

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-58164

Title: Geographical disparities in primary education between urban and rural areas in the Zinder region of Niger.

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- 180

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The manuscript examines the geographical disparities in primary education between urban and rural areas in the Zinder region of Niger. It addresses an important educational policy issue by investigating how unequal distribution of educational resources contributes to differences in school enrolment, infrastructure, and learning opportunities. The study is well grounded in the context of Sustainable Development Goals and existing African educational literature, clearly identifying the research gap and establishing the need for a more equitable distribution of educational resources across the region. The objectives, hypothesis, and theoretical framework are logically presented and provide a solid foundation for the research. The methodology is one of the strengths of the paper. The authors adopt a mixed-methods approach by combining longitudinal quantitative data from 2018–2023 with qualitative interviews involving educational inspectors, pedagogical advisers, and community representatives. The use of multiple educational indicators, panel regression analysis, and qualitative evidence strengthens the validity of the findings. The authors also acknowledge methodological limitations, which enhances the transparency of the study. However, the paper would benefit from a clearer explanation of the sampling strategy, participant selection criteria, ethical approval procedures, and validation of the qualitative interview process.

The results provide convincing evidence of significant disparities between urban and rural areas. The study demonstrates that the city of Zinder enjoys considerably better school infrastructure, higher enrolment rates, improved completion rates, and more favourable teacher–student ratios than the surrounding rural departments. The analysis of multigrade classrooms, infrastructure quality, and educational indicators effectively illustrates how unequal allocation of resources affects educational access and quality. Furthermore, the panel regression analysis provides strong statistical support for the conclusion that school infrastructure, teacher availability, electricity, and water supply significantly influence gross enrolment rates.

The discussion successfully relates the findings to previous African studies and explains how structural inequalities continue to reinforce educational disadvantages in rural communities. The authors introduce the concept of an "urban advantage" to explain the concentration of qualified teachers, infrastructure, and administrative support within the regional capital. The paper concludes with practical recommendations, advocating geographically balanced educational planning and equitable resource allocation as essential strategies for reducing educational inequalities. These recommendations are relevant for policymakers and educational planners working in developing countries. Despite its strengths, the manuscript requires revision before publication. Numerous grammatical errors, awkward English expressions, and translation inconsistencies reduce the overall readability of the manuscript. Several tables and figures require improved formatting and clearer interpretation within the text. The discussion could be strengthened by comparing the findings with a broader range of recent international studies rather than

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relying mainly on African literature. Additionally, the policy recommendations should be more specific by outlining practical implementation strategies, expected outcomes, and potential challenges.

Overall, the paper addresses a highly relevant topic and makes a meaningful contribution to the literature on educational inequality and regional educational planning in developing countries. The combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence provides valuable insights into the structural causes of urban–rural educational disparities in the Zinder region. With improvements in language quality, methodological reporting, presentation of results, and expansion of the discussion, the manuscript has the potential to become a valuable contribution to educational policy and development research. Therefore, the paper is recommended for major revision before publication.