

**QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FORMS, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION
IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS IN ABIDJAN (CÔTE D'IVOIRE)*****Dr. DJAKO Logon Albert Thierry and Dr. BA Néné**

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Abstract

The phenomenon of school exam fraud is growing in Africa. The Ivorian education system is not spared. The corrective measures so far implemented by the academic authorities are not yet producing the expected results. It is in this context that this study proposes to analyze the forms, causes and consequences of fraud in secondary education exams in Abidjan. It is based on a qualitative approach proceeding from the survey by semi-structured interviews conducted with 32 students who took the BEPC or BAC exam last year. The verbal data collected is processed by thematic content analysis. The results show that exam fraud is mainly due to collusion between students and teachers, usually at the initiative of the latter. The causes of exam fraud fall into six categories: "learner's non-involvement", "psycho-sociological causes", "lack of ethics", "targeted academic benefits", "economic causes", "institutional weaknesses". Finally, this phenomenon has three types of consequences: "academic and legal sanctions", "psychosocial repercussions" and "degradation of school education". These results can help reform the organization of national examinations and competitions in Côte d'Ivoire so as to significantly reduce fraud.

Keywords: Fraud, Corruption, Manifestations, Causes, Consequences.

INTRODUCTION

Corruption refers to the fact that a person vested with a specific function (public or private) solicits or accepts a gift or any advantage with a view to performing, or refraining from performing, an act falling within the framework of his duties. According to Transparency International (2021), corruption is a global scourge. Countries in Western Europe and North America are the least affected, while countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East are the most affected. Côte d'Ivoire has reached an alarming level of corruption, because this country occupies the 104th place out of 180 countries in the ranking carried out by Transparency International (2020) which ranks the countries from the least corrupt to the most corrupt from their index of perception of corruption. Moreover, the Afrobarometer report (2019) reveals that, in this country, in the last 12 months, 34% of public administration users had to pay a bribe to be able to benefit from public services. Today, corruption costs more than 1300 billion to the State of Côte d'Ivoire according to the Minister for the Promotion of Good Governance, Capacity Building and the Fight against Corruption. Petty corruption is one of the most widespread forms in this country. It is limited to the various public and administrative services and is generally perceived as a set of transactions linked to the routine operation of public services. The Ivorian education sector is one of the most affected by corruption with a corruption rate of 18%, particularly in public schools (Afrobarometer, op. cit.). According to Mokaddem (2010), this phenomenon manifests itself in the financing of schools, the awarding of public contracts, the production and distribution of textbooks, the awarding of scholarships, the organisation of examinations and teacher recruitment competitions (Mokaddem, 2010). The most visible corrupt practices are the falsification of transcripts, the sale of examination papers, the embezzlement of funds intended

for school buildings, the recruitment and posting of teachers in exchange for bribes or sexual favors. Added to this is the assignment of fictitious students to major private schools, allowing fraudsters to embezzle colossal funds, as well as the payment of bribes to supervisors during school exams. In addition, Méité (2014) identifies other forms of corruption present in the Ivorian education system, in particular "petroleum" which refers to obtaining the exam subject before it is even distributed in the exam rooms. , "the owl operations" which consist in dealing with the subject outside the examination room and then introducing it into the batch of copies to be corrected thanks to the complicity of the person or those responsible for keeping these copies, "the sexually transmitted notes meaning high marks arbitrarily awarded to students (usually schoolgirls) in exchange for sex. Koné (2017) agrees with Méité (op. cit.). For him, final exams are an ideal opportunity for some crooked teachers to extort money from candidates. It should be noted that even before the exam period, the manifestations of corruption are indeed notable. Some teachers neglect teaching time in favor of so-called "reinforcement" courses. These courses, originally intended for students in difficulty, are diverted from their initial purpose and imposed on all students. This is why Mokaddem (2010) adds that some teachers teach only part of the program during regular class hours and force their students to pay for private lessons for the remaining lessons. Koné (2017) specifies that these courses are the place of organized cheating, because the interrogations scheduled for the regular hours will be dealt with there in advance. Thus, students who do not participate in it are subject to harsh treatment on the part of teachers, while those who adhere to it are favored. For Koné (2017), it would be wise to really consider a reorganization of examinations and competitions in Côte d'Ivoire, by endeavoring to eliminate corruption in depth, in order to allow the most deserving students or candidates to emerge so that it benefits this country which aspires to development. Achieving this objective involves questioning: what are the forms, causes and

consequences of fraud in school exams in Abidjan? Previous work may provide some answers to this question. In Kenya, Oyieko (2017) studies the forms and causes of academic fraud using a probability sample of 640 students and 25 teachers from 8 secondary schools in BondoSub-County. The study shows that the most common modes of exam cheating among students include writing on body parts, leaking exam papers beforehand, and changing exam papers after the papers. The results further reveal that students cheat on exams because they want to get good grades, have prepared poorly for exams, are afraid of failure, are pressured by parents and school, lack confidence in themselves.

Agwu *et al.* (2020) attempt to understand, from a literature review, the nature and determinants of “miracle examination centres” in Nigeria. These centers have a practice of allowing candidates for the Upper Secondary School Certificate Examination to achieve excellent results in a corrupt manner. To do this, these authors summarize 104 publications and come to the conclusion that the “miracle examination centres” are almost exclusively private schools. The proliferation of these centers is fostered by school politics, weak government sanctions, and the lure of exam takers for the dishonest services offered by these schools. The agents responsible for the faults committed in the “miracle examination centres” are mainly the owners of extra-tutorial centres, the owners and directors of private schools, teachers, security guards, pupils and parents. The existence of “miracle examination centres” leads to growing distrust of the Nigerian education system and therefore contributes to the production in this country of an incompetent workforce.

In Liberia, Kromah and Arunberkfa (2020) study the causes of corruption in private schools in Monrovia. They highlight 4 categories of reasons explaining this phenomenon. These reasons relate to the administration of education, low teacher salaries, government support for private schools, and student laziness. Indeed, due to their low salaries, some teachers engage in bribery and/or illegal extortion of money from students. This results in students not being serious about their studies. The majority of respondents argue that one of the possible reasons for corruption in private schools is the greed of teachers. One of the causes of exam cheating reported by teachers is that the government does not support the school system in Liberia, especially in private schools. Student laziness arises when there is no one watching over them at home to bring them back to the right path.

In Nigeria, Petters and Okon (2014) highlight both the causes and consequences of cheating in end-of-year school exams. They establish, in fact, that the main causes of this phenomenon are the societal preference for the diploma without worrying about the competence, the negative self-image, the lack of skills of the learners, the bad preparation as well as the laziness of the candidates to exams. This fraud has the consequences, among other things, of the demotivation of candidates to study, the refusal of admission to deserving students, the overall drop in the quality of academic training and the underperformance or incompetence of graduates on the job market. The study by Mokaddem (2010) supports the results reported by Petters and Okon (2014). This author shows, for his part, that fraud in school exams has the main consequences of making investment in education unproductive, of causing the demotivation of students and of causing a drop in per capita income.

In short, the forms, causes and consequences of fraud in school exams seem to vary from one country to another, but with some similarities. The Ivorian education system, in general, and end-of-year exams, in particular, are affected. In view of the harmful consequences of this phenomenon, it is imperative to study it scientifically in order to produce the knowledge necessary to combat it. Such is the meaning of this study which sets out to describe the manifestations, causes and consequences of fraud or corruption in the final examinations of secondary education, based on the experiences and testimonies of pupils in Abidjan who have passed, either the Brevet d'Etude du Premier Cycle (BEPC), or the Baccalaureate last year. Achieving this objective requires the development of an appropriate methodology which should be presented.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology on which this work is based is divided into three stages. The first step is to build the study sample, then to present the data collection instrument and finally to describe the analysis technique that will allow the data collected to be processed.

Sampling

The study population is made up of all the students who took the BEPC or the BAC last year. Our approach is qualitative and proceeds from sampling by multiple cases to select the participants to be interviewed. This technique consists in including in the study sample participants with the most varied characteristics possible so that all possible profiles are represented, without worrying about their actual frequency in the study population. To build this sample, we consider 5 socio-demographic variables, each having a close correlation with the phenomenon studied, here corruption or fraud in school exams. These are gender, age, level of education, standard of living and school status. Indeed, Vowell and Chen (2004) show that gender, age and level of education influence the propensity to cheat among students. Indeed, the practice of cheating is more frequent among younger male students with lower educational attainment than among their older female peers with higher educational attainment. Additionally, Agwu *et al.* (2020) establish from a review of the literature that exam fraud is more common in private schools than in public schools. Each of these variables admits in this work 2 modalities as follows:

- Gender: boy or girl;
- Age: 14 to 16 or 18 to 20;
- Type of establishment: private school or public school
- 3rd or 2nd class opposed to the final class or the first year of BTS or Licence;
- Standard of living: low standard of living or high standard of living;
- Religion: animist and without religion, Christian or Muslim.

Each of the 32 participants in our study sample is characterized by a distinct combination of the modalities of these variables. Thus, the theoretically most favorable participant in exam fraud is the boy of 14 to 16 years of age, with a low standard of living, repeating the class of the third class and enrolled in a private school. On the other hand, the participant least favorable to exam cheating would be the young girl of 20, of high standard of living, new to the class of terminale and enrolled in a public school.

Table I. Sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample

		Effective	%
Sex	Girl	16	50%
	boy	16	50%
Age	14 to 16 years old	16	50%
	18 to 20 years old	16	50%
Quality of life	weak	16	50%
	raised	16	50%
Religion	Animist and without religion	10	31%
	Christian	10	31%
	Muslim	12	38%
School type	private	16	50%
	public	16	50%
	3 rd	8	25%
Class	2nd -	8	25%
	T th	8	25%
	1st year ^{license} or BTS	8	25%
	Total	32	100%

Survey instrument

The instrument used for data collection is a semi-directive interview guide. It is structured in 5 axes as follows:

- The individual characteristics of the respondents;
- Exposure to school corruption during exams (BEPC or BAC);
- Forms of corruption in examinations;
- The causes of this corruption;
- The consequences of this phenomenon.

The first axis of the interview guide makes it possible to collect socio-demographic characteristics on the participant, in particular gender, age, class, standard of living, religion and the commune of residence of the respondent. The second axis of the interview guide helps to understand whether or not the participant has already been exposed to corruption during the end-of-year secondary education exams (the BEPC or the BAC). The question here is whether the respondent has already witnessed acts of corruption during the end-of-year exams. Was he simply a spectator, victim or actor (corrupt or corrupter)?

These first two axes provide essential information for the description of the study sample. The last three axes of the instrument are intended, in order, to collect the manifestations or forms, the causes and the consequences of fraud in secondary education examinations. It is the information reported by each of these axes that will be subjected to a thematic content analysis. It is, according to Bardin (1977), a technique of analysis of any written or oral verbal production using systematic and objective procedures of description allowing the methodical treatment of the explicit and implicit content of the texts in order to classify them and to interpret, by inference, its constituent elements.

Data processing

The application of the thematic content analysis begins with reading several times and attentively the transcription of the interview protocol of the participants. This reading makes it possible to understand the ideas expressed in order to be able to identify the themes around which the discourse of the respondents is organized. It suggests that the causes of corruption in exams can be grouped into 6 themes:

- The non-involvement of the learner;
- Economic causes;
- Psychosociological causes;
- Lack of ethics;
- Institutional weaknesses;
- The intended school benefits.

The first theme, called "learner's non-involvement", encompasses opinions explaining exam fraud by the student's lack of knowledge attributable to his unpreparedness, his lack of attendance or concentration in class, his lack of interest in studies, his refusal to learn or his poor learning strategy. This theme includes 6 arguments (*see* Graph 1). The second theme is called "economic causes". It includes opinions that explain the propensity for cheating in exams in secondary education for economic reasons, in particular the low income of certain actors in the education system. Two reasons make up this theme here (*see* Graph 1). The third theme called "psycho sociological causes" covers the reasons for corruption or fraud in examinations in relation to the emotional feverishness of the student induced by the stakes represented by the examination or resulting from the moral pressure exerted on the latter by his parents, precisely in order to encourage him to make the necessary efforts to be admitted. Essentially three reasons make up this theme (*see* Graph 1). The fourth theme called "the lack of ethics" brings together the reasons for fraud in examinations relating to the level of immorality that characterizes the different actors both in the educational system (the student and teacher the student) of the police institution (the policeman and the gendarme) as well as administrative staff in charge of organizing the examination (centre director, administrative staff). This theme is broken down into 5 motifs (*see* Graph 1).

The fifth theme is entitled "institutional weaknesses". They bring together all the opinions explaining fraud in school examinations in secondary education through malfunctions both in the way schools are managed and in the organization of final exams implemented by national education authorities. Three reasons make up this theme (*see* Graph 1). The last theme called "targeted academic benefits" includes the arguments explaining exam fraud by the academic profits that the actors of these frauds can derive from it. It is made up of 3 reasons (*see* Graph 1). The consequences of exam fraud can be organized into three categories:

- Academic and judicial sanctions;
- Psychosocial repercussions;
- The degradation of training.

The category "academic and judicial sanctions" refers to both academic and criminal penalties incurred by those involved in exam fraud if they are apprehended. Eight penalties make up this group of consequences (*see* Graph 2). The category "psychosocial repercussions" corresponds to the repercussions of being apprehended on the respectability of the fraudster, on the one hand, and on his emotional state, on the other. Six consequences make up this category (*see* Graph 2). The category "degradation of school education" refers to the repercussions of corruption or fraud in school examinations on the level of knowledge, the skills of learners on the education system as well as on the nation itself. It incorporates four consequences here (*see* Graph 2). This analysis continues with the description of the 3 units essential to the execution of the thematic content analysis:

- The information unit. It serves to decompose the corpus into these unitary constituents. We choose opinion here as the unit of information;
- The coding or recording unit. It makes it possible to attribute each unit of information to the different themes identified above. Here, an opinion related to one of the themes described above is considered as a coding unit;
- The unit of numeration is used to quantify the different themes based on their frequency of appearance in the discourse of the participants.

The application of content analysis to verbal data collected by semi-structured interview leads to three levels of results that should be presented.

RESULTS

The first level of results concerns the manifestations or forms of fraud in end-of-year examinations in secondary education. The second level of results deals with the causes of this fraud and the last level of results addresses the question of the repercussions of this phenomenon.

Forms and manifestations of school exam fraud

The results relating to the forms and manifestations of fraud in the BAC and BEPC exams are recorded in the table below.

Table II . Forms of fraud in secondary education examinations in Abidjan

Shapes	No.	Manifestations of Fraud	no.	%	total	%
Corruption initiated by representatives of public authority	1	In the oral exams, the teacher asks the student for a bribe (2000 to 5000F) in exchange for a good grade	12	9%	50	38%
	2	For written tests, teachers or supervisors sell the corrected test to students	10	8%		
	3	Some supervisors ask students for a bribe (5000F) to let them use their phones	10	8%		
	4	In the physical test, the teacher asks the student for a bribe in exchange for a good grade	8	6%		
	5	In the written tests, the students are authorized by the supervisors to communicate with each other if they each pay 2000 to 5000F	6	5%		
	6	Some police officers take money to bring in candidates' phones	4	3%		
	7	Some police let students enter the hall with their phones in exchange for money	6	5%	24	18%
Corruption initiated by candidates	8	In the physical test, the student offers a bribe to the teacher in exchange for a good grade	4	3%		
	9	In written exams, students offer a bribe to teachers to have the exams corrected	4	3%		
	10	In written tests, students offer a bribe to supervisors to be free to communicate with each other	4	3%		
	11	In the oral test, the student offers a bribe to the teacher in exchange for a good grade	2	2%		
	12	Students bribe police to get their phones into the room	2	2%		
The use of external supports prohibited	13	Students go to the exam center the day before the exam to bribe the director	2	2%		
	14	Use of the telephone to receive the answer key	16	12%	32	25%
	15	Write knowledge on an external medium (paper, handkerchief, bench table, ceiling)	10	8%		
	16	Write knowledge about a part of your body	4	3%		
Fraudulent exchanges between candidates	17	Go to the bathroom to check your notes	2	2%		
	18	Exchanges of answers or drafts between candidates	14	11%	19	14%
	19	Verbal communications between candidates	2	2%		
	20	Telephone exchanges between candidates	2	2%		
Social support for fraud	21	Some invigilators hide candidates' phones in the presence of authorities	2	2%	6	5%
	22	Some parents of students give large sums to their child to bribe the supervisors	2	2%		
	23	Some teachers whistle the correct answers to students	2	2%		

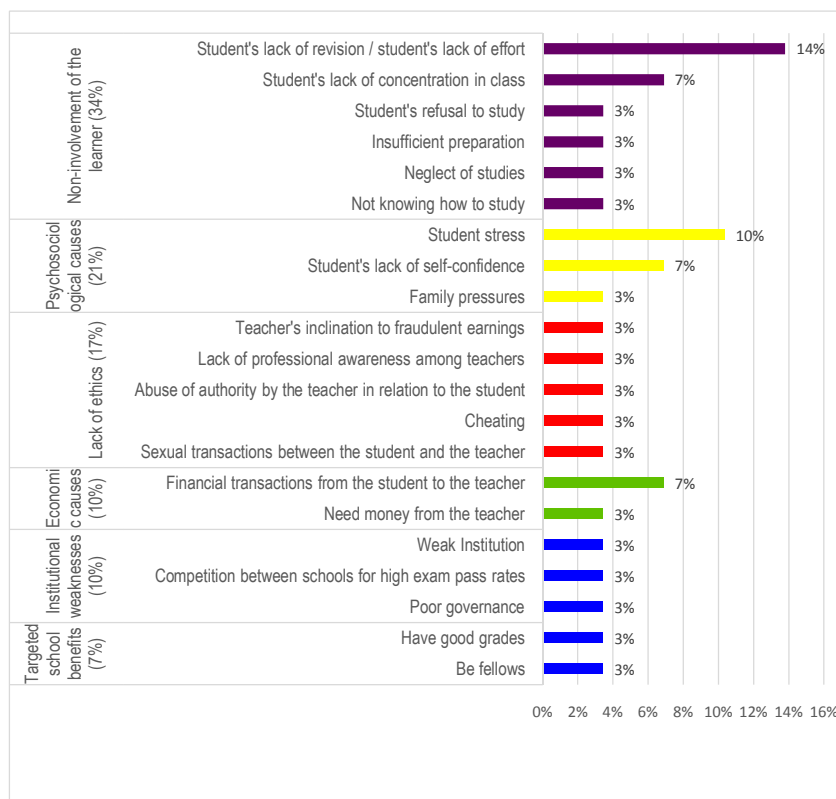
According to this table, manifestations of cheating in secondary school examinations take five forms. The first and the third most frequent forms are corruptions where the candidates for the examinations (the corruptors) pay bribes to the representatives of the public authority (the teachers, supervisors, police or gendarmes and directors of the center) the corrupted. The difference between these two forms is at the level of the initiator of this complicity. In the most common case, it is the emissaries of the public authority, that is to say

the teachers, the supervisors, the police or gendarmes and the heads of examination centers who initiate the process. This case represents 38% of the manifestations of fraud described by the participants. In the least frequent case, the candidate or learner is the instigator of the corruption (18%). Thus, in the oral (11%) and physical (9%) tests, some teachers give a good mark to the candidate after having received a bribe from him; in written tests, teachers or supervisors sell the answer keys to candidates (11%), allow students to communicate with each other (8%), use their telephones (8%) after receiving a bribe from them -wine. The last three forms of exam fraud are the use by candidates of prohibited external media, fraudulent exchanges between candidates and social support for fraud, which represent respectively 25%, 14% and 5% of the manifestations of fraud mentioned by the attendees. The latest form of school exam fraud, social support for fraud, reveals that this phenomenon is deeply rooted in Ivorian society since the supervisors, teachers and especially the parents of pupils who are supposed to give civic and moral education to learners become their accomplices in the fraud, some by hiding their mobile phones to prevent them from being caught in the act of cheating or by hissing them the correct answers and others (the parents) by giving them large sums money to bribe the overseers.

How can such deviant behavior be explained? In other words, what are the causes of fraud in end-of-year secondary education exams?

Causes of School Exam Fraud

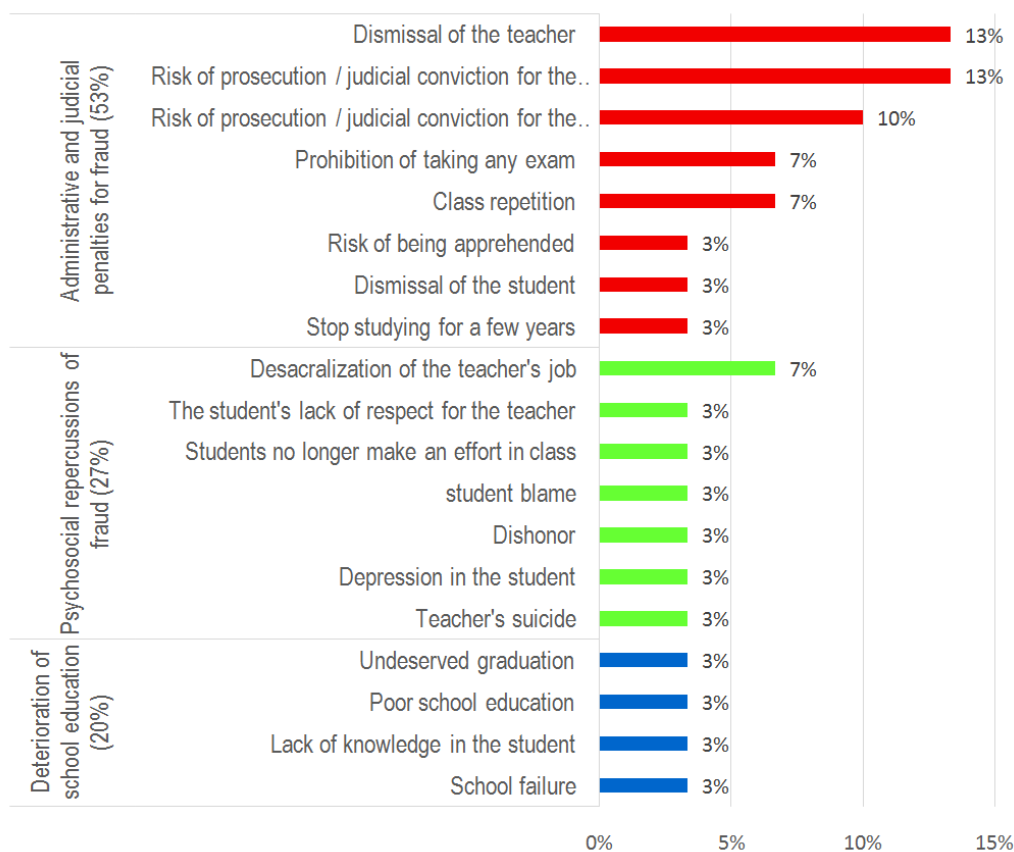
The graph below presents the causes of fraud in secondary education exams, highlighting their frequency in the discourse of respondents. According to this graph, the most cited category of causes for examinations is "students' non-involvement". This category of causes represents 34% of the explanations provided by respondents.



Graph 1. Causes of fraud in secondary education exams in Abidjan

The underlying idea that characterizes it is the attribution of exam fraud to the lack of knowledge in the student due to the fact that the latter did not prepare sufficiently for the exam (17%), missed concentration in class (7%), neglected their studies (3%), refused to study (3%) or did not know how to do so (3%). Clearly, the student has not invested in his studies, which is why he tries to cheat on the end-of-year exams to ensure success. The second most cited category of causes of fraud in secondary education examinations is of a psychosociological nature. This category represents 21% of the causes of exam fraud cited by the participants. The recourse to fraud or corruption during examinations is explained here by the state of emotional feverishness of the pupil induced by the challenge represented by the examination. It conceals the idea that, faced with exams, the learner finds himself in a state of emotional distress such that he cannot cope or, more precisely, doubts that he will be able to succeed through his own abilities in the tests. He is therefore tempted to resort to fraud to ensure success. This state of emotional weakness is both stress (10%), lack of self-confidence (7%) and pressure exerted by parents on them (3%). Causes associated with a lack of ethics form the third most recurrent category among respondents. Students who attribute exam cheating to this category consider that the immorality of the cheating is the source of their deviant behavior during the tests.

Here, the fraud is explained by the immorality of the teachers, the students, the police and/or the administrative staff in charge of the organization of the exams. The explanations relating to this category represent 17% of the causes mentioned. These first three categories of causes of fraud in the final examinations of secondary education together represent 61% of the explanations provided. This means that the students who are the primary beneficiaries of the fraud here are blaming themselves for these unethical practices. They are therefore aware of being the main source of these deviant practices, in particular through their lack of work (34%), their difficulties in coping emotionally with exams (21%) as well as their inclination to immorality (17%). The following two categories of causes appear with the same frequency in the discourse of respondents. They each represent 10% of the causes cited by the participants and incriminate, on the one hand, institutional weaknesses linked to the mode of management of schools and also failures in the organization of examinations and, on the other hand, the lack of income among certain players in the education system, specifically teachers (10%). In short, six categories of causes are cited by students to explain the propensity to cheat during end-of-year examinations in secondary education. Three of these categories, notably the first two and the last, exclusively incriminate the learner.



Graph 2. Consequences of fraud in secondary school examinations in Abidjan

The third category of causes makes all actors in the education system responsible for fraud in final examinations in secondary education. The fourth category explains exam fraud by institutional dysfunctions, while the fifth category puts all the blame on the teachers. What repercussions can such practices have? The following sub-chapter deals with this question.

Consequences of school exam cheating

The graph below shows the consequences of cheating in school exams, highlighting their frequency in the comments of respondents. The consequences of fraud in end-of-year exams in secondary education, as understood by students, take three forms: academic and legal sanctions, psychosocial repercussions and degradation of school education. Academic and legal sanctions resulting from fraud are the most recurrent type of consequences in the discourse of the students surveyed. They are estimated at 53% of the consequences of exam fraud described by the participants. The most frequent penalty in this category among the participants is the dismissal of the teacher (13%), followed by legal proceedings, in particular the prison that he incurs (13%), then legal proceedings intervene, that is i.e. the prison that the student risks (10%) followed by the sentences associated with it, in particular the ban for 5 years from taking any exam on Ivorian territory (7%), repeating a class (3%), stopping studies (3%), the risk of being apprehended (3%). It should be noted that the risk of being apprehended is the form of sanction least mentioned by respondents. However, academic and judicial sanctions only intervene if the offender is arrested. This may be a sign that the fraudsters are of course aware of the punishments they incur but underestimate the probability that they will be apprehended and therefore that these sanctions will be applied to them.

The psychosocial repercussions of cheating on final exams constitute the second most frequent type of consequence in the discourse of the participants. They correspond to the repercussions of being apprehended on the reputation or social respectability of the offender (the pupil or the teacher), on the one hand, and on his emotional state, on the other. 27% of the consequences cited belong to this category. In order of salience in the opinion of the participants, we have the desacralization of the teaching profession (7%), the student's lack of respect for the teacher (3%), the fact that the students no longer do effort (3%), teacher dishonor (3%), student blame (3%), student depression (3%), and teacher suicide (3%). The deterioration of academic training represents the third most salient form of consequence in my opinions of students. Here the work of the learner is in question.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to describe the forms, causes and consequences of fraud in final secondary education exams in Abidjan. It proceeds from a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews which made it possible to collect the testimonies and experiences of 32 students who had applied for the BEPC or the BAC the previous year. The data collected was processed by thematic content analysis. The results reveal that all categories of administrative actors involved in the holding of examinations participate in fraud to varying degrees. Pupils and teachers are the most implicated in the fraud, then come the police (police and gendarmes), then come the administrative staff and finally the directors of the centre. The forms of fraud described in this work, in particular the complicity of corruption between the representatives of the authority (teachers, supervisors, police officers, center

directors) and the candidates, the use of prohibited external media, fraudulent exchanges between candidates and social support for fraud are comparable to those observed by authors such as Oyieko (2017) and Agi and Omokhoa (2019). Indeed, in Kenya, Oyieko (2017) identifies 9 types of exam fraud by interviewing a representative sample of secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County consisting of 640 students and 25 teachers from 8 schools. These are, in descending order of frequency, writing on body parts (93%), writing on clothes or bench (92%), using Morse code to communicate (90 %), hiding literature in the toilet (86%), leaking exam papers (85%), changing the exam paper after the papers (81%), because the candidate to benefit from surveillance assistance (79%), from copying another candidate (89%), or from concealing unauthorized objects (70%). These forms of fraud described by Oyieko (2017) are identical to the manifestations of this phenomenon in Abidjan with the exception of two forms: the use of Morse code as a language of communication and the change of exam paper after the tests. In the past, this last form of fraud was common among Ivorian students. This is confirmed by Méité (2014). But the Ministry of National Education has introduced the use of stickers on the copy sheet which makes it difficult, if not almost impossible, to resort to this form of cheating. This measure could explain the absence of this practice among exam candidates in Abidjan. In addition, Agi and Omokhoa (2019) describes six types of exam cheating in secondary education in Nigeria. These include the introduction of unauthorized material into the examination room, irregular activities inside and outside the examination room (collaborative work between candidates or the provision of external assistance), collusion, identity theft, insults or attacks on invigilators, false certificates and the purchase by students from those in charge of the examination of documents called "expo" containing in general the real exam questions (Agi and Omokhoa, op. cit.).

In addition, six categories of causes are highlighted in this work. These are the learner's non-involvement (the learner's unpreparedness, lack of knowledge, etc.), psycho-sociological causes (the student's stress, low self-esteem, etc.), lack of ethics (the lack of ethics of the teacher and the student, etc.), institutional failures (unfair competition between schools to have a high success rate in exams, poor organization of exams, etc.), economic causes (the teacher's low salary, the low supervision bonus) and the targeted academic benefits (obtaining good grades, orientation in a prestigious school, etc.). These results relating to the causes of cheating in school exams are similar to those reported by Oyieko (2017), Naliaka, Odera and Poipoi (2015), Petters and Okon (2014), as well as by Agi and Omokhoa (2019). Indeed, in Kenya, Oyieko (2017) shows by surveying a representative sample of secondary school students in Bondo Sub-County that students cheat in exams because they want to have good grades, have prepared poorly for exams, undergo pressure from their parents, lack self-confidence or develop strong competition between students. Similarly, Naliaka, Odera and Poipoi (2015) establish that exam fraud is explained by bad study habits, laziness, fear of failure, enthusiasm for the diploma, lack of confidence in self, and family pressures experienced by the student. In Nigeria, Petters and Okon (2014) abound in the same direction by highlighting, from a survey of a representative sample of students, forms of exam fraud comparable to those observed here in Abidjan. They identify precisely 15 causes of this phenomenon, the seven most frequent of which are, in order, societal preference for diplomas (paper qualifications), the

absence of a positive self-image in the student, the lack of good study habits in it, the inadequate preparation for the exam, the intellectual laziness of the learner, the absence of appropriate sanctions for defrauding students, and the uncompleted curriculum (Petters and Okon, op. cit.). In addition, poverty is identified by Ifeakor and Anekwe (2010) as a fundamental factor in the occurrence of malpractice during school examinations. For these authors, since most individuals live in difficult conditions, they would not hesitate to participate in corruption during school examinations to earn easy money. Agi and Omokhoa (2019) count, for their part, about fifteen causes of fraud in academic exams, the most common of which are the candidate's fear of failing the exam, the enthusiasm for the diploma whose obtaining is dependent on success in examinations, the desire of parents to have their children in professions and jobs of choice at any price, the unemployed and the opportunists who take advantage of the holding of examinations to enrich themselves with candidates, the phenomena of leaks and cheating and the temptation of certain school principals to cheat on exams in order to improve the reputation of their establishment (Agi and Omokhoa, op. cit.). Furthermore, this phenomenon generally leads to three types of consequences, namely the academic and legal sanctions incurred by fraudsters (prison for the teacher and the student, dismissal of the teacher, dismissal of the student), psychosocial repercussions of being apprehended (the desacralization of the teaching profession, the student's lack of respect for his teacher, etc.) and the deterioration of training (the lack of knowledge and the incompetence of the student). These results are comparable to those reported by Achio, Ameko, Kutsanedzie, Alhassan and Ganaa (2012) as well as Petters and Okon (2014). According to Achio, Ameko, Kutsanedzie, Alhassan and Ganaa (op. cit.) corruption or fraud in exams have very damaging consequences for the student, the education system and the nation. This phenomenon produces incompetent students, holders of diplomas without possessing either the knowledge or the know-how that should be associated with it. The risk that the latter withdraw from very demanding jobs, because of their incompetence is high, and this, even if the remuneration is high. Petters and Okon (op. cit.) identify 10 consequences of exam fraud in Nigeria, the 5 most recurrent of which are the discouragement of students from studying seriously, the underperformance of graduates in the labor market, the refusal to admission of deserving students at the expense of cheating applicants, the overall reduction in the quality of education, the decline in the credibility of Nigerian degrees internationally.

Conclusion

This study analyses the manifestations or forms, causes and consequences of fraud in the final examinations of secondary school teachers in Abidjan. It reveals that this phenomenon continues to undermine the education system by involving the different actors involved in the organisation of school examinations, namely teachers or invigilators, students, police officers or gendarmes, administrative staff and directors or managers of examination centres. Students and teachers are the main instigators of fraud. The former pay bribes to the latter who, in return, give them good marks in the physical and oral tests, on the one hand, and, on the other, allow them to cheat in the written tests, either by communicating with each other, exchanging their answers or drafts, or using their mobile phones. Some teachers or supervisors go so far as to sell candidates the answers to the written tests. Some policemen or

gendarmes participate in fraud by distorting the inspections: they let students in with their mobile phones in exchange for a bribe. The same applies to some administrative staff who, once bribed, turn a blind eye to the fraud they observe around them. The causes of this phenomenon as described by the students can take 6 forms: lack of work by the student, lack of ethics, psychosociological causes, institutional weaknesses, economic causes and coveted academic benefits. The present work has highlighted the forms, causes and consequences of corruption or fraud in school examinations in Abidjan. Its results could be used to develop more effective anti-fraud awareness programmes. However, this is a qualitative study whose results cannot be generalised to the whole population. Further studies are therefore needed to confirm the results reported here.

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