

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 58876

Title: The Emergence and Development of Specialized Urban Markets in ATAKPAME, TOGO.

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.

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

Reviewer Name: Dr. Bishwajit Rout

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

(To be published with the manuscript in the journal)

The reviewer is requested to provide a brief comment (3-4 lines) highlighting the significance, strengths, or key insights of the manuscript. This comment will be Displayed in the journal publication alongside with the reviewers name.

- Significance:** This research is significant because it documents the development of specialized markets as important components of urban infrastructure, agricultural commercialization, and local economic development in Atakpamé. The study demonstrates how market specialization can influence urban organization, regional trade, and municipal revenue. Its findings also highlight important planning challenges involving sanitation, land security, accessibility, infrastructure quality, and safety within rapidly developing African urban environments.
- Strength:** The principal strength of the study is its comprehensive field-based investigation of specialized markets in an underexplored African urban context. The research combines documentary evidence, observations, interviews, and surveys to examine multiple dimensions of market development. It provides useful empirical information concerning infrastructure, accessibility, sanitation, security, catchment areas, historical development, and municipal revenue, while identifying practical weaknesses requiring planning intervention.
- Key Insight:** The central insight is that specialized markets can substantially contribute to urban commercial organization and regional economic activity when supported by adequate infrastructure and institutional partnerships. In Atakpamé, modern market structures and wide catchment areas demonstrate considerable development potential. Nevertheless, inadequate sanitation, weak fire protection, insecure land status, maintenance problems, and capacity constraints may undermine their long-term sustainability and planning effectiveness.

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Reviewer's Comment / Report

The paper titled “*The Emergence and Development of Specialized Urban Markets in ATAKPAME, TOGO.*” analyzes the emergence and development of specialized urban markets in Atakpamé, Togo, an agricultural crossroads city. Using literature review, observations, interviews, and a survey of 354 vendors and customers, it evaluates infrastructure, accessibility, and amenities. Results show strong access (97.5% report easy entry, 84% paved roads), modern stalls, fencing in 67% of markets, and basic sanitation. These markets generate about 11.3% of municipal revenue. While functional, some require relocation and all need improved cleanup. The paper offers useful insights into commercial infrastructure and urban development in West African secondary cities.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Explain why specialized markets in Atakpamé require separate investigation beyond general studies of African urban markets and commercial infrastructure.
2. Define specialized markets using established academic literature.
3. Compare different forms of market specialization across African cities to establish the theoretical and empirical uniqueness of Atakpamé.
4. Explain how Atakpamé's strategic transportation position contributes specifically to specialized market development, product circulation, and regional commercial connectivity.
5. Correct all inconsistencies regarding participant numbers immediately.
6. Clearly distinguish vendors, customers, and interviewed officials.
7. Explain how the final sample was determined and provide inclusion criteria for vendors, customers, association leaders, officials, and tax collectors.
8. Distinguish partnership initiatives from municipal interventions clearly.
9. Explain how the Niort-Atakpamé partnership influenced institutional capacity, financial resources, market specialization, and subsequent municipal development strategies.
10. Distinguish physical access from perceived accessibility clearly.
11. Assess accessibility through travel time, transportation cost, road quality, seasonal conditions, and connectivity rather than respondent perceptions alone.
12. Separate sanitation infrastructure from actual sanitation performance.

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The manuscript addresses an important and insufficiently explored topic concerning specialized urban markets and their role in infrastructure development and local economic activity. Its field-based evidence and geographical focus constitute valuable strengths. However, minor revisions are required to resolve methodological inconsistencies, particularly regarding sample size and analytical software, strengthen theoretical grounding, improve methodological transparency, verify numerical results, deepen the discussion, and enhance language and presentation quality before publication can be recommended. Addressing the identified weaknesses will make it suitable for publication in IJAR.

I recommend this paper for publication after minor revision.