

Self-Esteem among Pre-Retirees and Retirees from Secondary Education in the Departments of Atacora and Donga (Benin)

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Abstract:- The aim of this research is to highlight the quality of self-esteem in the way pre-retired and retired secondary school teachers perceive the end of their careers and adapt to it. It offers a better understanding of some of the psychosocial realities that emerge with the end of working life. To carry out this research, a mixed-method approach was adopted, based on semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, self-esteem assessment tests and participant observation of the facts and behaviour of the actors and/or subjects. Forty-two (42) permanent and contract civil servants were selected, regardless of sex, religion or marital status.

The results collected and analysed showed that most of the subjects had a very low level of self-esteem. For these pre-retirees and retirees, retirement is a stage in their lives when they feel they have been left to fend for themselves. The end of their careers raises psychosocial issues for them, particularly in terms of identity, image and rehabilitation. For a better understanding of the end-of-career experience, it is crucial to study the self-esteem of pre-retirees and retirees in order to offer admission managers and the people concerned appropriate psychosocial and professional support for a happy retirement.

Keywords:- *Self-Esteem, Early Retirement, Retirement, Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Benin.*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the International Labour Office (ILO, 2002), a nation's education system is one of the means at its disposal to ensure its development, through the training and development of human resources. The accomplishment of such a mission of national sovereignty is only made possible by the priesthood of teachers who are devoted to the task despite the many difficulties that mark their professional careers. In reality, the teaching profession is characterised by:

- A heavy workload, inherent in the preparation of teaching sheets, leading class groups, but above all correcting papers which vary according to the cycle and class;
- Heterogeneity of pupil levels, which poses a problem for managing class groups if we take into account the fragility of some pupils' basic skills;

- A feeling that pupils are passive when it comes to learning, even though teachers make a huge effort to encourage them to want to learn;
- Violence in the behaviour of some pupils, which can make them feel vulnerable and contribute to a feeling of powerlessness and incompetence;
- Experience of the feeling that the guidelines laid down by the ministries responsible for education give priority to a certain amount of knowledge to the detriment of more in-depth knowledge.

In the Beninese context, this state of affairs gives rise to an overall impression that knowledge is being 'sprinkled' rather than in-depth work on fundamental concepts; this implies a renunciation of the values of the profession and dissatisfaction with relationships with colleagues and learners in many cases. The work of Brunet (1996), quoted by Cau-Bareille (2009), shows that when teachers feel constantly ineffective, that they are failing at everything and that they have no power, they end up lacking initiative and suffering stress. What could be more frustrating than investing professionally and emotionally in a student's success and achieving nothing? When stress leads to a state of professional exhaustion, the teacher ends up developing the complex of the missionary in the infinite universe, where the individual feels very small in the face of an immense and overwhelming task to conquer, the impression of having exhausted his energy and of no longer being able to give in terms of relationships. In addition to the stress of keeping to the school timetable in line with the syllabus, there is also the physical fatigue of having to work so hard in class to get the students involved, and of having to spend so much time preparing lessons and marking papers.

This combination of factors generates a high level of stress linked to a heavy workload and considerable psychological strain. The teaching profession is considered to be very nerve-racking, which can prove exhausting at the end of one's career, especially as there is no specific retirement management policy to ensure a fulfilling end to one's professional life, enabling experience to be passed on, good professional and educational practices to younger people and better socio-professional retraining.

In Benin, the end of such a career, given the specific features of the education sector, is quite hectic and trying for most teachers, especially in the particular context of the civil service¹. It's no secret that over the last few decades, the issue of retirement has become one of the major concerns of public policy-makers, who are considering reforms to entry requirements in order to address skills and employment issues. However, there is a whole range of anomalies that complicate the end-of-career situation for early retirees and pensioners. These include, among others demotivation at work, alcohol dependency, self-neglect in terms of clothing, voluntary reduction of working hours for those still in service, lateness in service, unproductiveness, melancholy among retirees, instability in married life with, in the best case, an old-age wife and many children as retirement approaches or in retirement, a race against the clock to build a house for oneself after approaching the thirtieth year in service, etc. These phenomena, observed in the socio-professional lives of pre-retired teachers and in the social lives of retired secondary school teachers, lead us to ask how they perceive themselves at the end of their careers and how they feel about this phase of their lives. The research question guiding the present study is as follows: how does self-esteem influence the psychosocial adaptation of pre-retired and retired teachers in public secondary schools in the departments of Atacora and Donga as they reach the end of their careers?

II. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The research focused on early-retired and retired teachers in lycées and collèges in the departments of Atacora and Donga (Republic of Benin). Given the statutory nature of human resource management in the civil service, we opted for a purposive sample. For the selection of informants, the age range between 50 and 60 was the main criterion. This age group was chosen in order to reach the appropriate target for the study, given that in many cases early retirees and pensioners fall into this bracket.

Forty-two (42) teachers were involved in the data collection phase. They were consulted about their experiences at the end of their professional careers. The interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes per participant and a maximum of one and a half hours (1 hour 30 minutes). Beforehand, however, participants were given the interview guide to help them prepare for the meeting. The tools used were the interview guide and the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, which enabled us to assess participants' overall self-esteem and psychological experience of the end of their career.

The interview guide was used to gather essential information about the subjects' working lives, and to assess their overall psychological contract and their experiences of the end of their careers. To do this, the participants' comments were digitally recorded with their consent. The Rosenberg (1965) scale used was the one translated and validated by Vallières and Vallerand (1990). This scale contains ten (10) items for which the participants expressed their degree of agreement on a four (04) point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree; 4 = completely agree). Five of the ten (10) items were reversed. Overall, the average score ranged from 1 (low self-esteem) to 5 (high self-esteem). The scores for questions 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 of the scale are added together for each participant. For questions 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10, the scoring is reversed, i.e. we count 4 if the participant circles the number 1; 3 if they circle 2; 2 if they circle 3 and 1 if they circle 4. We then add up the points to obtain a score between 10 and 40.

The results are interpreted in the same way for men and women. If participants obtain a score below 25, their self-esteem is very low. Work in this area seems desirable. If they obtain a score between 25 and 31, their self-esteem is low. Work in this area would be beneficial. If they score between 31 and 34, their self-esteem is average. If they score between 34 and 39, their self-esteem is high. If they score above 39, their self-esteem is very high and they tend to be very assertive.

In addition, a content analysis was carried out on the participants' discourse, recorded on their perception of their career path, retirement and their future. Finally, it is important to point out that this research began in 2017, but has continued discontinuously and updated until 2023, leading regularly to the writing up and presentation of the results obtained. The observations received generally lead us to explore new aspects of the end-of-career issue.

III. SOME RESULTS OBTAINED

A. Social and Professional Profiles of Respondents

Most of the respondents were men; women made up only 4.76% of the sample, compared with 95.24% of men. The age of the respondents ranged from 50 to 64, as shown in the table and figure below.

➤ Age of Participants

The subjects interviewed were in the 50 to 64 age bracket. The numbers associated with the different age categories are shown in table 1.

¹ A number of efforts have been made in Benin over the past few years to ease the burden on pensioners, notably by digitising the pension processing procedure. With the possibility of starting the process shortly before retirement and obtaining certain documents online, civil servants no

longer have to wait months or years before receiving their pensions. However, these efforts have not yet succeeded in completely changing the way in which pre-retired and retired civil servants perceive and experience retirement.

Table 1: Age of Participants

Age	Workforce	Frequency (%)
50 to 54 years old	19	45,24
Age 55 to 59	19	45,24
60 to 64 years	4	9,52
Total	42	100

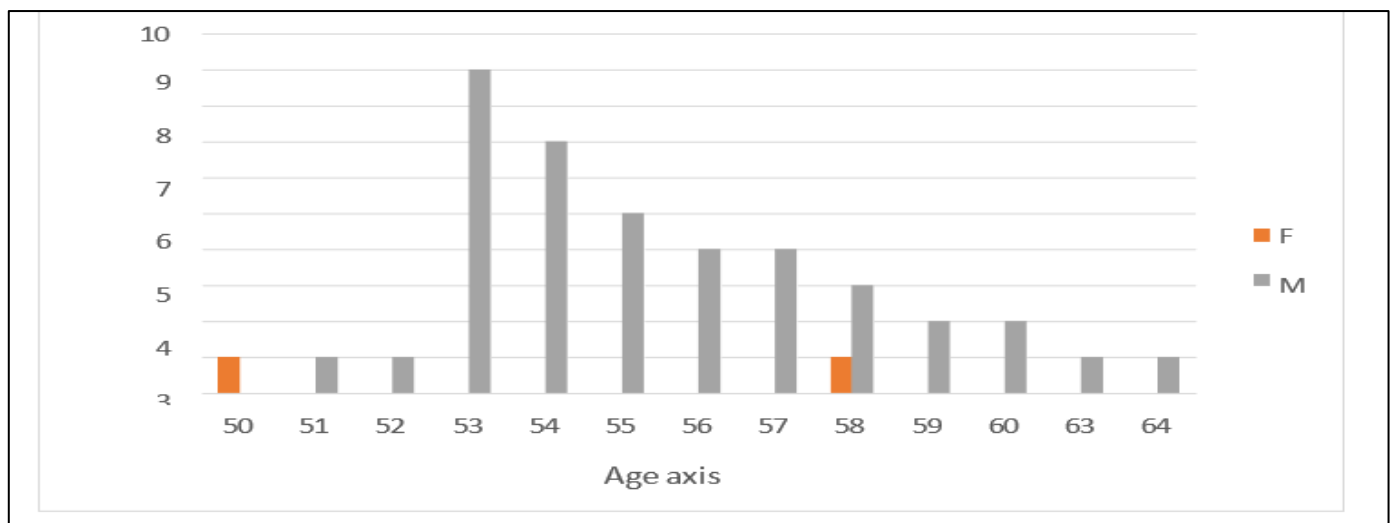


Fig 1: Number of Employees by Age

The graph shows that men, represented by ash-coloured bars, outnumber women, who are represented by pink-coloured bars.

➤ Participants' Marital Status

The variable of marital status was taken into account because it sometimes has an influence on the professional lives of the teachers interviewed. The data relating to this variable appear in Table 2.

Table 2: Marital Status of Participants

Marital status	Workforce	Frequency (%)
Cohabitation	11	26,19
Monogamy	29	69,05
Polygamy	2	4,76
Total	42	100,00

The majority of the teachers we met were in a couple with a woman. Similarly, there were many cases of cohabitation (11 out of 42 cases).

➤ Breakdown of Subjects by Category

The professional world surveyed is characterised by a diversity of statuses. In order to gain a better understanding of the actors interviewed, tables 3 and 4 were proposed, which shed light on the categories of state employees and the subjects they teach in the collèges and lycées of Donga and Atacora.

Table 3: Breakdown of Subjects by Body

Body	Workfor ce	Frequency (%)
Student teacher	1	2,38
Student Assistant Professor	7	16,67
Assistant Professor	1	2,38
Certified Teacher	29	69,05
Inspector	3	7,14
Other	1	2,38
Total	42	100

This table shows that, towards retirement, there are more certified teachers, as evidenced by the frequency

associated with this category, which is 69.05 out of 100. This score is followed by that of student assistant teachers (16.67).

Table 4: Breakdown of Subjects by Subject Taught

Subject taught	Workforc e
English	1
Physical and Sports Education	6
Spanish	1
French	6
History and geography	10
Mathematics	3
Philosophy	1
Physical, Chemical and Technical Sciences	2
Life and Earth Sciences	4
Accounting & Applied Mathematics	1
Agricultural Economics & Management	1
Horticulture	1
Financial mathematics	1
Animal production	1
Plant production	1
Mechanical manufacturing	1
Joinery	1
Total	42

History and geography teachers had the highest number (10), followed by mathematicians (3). 78.57% of the population hold a position of responsibility in school administration: Departmental director responsible for secondary education, deputy educational inspector, head of department in the departmental directorate responsible for secondary education, headmaster or headmistress of a school, or head teacher or supervisor.

B. Self-Esteem Inventory

Generally speaking, the average score for the self-esteem test was 25.48 points. Referring to the empirical standards proposed by Rosenberg, we can say, as shown in the graph below, that most of the participants in our research had a significantly low or very low self-esteem score, with the exception of the 7% who had an average score.

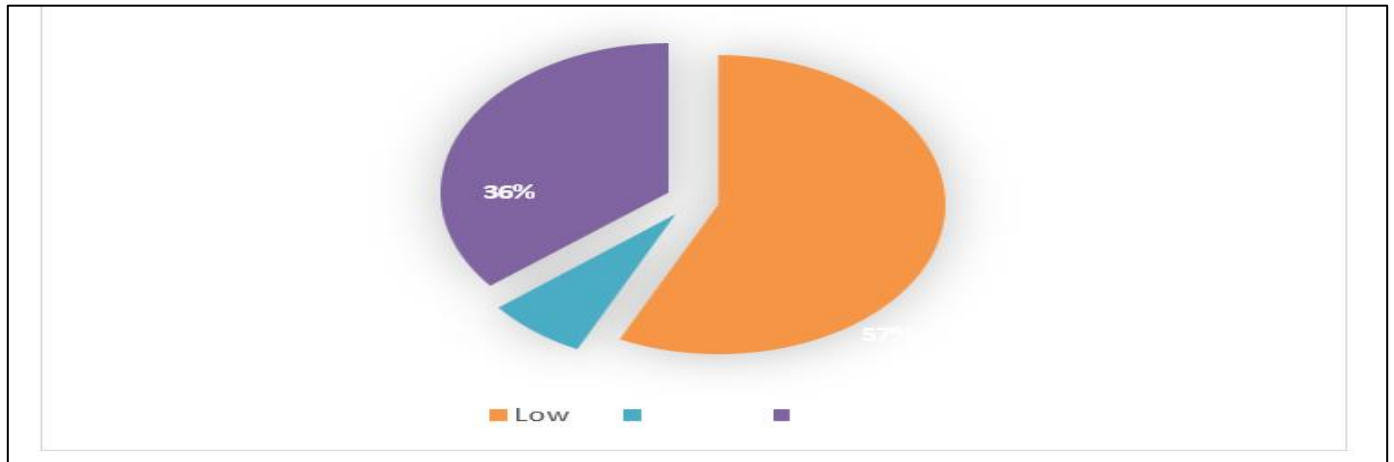


Fig 2: Level of Self-Esteem

Comparing the averages, we can see that the level of self-esteem is as low among pre-retirees as it is among

retirees, with a nuance among those in the process of retiring, for whom the level is very low, as shown in the figure below.

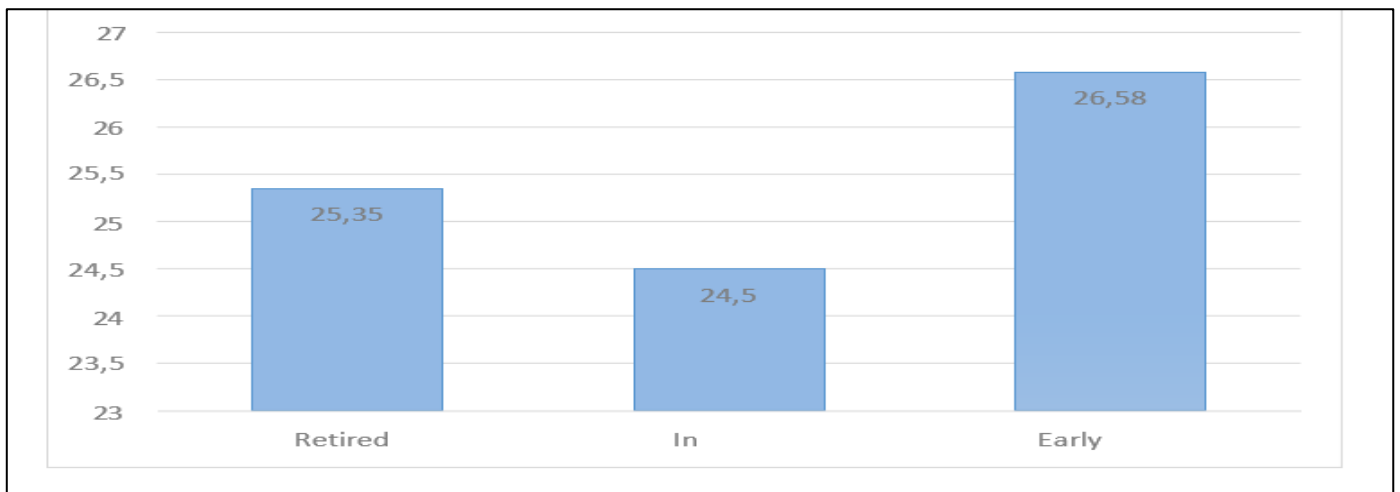


Fig 3: Self-Esteem Test Averages

The gender analysis, for its part, does not highlight any remarkable differences in the level of self-esteem between

retired and pre-retired men and women, even if the weight of the latter in the sample is low.

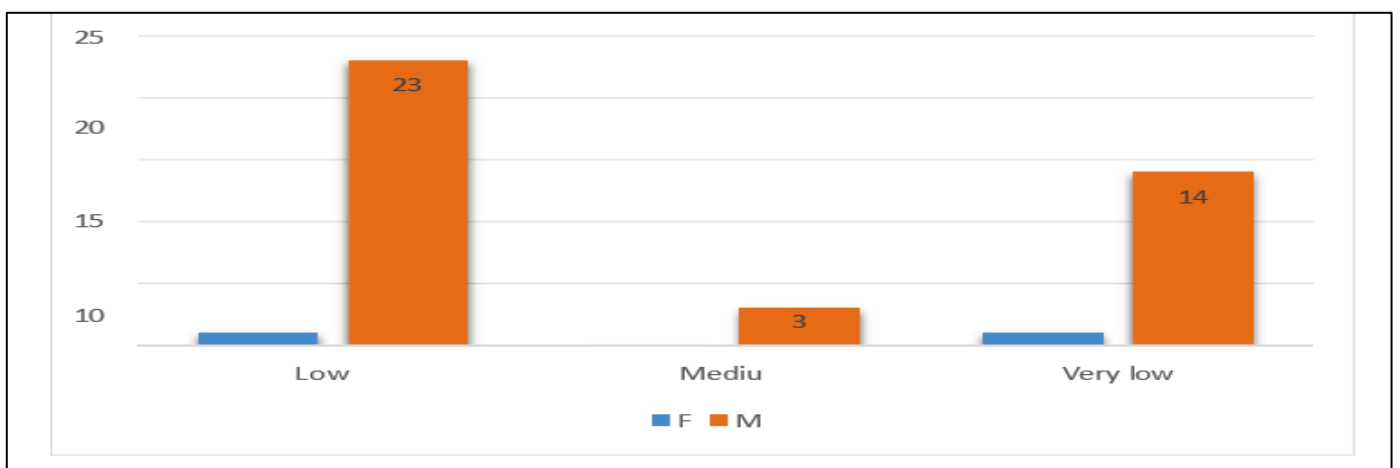


Fig 4: Esteem Level by Gender

Although the results do not show a strong correlation between self-esteem and marital status, it is nevertheless

useful to note that the three subjects with an average level of self-esteem are officially married to a woman.

Table 5: Self-Esteem and Marital Status

Level by variable	Workforce
Low	24
Cohabitation	5
Married	1
Monogame	17
Polygamist	1
Medium	3
Monogame	3
Very low	15
Cohabitation	6
Monogame	8
Polygamist	1
Total	42

A comparison of the results on self-esteem, marital status and number of dependent children suggests that it is rather difficult for retired teachers to meet the needs of their families effectively, especially those of their minor children. It is important to note that the results highlight a significant correlation between the level of self-esteem and family responsibilities. For example, subjects with very low or low self-esteem had an average of five dependent children, while those with average self-esteem had fewer than four. This is understandable, given that retirement means a reduction in monthly income of almost 40%, while these incomes must continue to bear the same burdens as those for which they were responsible when they were working. All in all, the subjects of our research, whether working or retired, male or female, married or not, religious or not, seem to suffer equally and dangerously from low self-esteem.

C. Attachment to the Public Service and Self-Esteem

It is important to remember that the literature leads us to place teachers among the groups at risk of stress and burnout. Among other things, our research should make it possible to explain the link between the almost fusional attachment to the public service developed by some secondary school teachers at the end of their careers and their rather negative self-assessment.

First of all, while it is clear that 54.76% of the sample are relieved from physically exhausting work, 92.86% are relieved from psychologically exhausting work and 57.14% feel that retirement is the right rest after long years of hard work, the fact remains that for most it remains a formidable ordeal that stresses the players involved. We begin by assessing the breach of the psychological contract observed among most secondary school teachers at the end of their careers, through the following results which summarise the psychosocial discomfort they experience. Out of 42 subjects, 69.05% said that they had not fully achieved their potential as

teachers. Nearly half the sample felt betrayed by the school system, the civil service and even their superiors or the teaching profession. As the comments of one of them below illustrate, almost all of the subjects expressed a feeling of abandonment on the part of the state or of colleagues who are still working:

‘A secondary school teacher at the end of his career was supposed to be a point of reference, a resource person, but unfortunately he's been thrown out to pasture and that's a shame’.

In this respect, almost all the interviewees wanted the government to create a framework or structure that would allow them to continue to be used for training young people to take over from them (or even for end-of-year exams). The subjects' perception of the express or tacit promises made by the government to secondary school teachers is rather negative. For 57.14%, the working environment was ‘less than promised’ (sometimes with late textbooks, insufficient work tools, etc.), while 30.95% thought it was ‘as promised’. Almost all of these subjects had low self-esteem.

D. Cross-Referencing Self-Esteem with other Independent Variables in the Study

A number of independent variables were identified in the present study in order to gain a better understanding of self-esteem among pre-retirees and retirees from secondary education. Using the tables, we have established the causal relationship between these variables and the dependent variable, self-esteem.

Table 6: Self-Esteem and the Promise of a Guaranteed Work Environment

Level by perception of promise	Workforce
Low	24
Less than promised	10
No promise at all	13
As promised	1
Medium	3
Less than promised	2
As promised	1
Very low	15
Less than promised	12
As promised	3
Total	42

Also, with regard to the State's promise to guarantee good interpersonal relations for these agents, 52.38% of the subjects chose the response 'Not at all promised', 16.67%

'Less than promised' and 30.95% 'As promised'. It is worth noting that the three (03) subjects with an average level of self-esteem all answered 'As promised' to the question.

Table 7: Self-Esteem and Promise to Guarantee Interpersonal Relationships

Level by perception of promise	Workforce
Low	24
Less than promised	4
No promise at all	13
As promised	7
Medium	3
As promised	3
Very low	15
Less than promised	3
No promise at all	9
As promised	3
Total	42

Similarly, with regard to the 'Promise of development opportunities', 50.00% rated it 'Less than promised', 40.48% 'Not at all promised', 7.14% 'As promised' and only 2.38%

'More than promised'. Most of the subjects who chose the answers 'Less than promised' or 'Not at all promised' had low self-esteem at most.

Table 8: Self-Esteem & Promise of Development Opportunities

Level by perception of promise	Workforce
Low	24
Less than promised	5
No promise at all	17
As promised	2
Medium	3
Less than promised	1
More than promised	1
As promised	1
Very low	15
Less than promised	15
Total	42

The 'Promise of training opportunities' factor was answered by 45.24% 'Less than promised', 38.10% 'Not at all promised' and 16.67% 'As promised'. The results also

show that the lowest level of self-esteem was observed among subjects who chose the response 'Not at all promised' or 'Less than promised'.

Table 9: Self-Esteem and the Promise of Training Opportunities

Level by perception of promise	Workforce
Low	24
Less than promised	5
No promise at all	16
As promised	3
Medium	3
Less than promised	2
As promised	1
Very low	15
Less than promised	12
As promised	3
Total	42

As for the factor 'Promised attractiveness of remuneration', it received 52.38% 'Less than promised', 42.86% 'Not at all promised' and only 4.76% 'As promised'. These secondary school teachers at the end of their careers

are clearly dissatisfied with their financial situation and have low self-esteem in almost the same proportions.

Table 10: Self-Esteem and the Promise of Attractive Pay

Level by perception of promise	Workforce
Low	24
Less than promised	5
No promise at all	18
As promised	1
Medium	3
Less than promised	2
As promised	1
Very low	15
Less than promised	15
Total	42

The question of autonomy among early retirees and pensioners arises above all in the light of the family burdens that fall on them: dependent children, self-fulfilment that goes hand in hand with owning a house and/or a car, the social success of adult children, and so on. The only evidence of this is the testimony of one of the subjects:

'As a pensioner, one of my particular concerns is that I'm in constant conflict with my wife because I haven't

managed to buy the little family a house and a car. I really want to, but I can't afford it at the moment. I suffer enormously. Sometimes I cry alone.

The 'Promise of responsibility at work' is no better appreciated. It mobilised 45.24% of 'Less than promised', 38.10% of 'Not at all promised' and 16.67% of 'As promised'. They show more or less the same correlation with the low self-esteem observed among the subjects.

Table 11: Esteem and the Promise of Responsibility at Work

Level by perception of promise	Workforce
Low	24
Less than promised	6
No promise at all	16
As promised	2
Medium	3
Less than promised	1
As promised	2
Very low	15
Less than promised	12
As promised	3
Total	42

In contrast to the perception of the employer's promises, the perception that the agents surveyed have of their express or tacit promises or commitments to the State is rather positive.

In fact, 59.52% said they had kept their 'Loyalty promise' 'As promised', 30.95% 'Not at all promised', 7.14% 'Less than promised' and only 2.38% 'More than promised'. As for the 'Promise to guarantee continuity of public service', 47.62% said they had honoured it 'As promised', 30.95% 'Not at all promised', 19.05% 'Less than promised' and only 2.38% 'More than promised'. The factor 'Promise to guarantee the quality of the public education service' was assessed by only 4.76%.

'Less than promised', 35.71% "As promised", 30.95% "Not at all promised" and 28.57% "More than promised".

With regard to the factor 'Promise of excellent school results', 33.33% rated it 'More than promised', 30.95% 'Not at all promised', 21.43% 'As promised' and 14.29% 'Less than promised'.

For the 'Political independence' factor, there were only 7.14% 'Less than promised', but 85.71% 'Not at all promised' and only 7.14% 'As promised'. The pre-retirees and retirees in our study are almost unanimous on the fact that there is political discrimination in Benin's public administration, which has a negative impact on the self-esteem of employees in general, and their own in particular.

Table 12: Self-Esteem and the Promise of Political Independence

Level by perception of promise	Workforce
Low	24
Less than promised	3
No promise at all	20
As promised	1
Medium	3
No promise at all	1
As promised	2
Very low	15
No promise at all	15
Total	42

Finally, the rather positive assessment by the participants of their promises to the State does not fail to display results that show their dissatisfaction with the working and living conditions in the Civil Service. Most of them experience a breach of the psychological contract during their professional career and especially at the end of their career. Despite this state of breach of the psychological contract, 64.29% of the subjects are surprised by the retirement deadline and would like to retire later compared to

35.71% who would like to retire at the end of the term and 23.81% are seized with guilt when thinking about youth unemployment.

Considering that self-esteem is the quotient of successes on claims or achievements on aspirations, that 52.38% of the sample are not proud of having chosen to be teachers, and that for participants we observe that the state of the psychological contract corresponds well to the low level of self-esteem.

E. Perception of Retirement and Self-Esteem

The perception of retirement varies depending on the actors encountered. Indeed, it should be remembered that the quality of the subject's perception of retirement is based on the quality of their self-esteem. Thus, a negative perception of retirement is symptomatic of low self-esteem. Based on this assumption, we compared the levels of self-esteem of pre-retirees and young retirees from technical education to those from general education. According to the analysis of the means, participants from technical education are not the most numerous to choose the factors reflecting a low level of self-esteem. Indeed, as indicated by the figure below, they obtained a higher average on the self-esteem test.

Furthermore, we cannot ignore the fact that 98% of pre-retirees and retirees from technical education showed a more remarkable awareness of the transferability of their skills. All of which translate into their choice of retirement investment projects, which almost all relate to their field of expertise. However, with regard to the relationship between the level of self-esteem and the discipline taught, the results show a similar deficiency in the level of self-esteem in almost all subjects, regardless of the sub-order of education; this despite the fact that out of the three who obtained an acceptable score in the self-esteem test, two come from technical education.

IV. DISCUSSION AND PERSPECTIVES

A. Discussion

This research has certainly revealed a certain positive correlation between the level of self-esteem and the experience of the end of career among pre-retirees and retirees of public high schools and colleges in the departments of Atacora and Donga in Benin. However, it presents some shortcomings that should be mentioned. First, the fact that some pre-retirees and retirees of high schools and colleges are disappointed by the quality of the education system cannot be systematically indicative of low self-esteem. In addition, for a better exploration of the problem addressed here, we cannot exclude the existence of other intrinsic or extrinsic factors such as health (alcoholism, diabetes, hemorrhoids, high blood pressure, HIV AIDS, hepatitis or even cancer) which also significantly impact the quality of self-esteem. Since the literature shows that:

The health [...] of people who leave the labor market is worse than that of those who are still working [...] Rohwedder and Willis (2010) conducted a psychological test on people aged over 60 in the United States and 12 European countries. They found that in countries where people work longer, the results of cognitive tests [...] are significantly higher than in countries where the working population retires earlier. A recent British study (Sahlgren, 2013) emphasizes that retirement increases the risk of depression and physical health problems, worsens perceived health and increases medication use. Coe and Zamarro (2011) also point out that several studies show that retirement leads to a higher state of stress, a disconnection from one's social network and a possible feeling of loneliness or of "feeling old" [...] Studies generally show correlations between poor health and

retirement, but fail to support a cause-and-effect relationship between the two (Morsa and Dayez, 2013).

In fact, this research, far from defending the idea of extending the retirement age, could have had the merit of establishing the correlation between the factor of poor health and the quality of self-esteem among pre-retirees and retirees from public high schools and colleges. Furthermore, a semblance of contradiction can be observed in some of the responses collected. Although this may be the case with human personality, this could lead to the assumption of the existence of a probable malaise among the authors of these responses, with regard to certain factors tested. However, on the other hand, the tests administered do not allow us to present a social desirability score. It is therefore possible, in other words, that some subjects may have wanted to give, knowingly or not, a favorable image of themselves, given the values of society and especially the representations it gives of work and people at the end of their careers.

Fortunately, the consistency and saturation observed in the responses of almost the entire population can support a presumption of a low level of social desirability, which leads us to support the reliability of these responses. Moreover, it should also be admitted that the research could have gained more in precision and data quality if we had been able to use for the experiment, the self-esteem inventory (S.E.I.) of Coopersmith (1926), translated and adapted in 1984, by the Éditions du centre de psychologie appliquée. This would have allowed us to have a specific adult form and to measure the evaluative attitudes of self-esteem across four domains: social, professional or academic, family and general. Given that "it is essential, if we wish to act preventively, to precisely identify the experience of each future retiree in order to better help them understand the cessation of activity" (Bouteyre and Lopez, 2005 p. 50), this predictability would present inadequacies if it did not take into account the four areas covered above by Coopersmith's SEI. For example, the weight of family responsibilities in the psychosocial concerns of the subjects being presented as one of the dominant factors explaining the state of their self-esteem, the study could have explored the link between the cult of money, corruption, the unbridled automation of social relations and self-esteem. The same is true for the problem of the stability of self-esteem over time in light of family realities. All things that could thus be included in the "framework of the theory of resilience", proposed by Bouteyre, Lopez (op.Cit), to explore the transition to retirement, "this event likely to jeopardize psychological balance". The authors base the theory of resilience, among other things, on "the theory of continuity" as they call, "the theory of rupture".

The theory of continuity in the achievement of their objectives posed by Atchley, teaches us that if an adult does not have "an intense family life before retirement, he will not experience one after. If he did not take leisure activities before retirement, he will not enjoy them afterwards" (Ibidem, 45). Regarding the theory of rupture, it can help us better understand that "the transition to retirement constitutes a rupture, a crisis leading to object reinvestments and libidinal rearrangements, that it is a loss, or even a bereavement."

(ibidem, 45). This is why the shock of the rupture with the lifestyle, activity, work and even creativity that retirement implies is experienced by some as a crisis. The abrupt change in old professional habits gives way to a crisis that is sometimes well managed or poorly managed by pre-retirees or retirees. Like a sudden change of pace, retirees and pre-retirees lack the creativity to adapt because they do not prepare well for retirement.

Finally, when we look at the analytical axes of Walker and Avant (2005), we see that negative perceptions of retirement engender antecedents such as lack of self-confidence, the feeling of becoming socially useless or of losing value; all things that cause many pre-retirees and retirees to feel less competent, to have less self-respect, and so on. In turn, these attributes, in conjunction with the daily lives of these individuals, affect their professional and psychosocial interactions. We can therefore see that this change in professional situation affects the social and psychological life of state agents at the end of their career.

B. Outlook

Studies on the measures and factors of self-esteem among secondary school teachers are still rare. This suggests not focusing solely on the negative aspects of the level of self-esteem, alarmingly observed among pre-retired and retired teachers, but considering the factors likely to promote the optimization of their self-esteem. While it is difficult to maintain one's self-esteem unshakeable at the time of retirement, it is nevertheless necessary for pre-retirees and retirees to regularly nourish their self-esteem with a rather positive perception of what they can gain from it so as not to focus on what they have lost. First, pre-retirees and retirees should be, themselves, at the heart of their psychosocial well-being. They must be able to work on themselves, work on accepting their strengths and weaknesses, against any negative symbolism of this new status of non-active or old, to which the gaze of others unfortunately refers. They can mitigate the emotional and socio-professional upheavals caused by the end of their career by anticipating. Thus, in the last five years at the latest before the deadline, they should be able to start asking themselves the right questions in order to prepare for an active, meaningful and fulfilling retirement.

All things that involve better knowledge and acceptance of oneself and of the new situation, a change of perspective on the meaning of work through a step back and perspective on the achievements and performance of the glorious days when they were in the prime of life. It is a very damaging evil to despise oneself by ruminating on negative thoughts about one's professional life and one's image. In this regard, it would also be more appropriate for retirees to proceed with a true dissociation from the image that they have forged for themselves and that has always defined them in relation to their function, to what they do but which in fact, is far from what they really are in an intrinsic way. Self-acceptance and the implications of retirement should not be confused with resignation. It implies for the subject, the adoption of positive attitudes and thoughts, beneficial on an emotional, physical, and spiritual level. To do this, the retiree could learn to please himself, avoid developing all day long or all the time,

avoidance strategies in the face of the realities of this stage of life and then avoid at all costs, psychological self-flagellation for any failures of the journey whatsoever.

Since imperfections are not an end in themselves, even if imperfect, it should be a duty to free oneself from the weight of social comparisons in order to overcome the fear of failure. There is no point in thinking that one can run away from oneself, hide from oneself or disgust one's "self" because one perceives it negatively. By doing so, if one does not face it, one only ends up becoming a slave to it or dressing it up as a nature. Subjects would therefore benefit from accepting in good faith, humbly, without an inferiority or superiority complex, their incompetence in the areas where they display weaknesses. They always have value and skills to assert or develop in order to readapt to serene and meaningful action. They could comfort themselves, for example, by learning to rejoice in their qualities; they could keep the list. In doing so, they could strengthen their emotional intelligence, which is essential for developing their adaptive capacity for a successful transition, especially in the particular context of secondary education where practically only logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligence seems to be more valued. Secondly, as the following box indicates, we cannot talk about self-esteem in a senior at the end of their professional life without worrying about the social environment, mainly made up of family, relatives and friends. They have a major role to play in the success of this stage of life where the person's status and roles change. Furthermore, given the importance of life as a couple for emotional balance and self-confidence, it would be a good thing for the retiree to reinvent his emotional or romantic life by developing new relationships, new habits that are conducive to rediscovering oneself and others, in order to keep desire alive, to uninstall routine so as not to put desire and sexuality to sleep. These psychosocial needs, expressed by the majority of respondents, reflect a secret wish to see society change its view of the image of retirees, their place and the value given to them. The success of the rehabilitation of retirees depends on it. As far as the State is concerned, it should make policies for managing pre-retirees and retirees a priority. Because high school and college teachers at the end of their careers expect the Civil Service to take action in favor of their well-being. One of the subjects stated in this regard:

"I would have liked to see the State: work to give a better image of the retiree in society; improve the financial conditions of civil servants and then help teachers to have a car and a house before retirement; establish a retirement allowance and help with the rehabilitation of retirees; relieve retirees by granting their dependent children scholarships for higher education; avoid a gap between the last salary and the pension so as to no longer let the retiree spend months or even years without a pension: some die from it".

Of all the factors that determine the quality of the end-of-career experience, the revaluation of the retiree's person is illustrated in particular by the observation that most of the desired adjustments concern financial realities and the social representation of retirement. This makes us think that it would be useful for Beninese society for the State to encourage the

empowerment of retirees, through age management policies in terms of HR practices and psychological support for those concerned, likely to optimize their self-esteem. This is a certain way of focusing on the approach of psychosocial guidance for seniors that can be part of the new trend of positive psychology. All the more so since retirement can be an opportunity to acquire new knowledge or skills and to continue personal development. If, as an old adage says, "a man who no longer learns stops living.", in order not to stop living, the retiree can, for example, make up for lost opportunities, get involved in social, economic or humanitarian actions, enjoyable physical and intellectual activities such as obtaining a diploma or taking art or computer courses, in order to stimulate the brain, preserve and maintain one's memory and body, and enjoy a lively and alert mind for longer.

In addition, the retiree has every interest in taking pleasure in a healthy and balanced diet, looking after his health (his heart, eyes, teeth, etc.) and developing his social life as an opportunity to meet, listen, exchange with others, learn and have fun; in other words, to get better. In short, it is a question of daring to think about oneself, to exist and project oneself into the future, to create, to commit and to have fun. And to succeed in their retirement according to this approach, pre-retirees and retirees would benefit from the valuable help of a psychologist who can help them question themselves, to become aware of their desires, their needs, their aspirations and their capacities to achieve them.

V. CONCLUSION

Retirement is part of the normal continuity of a professional life. Whether expected or feared, it does not fail to mark a decisive turning point in the personal life of the retiree, his entourage and to resonate with different areas: socioeconomic and psychological. The present research has set itself the objective, among other things, of highlighting the relationships between the quality of self-esteem and the way in which pre-retired and retired teachers of public high schools and colleges experience the end of their career. Generally speaking, the results show a deficiency in self-esteem among the subjects, both those who are still in office and those who are admitted to assert their right to retirement.

The particularity of the study lies in the simultaneous consideration of the level of self-esteem, the state of the psychological contract, feelings of end of career, the positive or negative perception of retirement and the psychosocial rehabilitation capacities of secondary school teachers at the end of their career. Psychosocial factors such as identity, image, family responsibilities and especially the transferability of skills in the psychosocial rehabilitation process have proven to be decisive in the analysis of the problem of low self-esteem among pre-retirees and retirees from secondary education. The investigations show that most of the subjects expressed the feeling of being abandoned to their own devices, by society and the State.

Also, the end of their career is accompanied by more feelings of anxiety, fear or doubt than feelings of relief or joy. Many retirees find themselves, after warm celebrations, sometimes grandiose and worthy of admission to assert their rights to retirement, being invaded by the fear of no longer finding their place in society, since they have lost the financial power that the position of the activity gave them and the value that society gave them. Some even find themselves prey to depression. Yet history allows us to see today that those who succeed in life are not always the most qualified, but those who are humanly valued and who are capable of recognizing, analyzing and intelligently managing their emotions and those of others.

This is why only retirees who are able to live and hope in self-confidence and confidence in life will succeed in optimizing their self-esteem and having an active and happy retirement. Because "hope does not disappoint." (Romans 5:5). To do this, they need not only the support of their family and loved ones, but also the State, which is the sole repository of the power to implement age management policies and especially the promotion of pre-retirees and retirees. For better management of the end of careers in public administrations, it is important to better understand and especially to take into account the psychosocial realities that emerge at this stage of professional life, such as the perception that retirees have of their new statuses and roles, their commitment, usefulness and then their responsibilities within society, etc.

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