

Early Graduation Rituals: A Sociological Analysis of Celebration Practices of the Primary Education Certificate in Algeria Through Digital Video

Content

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Abstract:

This article examines the phenomenon of early graduation rituals among primary school pupils in Algeria as an emerging social practice that reflects transformations in perceptions of academic success and the functions of the school as an educational institution. The study aims to deconstruct the symbols and practices accompanying these rituals and to analyze their presence in the digital space, particularly on the “TikTok” platform, in order to better understand their symbolic and social dimensions.

The findings of the analysis show that these celebrations are not merely moments of collective joy; rather, they represent a symbolic reproduction of success in which the performative and consumerist dimensions intersect with the educational one. The child is granted symbolic capital that circulates through digital imagery. The study also reveals that these rituals constitute a dual response: on the one hand, they satisfy a social need for recognition and visibility; on the other, they compensate for a collective anxiety regarding the fragility of educational attainment.

Keywords: Graduation Rituals; Pupil; Academic Success; Digital Space.

Introduction

Graduation rituals and the attainment of educational certificates are among the longstanding social practices in various societies, as they represent a decisive moment symbolizing the transition from one stage to another, whether from childhood to adolescence, or from education to work. These rituals are not limited to documenting the end of the academic journey; they also express collective recognition of individual effort and constitute a symbolic achievement within the group, carrying strong emotional charges alongside family participation and collective celebration of success and identity.

Over time, these rituals have evolved and taken different forms depending on cultural and social contexts. While some societies have preserved their formal and ceremonial character, others have introduced more performative and commercial dimensions, particularly

with the emergence of digital media, which has transferred these rituals from private family albums to the public digital sphere. This shift has subjected them to the logic of mass interaction and symbolic consumption.

In the Algerian context, recent years have witnessed a notable transformation in the representation of graduation moments, especially at the primary education level. Whereas this stage was traditionally concluded with the distribution of certificates and simple congratulatory gestures, it has now become a large-scale celebratory occasion. Elements associated with university graduation—such as gowns and staged photography rituals—are increasingly adopted, and the event is reproduced in an exaggerated celebratory form similar to coronation ceremonies. The moment is documented through audio-visual means and circulated in the public digital space, transforming the end of primary education from a purely educational event into a fully developed rite of passage with symbolic and identity-related dimensions.

This transformation reveals a profound social dynamic, as graduation is no longer merely an educational milestone but has become a space for the reproduction of social values and the expression of an individual's status within the group. The celebratory practices associated with these rituals not only reflect families' aspirations to grant symbolic recognition to their children, but also reveal an interplay between traditional patterns of perceiving success and new forms generated by digital globalization.

From this perspective, graduation rituals become a multidimensional interactive moment: on the one hand, they express an educational practice, while on the other, they function as a means of self-presentation and of enhancing the family's symbolic capital in the public sphere. Thus, educational symbolism becomes intertwined with the logic of display and cultural consumption.

Consequently, graduation rituals transcend their apparent boundaries as educational events to constitute a symbolic field that embodies mechanisms of change and transformation within social and cultural structures. They reveal the dynamics of interaction between individuals and groups, as well as the ways in which symbols and celebrations are mobilized to reinforce new forms of social recognition and collective belonging.

They also enable a deeper understanding of the interaction between traditional references and emerging representations produced by contemporary communicational and digital transformations. This makes graduation a complex moment in which forms of collective memory intersect with symbolic self-representation. In this sense, these rituals express the dialectic of continuity and renewal in social life, going beyond inherited ritual dimensions to engage with the mechanisms of display and cultural consumption generated by late modernity, ultimately producing a hybrid social space that reflects shifts in values and the stakes of status and recognition within the public sphere.

Problem Statement

The transformations taking place in the educational landscape in Algeria reveal the emergence of a new social practice related to the school as an educational institution, namely graduation celebrations that now extend to primary school pupils. This phenomenon was not

previously common in traditional school culture, as graduation has expanded to include children in the early stages of their schooling, who are celebrated as though they had reached the end of a major academic cycle.

However, this cannot be viewed merely as a natural extension of a culture of recognition or as a simple expression of collective joy; rather, it is part of a broader process of reshaping educational symbols and social representations of success. The transfer of celebratory rituals from the university space to the primary school environment reflects a form of symbolic diffusion of academic ceremonial practices to younger age levels. This raises questions about how meanings of achievement and social recognition are being reconstructed in early educational contexts.

This expansion also reflects an increasing overlap between the logic of the family and that of the educational institution, where families seek through these celebrations to assert their symbolic presence in the public sphere, while the school becomes involved in a new symbolic order that goes beyond its direct educational function, touching upon dimensions related to identity, status, and symbolic capital within society.

While this transformation may appear, on the surface, as an extension of joy and collective recognition of success, it in fact carries deeper implications regarding the symbolic functions of the school, representations of childhood, and the roles of the family. Success is no longer merely an educational achievement; it has become a fully staged celebratory event, framed by ritual practices, circulated through images, and invested within a new logic of symbolic economy.

Within this shifting context, the celebratory rituals accompanying the end of primary education establish themselves as a social practice that calls for sociological reflection, given the symbolic and collective meanings they carry. This transformation in forms of expressing academic success, along with the extension of graduation rituals to earlier educational stages, reflects a reconfiguration of the relationship between social actors, the school, the educational event, and collective representations of success. At the same time, these practices emerge as manifestations of deeper transformations that may be linked to family expectations, social pressures, and the dynamics of digital media, without any prior determination of their nature or objectives. This makes them a phenomenon that warrants investigation and analysis within a multi-level sociological framework.

From this perspective, the central question guiding this article is: What are the meanings of the new celebratory rituals associated with primary school graduation in Algeria? Do early graduation rituals represent a response to an increasing social need for recognition and visibility, or are they an expression of deeper transformations in the functions of the school and in representations of success and social status?

From this standpoint, the article does not merely document the manifestations of early graduation rituals; rather, it seeks to examine their symbolic and social dimensions from a sociological perspective by analyzing their visual representations as they appear in digital content. The significance of this approach lies in shedding light on an unusual transformation in the functions of educational rituals and contributing to a broader understanding of changes

affecting the school, childhood, and notions of academic success in the Algerian context, particularly in light of accelerating digitalization and the increasing overlap between the family and educational spheres.

Accordingly, this article aims to:

- Deconstructing the symbols and practices accompanying primary school graduation celebrations, as emerging rites of passage within the Algerian educational and social context.
- Highlighting transformations in representations of academic success through the analysis of visual content in digital videos documenting these rituals.
- Analyzing the role played by digital platforms in amplifying the event and transforming it into a collective performative occasion with new symbolic functions.
- Examining the social and cultural factors that have led to the emergence of these rituals, and exploring their relationship with ongoing transformations affecting the family and the school.

Based on the above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Primary school graduation rituals represent a reconfiguration of representations of success and of the roles of the school and childhood, where both the family and the school seek to produce early symbolic recognition of achievement within a contemporary performative social context.
2. These celebratory rituals reflect a collective anxiety regarding the decline of educational effectiveness, thereby becoming a form of symbolic compensation that masks the fragility of actual educational outcomes and reproduces school belonging through form rather than substance. (Al-Taher, 1991) (Muhammad Hussein, 1983) (Bouamousha, 2022) (Ben Maamar, 2019) (Toualbia, 2019) (Augé, 1992) (Bouchard & St-Amant, 1996) (Bourdieu, 1982) (Geertz, 1973) (Goffman, 1959) (Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior*, 1967; Harvey, 1971; Caillouis, 1950) (Van Gennep, 1960) (Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 1909; Villadary, 1968; Laferrière, 2011) (Larousse Dictionary of French, entry “élève.”, n.d.)

2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

1.2 Rituals:

Definition (terminological):

The word “**ritual**” is derived from the Latin word *Ritus*, which refers to the meaning of worship, a religious ceremony, but also, more broadly, to a habit or custom. However, it is difficult to define ritual precisely, as it is a concept connected to many fields. It is found in anthropology, sociology, social psychology, psychoanalysis, and among scholars of customs (Ben Maamar, 2019, p. 14).

The concept of ritual is considered one of the central notions in anthropology and sociology, as it refers to a set of standardized and repetitive practices of a symbolic nature that give events a meaning beyond their immediate reality. In a broad sense, it is any patterned, repetitive, and obligatory behavior. Van Gennep (1909, p. 13) defines rituals as “social practices that regulate the transition of individuals from one social status to another,

structured around three key stages: separation, transition, and incorporation.” This perspective makes ritual a tool for reconstructing and reinforcing social status through collective mechanisms.

In the same context, Geertz (1973, p. 112) views rituals as “cultural systems of symbols and signs used to produce shared meanings within a community,” making them a means of understanding the social self within a specific cultural framework. From another perspective, Goffman (1967, p. 56) argues that everyday rituals, whether sacred or secular, play a fundamental role in maintaining the individual’s “social face” and preserving interactional relationships.

Operational Definition:

In the context of this study, rituals refer to a set of structured ceremonial practices that accompany the transition of the pupil from primary education to middle education. These include collective forms and symbols (such as wearing graduation gowns, throwing caps, delivering farewell speeches, exchanging gifts, or preparing special spaces for the event). These practices do not merely add a celebratory dimension to the graduation moment; rather, they transform it into a symbolic social event that gives meaning to academic success, reinforces collective recognition of the pupil’s achievement, and reconstructs representations of success within both family and collective consciousness, in a local culture also influenced by contemporary digital media.

2.2 The Pupil

Conceptual Definition

The Larousse online dictionary (Larousse Dictionary of French, entry “élève.”, n.d.) defines the pupil as a person who receives education in a school institution; that is, an individual who is taught by a teacher.

Al-Taher (1991, p. 9) defines the pupil as a social being within an educational institution who interacts within a network of pedagogical relationships. The pupil’s role is shaped through the educational process within the classroom group and between the school and the family environment. The pupil is considered the primary focus and ultimate objective of all educational processes, for whom the school is established and equipped with all necessary resources.

Operational Definition:

The pupil is the individual officially enrolled in the fifth year of primary education, who particularly participates in graduation rituals. Their presence is manifested through visible elements such as wearing a graduation gown, participating in school or extracurricular celebrations, and interacting with teachers and parents within symbolic interactive spaces.

2.3 Academic Achievement:

Conceptual Definition:

The concept of achievement refers to the attainment of learning objectives specific to each stage of the educational pathway. When these stages coincide with the end of an academic cycle or educational level, academic achievement is generally translated into

obtaining a diploma or certificate, and ultimately successful integration into the workforce (Laferrière, 2011, p. 165).

Bouchard and St-Amant (1996, p. 4) define it as the achievement of educational goals related to the mastery of specific knowledge, that is, the progress made by the pupil within the school. This progress follows the sequence of taught subjects (curricula) defined by the Ministry of Education. Throughout this process, the pupil is evaluated based on performance, and the pathway ends with a certificate allowing either progression to a higher level or specialization.

Operational Definition:

In this study, academic achievement refers to the institutional and administrative transition of fifth-year primary school pupils to middle school. This transition is based on internal criteria established by the school, without passing through a standardized national examination. Consequently, it is no longer grounded in a unified measure of cognitive performance as in the past, but rather becomes an administrative decision that ensures the continuity of the educational pathway. Within this framework, academic achievement acquires a new meaning through the ceremonial rituals that accompany it, where it is no longer perceived solely as a learning outcome, but as a collective event in which success is displayed and broad social recognition is granted. Thus, achievement shifts from a purely cognitive outcome to a social symbol carrying meanings that extend beyond the school, as both the family and the school jointly contribute to reshaping the meaning of success within a new cultural system that combines local traditions with digital influences.

2.2 Digital Space:

Conceptual Definition:

The concept of digital space is characterized by multiple terminologies due to its association with the World Wide Web and the new applications it has enabled. It has established an informational and communicative space with a virtual nature. Among these designations are electronic space, virtual space, and cyberspace. This multiplicity of terms reflects a single communicative function within this digital environment. As Toulabia (2019, p. 49) states, “digital space, virtual world, cyberspace, and electronic world are all synonymous terms, referring to continuous communication among the world’s population through the network.”

Operational Definition:

In this article, digital space refers to the communicative infrastructure provided by the TikTok platform, including broadcasting, documentation, and interaction technologies. Through this platform, graduation rituals of primary education in Algeria shift from being a limited family and school-based event into a public spectacle that is displayed and circulated through audiovisual media. Ceremonial practices that were traditionally confined to the family or educational institution find a new extension in this space, allowing their reproduction in aesthetic and performative forms and granting them a broader social dimension beyond direct participants. In this sense, digital space is not limited to its purely technical dimension; rather, it emerges as a social and cultural field where familial and

educational symbols intersect with the logic of display and consumption. This opens the way to understanding early school rituals as contemporary phenomena shaped within the dynamics of the virtual public sphere.

3. Methodology

This study falls within analytical research that aims to examine specific phenomena in order to obtain sufficient and accurate information about them. Since the present study seeks to understand and explore the symbolic and social meanings of end-of-primary-school celebrations as they are produced and circulated through social media platforms—particularly TikTok, which has become influential in shaping and transmitting patterned behaviors—we adopted the descriptive-analytical approach. This approach allows for a systematic and precise description of visual and verbal content, as well as the analysis and interpretation of the underlying symbolic and social meanings. Frequency counts of selected categories were also used to support the descriptive analysis and highlight the intensity of their presence within the studied sample.

3.1 Research Tools

The researcher employs a set of tools consistent with the nature of the topic. In this study, the following tools were used:

- **Observation:** Simple observation was used to obtain preliminary information and data about the phenomenon under study.
- **Content Analysis:** As a tool and a “method aimed at the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Bouamousha, 2022, p. 65), this technique was employed by organizing analytical units and designing categories in the form of a content analysis sheet. The instrument included several dimensions aligned with the study’s objectives.

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The research population consists of publicly available videos posted on the TikTok platform that depict graduation ceremonies of fifth-year primary school pupils in Algeria.

The study selected a purposive sample consisting of:

- 20 videos published in 2025, with durations ranging between 5 and 10 minutes.
- Posts that received significant audience engagement.
- Videos clearly depicting rituals such as graduation gowns, certificate distribution, celebrations, decorations, and interactions.
- Content covering multiple geographical regions (to ensure cultural and symbolic representativeness).

3.3 Units of Analysis

A unit is a means of recording or counting; it is the smallest element through which the repetition of a phenomenon can be observed (Mohamed Hussein, 1983, p. 78). In this study, we adopt the **thematic semantic unit** as the primary unit of analysis, due to its capacity for flexible deconstruction of symbols and content that go beyond the surface level to reach socially constructed meanings.

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4.3 Analysis Grid

To ensure methodological rigor in the content analysis of the digital videos under study, a flexible thematic analysis grid was developed based on the following dimensions:

Table 1: Content Analysis Grid

Thematic Analysis Axes	Analytical Indicators
Symbolic ritual	Clothing, music, certificates, decoration, school stage, hospitality
Actors and roles	Who organizes? Who is celebrated? Who comments?
Symbolic representations	Meanings of success, heroism, excellence, praise
Consumerist and performative dimension	Halls, gifts, uniforms, effects, filming services

Source: Prepared by the researcher

To ensure validity, the dimensions of the grid were aligned with the study's objectives and research questions. The design was also based on precise conceptual references. Furthermore, a pilot test of the grid was conducted on a preliminary sample of three videos to assess the validity of the categories, identify ambiguities or insufficient dimensions, and make necessary adjustments before full application.

Regarding reliability, the coding procedures for each dimension were carefully documented to allow replication on similar videos. In addition, the same video was re-analyzed after a time interval to verify coding stability and to reduce subjective bias.

5.3 Data Processing Tools

- Descriptive transcription of visual and audio content.
- Classification and comparative analysis of recurring indicators.
- Sociological interpretation based on the following literature:
 - Social rituals (Van Gennep, 1909) .
 - Educational symbolism (Bourdieu, 1990) .
 - Dramaturgical performance in everyday life (Goffman, 1959).

4. Research Results

It should be noted that this study focuses on analyzing the content of graduation videos of fifth-year primary school pupils published on TikTok. In line with the nature of the study, a content analysis sheet was designed to classify the relevant analytical categories. Accordingly, the sheet included several dimensions, which in their final form comprised the following categories and units:

First: Content Categories

1. **Ritual Type:** Formal graduation ceremony – Home celebration – Celebration in a banquet hall – Celebration within the school.
2. **Participants:** Pupils only – Pupils and parents – Pupils and teachers – Distinguished guests.
3. **Activities:** Speeches – Artistic performances – Group dancing – Songs/Chants – Awards and recognition.

Second: Form Categories

4. **Hospitality:** Present – Absent.
5. **Location:** Classroom – Schoolyard – Private venue – Home.
6. **Decoration:** None – Traditional – Luxurious.

Table 2: Results of the Content Category Analysis

Category		Frequency Percentage	
Ritual Type	Formal graduation ceremony	10	50%
	Home celebration	2	10%
	Banquet hall celebration	4	20%
	School-based celebration	4	20%
	Total	20	100%
Participants	Pupils and parents	4	20%
	Pupils and teachers	14	70%
	Distinguished guests	2	10%
	Total	20	100%
Activities	Speeches	10	50%
	Artistic performances	4	20%
	Awards and recognition	6	30%
	Total	20	100%

Source: Prepared by the researchers.

The results presented in **Table 2** reveal that the formal graduation ceremony ranks first, accounting for 50% of the sample. This finding reflects a clear tendency to confer an official and institutional character upon the event, even though it concerns children completing primary education. The high proportion suggests that schools—and perhaps families as well—seek to establish an organized symbolic representation of success that transcends the spontaneous or informal nature of a simple celebration. In contrast, home-based celebrations represent only 10% of the sample, indicating that the domestic sphere may no longer be sufficient to satisfy the social need for celebration and recognition. Public visibility and exposure to a wider audience appear to have become integral components of the ritual itself. Meanwhile, celebrations held in banquet halls (20%) and within schools (20%) reflect a

diversity of settings, yet they remain governed by a preference for collective and publicly displayed forms of celebration rather than private ones.

Regarding participants, the findings show that the presence of **teachers alongside pupils in 70% of the cases** reflects a strong attachment to the educational and symbolic dimension of the event. In this context, teachers appear to confer academic legitimacy upon the graduation ceremony. By contrast, the participation of **parents in only 20%** of the sample suggests that the celebrations continue to be organized primarily within the institutional framework of the school. However, the presence of **distinguished guests in 10%** of the cases indicates an effort to broaden the social dimension of the event and to enhance its symbolic status through the attendance of socially respected figures.

At the level of the activities performed, **speech delivery** ranks first with **50%**, indicating the central role of verbal discourse in constructing the meaning of the event. Through speeches, notions of success, excellence, and belonging are reproduced and reinforced. The relatively lower presence of **artistic performances (20%)** may suggest that the creative dimension is not always a priority. Meanwhile, **award and recognition ceremonies (30%)** remain one of the core components of the ritual, as they carry a symbolic dimension of acknowledgment that provides children with a sense of value and achievement.

Table 3: Results of the Analysis of Form Categories

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
Hospitality	Present	12	60%
	Absent	8	40%
	Total	20	100%
Location	Classroom	4	20%
	Schoolyard	8	40%
	Private venue	4	20%
	Home	4	20%
	Total	20	100%
Decoration	Traditional	6	30%
	Luxurious	10	50%
	None	4	20%
	Total	20	100%

Source: Prepared by the researchers.

The data presented in Table 3 reveal that **hospitality** is present in **60%** of the celebrations, indicating that food and refreshments have become an integral component of the ritual scenario. They function not only as elements of hospitality but also as symbols of collective generosity and the completion of the celebratory experience. Conversely, the absence of food-related content in **40%** of the cases may be associated with the nature of the

venue (such as celebrations held in classrooms or schoolyards) or with organizational and economic considerations. Nevertheless, this absence does not diminish the celebratory character of the event.

Regarding the **location**, the **schoolyard** emerges as the preferred setting, accounting for **40%** of the cases. This choice combines the institutional character of the school with openness to a broader audience, allowing for greater participation and more visible documentation of the event. Celebrations held in classrooms, private venues, and homes each account for **20%** of the sample. While these figures reflect diversity in the spaces used, they also suggest that open settings provide the ritual with a more public and performative dimension, one that aligns closely with the logic of sharing and visibility on digital platforms.

With respect to **decoration**, a **luxurious style** predominates, representing **50%** of the sample, while **traditional decoration** accounts for **30%**, and **20%** of the celebrations feature no decoration at all. These findings suggest that graduation ceremonies have increasingly become opportunities for aesthetic and visual investment, with considerable attention devoted to decorative elements that enhance the perceived value of the event among both attendees and online viewers. In this context, luxurious decoration is not merely a backdrop but rather an integral part of the discourse of success, serving as a means of displaying distinction and social prestige.

Overall, these indicators demonstrate that the formal aspects of graduation rituals—from hospitality to decoration—are no longer peripheral elements. Instead, they have become essential components of the symbolic message that the ceremony seeks to convey, both to the immediate audience and to the wider virtual audience reached through digital media platforms.

5. Discussion of the Results

The previous figures, despite their precision, do not fully capture all dimensions of the phenomenon. A decade ago, the end of primary education was a quiet transition: simple certificate distribution, a group photograph, and departure for the summer holiday. Today, however, it has been transformed into a symbolic rite of passage, similar to what Van Gennep (1909, pp. 10-12) described in terms of separation, transition, and incorporation. Children wear graduation outfits resembling those used in universities, halls or schoolyards are decorated, and professional photographs are taken, as if we were witnessing a miniature version of major graduation ceremonies. This reflects a shift from routine school procedures to a highly symbolic and socially constructed moment, in which the child becomes an active participant in a celebratory scene that extends beyond the school into a broader space of meanings and representations.

Part of this transformation in celebratory practices is linked to changes in Algerian families' representations of childhood and success. The current generation of parents grew up in a highly visual digital era and tends to perceive celebration not only as an opportunity for joy, but also as a means of producing symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1982, pp. 45-48) that is publicly displayed and circulated within wide social networks. In this context, celebration becomes a form of symbolic investment in a digital age that reshapes the criteria of success

and recognition. Social media platforms such as TikTok have given even minor events the potential for visibility and engagement, drawing both schools and parents into a dynamic of public display.

The temporal context also helps explain part of the phenomenon. In the past two to three years, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a resurgence of a previously suppressed desire for celebration. This renewed emotional demand, combined with economic and social pressures, has led families to seek moments that provide a sense of achievement and control over life trajectories, even at transitional stages such as the end of primary education. In this sense, celebration is not merely an expression of individual success, but a collective mechanism for coping with fragility and everyday stress, offering symbolic reassurance in response to socioeconomic instability.

Culturally, Algerian society is rich in collective celebratory traditions, ranging from weddings to religious festivities, where symbolic and social dimensions are deeply intertwined. The extension of this celebratory logic into the school environment is not unusual; however, it is now reinforced by a digital performative culture. As Villadary (1968, p. 26) suggests, celebration becomes integrated into everyday life as an “existential experience” tied to a way of living, rather than a transcendent essence. Celebration is no longer perceived as a break from routine, but as part of routine itself, reproduced through visual aesthetics, music, and photography. This reflects how symbolic practices become everyday acts saturated with meanings of identity and belonging, yet increasingly governed by logics of display and consumption.

From another perspective, the clearly visible performative and consumerist dimension in the videos—luxurious decorations, gifts, professional filming, and curated music—approaches what Roger (1950, p. 97) described as a “contagion of excess” in celebratory practices, where participants go beyond conventional limits and temporarily suspend social constraints. It also aligns with Harvey (1971, p. 35), who highlights the deliberate exaggeration in celebrations in terms of spending and behavior, allowing communities to express emotions that are often socially restrained.

Furthermore, the circulation of these videos can be understood as transforming the school space into what Augé (1992, p. 78) calls a “non-place,” a representational space detached from its original context and reconstructed within a digital environment open to an anonymous audience. The event is no longer consumed only within the classroom or schoolyard but is reproduced and reinterpreted in a public digital sphere, adding new layers of meaning—and possibly new pressures on families and schools to conform to dominant visual standards.

In this sense, what we are witnessing is not merely a passing trend, but a transformation in the symbolic structure of the Algerian school, where emotional needs, the search for recognition, and digital cultural pressures intersect to produce a new rite of passage linking childhood and adolescence.

Conclusion

The results of the analysis show that early graduation rituals for primary school pupils in Algeria represent more than transient celebratory practices; they reflect a process of reproducing representations of success, in which symbolic, performative, and consumerist dimensions are intertwined within a local cultural context increasingly influenced by global digital dynamics.

The first hypothesis is clearly supported, as the findings demonstrate that both families and schools jointly seek to produce early symbolic recognition of the child's achievement. This is expressed through luxurious visual elements, standardized attire, and professional digital documentation, all of which grant participants symbolic capital that is circulated within the digital sphere and reinforces social status.

The second hypothesis is also supported by field indicators suggesting that these rituals may function as a response to collective anxiety regarding the perceived weakness of educational effectiveness. In this context, the celebratory form tends to dominate over the educational content, and visual display becomes a means of compensating for—or masking—cognitive gaps.

Moreover, the analysis of these rituals reveals the emergence of what may be termed an economy of symbolism and visibility, where graduation moments become spaces for producing images and meanings that extend beyond the school itself and enter networks of social and digital exchange. Pupils and their families are not merely celebrating individual achievement; they are actively reproducing a social discourse on status, recognition, and success. This positions these practices at the heart of broader societal transformations between tradition and modernity, and between the local and the digital. It also suggests that rituals are no longer confined to localized events but have become platforms for reshaping collective meanings under digital globalization. In this sense, everyday practices are transformed into complex symbolic acts that intertwine educational and cultural dimensions.

Accordingly, these celebratory practices can be understood as a dual response: on the one hand, they satisfy a growing need for recognition and visibility; on the other, they perform a symbolic compensatory function for the fragility of actual educational attainment. This interplay between the symbolic and the compensatory, and between the local and the digital, places the Algerian school system before the challenge of redefining its role in an era of rapid cultural and social transformation.

Finally, while these findings reveal deep symbolic and social dimensions of early graduation rituals, they also open avenues for future research. These may include examining gender representations within these rituals, exploring the psychological and educational impacts of early celebration on children, and analyzing the economic dimensions of what may be called the “economy of celebration.” Comparative studies across local, Arab, and international contexts could further highlight the cultural specificities of these practices. Additionally, there is a need to reconsider how schools and families can adapt to rapid digital transformations in ways that preserve the educational function of graduation and prevent its reduction to purely performative and consumerist displays.

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