



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EVALUATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF CANDIDATES FOR THE COMPETITIVE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION TO THE FIRST YEAR OF A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN SCIENCES ET TECHNIQUES DES ACTIVITÉS PHYSIQUES ET SPORTIVES (STAPS): A STUDY OF CONDITIONS OF ACCOMMODATION, ADMINISTRATION AND PHYSICAL TESTS

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of the results on the clarity of the information regarding transportation arrangements for the physical exam shows a mixed perception among the candidates. Although 67% of respondents found the information clear, a significant proportion of 20.7% expressed difficulties, indicating a need for improvement in communication. Regarding the transparency of the evaluation criteria for the physical tests, 58.6% of participants were satisfied, reinforcing their confidence in the fairness of the process, while nearly a third of respondents perceived a lack of clarity, highlighting the importance of improving the communication of criteria to avoid any sense of injustice. The evaluation of the consideration of weather conditions to ensure the safety of candidates reveals a majority of 62.1% satisfaction, but with a minority of 24.3% expressing concerns, suggesting a need to improve the management and communication of safety measures. Finally, the analysis of overall satisfaction with the administrative and medical admission process in STAPS shows a relatively balanced distribution of opinions, with 46.3% satisfaction versus 33.7% dissatisfaction, indicating perceived shortcomings by a significant group of candidates. This diversity of opinions highlights the importance of a thorough evaluation to identify the aspects of the admission process that require improvements, particularly regarding communication, transparency, and the administrative and medical management, in order to better meet the candidates' expectations.

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INTRODUCTION

The competitive entrance examination for the first year of a degree in Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives (STAPS) is a crucial step for many students aspiring to a career in physical education and sport. However, the conditions under which these competitive examinations are organized can have a significant impact on candidates' satisfaction and, consequently, on their performance and well-being. Hence the importance of regulating these conditions to ensure the fairness and efficiency of the admissions process. Research (Smith et al., 2018; Johnson, 2019) has shown that a variety of factors influence candidate satisfaction at university entrance examinations, including accommodation conditions (housing, transport, food), the conditions under which physical tests are conducted and administrative conditions. In this context, studies have revealed that inadequate accommodation conditions can cause stress and fatigue, thus negatively affecting candidates' performance (Brown & Williams, 2017).

Similarly, a well-organized testing environment that is perceived as fair promotes better performance and a positive perception of the competition (Davis et al., 2016). Despite this knowledge, there remains a need for specific research on the STAPS entrance exam, to better understand how these different factors influence candidate satisfaction. The aim of this study is therefore to assess the candidates' level of satisfaction with accommodation conditions, the conduct of physical tests and administrative conditions during this competitive examination. Exploiting these dimensions enabled us to identify areas requiring improvement and to propose recommendations for optimizing the admissions process. The results showed that accommodation, physical testing and administrative conditions play an interconnected and significant role in the degree of satisfaction of applicants to the first-year STAPS entrance exam. Careful attention to these aspects can not only improve the immediate experience of applicants, but also enhance the image and reputation of the institution among prospective students.

In addition, the imbalance in the variability of baccalaureate streams could have an impact on future pedagogical orientations and research. To do this, we will first expose the problem and the questions that arose from it. Then, following a review of the methodology used, we will present and analyze the research results.

Current issues : The evaluation of admissions processes in physical education and sports programs is crucial to guarantee the equity and efficiency of the educational system. Firstly, studies on entrance examinations for the first year of the STAPS (Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives) bachelor's degree are limited, but similar research in other fields shows that accommodation conditions, the conduct of tests and administrative aspects have a strong influence on candidate satisfaction and performance (Smith et al., 2018; Johnson, 2019).

Thus, lodging, transport and food conditions during competitions are determining factors in candidates' well-being. Studies show that inadequate accommodation conditions can lead to stress and fatigue, affecting candidates' performance (Brown & Williams, 2017). Similarly, the conditions under which physical tests are conducted are also critical. Research indicates that a well-organized and fair testing environment promotes optimal performance and a positive perception of the competition (Davis et al., 2016). Finally, administrative conditions, such as clear instructions and a transparent selection process, play a key role in candidate satisfaction and the perceived fairness of the competition (Garcia, 2018).

Accommodation, physical testing and administrative conditions play a crucial role in the degree of satisfaction of candidates for the entrance exam to the first year of the STAPS (Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives) degree program. Indeed, conditions relating to lodging, transport and food influence candidates' immediate experience, as well as their perception of the fairness and quality of the institution. Comfortable, well-located lodging reduces candidates' stress and enables them to concentrate fully on the tests, while clean and secure facilities contribute to a positive experience, thereby increasing their satisfaction (Davis, L., Smith, K., & Thompson, R.(2016)). In addition, reliable and well-organized transportation arrangements enable candidates to arrive at tests on time and in good condition. This avoids delays and inconvenience, improving their perception of the overall organization of the competition. And an adequate, healthy diet is essential for candidates to maintain their energy and concentration. Indeed, if food is of good quality and adapted to candidates' nutritional needs, it contributes to their general well-being, which has a positive influence on their satisfaction. For the purposes of this study, only transport was not taken in charge by the organizers, which removes their power to control certain crucial aspects of the social and environmental conditions of the events. However, the conditions under which the physical tests take place are totally under the control of the organizers of the STAPS department of the UFR SEFS, and take into account both organization and logistics. Indeed, clarity and efficiency in the organization of the physical tests are essential, as a smooth progression without delays or interruptions minimizes stress and anxiety, enabling candidates to perform to the best of their abilities. On the other hand, modern, well-maintained equipment and suitable facilities (pitches, sports halls) play a decisive role in ensuring that candidates feel valued and respected, which in

turn increases their satisfaction. In addition to these two aspects, appropriate safety measures and the availability of first aid ensure a safe environment for candidates. This contributes to their peace of mind and positive perception of the event. In addition to the conditions under which the physical tests are held, the administrative conditions for admission play a key role in determining the degree of satisfaction of applicants for the first-year STAPS entrance exam. Clear, well-communicated instructions on admissions procedures reduce confusion and stress, and well-defined, transparent processes boost applicants' confidence in the system. Easily accessible information on admission criteria, important dates and required documents enables applicants to prepare adequately, increasing their satisfaction.

The availability of competent staff ready to answer candidates' questions and assist them in the event of a problem is an essential factor, as effective administrative support enhances the candidate experience. Thus, when administrative conditions are clear and well managed, applicants perceive the admissions process as fair and professional, which reinforces their satisfaction. If favorable conditions are followed by adequate support, this would increase applicants' motivation and commitment to the STAPS program. Finally, a positive experience during the entrance examination may also influence their decision to continue their studies at this institution for their future training. This study begins with a central question: how satisfied are candidates with the STAPS entrance examinations at universities? How satisfied are applicants with the conditions of accommodation, such as transport, the conditions under which the physical tests are held, and the administrative conditions for admission to the first year of the STAPS bachelor's degree?

Research objective

The aim is to assess the degree of satisfaction of applicants with regard to accommodation conditions such as transport, the conditions under which physical tests are carried out, and the administrative conditions for admission to the first year of the STAPS bachelor's degree.

Key assumptions

- Candidates who are satisfied with the accommodation conditions will have a better perception of their entrance examination experience.
- Efficient organization of physical tests will contribute to greater candidate satisfaction and better results.
- Transparent, well-managed administrative conditions will boost candidate satisfaction and their perception of the fairness of the admissions process.

METHODOLOGY

Having set out the problem, research question, objectives and research hypotheses, the following section is devoted to the methodology used in this study.

Sampling: A random sample of 260 candidates who took part in the competitive entrance examination for the first year of the STAPS bachelor's degree is selected. To determine its size, we used the following formula to ensure an accurate estimate: $n = N \cdot Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p) / E^2 \cdot (N-1) + Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)$ where: n = sample size, N

= population size (800 candidates), Z = Z-score corresponding to confidence level (e.g., 1.96 for 95% confidence interval), p = hypothetical proportion of population (e.g., 0.5 to maximize variability and obtain maximum sample size), E = desired margin of error (e.g., 5% or 0.05). The values were: $N=800$, $Z=1.96$, $p=0.5$, $E=0.05$. Inserting them into the formula gives: $n=800 \cdot (1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5) / (0.05)^2 = (800-1) + (1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)$. The calculation of each component is: $Z^2=1.96^2=3.8416$, $p \cdot (1-p)=0.5 \cdot 0.5=0.25$, $E^2=0.05^2=0.0025$. Putting the formula together gives: $n=800 \cdot 3.8416 \cdot 0.25 / 0.0025 = 799 + 3.8416 \cdot 0.25$, so $n=768/1.9975+0.9604$, $n=768/2.9579$, $n \approx 259.57$. So the ideal sample size would be around 260 candidates.

Measurement tools

A structured questionnaire was used to measure the degree of satisfaction of applicants, covering:

- Transportation conditions
- Physical test conditions
- Administrative conditions for admission

Responses were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = agree, 5 = strongly disagree).

Semi-structured interviews enabled us to select a sample of 5 participants to gather additional qualitative data and deepen our understanding of candidates' perceptions. The aim was to explore specific experiences and perceptions in depth.

Data collection and analysis: Data is collected using questionnaires distributed to candidates after the end of the competition. The "google form" application was used to construct and distribute the questionnaires by email and via social networks. A quantitative analysis of the data collected was carried out to assess satisfaction levels, correlations between the various aspects evaluated and the impact on the overall experience of the candidates.

Procedure: Firstly, questionnaires were distributed to candidates a few weeks after the competition. Candidates from previous years also took part in the study. Next, semi-structured interviews were conducted with volunteers from the sub-sample, followed by analysis of the quantitative data using descriptive and inferential statistics (chi-square test, analysis of variance). Finally, qualitative data were analyzed using thematic coding.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Having outlined the methodology used to carry out this research, the following section presents an analysis of the results gathered.

I/ Quantitative approach: Analysis of the results in terms of general information revealed a heterogeneous population. A total of 168 candidates, including 126 men and 44 women aged between 19 and 31, from 14 regions of Senegal completed the questionnaires. The planned sample size was 260, but this was not achieved. So, to ensure that this was a sufficient sample for this study, we calculated the margin of error for a 95% confidence level with a sample of 168 subjects in a population of 800 candidates, using the following margin of error formula :

$$\text{Margin of error} = \frac{Z \times \sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$$

Where:

- Z is the z-score corresponding to the 95% confidence level, which corresponds to approximately 1.96 for a 95% confidence level.
- σ is the population standard deviation (or an estimate thereof).
- n is the sample size, in this case $n = 168$.

Assuming that the standard deviation of the population is not known and is not estimated from the sample, we have used a conservative estimate of 0.5 for the standard deviation (since this is the maximum value of the standard deviation for a 50/50 proportion). The calculation gives:

$$\text{Margin of error} = \frac{1.96 \times 0.5}{\sqrt{168}}$$

$$\text{Margin of error} = \frac{0.98}{\sqrt{168}}$$

$$\text{Margin of Error} \approx \frac{0.98}{12.884}$$

$$\text{Margin of Error} \approx 0.076$$

So, with a confidence level of 95%, the margin of error for a sample of 168 subjects in a population of 800 candidates is around 0.076, which means that estimates based on this sample can vary by around ± 0.076 from the true value in the population. This is sufficient and reasonable for this heterogeneous and varied population.

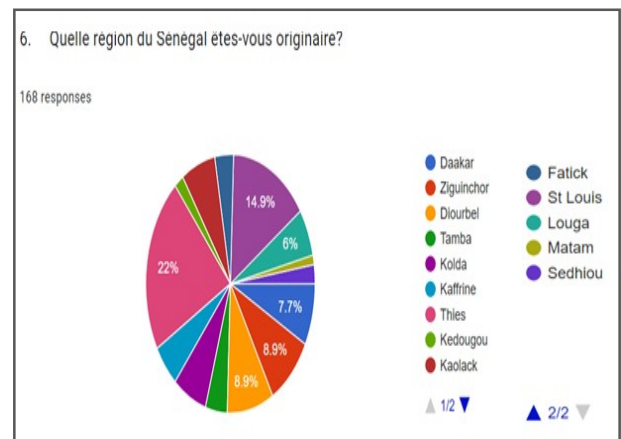


Table 1. Distribution of candidates by region of Senegal

Table 1: Distribution of candidates by region of Senegal Most candidates came from the St Louis region (22%), Thiès (14.9%) and Diourbel (8.9%). The L stream is by far the most represented, with 89.9%.

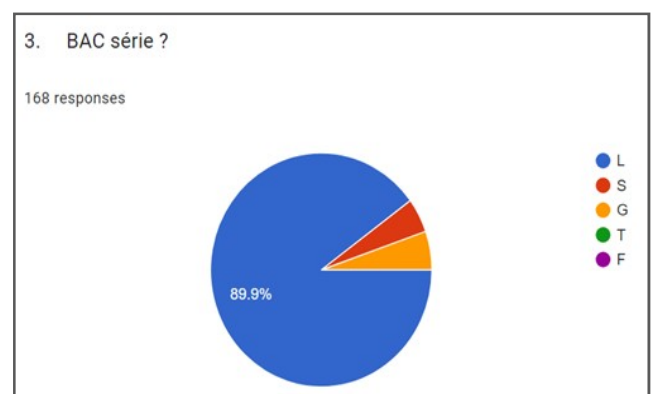


Table 2. Breakdown of applicants by Baccalaureate streams

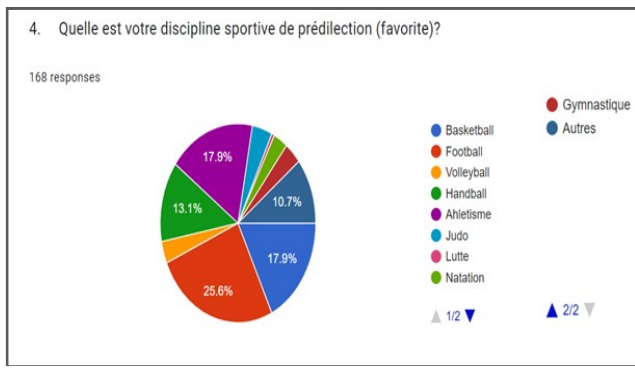


Table 3. Breakdown of applicants by preferred sport discipline

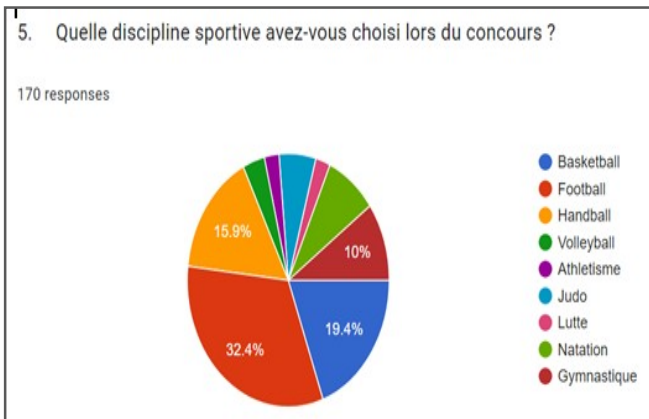


Table 4. Distribution of candidates according to the discipline chosen for the competition

Transportation conditions

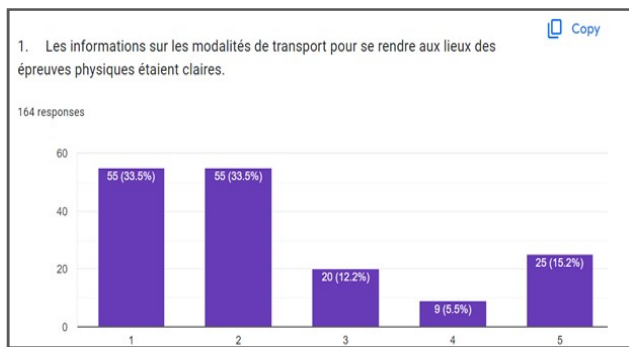


Diagram 1: breakdown of information on transportation terms and conditions. An analysis of the results on the clarity of information on how to get to the physical event venues reveals an overall mixed perception among respondents. The data show that 33.5% of participants strongly agreed and 33.5% somewhat agreed with the clarity of the information, suggesting that two-thirds of respondents felt that the instructions provided were sufficiently clear. This may indicate that for a majority, transport information was well communicated and understandable. However, a significant proportion of participants, 12.2%, expressed a neutral opinion (3), which may reflect uncertainty or indifference as to the clarity of the information received. On the other hand, a total of 20.7% (5.5% disagree and 15.2% strongly disagree) of respondents found the information insufficiently clear, indicating a need for improvement. This distribution indicates that although a majority perceived the information as clear, a fifth of candidates encountered difficulties in understanding or a lack of adequate information, which could potentially affect

their preparation and increase stress. These results therefore suggest that, although transport information was clear to a majority of candidates, there remains a significant segment that did not find the information sufficiently explicit, pointing to a need for clarification or reinforcement of communication channels to ensure better understanding for all. This analysis highlights the importance of continuous improvement in logistical communications to fully satisfy all candidates and minimize ambiguities that can affect their overall competition experience.

Conditions for the physical tests

Criteria

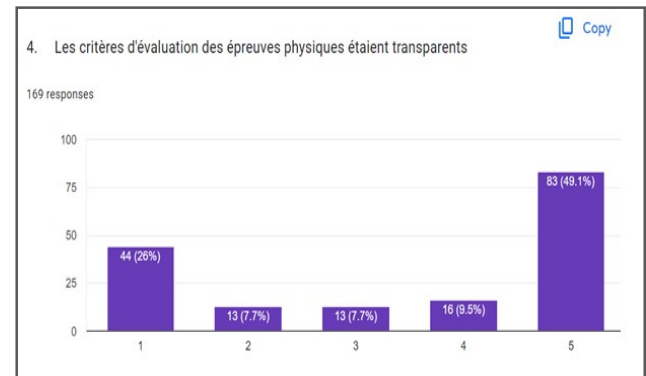


Diagram 2. Candidates' perceptions of the transparency of evaluation criteria for physical tests

The results concerning the transparency of the evaluation criteria for the physical tests reveal a predominantly positive perception among respondents. With 49.1% of participants strongly agreeing and 9.5% somewhat agreeing, it is clear that over half of respondents (58.6%) felt that the assessment criteria were clear and transparent. This indicates a high level of satisfaction, suggesting that the majority of candidates had a good understanding of the criteria applied, which probably reinforced their confidence in the fairness of the assessment process. However, 7.7% of participants remained neutral, expressing indifference or lack of certainty about the transparency of the criteria, which may reflect a partial understanding or lack of personal commitment in this regard. In contrast, 26% of participants strongly disagreed, and 7.7% somewhat disagreed, indicating that almost a third of respondents perceived a lack of transparency in the evaluation of physical tests.

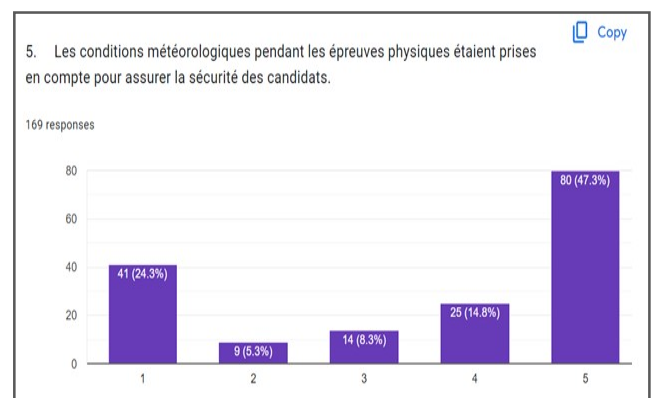


Diagram 3. Candidates' perceptions of how weather conditions affect candidate safety

This group, although in the minority, highlights a significant concern regarding the clarity and communication of evaluation criteria, which could generate a sense of injustice or frustration among these candidates. Thus, despite a majority satisfaction, the presence of a dissatisfied minority highlights the need to further improve the communication and explanation of evaluation criteria to ensure universal understanding and reinforce the perception of fairness among all candidates. These results show that, although the transparency of the criteria is recognized by a majority, there remains a significant segment of participants who could benefit from further clarification, which is crucial to ensuring full confidence in the evaluation process.

Weather conditions

Diagram 3: Candidates' perceptions of how weather conditions affect candidate safety

Analysis of the results concerning the consideration given to weather conditions to ensure the safety of candidates during physical tests reveals an overall positive perception. Almost half of respondents (47.3%) strongly agreed, indicating a high level of satisfaction with weather safety measures, followed by 14.8% who somewhat agreed, bringing the total proportion of satisfied respondents to 62.1%. This majority shows that most candidates felt that weather conditions were adequately managed for their safety, suggesting good organization and effective risk anticipation. However, a significant minority expressed reservations: 24.3% strongly disagreed, reflecting a quarter of participants who felt that weather conditions had not been properly taken into account. This group may have experienced situations where risks were not sufficiently anticipated, generating safety concerns. The fact that 5.3% disagreed and 8.3% were neutral indicates that, although a minority, there are differences of opinion on the effectiveness of the measures taken. These results show that a majority recognizes an effective effort in weather management, but that concerns remain among a significant proportion of applicants, underlining the importance of reinforcing and better communicating safety measures to ensure the confidence of all participants.

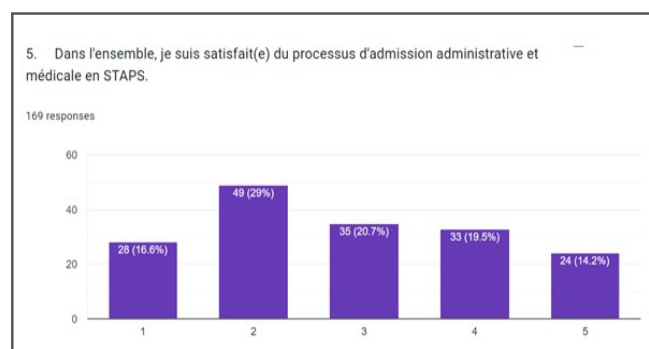


Diagram 4. Candidate satisfaction with the STAPS admission and medical process

Administrative admission requirements

Analysis of the results relating to overall satisfaction with the STAPS administrative and medical admissions process shows a relatively dispersed distribution of opinions. A total of 16.6% of respondents strongly agree, indicating high satisfaction among a minority.

However, a larger proportion, 29%, fell into the somewhat agree category, suggesting that a significant proportion of participants found the process satisfactory, but perhaps not unreservedly so. Neutral respondents, representing 20.7%, were also numerous, which may indicate a mixed perception, with no strong feeling of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. On the other hand, 19.5% of participants tend to disagree, expressing concern or dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the admissions process. Finally, 14.2% strongly disagreed, expressing strong dissatisfaction. These results reveal that, although the majority are relatively satisfied or neutral (46.3% agree vs. 33.7% disagree), there is a sizeable group of applicants who perceive shortcomings in the process. This diversity of opinion underlines the need for an in-depth evaluation to identify specific aspects of the admissions process that could use improvement, particularly in communication, transparency, or administrative and medical management, in order to better meet the expectations and needs of all applicants.

Qualitative approach: In order to collect and analyze qualitative data from responses to semi-structured interview questions on the experience of candidates for the first-year STAPS entrance examination, thematic coding is structured around the following main themes:

Theme 1: Logistics

Transportation

Punctuality, coordination of journeys. For 78% of subjects, transport was poorly organized, with frequent delays. For future candidates, punctuality should be improved (16%).

Theme 2: the administrative process

Clarity of procedures

This is the perception of the clarity of instructions and understanding of the steps involved. For 50% of applicants, the administrative procedures were fairly clear overall, but the online platform posed a few problems (20%), notably slowness and difficulty in tracking application status. A more intuitive interface and more frequent updates would be appreciated (30%).

Information accessibility

This refers to the ease of obtaining information, and the transparency of criteria. 67% found their experience with administrative procedures positive overall, but there were moments of confusion. The instructions on what documents to provide were clear, but 13% found that the follow-up of their application lacked transparency, and that there was no online platform for tracking status. In addition, response times for questions asked by e-mail were quite long, which added to the uncertainty (24%). 8% think that smoother communication, with regular updates on the status of the application, would help to make the process more serene for candidates.

Administrative support

It takes into account the efficiency, responsiveness and availability of staff to resolve problems or answer questions.

Theme 3: Physical tests

Test organization

The analysis takes into account the perception of the planning, time management and conduct of the tests. For 43% of candidates, the organization of the physical tests was well managed, but the lack of information before the tests caused stress (12%). A more detailed briefing would have helped them prepare better mentally (18%). However, 9% did not appreciate the lack of flexibility in the organization according to weather conditions. They didn't like the fact that the supervisors didn't take the weather conditions into account, not adjusting the program accordingly to avoid the hottest moments of the day. This showed a lack of concern for the candidates' well-being and made the experience more or less negative.

DISCUSSION

The impact on the first-year STAPS curriculum could be considerable, depending on the distribution of students from different baccalaureate streams. If the majority of students come from the literary L series, this could affect the diversity of skills within the graduating class. In physiology, a lack of knowledge of the physical and biological sciences could necessitate a strengthening of the biology foundations. In biomechanics, students from the L streams, who generally have less experience in mathematics and physics, may need to adapt their courses to fill these gaps. In Physical and Sports Activities (PSA), although the L streams can offer skills in literary analysis and critical thinking, adjustments may be required to integrate the more practical and technical aspects of PSA. In the humanities and social sciences, a strong representation of the L streams could bring a heightened sensitivity to the sociological, historical and philosophical aspects of physical activities and sports, thus enriching discussions.

However, it may be necessary to strengthen social science knowledge to balance with the more scientific aspects. In short, the diversity of profiles in STAPS can enrich academic debates, but it also calls for adjustments in the program to ensure that all students acquire the required skills, both scientific and practical. Program managers must therefore carefully monitor student performance and adapt teaching accordingly to maintain quality training (Coulon, A. 1997). Would it be a good idea to create selection criteria to balance the number of candidates admitted according to baccalaureate streams?.

Creating selection criteria to balance the number of candidates admitted according to baccalaureate series can enrich the diversity of profiles within a STAPS graduating class, fostering richer and more varied exchanges. To implement such criteria, it is crucial to clearly define the objective of balance between the different series, based on historical data and the specific needs of the program (Goastellec, G 2020). Selection criteria must be transparent, objective and relevant, including assessments of scientific, mathematical, linguistic and physical skills, as well as interviews to assess the motivation of candidates (Duru-Bellat M. and Merle P., 2000). Once students have been selected, it may be necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the specific needs of each profile, which could include support courses, optional modules or personalized tutoring.

In addition, regular monitoring of student performance should be put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of selection criteria and program adaptations, enabling these processes to be adjusted over time to ensure student success. What major concerns might be raised by the situation where a significant percentage of applicants (initially 25.3%, then 32.4%) turn to soccer when they fail to find the discipline of their choice?. Firstly, the fact that some candidates had to choose soccer by default rather than out of personal interest suggests a certain level of dissatisfaction. It could also indicate a lack of diversity or accessibility in the disciplines on offer, which can undermine students' motivation and commitment to their STAPS course. Secondly, an influx of applicants to a specific discipline, such as soccer, could unbalance the distribution of students across the different streams, leading to overcrowding in some programs and a lack of applicants in others, especially in optional activities. Also, students who have not been able to choose their preferred discipline could be less committed and less satisfied with their training, which could affect their academic performance and perseverance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It would be appropriate to broaden and diversify the range of sports disciplines available in the STAPS entrance exam. This would better meet the varied interests of applicants and reduce the need to make a default choice.
- Better communication on the disciplines available and how to access them could help applicants make more informed choices in line with their personal interests.
- Secondly, introduce a pre-selection phase where candidates can express their preferences before the competition. This approach would enable us to adjust supply to actual demand, and better guide candidates towards disciplines where there is availability.
- Implement more robust guidance services to help candidates understand the different options available and find a discipline that truly matches their aspirations and skills.

CONCLUSION

This research has provided specific recommendations for improving the accommodation (transport), test-taking and administrative conditions of the STAPS bachelor's degree entrance examinations, thereby contributing to greater candidate satisfaction and a fairer, more efficient admissions process. It is of particular importance as it will not only improve the experience of candidates, but also enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the STAPS entrance examinations. By integrating scientific perspectives and drawing on empirical data, this research will contribute to fairer and more efficient administrative and organizational practices.

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