

## Evaluation Fraud in Technical Education in Côte d'Ivoire: From Standard Practices to New Forms

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**ABSTRACT:-** The objective of this study is to analyze exam fraud. It takes place at the professional high school of Jacqueline, in the south of Côte d'Ivoire. It targets the trio of actors that are teachers, education staff and members of the administration. The volunteer sample size is twelve (12) persons, namely: five (5) teachers, three (3) education staff and four (4) administration, were individually submitted in a semi-structured interview. To this end, two interview guides have been developed: one is aimed at teachers and education staff. And the other to members of the administration. The theoretical anchor of this study is a model inspired by Gabriel Tarde's theory of imitation and Morin's systemic model, which make it possible to identify individual behavior and the interaction of actors in terms of exam fraud. The data was subjected to thematic content analysis. The main results reveal "dummy evaluation", as a new form of exam fraud in addition to: sale of marks, trafficking of course hours, devious means of fraudsters, fabricated marks and averages, sexually transmitted averages.

**Keywords:** Administration, Educators, Teachers, Evaluations, Frauds

### I. INTRODUCTION

Cheating is a phenomenon that prevails in the school environment. It knows a strong mediatization during the exams with great circulation. Thus, every year in Côte d'Ivoire, students, teachers, education staff and members of the administration are denounced and sanctioned for their proven involvement in cases of exam fraud. To deter fraudsters, the inter-ministerial decrees respectively 0062 of July 25, 2011, relating to the sanctions in the event of fraud committed by the candidates and the actors and the decree 0074, of April 06, 2018 authorizing the systematic body search were taken. Despite this system and the sanctions taken against all these offenders, exam fraud is growing year after year. In 2018, throughout the Ivorian territory, 208 cases of fraud were observed on the Baccalaureate exam out of 242,908 candidates. In 2019, there were 1,516 cases of fraud out of 256,452 candidates in technical education and 6,254 cases of fraud out of 276,442 candidates in general education (MENETFP, 2019). Finally, in the 2020 Baccalaureate session, "16,428 cases of Baccalaureate fraud were recorded in 2020, i.e. 26.6% compared to 2019 which recorded 6,833 cases of fraud" (MENETFP/DECO, 2020). The consequences of this practice essentially boil down to the devaluation of the education system and the lowering of student levels, through the awarding of undeserved diplomas (Gbongué, 2008), non-respect of hierarchical authority by corrupting learners (Ettien, Bende and Konan, 2006)<sup>1</sup>. Several studies and research have been conducted on the subject of cheating or corruption in schools around the world. Thus, during their research Hallak and Poisson (2009) focused on the functioning of the school institution and also its standards. However, these two authors did not take into account the individual factors of school cheating and did not identify all the other institutional actors of school exam cheating. In France, Guibert and Michaut (2009), Blémont, Foucault, Kesler and Mazodièrè (2012), Michaut (2013) have targeted pupils and students in their work on assessment fraud. Similarly, in Cameroon, research by Ngassa (2016), Tchouata, Tchokote, Lamago and Singo (2011) also shed light on pupils and students. With the exception of the study by Djateng (2012) which noted the facts and practices of members of the administration and teachers. This author proposes solutions without, however, specifying the determinants and impacts of cheating. In Côte d'Ivoire, the research of Ettien, Bendé and Konan (2007), Méité (2014) for their part, agree on the responsibility of pupils whom they

identify as one of the main actors in cheating in the middle school. as for Gbongué (2008), although retaining students on the list of actors in exam fraud, also cites teachers, parents of students and school administrative staff, supervisory authorities and society as a whole. it is a general inventory that does not emphasize the institutional actors, nor the dynamic nature of the fraud strategies used. this is what this article tries to correct, which is limited to three actors: teachers, education staff and members of the administration likely to practice petty corruption (Hallak and Poisson, 2009).

The objective of this study is to analyze exam fraud from the point of view of the trio of actors mentioned above. The theoretical anchor of this study is a model that is inspired by both the theory of imitation and the systemic theory. in the theory of imitation, Tarde (1890) emphasizes the existence of individual consciousnesses linked to each other by the laws of imitation. This acts like a magnetic wave or current that propagates from individual to individual. Imitation supposes a reference to be copied and a person who aspires to resemble said reference. This transformation can happen consciously or unconsciously. Systemic theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the interactions of the actors of a system. it is a model that seems particularly suited to the school context. These conceptual tools make it possible to identify the dysfunctions of these interactions (Morin, 1967).

In summary, these two theories of imitation and systemic make it possible to identify individual behavior and the interaction of actors in the education system.

## II. METHOD

### 1. Site and survey participants.

The study was conducted at the Professional High School in Jacqueville, located 64 km from Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire. The number of persons expected to participate in the study is 111 individuals, including: 99 teachers, 7 education staff and 5 administration. They were chosen on the basis of the voluntary non-probability sampling technique. Then, since the elements of the population are naturally grouped together, the cluster sampling technique was used in order to have respondents from the trinomial until saturation. This saturation was obtained after the twelfth (12th) interview. Thus, the sample size is twelve (12) individuals, distributed as follows: five (5) teachers, three (3) education staff and four(4) members of administration.

### 2. Data Collection Techniques.

The data collection technique used in this study is the individual semi-structured interview. Two guides have been developed: one is for teachers and education personnel; and the other, to members of the administration. These guides present the same themes but have some variances in the wording of the questions. The first theme deals with general information on the phenomenon of exam fraud and the second relates to the forms of cheating in which they were actors and/or witnesses.

### 3. Method of data analysis

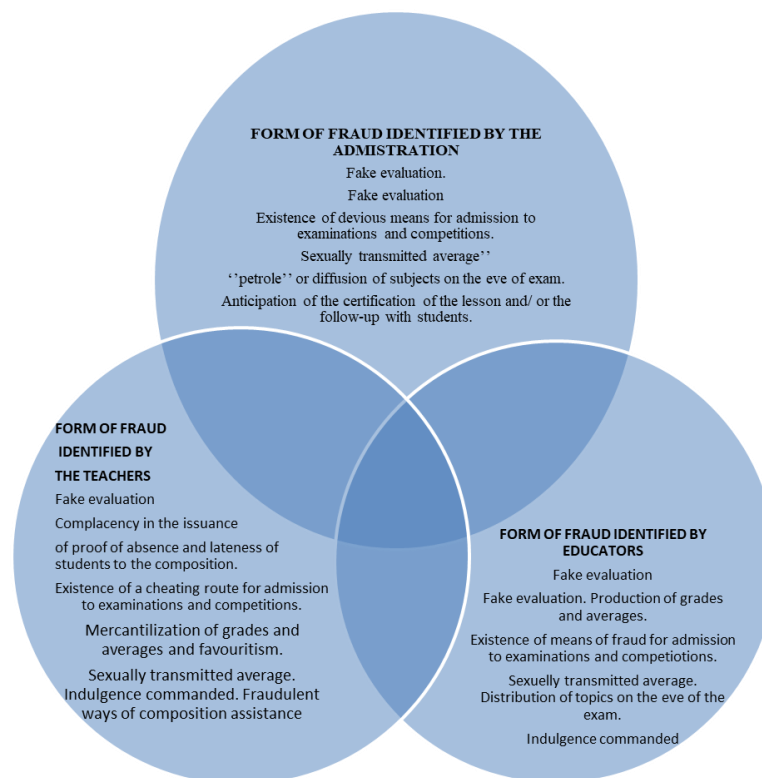
The data collected was subject to a thematic content analysis. The procedure initially consisted of transcribing the data to obtain verbatim statements. Then, these verbatims were submitted to the respondents for the validation of their own statements. Finally, we proceeded to the breakdown of the data and to complete the categorization. this last operation was not carried out in a sequential and linear fashion. The data was processed, cut up and labeled (using codes) significant segments then called units of meaning (Deslauriers, 1991). this step therefore consisted of classifying and giving meaning to the raw data collected by hand, in order to highlight the categories that are listed in the following section.

## III. RESULT

The results of the study are organized around the following points: first, the forms of cheating highlighted by the teachers interviewed; second, the forms of cheating noted by the education staff, third, the forms of cheating identified by members of the administration, and finally the description of the forms of cheating common to teachers, education staff and members of the administration.

### 1. Different forms of fraud according to the triad of actors

The Venn diagram below presents the different forms of fraud according to the triad of actors interviewed.



Source: Investigation sadia et al, 2021  
Figure 1: diagram of forms of fraud

Observing this figure makes it possible to understand the main forms of fraud from the point of view of teachers. these are: Mesh of correcting teachers (or labo), Commanded indulgence, Sexually transmitted average, Mercantilization of marks and averages and Favoritism, Existence of mesh and tips for admission to exams and competitions, Complacency in the issuance of supporting documents, student absence and lateness to testing and evaluation for education staff exam cheating takes the form of: fake evaluation, invention of marks and averages, existence of mesh and tips for admission to examinations and composition, average sexually transmissible, Dissemination of topics on the eve of the exam (petroleum) and ordered indulgence. Finally, according to the members of the administration, the fraud of the exams takes into account: False evaluation, Low attendance and / or negligence of the teachers, Manufacture of marks and averages, Existence of network and tips for the admission to the exams and contest, averages sexually transmissible, Dissemination of subjects on the eve of the exam, Anticipation of the certification lesson and/or follow-up with the students,

Corruption of the commissioners and president of the jury and overbilling of the allowances for the correction of practical work by the examiners. The common forms are as follows: In the first position, there is the category "Dummy evaluations". This is followed by the categories "Sales of grades and averages" and "mesh for admission to exams and competitions". Then come the units considered attached to the category "Production of grades and averages", "Parallel paths of access to establishments". Finally we have the "Sexually Transmitted Average" category of unit of meaning.

## 2. Description of FORMS of fraud common to the trio of actors

### 2.1. Fake evaluations

These are summative evaluations which are not based on normative and/or criteria interpretations but rather on other non-regulatory interpretations.

*"cheating is (...) also among teachers. because when you give a task to perform to four trainees, it is participating in cheating. because when Peter is working, Paul is not working. and as the teacher is called upon to note them, the latter consider everyone to contribute to the achievement of the task at hand. and the same mark is attributed to the five trainees when the five do not deserve the same marks". (Inquested 4)*

"We realize today that with a single composition, we make the average of the child. these are common practices" (Inquested 2).

## 2.2. Sale of marks

The sale of marks consists of assigning a mark for money.

“There are avenues opened to them by some with promises. And in those promises is the money. They can, for example, give the BT for 200000f or even 300000f. It depends on their mood. e2: But we ask to send 100000f or more for a claim that is free. Our authorities need to be more observant. Because in addition to those who enter the notes on the computers also cheat and modify the notes for money” (Inquested 5).

## 2.3. Lesson hours traffic

To make traffic of course hours, it is when, voluntarily the actor does not assume a good part of the hourly volume for other purposes.

Repetitive absences, lateness of teachers, chapters not dispensed, doing parallel work "okra" during class hours

## 2.4. Devious routes or ways of admission to exams and competitions.

They are organized people who through devious means grant admission to a competition for money.

“There are avenues opened to them by some with promises. And in those promises is the money. They can, for example, give the BT for 200000f or even 300000f. It depends on their mood. e2: But we ask to send 100000f or more for a claim that is free. Our authorities need to be more observant. Because in addition to those who enter the notes on the computers also cheat and modify the notes for money” (Inquested 5).

“a tip is the roundabout way to get there. Is your pipe straight so you can see the other end? so I want to do a competition (...) and I really know Mr. x who can get us into such a service, but he's not going to do it for free. So you need a certain amount” (Inquested 7)

## 2.5. invented marks and averages.

It is when one modifies, improves, and manufactures grades and averages of students without objective criteria and on demand.

“If we have to exclude one of your proteges, you are forced to go see the other colleagues so that they raise the notes to save him from exclusion. It is also a form of cheating because the child did not earn that grade” (Inquested 3).

“I know that they often fix the averages” (Inquested 11).

## 2.6. Sexually transmitted average.

These are averages given by teachers after having sex with students.

“girls practice sexually transmitted averages. the girl who seduces teaching because she didn't do well in order to have sex for better grades. or it is the teacher who approaches the girl who does not have good grades in order to arrange her by means of sexual intercourse. or even when the two have sex and she has an average of 02, he will do everything to help her by giving her 12. All this to prevent the little one from being excluded” (Survey 3)

In summary, the actors interviewed paid particular attention to the following forms: fake evaluations, sale of notes, trafficking of course hours. Then they mention the question of the mesh or parallel pipe for admission to exams and competitions, then the marks and the averages fabricated, but also the sexually transmitted averages and they deplore the parallel ways of access to the institutions.

## IV. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to analyze exam fraud in technical establishments in Côte d'Ivoire. The theoretical anchor of this study is a model that draws on both imitation theory and systemic theory.

The actors interviewed paid particular attention to the following forms: fake evaluations, sale of notes, trafficking of course hours. Then mention the question of the mesh or parallel pipe for admission to exams and competitions, then the marks and the averages fabricated, but also the sexually transmitted averages and they deplore the parallel paths of access to the establishments which thrive in this professional schools.

The originality of this study lies in the fact that it is the teachers, the education staff and the members of the administration who in their remarks highlight its practices, one of which emerges from this study. On the other hand, the other forms of cheating resulting from the analysis of the interviews and the data that we observed in the environment are consistent with the existing literature with some variances.

Let's start the discussion with the first form of cheating, fake evaluation that emerges from our study. This form of cheating does not exist in the literature to our knowledge. It emerges from this study because, according to the actors interviewed, this practice is rooted in this establishment. Indeed, for many years, the deleterious working conditions (with dilapidated teaching equipment, the absence of work materials and to top it all off, an ever-increasing class size each year) have had an impact on the quality of training. Despite the good will of the actors and their ingenuity, the quality of the training is declining and at the same time the expectations of the authorities are demanding. thus the students as well as the teachers and the members of the administration who want to obtain better end-of-year results in order to comply with the requirements of the

authorities therefore work by devious means to obtain them to the detriment of the quality of training and evaluation. As the basic training is strongly tainted some actors are forced to indulge in artificial assessments of learners. Moreover, with the plethora number of students, teachers are reluctant to do summative assessments. They end up doing an evaluation. Then, it links the evaluation mark to that of the notebook correction marks or to the participation marks which are used to obtain the average of the learners. To our knowledge, this form of cheating does not appear in the literature review. it is therefore a practice that emerges from this study.

After the first form, respondents indicate another common practice, the existence of mesh for admission to exams and competitions. According to them, parents and students regularly look for people who are supposed to grant them their diplomas or admission to competitions. This is corroborated by the literature. Indeed, Hallak and Poisson (2009) also identify this form in their research. They mention bribes for admission to examinations and obtaining diplomas. While the form of cheating which consists in selling marks and averages on the initiative of teachers, students or parents, is also observed in schools according to the trinomial of respondents and our observations. Hallak and Poisson (2009) also mention it under the term bribes for good grades. Djateng (2012) indicates that in principle, the results of learners are presented in order of merit. Which assumes that an effort is made so that everyone has the grade that suits their skills and level? In reality, however, non-objective (and non-measurable) elements often enter into the evaluation. They call these cheating practices "review grade traffic". The remuneration for this improvement in grades can be in kind or in cash depending on the author. Gbongué (2008) indicates that cheating by exchange consists in communicating during an evaluation, exchanging copies or drafts between candidates, granting marks out of convenience, in exchange for money or sexual relations. We thus note by the definition of the author that the sale of the notes is found in cheating by exchange. However, here our objective was to identify from the comments of the actors a particular type of attribution of scores with money in return. This is comparable to a business during orals, defenses, physical tests...

The data collected from the actors, during the interviews and the participant observation, also show the existence of "Average sexually transmitted" within the Vocational High School. This is at the initiative of the students as well as other actors in the school environment. According to them, this practice is indeed insidiously present in the system. Djateng (2012), also identifies it under the term traffic of evaluation notes, citing it as a form of this traffic. Moreover Hallak and Poisson (2009, underline this by naming them harassment or sexual exploitation. For Gbongué (2008), the sexually transmitted average is a form of cheating by exchange which consists in communicating during an evaluation, exchanging copies or drafts between candidates, granting marks out of convenience, in exchange for money or sex. These authors thus come to corroborate the remarks of the actors of this establishment.

The production of notes or averages is consecutive to the various requests from colleagues or third parties and which is not subject to a financial counterpart exclusively pushes certain actors to the modification, the improvement, the resumption of the reports and the control matrix continue according to the authors. All these operations are summarized in an invention of marks and averages for the benefit of our "cases". Hallak and Poisson (2009), use the concepts of bribes for marks. But in this case it is not a question of bribes offered to obtain good marks but rather, it is the links woven between the protagonists that are put forward. Djateng (2012), for his part, inscribes this in the traffic of marks. This distinction is made by us to identify one of the most insidious practices among cheating practices and which tends to become institutionalized. Gbongué (2008) rightly classifies it among so-called legal cheating, i.e. a form of cheating that is practiced in a so-called normal way. The author indicates that it is one of these most subtle forms because it is practiced through the bonds of friendship with the relatives of the teachers.

The development of these different forms of cheating presented in this study can be explained by the imitation of anti-model behaviors by the trio of actors. As Linton (1977) specifies, the individual, his needs and his capacities are at the base of all social and cultural phenomena. After all, societies are organized groups of individuals, and cultures are, in the final analysis, nothing more than systems of repeated responses common to members of a society. Thus, the trio of actors reproduces the different responses to the problems they face for example, for some years now, faced with the lack of work materials and workstations, they have been obliged to produce a practical work note even though the objective conditions for evaluation have not been met. Yet the administration accepts these marks, aware that they sanction subjective evaluations. In addition, the development could be consecutive to the silence of the hierarchy in the face of these anti-social behaviors. This hierarchy is responsible, among other things, for evaluating and correcting any malfunctions. For Morin (1967), the system, also called the interconnected cluster system where the subject is a connection, a node of this network. Also, if a node of this school system is gangrenous and that curative measures are not taken, a contagion of the other nodes of this mesh could develop.

## V. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, it is important to remember that exam fraud also concerns teachers, the staff of education and members of the administration in addition to students who are usually quoted. However, these three actors are the guarantors of the socialization of the child at school. Their role in the transformation of the pupil into a citizen being notorious, the revelation of their active implication in the fraud in the examinations, poses a real problem of ethics (Rey, 2008), of forfeiture of the moral values and especially a lack of educational model in the Ivorian education system. Therefore, would it not be fair to conclude on the basis of the theory of imitation that the maladjustment of students in the Ivorian education system is a reflection of the maladjustment of this institution which struggles to confront the rules probity in evaluation?

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