2019, I have been in charge of six (06) classes of Terminal in this high school, which represents approximately 350 high school students to supervise annually. With this number, I don't have the time to regularly give individual interviews to each of the students with learning difficulties. During a class visit, I ask those who wish to come and see me at the office. Few do. They come at the end of the term to justify their hours of absence or plead for certain hours to be cancelled”.

Mr. B. K., Orientation Inspector at Akoupé Modern High School, also recognizes this reality when he maintains that:

“We are only two (02) Orientation Inspectors in this high school which has more than 3000 students. We do not have enough time or resources to organize individual interviews with high school students to identify difficulties”.

In addition to the individual interviews, the class interview sessions seem to be very little integrated into the daily practices of those involved in school life. The organization of life and the school environment would contribute to this. Mr. B. B., educator at Adzopé Modern High School affirms it in these words:

“We do the portal service to control and filter the entry of students and rounds to coordinate and supervise student movements at the start of the day, during interclasses, and at the end of class. It is difficult to have free time or off-peak hours to carry out daily class interviews. Our class visits are most often part of the dissemination of information relating to schooling or certain events that affect the life and operation of the establishment.

Mr. K. H., Orientation Inspector at Adzopé modern high school agrees, arguing that:

“The Orientation Inspectors do not have daily hours dedicated to their activities in class. We practically do not carry out class interviews that would make it possible to prevent conflicts and to detect the difficulties linked to the learning conditions. Psychosocial follow-up then becomes difficult. We can only focus on the situation of high school students who approach us or on the cases that are reported to us by certain teachers. Generally, our collective interviews are with the examination classes, for information on the training courses and choice of orientation”.

3.2.1.2 Lack of Communication and Collaboration on the Initiative of the Trainers with the Families of High School Students

When asked whether parents or guardians were often invited by school supervisors to discuss school difficulties or working conditions, 89% of repeating high school students surveyed said they had no parent or guardian who had been invited by a teacher or an actor in school life for such discussions. Reality confirmed by the Mr. B. S, parent of a student at Agou Modern High School, when he points out that:

«Since my son is in high school, I have never been called to talk about his school, at the end of the year I will take his report or often himself, he sends me”.

Likewise, teachers and those involved in school life recognize this weakness in communication on their initiative with the parents of high school students. This state of affairs is underlined by Mr. Z. P., Deputy Head of Akoupé Modern High School when he points out that:

"Logically, the daily monitoring of attendance (absences, tardiness, and dropouts) carried out by the school life supervisors as well as the cases of maladjustment detected by the teachers should lead to

an immediate summons of the parents for discussions which would make it possible to identify causes and corrective solutions. Unfortunately, this follow-up is not always carried out as it should be and the cases are known only at the end of the quarter or at the end of the year”.

3.2.1.3 Almost Non-Existence of Socio-Educational Animation

The study revealed a very low level of socio-educational animation within six (06) high schools in the Mé region surveyed. Indeed, when asked whether there were socio-educational clubs in their establishments, almost all the high school students surveyed said they knew of the existence of clubs in their establishment. The clubs generally mentioned are the literary club, the philosophy club, the English club, the German club, the mathematical club, the health club, the environmental club, and the cooking club. On the other hand, very few high school students have joined. The data from the questionnaire revealed that only 08.50% of the high school students surveyed had joined a club during the year of their failure in the baccalaureate. The survey also revealed a lack of supervision of the clubs and a weak socio-cultural animation. Mr. Z. P., deputy head of Akoupé Modern High School, testifies to this in these terms:

“We see a very low membership of high school students in the various clubs in this establishment. Each year with the principal, we encourage and support the setting up of clubs as much as possible, but very few high school students take part in the activities of these clubs. However, these clubs and their activities are educational frameworks that are supposed to be recreational spaces for them and instances of culture. Unfortunately, our educators and teachers do not make them aware enough to join; they are not very involved in the management and monitoring of the clubs”.

Mr. B. C., Education Inspector at Adzopé Modern High School, who argues that, also underlines the low degree of involvement of education staff and teachers in the running of socio-cultural activities:

“Each year, we have great difficulty in assigning the supervision of socio-educational clubs to educators. Our collaborators are not very interested in supervising the clubs and leading the socio-educational activities that are an integral part of our missions. We can also understand their lack of interest, especially since socio-cultural activities receive little financial and material support from the COGES and the city authorities”.

3.2.2 Lack of Appropriate School Support Systems

3.2.2.1 Individualized Pedagogical Follow-up and Remedial Mechanisms for the Benefit of High School Students with Academic Difficulties

The survey revealed the lack of pedagogical follow-up and the weakness of individualized support. Indeed, when asked if they had a home study timetable, 93% of high school students in the survey said they had not had to have a timetable drawn up by a teacher or supervisor who ensured follow-up. The supervisors and teachers, not being very

willing to invest themselves free of charge in monitoring schoolwork at home, did not consider it useful to develop a timetable that would not be carried out by the high school students. Timetables are generally drawn up for high school students for whom they are responsible for supervising them at home through private lessons. A fact underlined by Mr. B. L., professor of philosophy at Alépé Modern High School in these terms:

“What is the use of establishing a home study schedule for high school students, when you don't have the responsibility of supervising them at home? You can work out a schedule for working from home, when you are sure you can control it. I do it for the students that I supervise at home or who follow my reinforcement courses”.

These remarks denote a certain fatalism, which would be detrimental to high school students of low social origin. Because it is, the fatalistic attitudes of teachers that best fuel the persistence of school failure (Isambert-Jamati, 1990) ^[16]. In addition to the virtual non-existence of a home study timetable, drawn up and supervised by teachers or supervisors, which would be a contribution to the supervision of schoolwork at home, the majority (96%) of the high schools surveyed supported, not having benefited, the year of their failure in the baccalaureate, from specific explanation sessions of weakly assimilated courses. Indeed, the pedagogical concerns of teachers did not seem to be oriented towards individualized follow-up of students in difficulty. Their strategies were rather oriented towards collective reinforcement mechanisms, known as reinforcement courses during and/or at the end of the school year, generally close to the baccalaureate exam. A reality affirmed by Mr. A. H., professor of Physics-Chemistry at Akoupé Modern High School, when he maintains that:

“We cannot return to certain aspects of the courses, through individual explanations for those who have difficulty understanding. In addition, the allocated hourly volume does not allow for multiple explanation sessions or to carry out several application exercises on a content. This is why we encourage high school students to enroll in the reinforcement classes that we organize on Saturday mornings during the school year, and when approaching the baccalaureate exam over a month from Monday to Saturday”.

However, the reinforcement courses organized during the school year, or close to the baccalaureate exam, are inaccessible to a large proportion of high school students.

3.2.2.2 Inaccessibility to Mechanisms for Reinforcing Learning Outcomes

The survey conducted in six (06) high schools in the Mé region revealed an undeniable fact, the primacy of reinforcement courses as a remedial mechanism for school difficulties. Reinforcement courses organized in the form of tutorials are sessions for explaining course content and application exercises carried out in the students' free time, during the school year, on Wednesday afternoons, and on Saturdays or the approach of the end of year exams. These courses organized by associations of teachers or by individual teachers are far from being included in the plans

for establishments in high schools. Participation in these reinforcement courses, suggested to pupils (candidates for the exams) by the teachers, is subject to the prior payment of the registration fees. Also, when they are initiated and proposed by the administration of the school establishment, generally at a lower cost than that practiced by the teachers, they acquire little support and contribution from the teachers. A reality underlined by Mr. S. B., Head of School at Adzopé Modern High School, who affirms that:

"As of the 2015-2016 school year, we initiated reinforcement courses for the benefit of students in examination classes, in return for a modest monthly contribution of 3000 CFA francs for all specific subjects, in order to allow the greatest number of high school students who want to have access to it. A modest sum compared to what is required by the associations of teachers who organize reinforcement courses. We have observed a real enthusiasm among the students and their parents. Unfortunately, our teachers being accustomed to organizing their own course boycotted the process on the pretext that they would not derive much benefit from it. To do so, the following year we prohibited the organization of reinforcement courses by teachers within the high school. Their courses have nevertheless been relocated to primary schools or private colleges.

The reinforcement courses organized by teachers' associations mainly concern specific subjects (Mathematics, Physics-Chemistry and Life and Earth Sciences for high school students in the C and D series and Philosophy, French, History-Geography, English, German or Spanish for series A). Thus, the average costs charged for these reinforcement courses during the school year were 20,000 FCFA per month for the high schools of Affery, Agou and Yakasse-Attoubou and 25,000 FCFA monthly for the high schools of Adzopé, Alépé and Akoupé. The study revealed that a large segment of high school students, especially from disadvantaged social backgrounds, struggled to access it because of the relatively high costs. For some, participation in these courses was late and did not make it possible to remedy the shortcomings accumulated in specific subjects. The words of M. Z. P., Deputy Head of School at Akoupé Modern High School testify to this:

"We are in a school system where the parents, as we know, are for the most part poorly educated and have few resources, some are downright resigned, and they think that the school can do everything. The school does not have the means to subsidize the reinforcement courses for final year students. COGES is also struggling to do so. We cannot put pressure on teachers to get them to do it free. The teachers who set the conditions for the students organize the courses. We have no influence on these courses, especially that they are held outside the high school in agreement with primary schools or private colleges. With the costs, which remain high, rare are the high school students from poor families who can participate".

In addition, MYL, professor of Physics-Chemicals, member of a team organizing reinforcement courses, agrees in the same way, when he affirms that:

"High school students arrive in the final year with many shortcomings accumulated throughout the secondary cycle. We suggest to them the reinforcement courses at the beginning of the year. Unfortunately, for lack of financial resources, most of them wait until the end of the year, when the baccalaureate exam approaches, to enroll in the preparation course and prepare for the exam. How do you think they can do on the exam? However, we strive to provide them with the maximum".

With regard to the difficulties of access to the reinforcement course, the data from the questionnaire administered to repeating high school students reveal that a significant proportion of high school students (64%) had the alternative of forming study groups with peers. These study groups that function during the year and at the approach of the examinations produce very few good results. Testifies to this, Mr. K. F, educator at Alépé Modern High School who affirms that:

"High school classrooms remain open on Wednesday afternoons and Saturdays to allow some high school students in exam classes to study in groups, but the observation is that there is less concentration and more distraction during their study sessions. Some come here to get away from homework. Also, the fact of working in a group without the supervision of a teacher, leads them to remain in certain errors and accumulate many gaps which accompany them to the exam".

3.2.3 Assessment and Grading Practices that Set the Stage for Failure

Evaluation plays a major role in the regulation of any training system. To this end, the quality of a training system presupposes the establishment of a valid and transparent evaluation system that integrates and arranges in a coherent manner diagnostic, formative and summative evaluations. Believing that it is necessary or even compulsory for the teacher to know the types of assessment and their functions in order to make appropriate use of them, we questioned the teachers on the types of assessments practiced, paying attention the three types of diagnostic, formative and summative evaluation and their functions.

3.2.3.1 On the Superficiality of the Diagnostic Evaluation

With regard to diagnostic evaluation, the interviews reveal that almost all (97%) of the teachers interviewed certainly practice it in their pedagogical approach. However, this evaluation is done by questions put to the high school students collectively that do not really make it possible to achieve its aim. The words of Mr. S. B., Professor of History-Geography at Akoupé Modern High School testify to the superficiality of the diagnostic evaluation practiced when he maintains that:

"We always start our lesson sequences with a questioning addressed to the students to measure the prerequisites and knowledge they have of the chapter or lesson to be covered. Once some answers have been obtained, we discuss the content of the course in question".

Made superficially, this diagnostic evaluation does not allow the teacher to know for each student the level of acquisition, the strong points on which to anchor the learning and the weak points, signs of the difficulties encountered. The superficially practiced diagnostic evaluation does not provide the teacher with pedagogical benchmarks to organize learning, act on the choices of progression, on the internal organization of the class, and on the exercises proposed to the students. However, diagnostic evaluation only makes sense through the use made of the results of the diagnosis to adapt teaching to students as they are.

3.2.3.2 Formative Assessment Not Firmly Rooted in Pedagogical Practices

Formative assessment is a constant part of the teaching and learning process to provide the teacher and the learner with information on the degree of mastery achieved and on the difficulties encountered. It is therefore essential for any teacher concerned about the effectiveness of his teaching actions. However, the survey reveals that formative assessment is poorly integrated into teachers' pedagogical practices. When asked what was, on average, the number of non-graded assessments (written or oral questions) carried out for a lesson or a chapter before the graded assessments, 89% of high school students stated that they had not undergone any gender assessment. In addition, it emerges from the interviews that almost all (95%) of the teachers interviewed do very little formative assessment in its conventional form. Indeed, teachers must naturally practice formative assessment, during learning, by watching the pupil's work, by subjecting them to written or oral tests that they correct, by judging them in relation to the objectives set, by assessing the progress achieved through application exercises. However, the formative assessments carried out in the high schools surveyed are generally practical exercises to be done at home and corrected collectively in class. Students are rarely given formal notice to solve a problem or submitted to written tests without attribution of marks during the lesson sequences. These opportunities for individual production that should be accommodated in working time are not. Mr. C. G, professor of Physics and Chemistry at Yakassé-Attobrou Modern High School illustrate this reality, when he maintains that:

“Generally, we assign application exercises to students at the end of a lesson they do at home, we devote a few minutes to corrections before starting a new lesson or subjecting students to an assessment”.

However, to prepare for normative assessments, students must try themselves, commit themselves. Their errors, analyzed and processed, become sources of progress. In order to provide feedback that allows students to identify what they need to do to make their learning effective, a grade may be given as an indication to formative assessments but will not count towards the average. It emerges from the foregoing that formative assessment is little practiced by the teachers of the high schools surveyed. Yet, as Anon (2015) ^[1] points out, it is a key factor in

improving student success.

3.2.3.3 Normative Evaluation Practices Guided Essentially by the Concern for Selecting the Best Students

Normative or summative evaluation is a review of the learning of a subject or group of subjects, indicating the extent to which they have achieved the planned objectives (Therer quoted by Anon, 2015) ^[1]. The decision resulting from this assessment results in a note, a mention, a certification and an administrative decision-making. However, in practice, Viallet and Maisonneuve (1981) ^[45] point out that summative evaluation produces perverse effects. The said effects, noted below as part of our investigation.

3.2.3.4 Propensity to Practice Normative Assessment to the Detriment of Diagnostic and Formative Assessments

Data from the questionnaire survey and interviews reveal a strong propensity among teachers to practice normative assessment to the detriment of formative assessments. Thus, to the question of knowing how much was estimated on average the number of evaluations noted for a discipline per quarter of education, 86% of high schools affirmed, to have undergone on average 05 to 06 evaluations. However, when asked what was the average number of unmarked assessments (written or oral) carried out for a lesson or a chapter before the assessments with attribution of marks, 89% of high school students said they did not have undergone no such assessment. Reality recognized by 93% of teachers questioned on the types of assessment they practiced.

3.2.3.5 Evaluation Results Rarely Analyzed

One of the perverse effects of the practice of normative evaluation revealed by the study is the scarcity of analyzes of evaluation results. In fact, teachers do not analyze the results of the evaluations very much (questions, homework, exams) and these results are therefore rarely improved. Indeed, a common practice observed among many teachers is to submit copies of certain evaluations, more often, at the end of the term, with a view to constituting the averages that are an administrative requirement. Thus, the learning difficulties identified only at the end of the teaching period reduce the possibilities of making corrections. Findings corroborated by Mr. Z. P., Deputy Head of School at Akoupé Modern High School, in these terms:

“The best approach would be to return copies of an assessment after marking it before proceeding to another assessment, even if the assessments do not relate to the same chapter or the content of the same course. Unfortunately, many of our teachers accumulate evaluation papers and usually return them at the end of the term”.

However, in these conditions of teaching and assessment, there is little opportunity to verify what students retain from teaching, in particular if the abilities assessed persist for the

rest of their studies (Viallet and Maisonneuve (1981)^[45].

3.2.3.6 Assessment and Categorization of Students

The survey by questionnaire reveals in general, for all the high schools in the study, that 73% of high school students had failed the baccalaureate for the reason of an Annual General Average lower than 10 (AGA<10), against 27% of high school students having failed either for the reason of a Number of points lower than 160 or for the Insufficiency of Specific Average preventing to be fished. Remember that admission to the general baccalaureate is done according to three (03) scenarios. Either the candidate obtains a total of points greater than or equal to 200, or the candidate obtains a total of 180 points with the average in a specific subject, or he obtains a total of 160 points with the average in two (02) specific subjects. In these last two cases, the candidate is fished out when he has an annual general average greater than or equal to 10. In addition, it should be noted that the Annual General Average results from continuous evaluations (written or oral questions, homework, exams) carried out throughout the school year. Thus, the very high proportion of high school students who failed on the grounds of an Annual General Average of less than 10, when they achieved a score of 160 or 180 points on the national exam, with at least an average in one subject specific may reflect a certain categorization high school students through continuous summative assessments. The defective reinforcement of trainer capacities is no stranger to these evaluation practices that contribute to this failure in the baccalaureate.

3.2.4 Inadequate Capacity Building of Teaching Staff and Education Technical Support Staff

Defective capacity building for teaching staff and technical support staff in education is reflected in the scarcity and virtual absence of class visits and observations made by pedagogical and continuing education facilitators, the scarcity of seminars organized for teachers and technical support staff in education.

3.2.4.1 Rarity of Class Visits by Pedagogy and Continuing Education Facilitators

The interviews carried out with the teachers highlighted a scarcity of class visits and observations made by the animators or inspectors of pedagogy and continuing education in the Mé Region. Indeed, when asked how often they received class visits from the disciplinary pedagogical supervisor each year, 89% of teachers maintained that they had not received a visit during the two years preceding our survey. Reality expressed by Mr. Z. B., professor of History-Geography at Akoupé Modern High School, in these terms:

«I am in my third year of teaching in this school and I have never received a visit from the educational animator of my discipline ».

In addition, Mr. E. L., professor of Life and Earth Science, at Agou Modern High School, agrees in his words:

“I do not remember having received since my arrival in this high school in 2018, the visit of a disciplinary educational supervisor. Last year, I received a class visit from the ACE, which is not a specialist in my

discipline. He was a mathematics teacher before he became Deputy Head of School”.

The reasons given for this scarcity of visits are the lack of technical, material and financial means, but also the ratio of supervision in the Regional Management. Reality confirmed by Mr. O. L., Pedagogical Inspector of Physics-Chemistry and Mr. A. I., Pedagogical Inspector of French, who respectively maintain that:

“Not only are we understaffed and the means made available to us are very weak or even insignificant to multiply and carry out regular class visits. We are then obliged to intervene with a few hand-picked teachers and more often in the town of Adzopé”.

“In the standards, the ratio of supervision is 25 teachers for one Disciplinary Pedagogical Inspector. At the modern high school of Adzopé alone, last year we had 32 teachers to supervise and for this year 2021, we have under our supervision 35 French teachers in this high school and 250 for the whole region. So how do you think we can ensure effective and quality supervision under these conditions? We are only two (02) disciplinary pedagogical inspectors for the entire region”.

3.2.4.2 Scarcity of Seminars Organized for Teachers and Technical Support Staff in Education

The defective capacity building of trainers is also reflected in the scarcity or even virtual absence of seminars or training workshops for them. When they are, their organizational methods do not favor the participation of the majority of teachers and those involved in school life. This reality is expressed both by teachers and by administrative and school authorities. Thus, Mr. P. P., French teacher at Alépé Modern High School points out that:

“Since I left ENS and started working at this high school in 2018, I haven't taken part in any workshops. Last year, there was a workshop in Adzopé, where we were invited, as the Antenna of pedagogy is there. I didn't go because I thought the trip was too expensive and without funding”.

In the same vein, Mr. T. A, Pedagogical Inspector at the Adzopé Pedagogy Antenna points out that:

“Our wish is to regularly lead training and capacity building seminars in all the localities of the region, but faced with the scarcity of resources, we are led to organize only one or two workshops per year, generally in Adzopé and teachers from surrounding localities are encouraged to take share”.

Like teachers, few capacity building seminars or workshops are organized for technical support staff (educator, education inspector and guidance inspector). The school life branch, which is supposed to organize and run training workshops on a regular basis, finds itself unable to develop this approach. Evidenced by the words of Mr. K. F., educator at the modern school of Alépé when he argues that:

“Educators hardly benefit from continuous training. In any case, since taking service in this high school,

about 10 years ago, I have benefited from only one training workshop organized by the head of the school life antenna in 2016, on the animation of socio-educational activities".

4. Discussion

The survey carried out within six (06) high schools in the Mé region brought out at first glance the problem of the organization and animation of school life as an aspect of the logics of operation of high schools at the origin of baccalaureate failure. Indeed, the lack of supervision and the weak commitment of the actors of school life in the psychosocial follow-up of high school students through individual interviews that would allow the management of cases of school maladjustment would contribute to building this failure at the baccalaureate. However, the less interest teachers have in the studies and learning difficulties of high school students, the less the latter will be committed to work and the worse their performance will be. In addition, the class interviews, which constitute an important aspect of the supervision of school life and psychosocial follow-up by making it possible to prevent and manage conflicts, to detect certain difficulties, to ensure the improvement of the working conditions of the learners are weakly integrated into the daily practices of school actors. Anything that would lead to low performance in the baccalaureate of high school students, especially those of socially weak origin, whose family practices are not customary to those of the school.

In addition, the study shows very little communication on the initiative of teachers and technical support staff with parents. This state of affairs is harmful, especially since the parents of high school students with academic difficulties, mostly poorly educated and mostly living in the countryside, rarely take the initiative in communicating with school actors. In this context, the weakness of the commitment and the lack of communication on the initiative of the trainers with the parents of high school students in a situation of maladjustment would be closing factors of the relatively high failure in the general baccalaureate.

Furthermore, the survey reveals a weakness in socio-educational activities within the high schools surveyed. However, given the importance of socio-educational activities in the education process, it is unquestionably that the absence or lack of such a device in the school project constitutes a real handicap for high school students. Indeed, through animation, teachers and actors in school life must be able to help their target (middle and high school students) to recreate themselves, to relax, in short, they must be able to to imagine and create new living conditions that are more bearable for students in the school environment (Ettien, 2007) [12]. The interest of socio-educational animation for the individual is to allow him to free himself, to emancipate himself. It is implemented through school clubs and allows students, in addition to the instruction received in class, to cultivate themselves, to learn and to prepare for social and community life through knowledge, -to do and know how to be.

In addition, the results of our study indicate a real lack of support and academic support measures for improving the baccalaureate results of high school students with learning difficulties and those of disadvantaged socio-economic background. It emerges from the survey that there is a virtual absence of measures to reinforce what has been

learned, financially and materially supported by the school administrations or the management committees of the establishments for the benefit of high school students with learning difficulties. However, tutoring refers to all specific actions whose explicit and essential goal is to help middle and high school students in their school career (Glasman *et al.*, 1991) [13]. School support originally inseparable from teaching practices (Arenilla, *et al.*, cited by Narpoon and Abdel, 2013) [32]. According to Glasman (2006) [14], two forms of tutoring can be distinguished. The first relates to private lessons (carried out at home or in a place provided for this purpose) offered to students in return for payment. The second takes into account associative or public schemes that offer students free homework help. Reverdy (2017) [41] emphasizes that tutoring corresponds to remedial work and a resumption of school content. In the Mé region, support is available either in tutorials, under the name of chargeable reinforcement courses organized in schools or outside during and at the end of the school year for the preparation of end-of-cycle exams; or in private lessons given at home for a payment. However, the inaccessibility of a large segment of high schools to these remedial and academic support mechanisms constitutes a real obstacle to success and lays the foundations for low performance in the baccalaureate.

In addition, the study highlights the contribution of evaluation practices to the failure of high school students in the baccalaureate. However, as Perrenoud (1999) points out, if the evaluation does not change, the rest will not change. According to Crahay (2003), the school is an institution that evaluates, judges and classifies. The rates of grade repetition and falling behind are above all a reflection of the way in which teachers judge pupils' performance, rather than an indicator of a level. Moreover, some assessment methods implemented by teachers can encourage students to drop out. Thus, the failure of high school students in the Mé Region at the baccalaureate is also constructed through the superficiality of the diagnostic evaluation, the weak anchoring of formative evaluations in the teaching practices of teachers, and their propensity to practice normative evaluation to the detriment of diagnostic and formative evaluations, the scarcity of analyzes of the results of evaluations guided essentially by the sanctification of grades and the concern for selecting the best students. Our results are therefore in line with those of Anon (2015) [1] according to which the vast majority of secondary school students in Côte d'Ivoire experience academic failure, largely resulting from the methods of assessing learner achievements.

In addition, the defective capacity building of trainers, which results in the rarity of class visits made by pedagogical and continuing education facilitators combined with the rarity or even the virtual absence of seminars organized for teachers and technical support staff in education, contribute to the construction of the relatively high failure of some high school students in the baccalaureate. These results are in line with those of Touré (2002) [42] on the failure of high school students in the philosophy test for the general baccalaureate in Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, Touré (Idem) maintains that this failure is linked to a set of multiple, cumulative and interfering factors, in particular the pedagogical practices of teachers and the programs of philosophy. He also maintains that there is a strong relationship between the inadequacy of the training and pedagogical supervision of teachers and the

failure of high school students in the baccalaureate philosophy test. Insufficient supervision resulting in the rarity of class visits by pedagogical animators and the rarity of seminars for trainers for the harmonization of teaching practices in the field.

5. Conclusion

The objective of this research was to analyze the link between the logic of the functioning of schools and the failure of high school students in the Mé region to pass the general baccalaureate. At the end of the analyses, our results show that this failure in the general baccalaureate is due to multiple and cumulative factors inherent in the functioning of high schools in the Mé region. These include, in particular, the lack of supervision and the weak commitment of the actors of school life in the psychosocial follow-up of high school students through individual interviews that would allow the search for corrective solutions and the management of school maladjustments. In addition, the class interviews which would make it possible to prevent and manage conflicts, to detect certain difficulties, to ensure the improvement of the material living and working conditions of learners are poorly integrated into the daily practices of school actors, all of which leads to poor performance in the baccalaureate of high school students, especially of low social origin. In addition, the study shows very little communication on the initiative of teachers and technical support staff with parents. The survey also revealed a weakness in socio-educational activities within the high schools surveyed. However, in view of the importance of socio-educational animation in the education process, it is unquestionably that the absence or the deficit of such a device in the establishment projects constitutes a real handicap for the high school students of socially underprivileged origin and with learning difficulties. The basis for failure in the baccalaureate is thus laid. In addition, the results of our study indicate a real deficit of support and academic support measures implemented by school administrations to improve the baccalaureate results of high schools with academic difficulties and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. There appears to be a virtual absence of measures to reinforce acquired knowledge, financially and materially supported by the School Management Committees for the benefit of high school students with learning difficulties. However, the inaccessibility of a large segment of high schools to these remedial and academic support mechanisms constitutes a real obstacle to success in the baccalaureate. The study also underlined a major contribution of evaluation practices to the construction of the failure of high school students in the baccalaureate through the superficiality of diagnostic evaluation, the weak anchoring of formative evaluations in teachers' pedagogical practices, and a propensity to practice normative evaluations, the scarcity of analyzes of evaluation results, normative evaluation practices guided essentially by the desire to select the best students. In addition, the defective capacity building of trainers, which results in the rarity of class visits made by pedagogical animators combined with the rarity or even the virtual absence of seminars organized for teachers and support staff technique to education, contribute to the construction of the relatively high failure of certain high school students in the Mé region at the general baccalaureate.

Overall, this study makes it possible to apprehend the

question of failure in the baccalaureate from the practical case mentioned above by highlighting the combined influence of variables relating to the functioning of establishments. Faced with this preponderant influence of the logic of operation of high schools in the Mé region on failure in the baccalaureate, there is an urgent need to identify empirically and implement appropriate school support mechanisms and permanent ones that would make it possible to counterbalance the effects. This aspect was not addressed by the study and this limitation therefore potentiates future reflections.

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