

PERCEPTION OF ANTI-VALUES BY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN MUENE-DITU

NGOYI MUAMBA JEAN-BAPTISTE

PhD student at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
University of Kisangani

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how schoolteachers in Mwene-Ditu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, perceive the presence of counter-values in their professional environment. Based on a survey of 60 teachers from various educational institutions, the findings highlight a strong awareness of issues such as corruption, cheating, favoritism, and impunity. These behaviors are perceived as consequences of poor working conditions and weak institutional oversight. Teachers' attitudes range from resignation and opposition to adaptation and indifference. The study calls for a renewed ethical commitment within the Congolese education system.

Keywords: Perception – Counter-values – Teachers – Education – Mwene-Ditu – Democratic Republic of the Congo

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In all societies, education plays a central role in human development and the transmission of fundamental values. According to Piaget (1932), Freire (1974) and Durkheim (1922), the school is not only a place of learning, but also a space for ethical, civic and social training. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, this mission is compromised by the infiltration of anti-values – such as corruption, cheating, impunity and favoritism – into the education system.

Several authors (Mabiala (2002), Tshisekedi wa Mulumba (2006), Kapanga (2010), Tshibangu Tshishiku (2008), Kitenge Yezu (2014) have denounced the emergence of an "inverted ethic" in Congolese society, where deviant practices are often justified by socio-economic difficulties. The school, which is supposed to be a model of probity, is no exception to this drift and sometimes becomes a space for the reproduction of social failings. In this context, the figure of the teacher, prey to precarious conditions, finds himself at the heart of a dilemma between ethical demands and daily survival.

Despite the numerous studies on forms of anti-values in Congolese schools, few have been interested in how teachers themselves perceive them. However, as Moscovici's theory of social representations (1961) points out, it is through these perceptions that behaviors are constructed. Representations shape tolerance or rejection of deviant practices, thus influencing the school environment.

It is in this context that the present study, conducted in the town of Mwene-Ditu, an important educational centre in the province of Lomami, is part of this study. It aims to understand how teachers perceive anti-values in their professional environment and to analyse the implications

of these perceptions on their moral posture and the quality of education. The approach mobilizes in particular Bandura's (1986) theory of social learning, according to which any transformation of behavior requires an evolution of internal representations.

This research aims to provide an in-depth diagnosis, to contribute to the ethical reflection on Congolese schools and to propose avenues for reform for an education based on shared values.

The general hypothesis suggests that teachers in the city of Muene-ditu have a certain perception of the anti-values that are conveyed in different schools.

Specifically:

- Teachers have a general knowledge of the phenomenon of anti-values;
- They know how to present the explanatory factors of anti-values;
- They have attitudes and reactions of resignation in the face of anti-values;
- They know how to justify the various practices relating to anti-values.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The present study is part of a descriptive and analytical approach, aiming to explore the representations that teachers in the city of Mwene-Ditu have of the anti-values observed in their professional environment. It is based on a combination of methodological tools from the social sciences, and more specifically from social psychology, to capture perceptions, attitudes and discourses around this issue.

2.1 Type of research

This is qualitative research with a descriptive purpose, supported by quantitative elements. This choice is based on the fact that social perceptions and representations cannot be fully understood without a contextual and subjective understanding of the lived experiences of individuals (Blanchet & Gotman, 1992). The study thus relates to psychosocial survey methods, as described by Auport (1967) and Krech (1972), in that it seeks to understand how the behaviours and attitudes of individuals are influenced by their social, institutional and symbolic environment.

2.2 Target population

The target population of this study is primary, secondary and kindergarten teachers in the town of Mwene-Ditu, located in the province of Lomami, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This population is divided into two main categories: standing teachers (those who actually teach classes) and sitting teachers (those assigned to administrative or pedagogical supervision tasks within the offices of the provincial education division).

According to the data available at the Muene-Ditu Lomami 2 subdivision, the total number of teachers in the city is estimated at 1,287, including 1,137 standing teachers and 150 sitting teachers. This mixed population, in terms of gender, age and professional responsibilities, constitutes a rich field for the study of the various perceptions related to anti-values.

2.3 Sampling

Given the relatively large size of the population, the study used proportional stratified random sampling to ensure that the different categories of teachers were representative. This method consists of dividing the population into homogeneous strata (standing teachers and sitting teachers) and then randomly drawing subjects from each stratum in proportion to their respective weight in the overall population (Delandshere, 1999).

Table 1: Presentation of the general sample

Teacher Types Gender	Sitting % Standing % Total %					
	Female	2	28,5	13	24,5	14
Male	5	71,5	40	75,5	45	76,23
Total	7	100	53	100	59	100

The total sample is composed of 60 teachers, distributed as follows:

- 53 teachers standing, including 40 men and 13 women,
- 7 seated teachers, 5 of whom are men and 2 women.

This division respects statistical weighting and provides a balanced overview of perceptions within the teaching staff.

2.4 Data Collection Methods

To better understand the social perceptions of anti-values among teachers in the city of Mwene-Ditu, a questionnaire survey was chosen as an approach method (Lamoureux 2006). According to Quivy and Van Campenhoudt (2013, p. 167), this method consists of submitting a series of closed or open-ended questions to a representative set of respondents, concerning their opinions, attitudes, expectations, knowledge or perception.

Theme	Questions	Number
Knowledge of anti-values and their forms	1,2,3	3
Explanatory factor for anti-values	4	1
Attitudes and reactions	5,6,7,8	4
Anti-Value Practices	9,10,11,12	4
Consequences related to anti-values	13	1
Total		13

Table 2: Specification of items by theme

2.5 Data processing and analysis

The quantitative data from the questionnaires were encoded in manual processing tables and then analysed using simple descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages). Qualitative data, particularly from open-ended questions and interviews, were subjected to thematic analysis, following the principles of content analysis (Bardin, 2013). This dual approach has made it possible to bring out the dominant perceptions, the points of divergence, and the recurrent social representations around anti-values.

3.0 PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The analysis of the data collected from the 60 teachers interviewed in Mwene-Ditu made it possible to identify several major findings on the perception of anti-values in schools. The results are presented here according to several axes: the recognition of anti-values, the types of anti-values identified, the explanatory factors evoked, the attitudes of teachers, as well as the shared responsibilities and educational consequences observed.

3.1 General recognition of the phenomenon

Table 3: General recognition of the phenomenon

Teaching	Not	%	Yes	%	Total	%
Standing	3	5	52	86,6	55	91,6
Axles	2	3,3	3	5	5	8,3
Total	5	8,3	55	91,6	60	100

To the question of whether anti-values are present in the local education system, almost unanimously (91.6%, or 55 out of 60 teachers) answers in the affirmative. This broad recognition shows that the phenomenon is neither marginal nor ignored, but well perceived as a daily reality. This corroborates the findings of Tshibangu (2008), according to which teachers are fully aware of the degradation of values in the school system. This high level of recognition suggests that anti-values are not seen as isolated incidents, but as a structural component of the school environment, which fully justifies the interest in their social representations in the present study.

3.2 Forms of anti-values identified

Table 4: Forms of anti-values

Type of antivalue	Percentage of citations
Organized cheating during evaluations	90%
Corruption (buying points, exams, etc.)	85%
Nepotism / favoritism	76,6%
Unjustified absence of teachers	71,6%
Misappropriation of school fees	68,3%

Sale of Taxed School Items	53,3%
Impunity for serious misconduct	48,3%
Disrespect for students	41,6%

The table shows that the anti-values most cited by teachers are cheating (90%), corruption (85%) and favouritism (76.6%), which reflects a strong alteration in the principle of academic merit. These practices, rooted in evaluations and promotions, directly affect the credibility of the education system. The frequency of unjustified absences (71.6%) and the misappropriation of school fees (68.3%) indicates that teachers themselves are not spared from this dynamic, which calls into question professional responsibility. Finally, practices such as the forced sale of objects and the lack of respect for students confirm the existence of a weakened school climate. These results suggest a normalization of anti-values, perceived as systemic rather than punctual.

3.3 Explanatory factors mentioned by teachers

Sources	Teachers					
	Standing %	Sitting %	Total %	Standing %	Sitting %	Total %
Students	10	34,5	10	34,2	20	33,3
Parents	4	13,7	1	3,5	5	8,33
School authorities	1	3,5	7	22,5	8	13,3
The Government	3	10,4	3	10,1	6	10
Teachers	8	27,6	6	19,3	14	23,3
The ambient society	3	10,4	4	13,7	7	11,6
Total	29	100	31	100	60	100

Table 3 presents the distribution of the sources of anti-values as perceived by teachers. Pupils are the most frequently appointed 33.3%, followed by teachers themselves 23.3%, school authorities 13.3%, the surrounding society 11.6%, the government 10%, and finally parents 8.33%. These results reflect a shared perception of responsibilities, where teachers recognize their own involvement in the propagation of anti-values, while emphasizing the influence of students and the overall social context. The diversity of the sources cited suggests that anti-values are perceived as a systemic phenomenon, rooted in all educational and social interactions.

These data suggest that teachers perceive themselves not only as responsible, but also as victims of a dysfunctional system, where anti-values are structured by a degraded economic and institutional context. This confirms the analysis of Mabilia (2002), who sees anti-values as strategies for adapting to a hostile environment, and is in line with Kapanga's (2010) observations on the logic of institutionalized resourcefulness.

3.4 Attitudes and reactions to anti-values

Table 6: Teachers' attitudes towards anti-values

Reported attitudes	Value	Percentage
Resignation to the system	20	33,3 %
Objection and denunciation	16	26,6 %
Forced participation	13	21,6 %
Indifference or detachment	11	18,3 %

This table highlights the diversity of attitudes adopted by teachers towards anti-values. A third of respondents (33.3%) say they are resigned to the system, illustrating a form of passive acceptance or discouragement. Others, 26.6%, say they actively oppose deviant practices, reflecting a desire for ethical resistance. On the other hand, 21.6% acknowledge a forced participation, revealing a submission to the context or institutional pressure. Finally, 18.3% display an attitude of indifference or detachment, which may indicate moral disengagement.

These results reveal a heterogeneity of ethical positions within the teaching profession, ranging from individual resistance to collective resignation, including forms of conscious compromise. This illustrates Jean-Claude Abric's (2001) idea that social representations influence behaviour in different ways, sometimes in the sense of acceptance, sometimes in the direction of resistance. This variety of attitudes thus underlines the complexity of the relationship to anti-values in a weakened professional environment.

3.5 The practices of the anti-values observed

Table 7: Anti-values observed among teachers themselves

Categories of practices	Standing %	Sitting %	Total %
Fake diplomas, coining points, drunkenness	5	15,4	3 11,2 8 13,3
Debauchery, bribery, foul language, favoritism	18	54,6	16 59,2 34 56,6
Non-compliance with directives, influence peddling, impunity	10	30	8 29,6 18 30,1
Total	33	100	27 100 60 100

The table reveals that the practices most attributed to teachers are: debauchery, corruption, foul language and favoritism 56.6%, followed by non-compliance with directives, influence peddling and impunity 30.1%. 13.3% of teachers are also accused of fake diplomas, coining points or drunkenness. These results suggest that some teachers actively participate in the dynamics of anti-values, harming their own credibility and the moral role they should embody.

Table 8: Anti-values imputed to school administrators

Alleged conduct	Standing %	Sitting %	Total %
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Fake diplomas, drunkenness	8	25,8	9	31,2	17	28,4
Impunity, influence peddling, corruption	16	51,6	14	48,2	30	50
Tribalism, discrimination, incompetence	7	22,6	6	20,6	13	21,6
Total	31	100	29	100	60	100

According to the data, school administrators are mostly accused of accountability, influence peddling and corruption 50%, followed by accusations of fake diplomas and drunkenness 28.4%, then tribalism, discrimination and incompetence 21.6%. These figures underscore the perception of failing school leadership, accused of promoting or tolerating practices that weaken the legitimacy and ethics of educational governance.

Table 9: Anti-values assigned to students

Alleged conduct	Standing %	Sitting %	Total %	Standing %	Sitting %	Total %
Corruption, cheating and prostitution	12	25,8	11	31,2	23	28,4
Impunity, influence peddling, corruption, cheating	15	51,6	15	48,2	30	50
Violent and immoral behaviour	4	22,6	3	20,6	7	21,6
Total	31	100	29	100	60	100

The most cited anti-value behaviours among pupils are: delinquency, drugs and school vagrancy 50%, followed by corruption, cheating and prostitution 28.4%, then drunkenness, violence and pornography 21.6%. This reveals a youth exposed to multiple deviant practices, often perceived as a reflection of the overall dysfunction of the education system and negative social influences.

Table 10: Parental Failures and State Responsibilities

Categories	Standing %	Sitting %	Total %	Standing %	Sitting %	Total %
Lack of educational follow-up (parents)	14	21,5	13	23,6	27	22,5
Educational Neglect (Parents)	10	15,3	9	16,3	19	15,8
Financial crisis, irresponsibility (parents)	8	12,3	6	10,9	14	11,6
Lack of supervision (State)	17	26,1	13	23,6	30	25
Impunity, favouritism, political influence	16	24,6	14	25,5	30	25
Total	65	100	55	100	120	100

The two most reported breaches are the lack of government supervision (25%) and accountability, favouritism and political influence (25%). On the parents' side, the lack of educational follow-up 22.5%, carelessness 15.8% and the financial crisis or irresponsibility 11.6% are the most frequently mentioned. These results show that the crisis of anti-values is perceived as collective and systemic, involving both families and public authorities.

3.6 Consequences of anti-values in the school environment

Table 11: Consequences of anti-values

Effects identified	Number of respondents	Percentage
Moral crisis and the decline of the education system	11	18,3
Drop in level and indiscipline	9	15
Deficiencies in childcare facilities	4	6,6
Administrative mistrust and professional inadequacy	10	16
Devaluing the teaching function	12	20
Staff instability	14	23,3
Total	60	100

The most frequently cited effects are the instability of the teaching staff (18.3%) and the devaluation of the teaching function (20%), followed by the moral crisis of the education system (18.3%), administrative mistrust and professional inadequacy (16%), the decline in standards and indiscipline (15%), and finally the deficiency of childcare facilities (6.6%). These data confirm the profound and multifaceted impact of anti-values on the school environment, both on a human and organizational level.

In summary, the perception of anti-values among the teachers of Mwene-Ditu is marked by a massive recognition of the phenomenon, a precise identification of its manifestations, a critical analysis of its structural causes, but also a diversity of individual attitudes. These observations call for a nuanced reading of the role of teachers: they are not only bearers of deviant practices, but also lucid actors in a system that they suffer, interpret and sometimes contest.

4.0 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The results of this research reveal a worrying reality: anti-values are widely recognized, identified and experienced as an integrated component of the daily functioning of schools in Mwene-Ditu. This section offers a critical discussion, successively analyzing the data presented in the tables in the previous part.

The main finding from the first table is that 91.6% of teachers (55 out of 60) recognise the existence of anti-values in their professional environment. This high rate reflects an acute collective awareness of the phenomenon, which goes beyond the stage of a simple rumour or a one-off exception. Far from being in denial, the teachers interviewed say they see, live or suffer practices that undermine the moral foundations of the education system. This observation reinforces the seriousness of the situation, because it implies that deviant behaviors persist despite a generalized recognition of their harmfulness. As Tshibangu Tshishiku (2008) points out, this lucidity is not always enough to curb abuses, especially when they are perceived as systemic.

The second table, on the forms of anti-values most cited, shows that the most denounced practices are organized cheating during evaluations (90%), corruption including the purchase of points or exams (85%), and favoritism or nepotism (76.6%). These elements, linked to the

very process of evaluation and academic progression, directly affect the equity and meritocracy at the heart of the educational mission. The high frequency of unjustified teacher absences (71.6%) and the misappropriation of school fees (68.3%) also indicates that some teachers are themselves guilty of practices that they condemn, thus creating a dissonance between the ethical standards professed and actual behaviour. This trivialization of deviant practices, as Kapanga (2010) has pointed out, reflects a form of institutional culture of "arrangement", often justified by social and professional constraints. Even practices such as the forced sale of school items (53.3%) or insults and disrespect towards students (41.6%) are not marginal, which highlights a climate of instability and deregulation in educational relationships.

The next aspect, concerning the sources of anti-values, illustrates the teachers' perception of the shared responsibilities in the proliferation of the phenomenon. Of the 60 respondents, 20 point to students as the main sources, 14 to the teachers themselves, 8 to the school authorities, 7 to the surrounding society, 6 to the government and 5 to the parents. This distribution reflects a systemic vision of the moral crisis, in which everyone occupies a place in a chain of compromise. The fact that teachers include themselves among the responsible actors reflects a certain intellectual honesty, but also a form of resignation or powerlessness in the face of a system perceived as morally inverted, where anti-values have become survival strategies, as Mabila (2002) maintains.

With regard to the attitudes adopted by teachers towards anti-values (fourth table), there is a diversity of positions: 33.3% (i.e. 20 teachers) say they are resigned, 26.6% (16 teachers) actively oppose anti-values, 21.6% (13 teachers) admit to participating in them sometimes under duress, and 18.3% (11 teachers) say they are indifferent. This heterogeneity reflects a complex moral reality, where individual choices are strongly influenced by context. Abric (2001), through his theory of social representations, shows that individuals do not act solely according to objective norms, but according to the way in which they perceive, interpret and prioritize these norms in their social environment. Thus, the feeling of powerlessness, the lack of institutional support or peer pressure can push a teacher to adopt behaviours that he or she reapproves of in theory.

The analysis of Tables 5, 6 and 7, which deal respectively with the behaviours of teachers, managers and students, reveals that deviant practices are widely distributed at all levels of the school institution. Teachers denounce serious facts such as debauchery, corruption, favoritism (36.8%), but also non-compliance with directives or influence peddling (30.1%). As for managers, they are strongly accused of corruption and influence peddling 30%, followed by the issuance of false diplomas and drunkenness 28.4%, and finally tribalism and incompetence 21.6%. Students, for their part, are reported for their delinquency, drug use or school vagrancy 50%, for cheating, corruption or prostitution 28.4%, and for violent or immoral behavior 21.6%. These observations reinforce the idea that schools are both victims and vectors of anti-values. As Moscovici (1961) mentions, the social representations that students construct for themselves are influenced by the models they are confronted with. An institution where norms are systematically circumvented trains individuals who internalize these deviations as acceptable social norms.

Finally, the last tables, relating to the failings of parents, the responsibilities of the State and the consequences of anti-values, make it possible to complete the diagnosis. Of the parents,

22.5% of teachers mention the lack of educational follow-up, 15.8% of teachers mention carelessness and 11.6% denounce irresponsibility linked to the financial crisis. For the State, 26% of teachers point to a lack of supervision, 25% to impunity and political influence or favouritism. These cumulative failures lead to serious effects according to teachers: staff instability 23.3%, devaluation of the profession 20%, moral crisis of the system 18.9%, drop in school level 15%, and administrative mistrust 16%. And 6% mistrust of reception treatments. These consequences confirm that anti-values are not isolated slip-ups, but symptoms of a globally weakened system, as Tshisekedi (2006) points out when he refers to the "inverted ethics" that prevail in many Congolese institutions.

In short, the analysis highlights a deep and multidimensional moral crisis that runs through education in Mwene-Ditu. Teachers, fully aware of the anti-values that undermine their professional environment, are nevertheless limited in their reactions by a global context that is not conducive to ethics. Faced with this reality, solutions cannot be reduced to sanctions or regulations. It is imperative to undertake a structural reform, focused on restoring trust, enhancing the role of teachers, collective responsibility and the direct involvement of educational actors in the redefinition of the moral norms of schools.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The present study, which focuses on the perception of anti-values by teachers in the city of Mwene-Ditu, highlights a worrying but revealing reality of the current functioning of the Congolese education system. It shows that anti-values – such as corruption, cheating, favoritism, complacency or impunity – are not only known to teachers, but that they are widely recognized, identified, named and analyzed by those who face them on a daily basis.

The results reveal that teachers are neither naïve nor indifferent to the ethical deviance that affects their professional environment. On the contrary, they show a critical lucidity, while expressing a feeling of powerlessness, even resignation, in the face of a system that they perceive as failing overall. The causes they invoke – weak institutional control, poverty, devaluation of the profession, loss of moral reference points in society – are all systemic factors that feed and maintain the trivialization of anti-values in schools.

Moreover, the diversity of attitudes observed (resistance, resignation, adaptation, indifference) illustrates the psychological and ethical complexity of teacher positioning. This confirms Moscovici's theories on social representations, Abric's theories on social attitude and behavior, and Bandura's theories on moral disengagement. Teachers do not all react in the same way: some denounce, others adapt, others remain silent. But all, to varying degrees, integrate these practices into their daily professional lives, which makes transformation all the more difficult without deep and lasting support.

In short, the fight against anti-values in the Congolese education system cannot be limited to one-off measures or moralizing speeches. It must be part of a dynamic of ethical and institutional reconstruction, where teachers are recognized, trained, supported and empowered. Restoring school ethics involves:

- An upgrade of the status of the teacher,
- Rigorous and impartial supervision,

- A policy of ethical awareness from the initial training,
- And an effective involvement of teachers in the definition of professional standards.

It is only at this price that the school will be able to regain its primary function: that of forming not only educated minds, but also enlightened consciences, capable of rebuilding a society based on the values of justice, responsibility, solidarity and truth.

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