

SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION OF YOUNG GRADUATES IN BENIN: STRATEGIC TRAINING / QUALIFICATION CHOICES FOR A DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION MARKED BY DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL (2000/2010)

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Abstract: *The problem of unemployment and the difficulties of socio-professional integration of graduates of higher education in Benin led us to carry out this reliable research: "The socio-professional integration of young graduates in Benin: strategic choices of training / qualification towards research of development". The objective being to contribute to a better professional integration of young graduates in Benin, we started from the assumptions according to which: the choice of training of the students has a link with the difficulties of socio-professional integration which they experience; the education system does not train in a logic of professional integration. The methodology used is documentary research, questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. After our investigations we realized that there is no learner orientation policy that takes into account the qualification needs existing on the job market. Also, many students follow a training which does not take into account neither their aspirations nor their capacities. All this constitutes an obstacle to their socio-professional integration. To remedy this problem, it is important for the State to establish an educational policy that meets the country's needs in terms of managerial qualifications to boost the country's development.*

Key Words: *education, qualification, integration, development.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

In most countries of the world and Africa in particular, the issue of unemployment and youth employment has continued to hit the headlines, especially following the economic crisis of the 1980s, which shook and upset the growth forecasts around the world. This issue, in particular that of the socio-professional integration of higher education graduates, remains one of the most worrying issues of the day in Benin. Several diagnoses made it possible to elucidate some of the foundations, including the thorny issue of the mismatch between training offers and the jobs available on the labor market. This seems to be an inadequacy of the education system because the training offered does not meet the requirements of the job market. The other situation is also the growing number of graduate students who pour into the job market every year, which continues to shrink.

Furthermore, the education system is organized in such a way that each pupil / student who wishes to continue his studies must choose one from the existing training; which will at the same time determine his future professional trajectory. Unfortunately, it is clear that students do not seek information or benefit from any pedagogical support that can help them make a judicious choice of training according to their aspirations, predispositions and any existing professional opportunities.

One of the conditions for choosing a training option or a professional project remains knowledge of the opportunities offered. However, many young people in Benin are not sufficiently informed of the specific training opportunities that they can access after obtaining the baccalaureate.

Numerous inconsistencies and mismatches can be observed between the training courses of the students and their series of studies in secondary school, (ERNWACA, 2011). This state of affairs causes many failures at the end of academic years; which makes professional integration more difficult, and by extension, jeopardizes the socioeconomic development of our country since it is its future leaders, managers and development agents who are thus in difficulty of integration.

Thus, we wondered how the choices of training / qualifications are made by young people and what education should be promoted for the harmonious development of our country?

To find answers to its concerns, we conducted an analysis of the literature relating to questions of socio-professional integration, choice of training as well as the relationship between education and development. Indeed, according to our bibliographic searches, we found that professional integration is a relatively recent notion that appeared in the 1970s (RABAH, 2002). Its genesis attributed to it a situation of shrinking labor market, a situation in which young people leaving the education system would encounter more and more difficulties in finding a job.

Traditionally, socio-professional integration is considered to be the successful transition between school training and working life. This conception assumes that, in a short period of time, people with a diploma have access to permanent, full-time employment in relation to their field of study. The idea is therefore to consider integration as a rational process of job search. In this case, integration begins when people devote their time to looking for a job and ends when they hold a job that suits their training and their personal life plan (Trottier, 1995).

Thus, Vernières (1997) affirms that integration is a complex process given its multifaceted aspects affecting both the fields of education, labor markets and training systems. In addition, he adds that the population that is in a situation of integration at a given period is most often young and has just left the school system. The integration process, due to its multidimensional aspect, involves several actors whose strategies and individual trajectories for integration are diverse.

On this subject, Roy (1988) suggests the existence of several social factors linked to the socio-professional integration of young people which can hinder their progress. It groups them into two categories, namely the level of socio-economic activity (structural and technological changes, new forms of work, fight against inflation, government programs, etc.) and market regulations (certification of knowledge, primacy seniority, regulation of professional practice, etc.).

In this same perspective, Doray (1995) examines the integration process from the point of view of business demand. It starts from the postulate that the labor market is not only an end or a destination for graduates, but a regulator of access to jobs. Its objective was to show how companies' workforce mobilization practices help to structure the field of professional integration. This process is not first analyzed from the angle of individual trajectories but as a process structured downstream and upstream by educational practices, state intervention and company hiring policies. According to Doray, companies intervene first of all with a view to structuring the training offer, influencing training orientations and objectives as well as the professional socialization process. In addition, recruitment practices have a direct impact on the integration capacities and professional trajectories of graduates.

After this overview on the question of the socio-professional integration of young people, shows the opinions of the authors on the part of the choice of training or guidance in this process. The choice of training is a decisive step because it actually traces the trajectory that the young person must follow not only for his school or academic course but also and above all for his socio-professional integration. According to Vincens (1981), there is a strong link between the notion of orientation and that of "life project". For him, the life project begins during the educational system with the choice of training. Continuing studies, repeating a year, dropping out of school are the first steps in a more or less long journey towards employment. It is then gradually built up through the first professional experiences.

Indeed, the notion of guidance covers three meanings: a first meaning which highlights the collection of information on training courses and professions, a second which takes into account assistance in the development of a professional project or training staff and a third meaning which refers to assignment in a particular training course.

But it is regrettable that too often the question of orientation is reduced to this last component. (Dakpo, Yarou and Flenon, 2011)

In this momentum, Giret, in 2000, thinks that "the end of compulsory education, the date when the young person has the possibility of making a choice in his school curriculum, the moment when the training project turns into a professional project, are so much information that can be used to understand the real process of integration".

Thus, orientation places the individual at the center as the actor and main responsible for his own choice of training. This is what UNESCO revealed in a report on the question in 1970: "Guidance consists (...) of enabling the individual to become aware of his personal characteristics and to develop them with a view to choosing of his studies and his professional activities in all the conjunctures of his existence with the joint concern to serve the development of the company and the blooming of his personality" (UNESCO, 1970). On the other hand, apart from the fact that the choice of training or profession is a personal responsibility of the individual in a situation of guidance, the fact remains that it makes the involvement of the community a necessity. In this regard, guidance can also be understood as "a process of developing and carrying out a personal, professional and training project, which requires personalized support to take stock of one's aspirations and skills and link them to realities of the socioeconomic world. Personalized process, guidance is both "individual approach and collective responsibility (Regional Economic, Social and Environmental Council - Nord Pas-de-Calais, 2009).

From this analysis, it emerges that if guidance should enable learners to develop intellectual and professional capacities and, later, to access a job which suits them, it is also the responsibility of the State, since these the latter will in return have to participate in the development of their society. It is in fact in this logic that we perceive the important role that education plays in the development process of a nation. Thus, there is a strong link between the development of education to be more precise, of the education of the population and of development itself. This is what the economist Galbraith said very succinctly in the magazine *Afrique 2000* in 1994: "There is no educated population in this world that is poor and there is no illiterate population that is not poor". This quote actually shows the relationship between education and the state of populations, that is to say their level of development. Education then helps develop the

productive capacities of individuals by giving them access to new technologies, which increases economic growth. (Baba Moussa, 2000).

If development is inseparable from the economic dimension, it is not enough to ensure a sustainable development of countries either, and also takes into account economic aspects and historical, social, cultural and political aspects.

As a result, Baba Moussa underlines that “education is no longer seen as a simple means of training a qualified workforce to ensure economic growth but rather as a means of training individuals who are socially and culturally integrated into their environment and participating in the choice and implementation of the transformations necessary for their well-being

From the analysis of the reflections of the various authors mentioned above, we have based the explanation of the notion of socio-professional integration on two explanatory theories such as the theory of the representation of the future and that of the “job search”.

Developed by Ginsberg (1951); Nuttin (1980); Guichard (1993); Evola (1996, 2005) and Guichard and Huteau (2007), the theory of representation in the future is one of the theories best suited to describe the professional choices of adolescents and to serve for educational and socio-professional guidance. In Benin, especially in high schools and general education colleges, adolescents are inevitably confronted with the choice of courses (series), from the third grade. This choice of courses has an immediate impact on their university orientation and on their professional training. Aware of the logical link that exists between the training received and the profession exercised, it can be said that the choice of training is made in projection of a future profession to which the young person aspires. Consequently, choosing a course or training probably corresponds to choosing a profession; that is why we analyze the choice of training young people by the theory of the representation of the future.

The representation of the future is an important modality in the relationship that an individual, and particularly an adolescent, has with his future. The representation of becoming assumes that the adolescent projects himself into social time, to anticipate his future social status, as well as the socio-professional future that he would like to have. The theorists of the representation of the future highlight the methods of formation of projects for the future among adolescents. According to Guichard, (1993: 16), the representation of the future covers both in pedagogy and in sociology, in social or cognitive psychology, all the projects for the future that are established "on a future that wishes to achieve, that is to say on a set of representations of what is not yet there, but which one considers more desirable than what one perceives of the present situation. The project is therefore also necessarily based on representations of this present that it is surely a question of going beyond". Guinsberg (1951) described the maturation of career choice according to a process he established in several stages. According to him, the professional choice process starts from the stage of fanciful choices (6-7 years and 7-11 years) passing through the stage of provisional choices (11 to 18 years) and ends with the stage of realistic choices (after the previous one). . The theory of job search or job search was developed by G. Stigler (1960), it is for the job seeker to get the perfect information on potential jobs in a labor market in pure competition and perfect. This information relates to salaries, jobs, qualifications, working conditions, etc. The problem posed in this research allowed us to state the following hypotheses:

- the choice of training for students in relation to the difficulties of socio-professional integration they experience;
- the education system does not train in a logic of socio-professional integration of learners.

2. METHODOLOGY:

To achieve the results obtained at the end of this research, we proceeded methodically. Thus, the methodology adopted can be summarized as follows.

Indeed, it must be said that our study is of a qualitative and quantitative type. The survey population includes: a target population made up of students and another made up of resource persons. Thus, we took into account, on the one hand, students from the University of Abomey-Calavi, in a few schools and faculties, and on the other hand, resource persons consisting mainly of executives responsible for higher education and concerning students and resource persons who were chosen respectively at random and in a reasoned manner.

The size of our sample is 220 for students, whose base number was determined by the Schwart formula, and 20 for the resource persons interviewed. To collect the information, we proceeded by documentary research, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, preceded by a pre-test. Regarding the processing, we did manual analysis and used the Excel 2007 software.

3. ANALISIS AND RESULTS:

The investigative work carried out within the framework of this research allowed us to obtain results whose substance is presented as follows. Indeed, this research has looked somewhat at the education system in order to bring out the opinions of the beneficiaries who are the students as well as the actors who intervene in it. In this sense, we have noted the appreciations of the educational system among students (Cf. figure 1). We note that 77.73% of the respondents

quite appreciate the Beninese education system. 19.55% and 02.72% of respondents have respectively a good appreciation and a mediocre appreciation. On the other hand, none of the respondents find the Beninese education system very good.

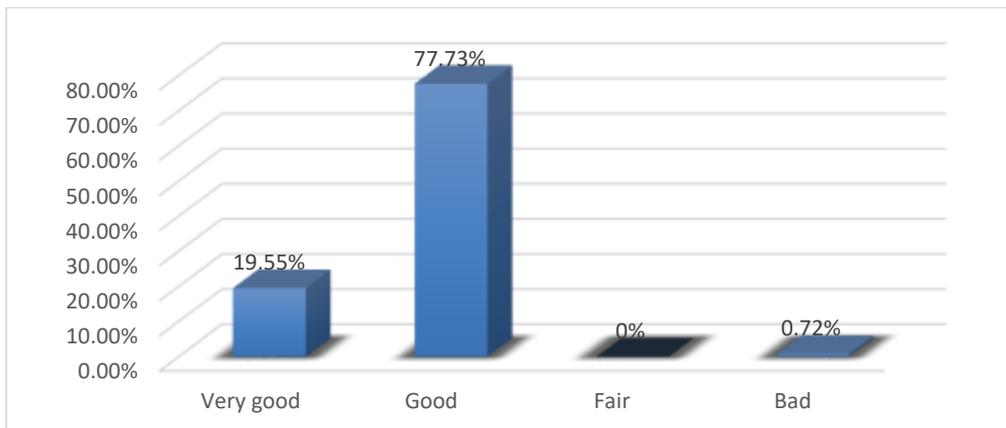


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents according to their assessment of the Beninese education system
Source: Survey data (2013)

In addition to this parameter, we sought to know from the students whether the training they received meets their expectations. And in this regard, we were able to see that 85% of respondents affirmed that the training they receive does not meet their expectations while 15% affirmed the opposite. (See figure 2)

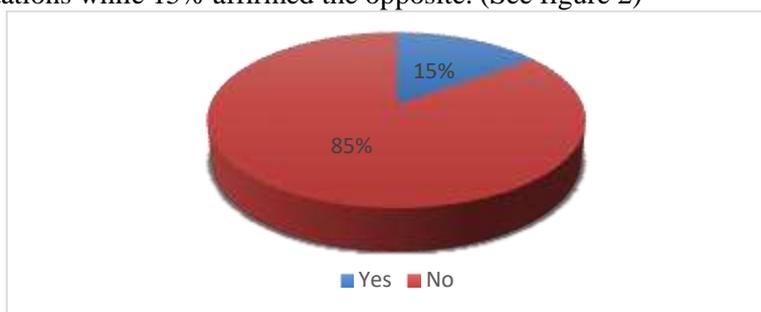


Figure 2: Distribution of respondents according to whether the training received meets their expectations
Source: Survey data (2013)

Then, we sought to know the opinion of the respondents in relation to the fact that the Beninese education system promotes or not the socio-professional integration of graduates (Cf figure 3). We retain that 74.55% of the respondents think that the Beninese education system does not promote the socio-professional integration of graduates while 25.45% expressed a contrary opinion.

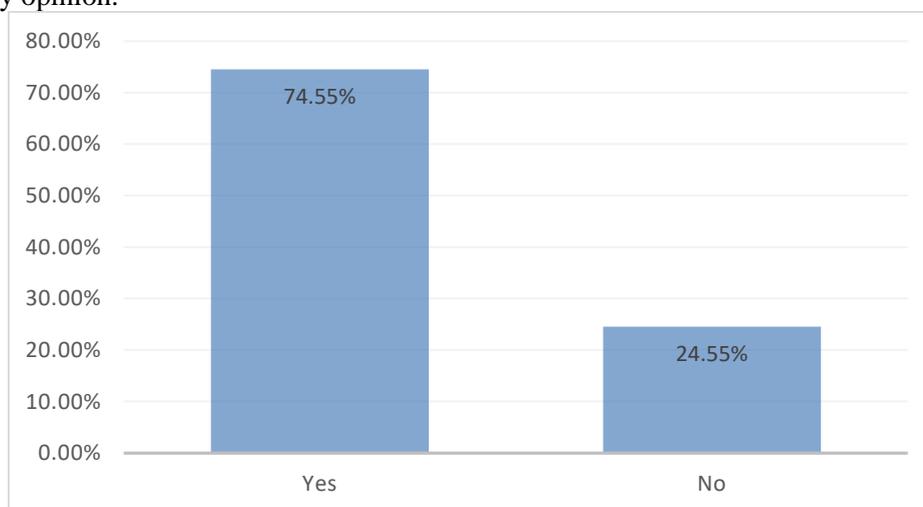


Figure 3: Proportion of respondents in relation to the fact that the Beninese education system does not promote the socio-professional integration of graduates
Source: Survey data (2013)

With regard to the choice of student training, our research shows that several modes contribute to the choice of training among students. In fact, at first glance, 72.27% of the students surveyed affirm that their course was not imposed on them. At the same time, the training course was imposed on 27.73% of these students.

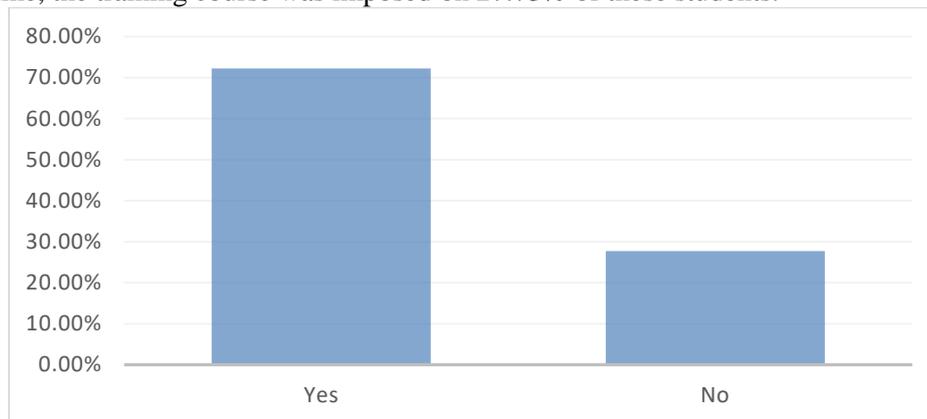


Figure 4: Distribution of respondents according to whether their course of study was imposed on them or not
Source: Survey data (2013)

The previous figure revealed to us that the training course was not imposed on 72.27% of the students surveyed. How do the latter then have the choice of their training? To this question, the respondents mentioned several modes governing the choice of their training (see figure 5). We have thus noticed that the following: nearly 40% of the students made their choice by elimination, 56% made it by intuition and more than 04% chose their field otherwise.

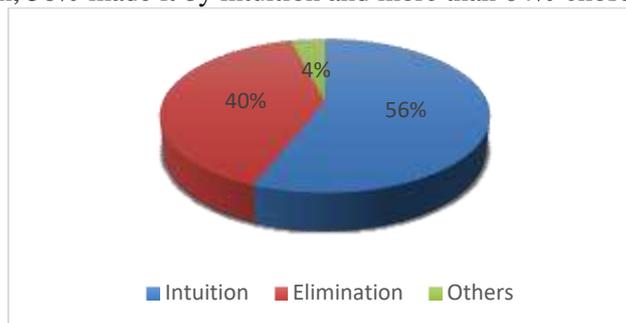


Figure 5: Distribution of respondents according to the method of choosing their training
Source: Survey data (2013)

It sometimes happens that learners, for one reason or another, change course. Thus, of the students who took part in our survey, surveyed, we noticed that 92.27% did not experience a change of course whereas 07.73% of the latter changed course. (See figure 6)

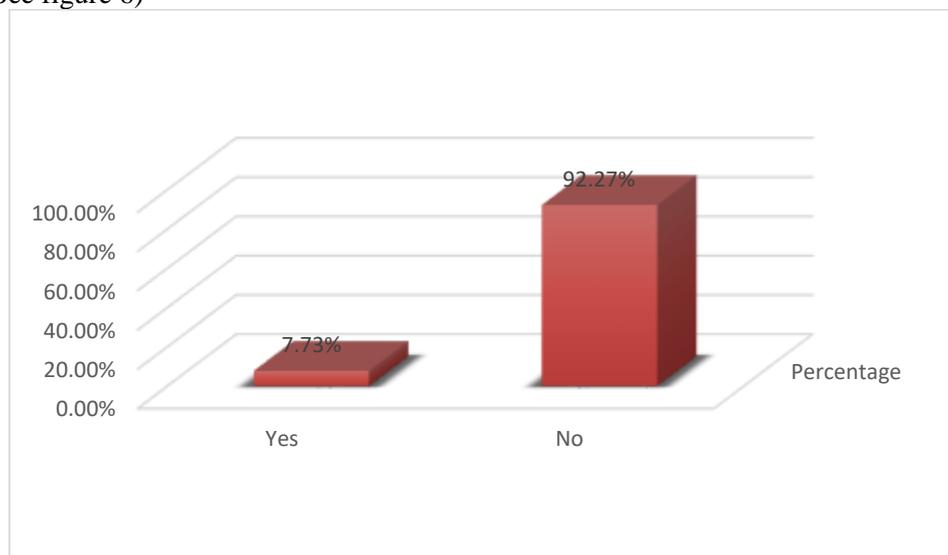


Figure 6: Distribution of respondents according to whether or not they have experienced a change of sector
Source: Survey data (2013)

If the figure above shows us that 07.73% of respondents have experienced a change of course, several reasons explain this state of affairs among learners. Indeed, we notice that of these 07.73%, more than 70% have changed course for repetition reason while 29.40% abandoned their first course due to a lack of interest. (See figure 7).

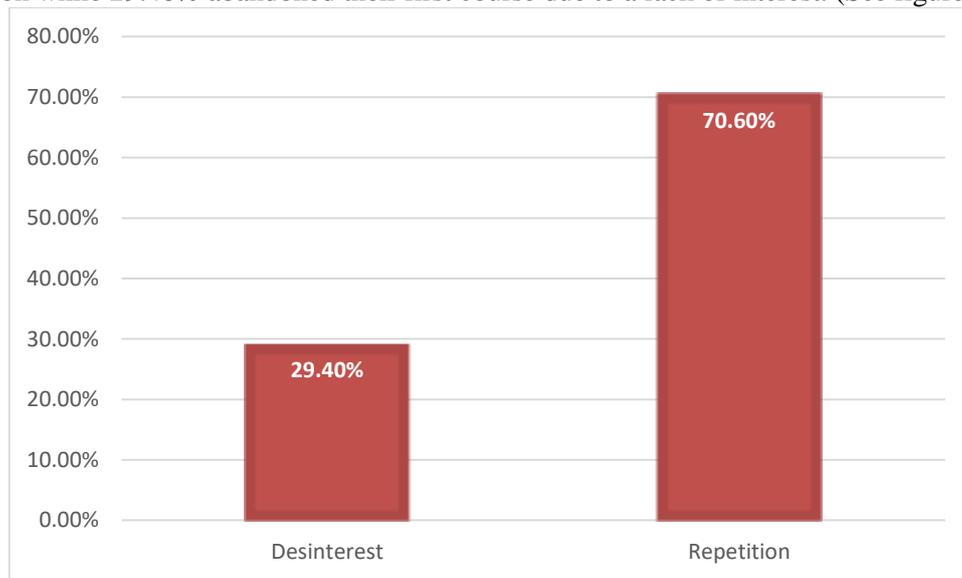


Figure no7: Distribution of respondents according to the reason for their change of sector
 Source: Survey data (2013)

Moreover, by trying to find out whether there is a link between the series of classes in secondary school and the training courses followed at the higher level, we noted that 50.46% of the respondents affirm that there is no link between their secondary and higher education and 49.54% say the opposite (see figure 8).

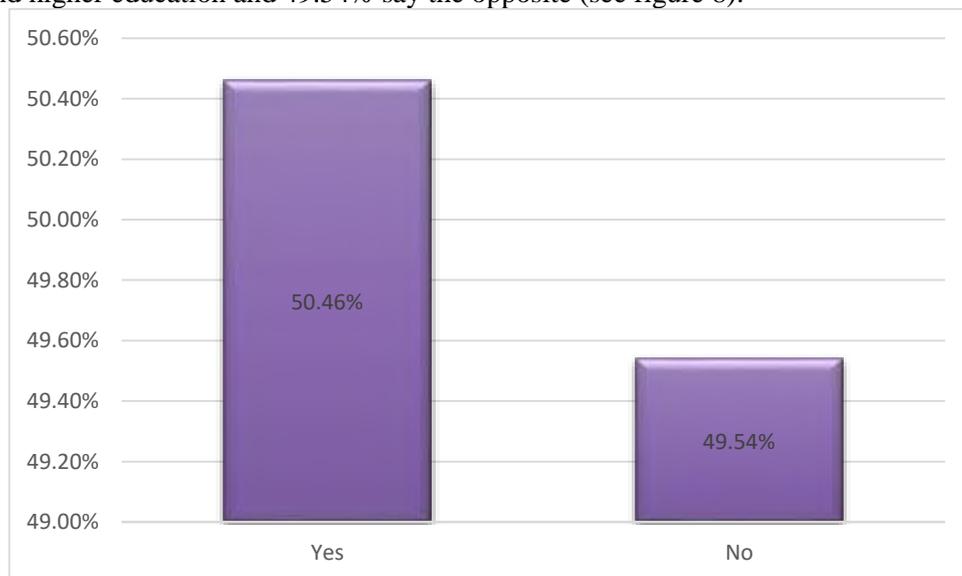


Figure 8: Distribution of respondents according to whether there is a link between their secondary education and their higher education.
 Source: Survey data (2013)

4. DISCUSSION:

The Constitution of December 11, 1990 and the resolutions of the Estates General of Education, expressing the will of the people, affirm that Education is the first priority of Benin. However, despite considerable efforts in terms of quantity and quality, the general performance of the system are far from satisfactory and deserve more and more reflection.

While the objective of education is to equip and provide learners with the necessary means enabling them to act and effectively transform their environment with a view to solving the problems that arise there, the educational system of the Benin is not yet very anchored in this logic. It is a system which is still modeled on a model foreign to the Beninese environment and is struggling to meet the country's current needs. This is what BABA-MOUSSA (2000) underlines

when he asserted that such an observation “is all the more relevant in underdeveloped countries as most of them have inherited Western education systems that they hardly try to adapt to their contextual realities. ”

Such education subject to the appreciation of students, the main subjects of this system at the higher level, shows the type of training offered. Thus, out of all the students questioned, 50% find that the training given is not very theoretical, and nearly 32% find it purely theoretical. Faced with such an observation, it goes without saying that our education system does not offer enough opportunities to learners to put into practice the theoretical knowledge learned. And as long as the training does not give enough time to practice, the students do not get much of it since it is the practice that will serve them the most once in a professional situation. This situation then raises the problem of the non-satisfaction of the students in relation to their expectations. Thus, logically the results of our surveys confirm this state of affairs where 85% of students say that the training they receive does not meet their expectations. This therefore means that the education system puts on the labor market people who will not be competent enough to exercise their profession effectively. Any situation that still poses the problem of their professional integration in this market which is already not easy. Learners thus receive training which a priori is not sure of guaranteeing them a job that they will be able to exercise properly in the long term. This is why the students surveyed within the framework of our research affirm to nearly 75% of their whole that the Beninese education system does not promote the socio-professional integration of graduates.

In fact, it is noticed that unemployment is much more pronounced among educated people, therefore coming from the education system. The EMICOV survey carried out by the Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis (INSAE) in 2010 reveals that the unemployment rate is only 0.3% for people who have not been to school; it grows to 0.8% for people with primary education and changes to 1.4% for those with lower secondary education. In the second cycle of secondary education, the unemployment rate rises a little more to reach 3.4% and has experienced a remarkable increase, reaching 5.8% for people with higher education. Also according to this survey, young people in the 25-34 age group are the most affected by this situation. This clearly proves that young graduates of higher education experience more difficulties in finding employment than others.

In this context where graduates in particular those of higher education are for a large number in difficulties of professional integration, where to find a job for these last recoveries of the luck or the Utopia, one wonders if really the education plays its role in Benin. The obvious answer is no, or at least not correctly. This calls into question the role assigned to education, in particular to education at the higher level, which is "to ensure the development, transmission and dissemination of the knowledge, know-how and knowledge to be necessary for the mastery of human environment and the improvement of living conditions; to ensure the harmonious development of the entire education system and to train competent and competitive senior executives capable of ensuring their own fulfillment and the development of the Nation. ”. There is no point in educating, in training people if their training cannot be useful for the nation or if this education does not give hope for a better tomorrow for the people who receive it. On the contrary, such education creates serious social problems for Benin in particular and constitutes an obstacle to its development. This confirms our hypothesis according to which education in Benin does not form in a logic of development.

In addition, it should be noted that the Beninese education system does not have real structures responsible for helping learners to make their choice of training. Educational policy through the Ten-Year Education Sector Development Plan (PDDSE) which is its technical steering instrument only partially addresses the issue of guidance. This means that the choice of training students is made in various ways, including taxation. 72% of students say that their course was not imposed on them. However, 27% affirmed that their sector was imposed on them; it is a not insignificant proportion and this situation deserves that we attach great importance to it. Indeed these students undergo training that they did not want and this could be a reason for the failure and the change of course that sometimes occurs among students. This is justified by the results of our research. In fact, we noted that nearly 8% of the students surveyed experienced a change of course and the reasons for this change of course are repetition (approximately 71%) and lack of interest (29%). However, it should be noted that more than 92% of the students surveyed did not experience a change of course. This high rate is necessarily related to the 72% to whom their sector has not been imposed. Thus, among these, 56% say they chose their training by elimination and nearly 40% chose their course by intuition. Indeed, if elimination is a mental and intellectual process which supposes that the individual examines the various possibilities which are offered to him in terms of training path, intuition is a more emotional and affective process. Thus, we could deduce that a number of Beninese students use their "heart" (intuition) in the choice of their training course at the university. But as for the choice by elimination, the student must have good information on the courses which are the object of their choice. This method seems to apply only at the higher level whereas the orientation does not start only when it comes to making the choice of training at the university. It's a process that begins in high school. “At the end of the first cycle of secondary school, the learner is confronted for the first time with a choice in the continuation of his academic training” (ERNWACA, 2011). In reality, after obtaining the BEPC, learners must choose their series which determines their secondary studies. Most of the time, orientation is done here on the basis of the marks obtained by the

learners in the different subjects. But the results of our study show that practically the series of the second cycle was imposed on more than 14% of the students while nearly 85% of the whole chose their series themselves.

Education at the secondary level must be linked to that of higher education, which must correspond to the profession envisaged. However, by imposing the series of studies there is a risk that there is no link between these two types of training. But despite the fact that 85% of the students chose their series themselves, we notice that almost 50% of all the students do not make a connection between their higher studies and their secondary studies. Which leads us to say that many students at one level of their course made a bad choice, either at the level of the second cycle in college or at the level of university studies.

The intimate link that exists between the choice of training and the profession envisaged actually shows that socio-professional integration can logically take a hit when the basis (the choice of training) is distorted. This allows us to say, having regard to the problems of orientation noted above, that the choice of training of the students has a link with the difficulties of professional integration which they experience, this confirms our second research hypothesis.

In the same logic, when we refer to law 11 no 2003-17 of 11 November 2003 on the Orientation of National Education in the Republic of Benin rectified by law no 2005-33 of 06 October 2005, it is said that the school must offer everyone the possibility of understanding the modern world and transforming the environment starting from national cultural values, endogenous knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills and universal scientific heritage. It must allow education and permanent training at all levels, and promote specializations through judicious guidance which takes into account individual capacities and the needs of the Nation. It emerges that the Beninese education system must allow that there is a good orientation of the learners because it will have to take great account of the individual capacities of the latter and must be done according to the needs of the country. But it goes without saying, unfortunately, that this is not the case in practice, first of all because the education system itself does not have real structures or effective means of orienting students. All of this is done roughly and inappropriately. Currently, the practice in guidance consists of matching the marks obtained in the Baccalaureate to existing training or courses. The fact is that this method does not take into account the educational background of the students and even less their personal aspirations in relation to the profession they wish to exercise. This means that learners follow training courses which they do not know the usefulness a priori, they are passive and leave graduates without a compass and do not know where and what to fit. Suddenly they are unemployed and unemployed.

Thus, the problem of socio-professional integration of graduates, orientation or choice of training for students remains unresolved. But on closer inspection, the difficulties of socio-professional integration of graduates also lie much more in the lack of framing and the non-definition of Benin's economic needs. It is in reality according to the needs of the country that we must orient education in general and know what are the qualifications and types of profiles that the country needs to face the development challenges. In this logic, the education system will be able to play its role effectively by providing the nation with executives of certain utility, competent and capable of transforming their environment in the direction of solving the problems that are theirs. An education system organized in this way would solve the problems of mismatch between training and employment and, by extension, those linked to the professional integration of graduates and unemployment.

5. CONCLUSION:

Our research focused on the difficulties experienced by higher education graduates in relation to their socio-professional integration, with particular emphasis on their choice of training. We also made an analysis of the Beninese education system while making the link with development. At the end of the research, we noticed that the Beninese education system has a part in the integration problems faced by graduates. In fact, the training given at school is impractical and this calls into question the competence and effectiveness of the products that come out on the job market. Many students follow a course that does not take into account either their aspirations or their abilities. In this, there is no link between secondary studies and those of higher education for many students. The reason is that the education system does not implement effective means of orienting learners to the various existing training courses. The method which is used for the orientation of the learners is the correspondence which is made between the marks and the existing courses or training. This method is adopted at the two levels where the orientation of learners is necessary in Benin, that is to say after obtaining the BEPC and the Baccalaureate. It should also be added that, even if the choice of training is above all personal, many students choose their course intuitively without thinking beforehand. All this, coupled with the fact that education in Benin, which is not adapted to our socioeconomic context and that the training given is also not in line with the qualification needs expressed on the labor market, constitutes a hindrance to the socio-professional integration of graduates.

In such a dynamic the country is exposed to major social problems, including unemployment with its corollaries of development problems. If the trained managers who have to work for development do not have jobs, it is quite clear that development cannot be a reality.

In any case, there is no longer any need to demonstrate that the development of a nation necessarily involves education. Indeed, by emphasizing the importance of education for all countries, we must understand the preponderant role played by men because it is they who are the architects of all progress and all economic development. If men are competent and competitive, it is education which is the basis for it, since it is this which trains them. Hence the need for an effective education capable of training quality men by providing them with the necessary means that can enable them to contribute effectively to the development of their country.

It would be beneficial for the nation if the government and the authorities in charge of education in general take the measure of the situation of the insertion of graduates and the measures which are necessary so as to take adequate actions in order to remedy to this problem. However, taking into account the suggestions made in the course of this work would be of great help in solving this problem.

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