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## Living Conditions, Resilience and Academic Performance of Ivorian Students Girls in the Third Year.

**Jean-Jaurès YOBOUA**

Université Félix Houphouët Boigny Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, Department of Psychology,

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**ABSTRACT:** The present study aims to study the relationship between living conditions, resilience and academic performance among students in the 3rd grade of the "Collège des Jeunes Filles de Bouaké". A sample of 132 students from the 3rd grade, all female and between the ages of 13 and 16, completed a questionnaire, the Inventory for the Measurement of Forms of Resilience by Békaert et al. (2011), and an interview guide. The results of the survey show, on the one hand, that students living in difficult conditions tend to achieve poor academic performance, unlike their classmates who live in better conditions. On the other hand, the results reveal that more resilient students perform better academically than their non-resilient peers.

**KEYWORDS:** Living conditions, resilience, school performance, young girls.

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### INTRODUCTION

The anomalies and dysfunctions that plague the Ivorian school system are numerous and varied, as evidenced by the report of the 2023 General Assembly on National Education in Côte d'Ivoire. In fact, it suggests that Ivorian schools are struggling to ensure access to education for all. The problems of this institution also extend to the development of preschool education, the increase in the supply of primary and secondary education, and the reduction of regional and gender disparities. In addition to these structural difficulties, there is a functional weakness in many areas such as the care of children with special needs, the improvement of the quality of educational services, the optimization of resource management, the improvement of the management of the education system, the recruitment of qualified teachers, the improvement of teacher performance, etc. the fight against illiteracy and the appeasement of the social climate at school. In any case, it is a given that the State must increase its investment in the development of human resources, both in quantity and quality. Similarly, at the structural level, the State must improve the physical working conditions of educational personnel, especially teachers and students. As a result, factors related to the school institution could create academic disparities in terms of student performance.

Nevertheless, referring to the term "education system", which would mean that several institutions have a share of responsibility in the determinism of school performance, some researchers argue that educational inequalities have more to do with the economic and social inequalities of the individual himself than with factors relating to the school. To this end, family factors would be at the forefront of all the determinants of school performance. This is the case, for example, of educated families who would take an interest in information and culture. Indeed, the training facilities available to them and the reading opportunities (books, newspapers, etc.) they offer to their children could probably contribute to improving their children's results. In addition, the influence of the socio-cultural status of these families extends to the realm of children's leisure and free time and has an indirect impact on school performance. In contrast to these pleasant living conditions, the "poor" living conditions offer free, spontaneous activities that do not promote intellectual maturation. Conversely, children from higher social classes would benefit from activities that stimulate their intellectual ability and have a wider range of experience with the physical and social world.

However, it should be noted that despite the difficulties faced by students, some of them manage to overcome them and perform better academically. These students are therefore resilient. Broadly speaking, resilience can be seen as the ability to face and cope with challenges at any time and place. In the school environment, resilience refers to pupils and students who persevere and succeed in their schooling despite the difficult conditions associated with their personal characteristics (problems adapting to the school environment, for example) or those of the social environment (blended family, for example) and school environment (the intransigence of certain teachers, for example) in which they evolve (Anaut, 2006). Thus, in the face of living conditions and academic difficulties, many students show resilience by having good grades at school. Such performances would be due to an adaptation of the latter to school and social realities. From this point of view, Puentes-Neuman et al. (2007) believe that academic and social adaptation would be the solution to the success of students who are said to be at risk because of their sustained exposure to a high level of family stress.

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In view of the above, it is clear that living conditions would impact the academic performance of young girls. However, there are many girls who, despite the difficulties related to living conditions and school requirements, would manage to achieve better performance in school. The present study aims to examine the relationship between the living conditions, resilience and academic performance of students at the Collège de Jeunes Filles de Bouaké.

### METHODOLOGY

#### 1- Participants

Interest-based sampling resulted in a sample of 132 female students aged 14 to 16.

#### Materials

##### a- Questionnaire

For the purposes of the study, two questionnaires were designed. The first is addressed to the students. It has several headings, namely the identification of the student, the socio-professional category of the parents, the school supervision, the living environment and the academic performance. The second questionnaire is intended for parents of pupils in order to solicit their opinions on the different educational styles likely to influence pupils' academic performance. It consists of three parts related to the three educational styles of democracy, authoritarian and permissive. This questionnaire seeks to detect the dominant educational style of the student's parent. It should be noted that the questionnaire addressed to students is administered directly, i.e. it is distributed to students, filled out and handed in on site. However, the second is given to the student for his or her parent so that he or she can answer the questions asked.

##### b- Measurement Inventory of Forms of Resilience by Békaert et al. (2011)

The assessment of resilience in the participants was carried out using the Forty Item Resilience Forms Inventory (IFR-40) of Békaert et al. (2011). This instrument makes it possible to identify three dimensions of resilience, namely the family dimension, the personal dimension and the social dimension.

##### c- Maintenance

In order to deepen the information resulting from the questionnaire, interviews were held. They took place within the school and allowed us to have contact with the students. This additional information was an essential contribution to the explanation and interpretation of the results.

#### 2- Procedure

The survey of the present study takes place in the Collège Moderne Jeunes Filles de Bouaké. It is a secondary school that includes only the first cycle. This school is public and only receives girls assigned by the State. It should be noted that the survey is being carried out in three phases. First, after the agreement of the administration, the participants are grouped together in a large room and instructed on the different tests. The latter were then collectively submitted to the various questionnaires. At the same time, forms were distributed to the young girls to be filled in by their parents. We made sure that as many of these cards as possible went to us. It should be noted that seventeen participants agreed to submit to the interview.

### RESULTS

#### 1- Living conditions and school performance

Table 1 shows the number of pupils according to living conditions and academic performance.

Students who live in disadvantaged living conditions and have low academic performance account for 31.82%, while 18.19% of their peers living in similar conditions have high academic performance. The analysis shows that there is a relationship between the participants' living conditions and their academic performance [ $\chi^2(6) = 12.13; P < .05$ ].

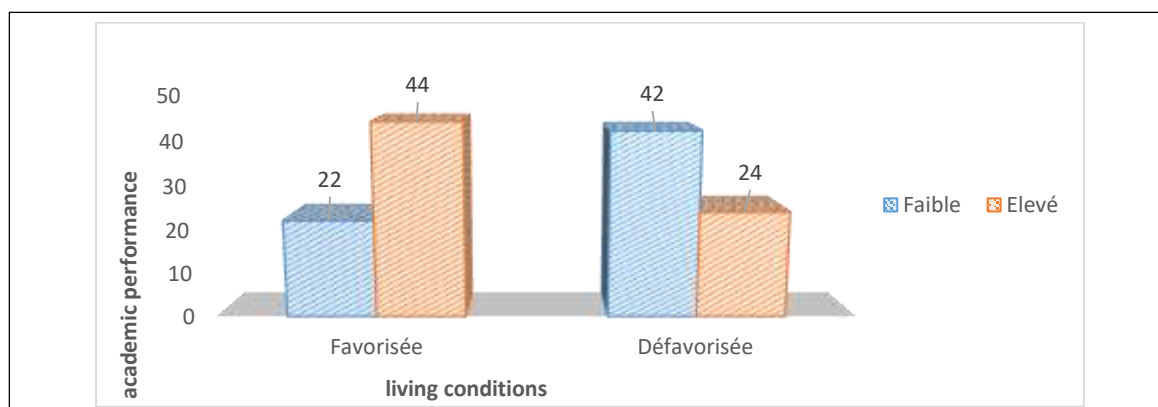


Figure 1: Histograms representing students' academic performance according to living conditions

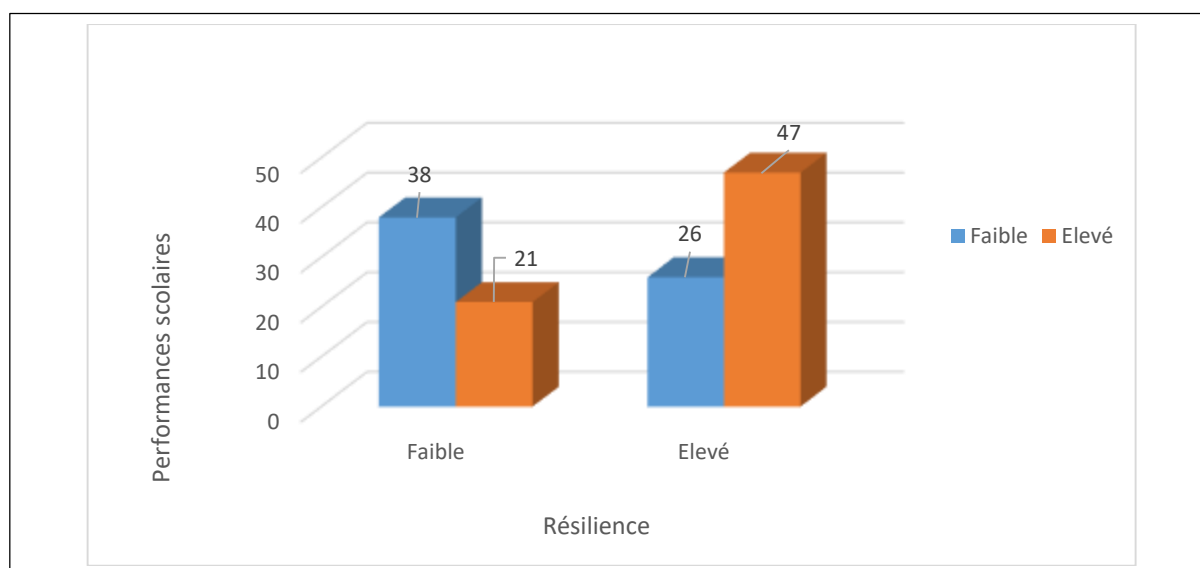
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**Table 1: Comparison of student numbers according to living conditions and academic performance**

		Academic performance		Total
		Weak	High	
Living conditions	Favored	22 (16.67%)	44 (33.33%)	66
	Disadvantaged	42 (31.82%)	24(18.19%)	66
Total		64 (48.49%)	68 (51.52%)	132

### 2- Resilience and academic performance

The proportion of students who are resilient and have low academic performance is 19.70%, while the % of their non-resilient classmates with low performance is 28.79 (Table 2). Statistical analysis of the data reveals that there is a relationship between resilience and participants' academic performance [ $\chi^2(4) = 10.83; P < .05$ ].



**Figure 2: Histograms representing students' academic performance by resilience**

**Table 2: Comparison of student sizes by resiliency and academic performance**

		Academic performance		Total
		Weak	High	
Resilience	Weak	38 (28.79%)	21 (15.91%)	59
	High	26 (19.70%)	47(35.61%)	73
Total		64 (48.49%)	68 (51.52%)	132

## DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The objective of this study is to study the relationship between the living conditions, resilience and academic performance of young girls at the Collège moderne de jeunes filles de Bouaké. To this end, two specific hypotheses have been formulated. The first states that many students in favourable living conditions perform better than their classmates who live in unfavourable living conditions. The second hypothesis is that the proportion of resilient students with high academic performance is higher than that of their peers with low academic performance. The investigation has led to results.

On the one hand, the results show that there is a relationship between living conditions and academic performance. In other words, many students living in unfavourable conditions have poor academic performance. These results are consistent with those of work oriented in various perspectives. First, in the socio-educational context, studies reveal that parental educational practices influence students' academic success. In this context, research by Adams and Anderson (cited in Koura, 2001) concluded that many parents in sub-Saharan Africa have preferences for boys to attend school rather than girls simply because of the norms, rules and

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roles established by traditional society. This could be explained by the fact that from an early age, the young Malian girl is introduced to the activities that she is expected to participate in during her future life. For example, a ritual practiced in Mali, and particularly among the Bambara, in the hours following the birth of a child, is very revealing of the role that women occupy within their households in these societies (Mainbourg, 1986). However, under these conditions, school can represent a kind of break with the place reserved for women in Malian society. Secondly, from a socio-economic point of view, the results of Bernard's work (2015) instruct us on the fact that socio-professional category and income have an impact on children's academic success or failure. In fact, the higher the socio-professional category of the parents, the less difficulties the children have at school. In addition, a study carried out by N'Douba (2002) with children from various living environments showed that the performance of groups of children from privileged socio-economic backgrounds is higher than those of their counterparts of the same age, but from a disadvantaged socio-economic background. This difference between the two categories of children seems to appear in the school setting. This is what Effiong and Edet (2020) are trying to show, as they have carried out studies whose results indicate that students' drop-out of school is attributed to family size. In fact, large families are always difficult to maintain, and given the current economic recession, only the wealthy can afford to adequately finance their families, both for education and other things. On the other hand, the heckling of large families does not create an atmosphere conducive to learning at home, while in smaller families there is always safety and tranquility, which enhances the convenience of learning. Thus, large families lead to an increase in the number of school dropouts, as most families will not be able to meet the financial requirements of the school. Similarly, the results of this study show that children from poor families find it difficult to cope effectively with their education. Some textbooks may be necessary for use in schools, but in a situation where these children cannot afford such textbooks that will help them and depend entirely on grades, they will hardly feel well. In addition, most of these children go to school every day and may miss one or two subjects due to being late. Where their parents cannot even afford to pay their school fees, they will be forced to leave school, so the dropout rate will be the result of their parents' financial constraints. In addition, some girls interviewed who live in unfavourable conditions and have performed poorly say that they take care of household chores entirely in addition to school. From this point of view, our results are similar to those of Mainbourg, 1986). According to this author, the initiation of young girls from an early age into the role that women occupy within their households in African societies is a sign that school can represent a kind of break with the place reserved for women in society.

On the other hand, the results show the existence of a relationship between resilience and academic performance of students at the Bouaké girls' college. These results are those of the studies by McGee et al. (2019) and McGee (2020). Indeed, this work reveals that in Canada, faced with the many difficulties (discrimination, for example) they face in school, young people from Black communities are resilient by being aware that they have to work harder than others to have their skills recognized. Just like these young students from Canada, some students at the Bouaké girls' college are able to overcome all obstacles at both the school and family levels. The latter say they use their own abilities, their individual resources to overcome the problems they encounter. They then perceive school resilience as a challenge. This can be explained by the theory of Masten et al. (1990), which maintains that these girls develop and learn better despite family difficulties.

## CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between living conditions, resilience and academic performance among students in the 3rd grade of the Lycée des Jeunes Filles de Bouaké.

All the data collected during the survey led to the conclusion that students from advantaged backgrounds mostly perform better academically than their classmates who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Similarly, students with a low level of resilience are likely to perform worse than their peers with a high level of resilience.

These results could be of great importance insofar as they challenge the institutions in charge of education on the need to review the cost of school education in order to create ideal conditions for access to quality education for all. Similarly, this study highlights the issue of the schooling of young girls, which seems to be decisive in the context of women's empowerment.

Therefore, it is appropriate to suggest in future research, the consideration of other variables such as parental involvement, the age of the students, cognitive functions (such as memory, attention, etc.), and the time of day in order to explain the issue of school performance from various angles.

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