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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-59587

Title: Du discours politique à la salle de classe : l'intégration du numérique dans l'enseignement secondaire au Gabon et au Niger. Cartographie des lycées confessionnels de Libreville et lecture comparée des contextes nationaux.

Recommendation:

Accept as it is .....

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision .....

Do not accept (*Reasons below*) .....

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

Reviewer's ID: JPR- 212

Detailed Reviewer's Report

This is an excellent, original, and methodologically rigorous study that makes a significant contribution to the fields of comparative education, educational technology, and African studies. The paper examines the integration of digital technologies in four faith-based upper-secondary schools in Libreville, Gabon, and compares this situation with the context in Niger. The research is timely and addresses a critical gap in the literature: the classroom reality of digital integration in Central and Sahelian Africa, which remains poorly documented despite being a stated goal of education policies across the continent.

The paper is exceptionally well-structured and well-written. The authors demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the relevant literature, including theories of the digital divide (Van Dijk, Hargittai), barriers to technology integration (Ertmer), and frameworks for pedagogical integration (TPACK, Hutchison & Woodward). The mixed-methods design is appropriate and well-executed, combining a multisite case study (questionnaire with 60 teachers, interviews with four deputy heads, and visits to six additional schools) with a secondary analysis of international indicators and published empirical studies on Niger. The findings are compelling and counterintuitive: no classroom in the four schools is equipped with digital tools, and the proportion of teachers declaring non-use of digital technology is paradoxically higher in the two schools equipped with a multimedia room. The authors' typology of two stages of integration—"pre-embryonic" and "embryonic"—is a valuable conceptual contribution. The comparative analysis reveals two distinct configurations of the digital divide: in Gabon, a largely connected country, the divide separates the school from society; in Niger, it remains primarily infrastructural. The finding that teacher training is the common bottleneck in both countries is significant and has clear policy implications. The paper's discussion of the language dimension, drawing on the authors' expertise in language didactics, adds further depth. The manuscript is honest about its limitations and offers concrete, actionable recommendations. It requires only minor revisions before publication.

Minor Issues (to be addressed in revision):

1. **Clarification of the Sample and Context:**
    - The study focuses on four faith-based schools in Libreville. The authors justify this focus well by noting the historical role of religious networks in Gabonese education and their

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explicit inclusion in the national connectivity goal. However, the paper could briefly discuss how the situation in these faith-based schools might differ from that in public schools. The authors mention a pre-survey of public schools in Libreville that found 65% suffered from a significant lack of equipment and internet access. A brief comparison of the findings from the faith-based schools with this pre-survey data would be valuable, even if only to note that the situation appears similarly dire.

- The authors state that the two equipped schools have a "salle multimédia" run by a private provider (IT-School) and devoted to fee-paying office-software courses. This is a crucial finding. The authors could further discuss the implications of this model of "externalization" for equity and for the nature of digital literacy being taught. Is this model of private provision common in Gabon? What are its advantages and disadvantages compared to public provision?

2. **Deepening the Comparative Analysis:**
   - The comparison with Niger is well-developed and insightful. However, the authors could further explore the implications of the different configurations of the digital divide. For example, in Gabon, the divide is characterized as separating the school from a connected society. What does this mean for the potential of digital technologies to transform education? If students are already connected outside school, what is the role of the school in developing critical digital literacy? In Niger, where the divide is primarily infrastructural, what are the most promising strategies for moving forward? The authors mention the "Un enseignant, une tablette" program and the potential of mobile phones. A more detailed discussion of these strategies would be valuable.
   - The authors note that the language of instruction is a common challenge in both countries, with educational resources being predominantly in French while students operate in plurilingual environments. This is an important point that deserves further development. How might digital technologies be harnessed to support multilingual education? What are the challenges and opportunities?
3. **Clarification of Methodological Details:**
   - The methodology section is generally strong, but a few points could be clarified. The questionnaire was completed by 15 teachers in each school, using a "convenience sampling" approach. The authors should acknowledge the limitations of this sampling strategy more explicitly. How might the findings have been different if a random sample had been used?
   - The interviews with the deputy heads (censeurs) lasted only 10-15 minutes. This is quite short for a semi-structured interview. The authors should briefly discuss the implications of this limited duration for the depth of the data collected.
   - The authors mention that the fieldwork was conducted during a teachers' strike that lasted about six weeks. They adapted their protocol by administering some questionnaires face-to-face. This is a commendable adaptation, but the authors should briefly discuss how the strike context might have influenced the responses. For example, were teachers more likely to report obstacles due to the heightened tensions?
4. **Strengthening the Discussion of Implications:**
   - The recommendations are practical and well-grounded in the findings. However, the authors could further discuss the feasibility of these recommendations. For example, the recommendation to "renégocier les partenariats" with private providers is important, but what are the potential barriers to doing so? What leverage do schools have in these negotiations?
   - The recommendation to make digital use a cross-disciplinary component of teacher training is excellent. The authors could briefly discuss what this might look like in

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practice. What specific competencies should be developed? How can teacher training institutions move beyond office software to pedagogical integration?

5. **Minor Typographical and Formatting Issues:**
    - The manuscript is generally well-formatted, but there are a few minor issues. For example, the phrase "qualifications de pré-embryonnaire et d'embryonnaire" in the abstract should be "qualifions de pré-embryonnaire et d'embryonnaire." The authors should carefully proofread the manuscript.
    - The reference list is comprehensive and well-formatted. However, the authors should ensure that all works cited in the text appear in the reference list and vice versa. For example, the reference to "Amadieu et Tricot [47]" appears in the discussion but the reference number [47] is not clearly linked to the corresponding entry in the reference list.

Specific Comments for the Authors (for a Minor Revision):

This is an excellent and important study that makes a valuable contribution to the literature on digital integration in African education. The methodology is robust, the findings are insightful, and the comparative analysis is compelling. To prepare the manuscript for final publication, the authors should address the following minor points:

1. **Clarify the Sample and Context:** Briefly discuss how the situation in faith-based schools might differ from public schools. Further discuss the implications of the private-provider model for equity and digital literacy.
2. **Deepen the Comparative Analysis:** Further explore the implications of the different configurations of the digital divide. Discuss strategies for moving forward in each context. Develop the language dimension further.
3. **Clarify Methodological Details:** Acknowledge the limitations of convenience sampling. Discuss the implications of the short interview duration. Discuss how the strike context might have influenced responses.
4. **Strengthen the Discussion of Implications:** Discuss the feasibility of the recommendations. Elaborate on what cross-disciplinary teacher training might look like.
5. **Correct Minor Typographical and Formatting Errors:** Proofread carefully. Ensure consistency in references.

Conclusion:

This manuscript presents an excellent, original, and methodologically rigorous study on the integration of digital technologies in faith-based secondary schools in Libreville, Gabon, with a compelling comparative analysis of the situation in Niger. The research addresses a critical gap in the literature, and the findings have important implications for policy and practice. The authors' typology of integration stages is a valuable conceptual contribution. The paper is well-written, theoretically grounded, and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the complex factors shaping digital integration in African education. With the minor revisions outlined above, this manuscript will be ready for publication and will be of great interest to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners working in comparative education, educational technology, and African studies. The recommendation is for acceptance after minor revision.