



REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-57984

Title: DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING ACCORDING TO WHETHER STUDENTS BELONG TO THE GROUP OF GIRLS OR THE GROUP OF BOYS: THE CASE OF HIGH JUMPING IN FIFTH GRADE AT THE AVOGBANAN GENERAL EDUCATION COLLEGE (BENIN) .

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		√		
Techn. Quality			√	
Clarity		√		
Significance		√		

Reviewer's ID: JPR-212

Detailed Reviewer's Report

This manuscript presents a timely and important investigation into gender-differentiated teaching practices in Physical Education (PE) within the Beninese context. The study focuses on a female teacher who separates boys and girls during high jump instruction in a 5th-grade mixed class, analyzing the resulting didactic interactions and learning environments. The theoretical framework, drawing on the Anthropological Theory of Didactics and the Theory of Joint Didactic Action, is robust and appropriate. The methodological approach, particularly the triangulation of classroom observations, interviews, and a teacher questionnaire, is a strength. However, several critical flaws, primarily concerning methodological transparency, data interpretation, and ethical considerations, prevent acceptance of the paper in its current form.

Major Compulsory Revisions (Reasons for " **Accept after major revision** "):

1. Confirmation Bias and Lack of Critical Distance: The study appears designed to confirm its central hypothesis (boys' environment is more conducive to learning) rather than to test it openly. The teacher's own justifications (e.g., "girls hide behind boys") are taken largely at face value. The paper does not critically examine whether the teacher's lower expectations for girls (e.g., setting the rope at 70cm vs. 100cm for boys) created the very lack of engagement and progress observed, rather than simply responding to pre-existing conditions. This is a classic self-fulfilling prophecy, yet the analysis does not explore this alternative interpretation.
2. Ethical Concerns Regarding Student Treatment: The described practices raise serious ethical questions that the paper fails to address. The teacher openly uses a reward system ("a gift") and public shaming (boys who struggle are a "source of shame") to motivate students. The post-session debriefing, where a boy demonstrates skills and girls are told to "follow the boys' example," reinforces a hierarchical and potentially humiliating classroom dynamic. The manuscript does not discuss whether these practices were reviewed by an ethics board or how student well-being was safeguarded. The "Compliance with ethical standards" section is generic and does not address these specific pedagogical actions.
3. Flawed Causal Logic and Sample Bias: The selection of the four focal students (two "strong" boys, two "weak" girls) is problematic. By selecting only the strongest boys and the weakest girls,

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the study guarantees it will find a performance gap. To properly analyze the effect of the teaching method, the authors should have followed students of comparable initial ability across genders. Furthermore, stating that "the two so-called strong ones are in the boys' group and the two so-called weak ones are in the girls' group" as a matter of observation is not a finding; it is an artifact of the sampling method. This severely undermines the validity of the comparative analysis.

4. **Overstatement of Conclusions Relative to Evidence:** The conclusion states that "the school and its stakeholders have conditioned boys to jump more than girls." While the data show differential outcomes, they do not demonstrate intentional "conditioning" by the school. The teacher's actions are presented as a response to perceived stereotypes, not necessarily an active imposition of them. The paper conflates correlation (boys perform better when separated and given higher expectations) with causation (separation causes this difference, or stereotyping causes the teacher's actions). The possibility that the girls' lower performance is due to lack of prior practice, different socialization outside school, or the teacher's own lower expectations is acknowledged but not rigorously explored as an alternative to the stereotype-driven hypothesis.

Minor Revisions (If a major revision were to be attempted):

5. **Length and Redundancy:** The paper is excessively long (21 pages of dense text). The introduction and literature review contain significant repetition, particularly regarding the context of Benin and the history of the high jump. Tables 2 and 3, while detailed, could be summarized more concisely in the text. A substantial reduction in word count would improve readability and impact.
6. **Clarify the Teacher's Status and Agency:** The paper refers to the teacher as a "trainee teacher" with ten years of experience. This is confusing. Is she a novice or experienced? Her status likely influences her adherence to perceived stereotypes. Furthermore, the paper should more clearly distinguish between official curriculum requirements (e.g., 90cm for girls, 100cm for boys) and the teacher's own additional differentiations (e.g., lowering the rope to 70cm for girls in the first session). The latter is not mandated by the official guidelines and represents a key teacher-driven variable.
7. **Questionnaire Data Utility:** The questionnaire of 22 other teachers is presented as a validity check, but the analysis is superficial. Only percentages (40.90%, etc.) are given without statistical tests or deeper qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses. What were the "circumstances" under which the 36% of teachers would separate groups? This nuance is lost. The questionnaire results do not genuinely triangulate the core classroom observations; they merely show that other teachers hold similar stereotypes, not that the observed teaching method is effective.
8. **Writing and Grammatical Errors:** While generally clear, the text contains numerous grammatical errors and awkward phrasings (e.g., "the environment co-created by the teacher... is more conducive to chronogenesis"). A thorough copy-edit by a native English speaker or professional service is required. The inconsistent use of acronyms (e.g., PES, PE, PSA) is distracting.

Conclusion:

This paper addresses a highly significant topic with a strong theoretical foundation and a commendable mixed-methods design. However, the study is fundamentally undermined by a confirmatory bias, ethically questionable pedagogical practices that go unexamined, and a flawed sampling strategy that precludes valid comparative conclusions. The conclusions are overstated and do not logically follow from the evidence presented as a result of these issues. Therefore, I recommend rejection of the manuscript. The authors could potentially produce a valuable study by redesigning their sampling to match students on initial ability, incorporating a critical lens on the teacher's own role in producing the outcomes, and addressing the ethical dimensions of the pedagogy observed.