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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 59810

Title: *Dynamique et perception paysanne du phénomène des transactions foncières dans le département de Madarounfa (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 Name:Dr. ANAPANA GOPAL

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

1. General Comments

The manuscript examines the dynamics of land transactions and farmers' perceptions of their causes and consequences in the Department of Madarounfa, Niger. The topic is relevant to rural development, agricultural sustainability, land tenure security, and food security, particularly in areas experiencing demographic pressure and increasing competition for agricultural land.

The study addresses an important issue by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches and presenting findings on land access, land fragmentation, the motivations behind land transactions, and their perceived socioeconomic consequences. The sample of 335 household heads across five localities provides a potentially useful basis for understanding local perceptions.

However, despite its relevance, the manuscript requires substantial improvement in its methodological description, consistency of statistical results, interpretation of findings, and academic presentation. Several numerical discrepancies appear between the figures, tables, abstract, and corresponding discussions. In addition, the study relies mainly on respondents' perceptions, but some conclusions are presented as established socioeconomic consequences without sufficient independent evidence. The authors should address these concerns before the manuscript can be considered for publication.

2. Content and Originality

1. The manuscript addresses an important research problem concerning land transactions and rural livelihood vulnerability. However, the specific research gap is not sufficiently established. The introduction provides general background on land tenure in Niger and West Africa but does not clearly explain what new knowledge this study contributes beyond previous studies conducted in other departments of Niger.

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2. The objectives should be stated more explicitly at the end of the introduction. The authors should clearly identify whether the study aims to examine the nature and evolution of land transactions, farmers' perceptions, the socioeconomic factors influencing transactions, or their consequences. These objectives should correspond directly to the results and discussion.
3. The manuscript frequently uses the terms *transactions foncières*, *marchandisation des terres*, *vente*, *achat*, *gage*, and *location*. These terms represent different forms of land transfer and access. The authors should define them clearly and distinguish between permanent land transfers and temporary arrangements such as leasing or pledging.
4. The study identifies food purchases (63.9%) and illness (56.7%) as major factors influencing land transactions. These findings are important, but the authors should explain whether these factors lead specifically to land sales, pledging, leasing, or other forms of transactions. Combining different types of transactions may obscure the actual motivations behind each practice.
5. The reported consequences, including food insecurity, the emergence of landless farmers, family nuclearisation, rising land prices, and land conflicts, are primarily based on respondents' perceptions. The authors should consistently distinguish perceived consequences from objectively measured outcomes. For example, the study does not provide direct measurements of changes in household food security, land ownership concentration, or agricultural productivity.
6. The conclusion presents land transactions as a process of progressive impoverishment and social destabilisation. Although this interpretation may be reasonable, the cross-sectional survey cannot independently establish these long-term causal relationships. The conclusions should therefore be expressed more cautiously.
7. The discussion should be strengthened by comparing the findings with previous studies in terms of similarities, differences, and possible explanations. At present, it mainly lists findings from other studies without sufficiently examining why the results from Madarounfa may differ.

3. Technical Quality

1. **Sampling procedure:** The authors report that 335 household heads were selected from five localities. However, the method used to determine this sample size is not explained. The authors should provide the sampling formula or justification, the total number of households in the study area, the sampling frame, and the selection procedure.
2. **Distribution of the sample:** The number of respondents selected from each of the five localities (Dama, Kabobi, Kodéraoua, Kountoumi, and Maya Oukou) is not provided. A table showing the distribution of the 335 respondents across the five localities should be included, together with an explanation of how the allocation was determined.
3. **Qualitative data collection:** The methodology mentions interviews with village chiefs, COFOB presidents, COFOCOM members, and COFODEP members. However, the number of people interviewed, their selection criteria, the interview procedures, and the method used to analyse qualitative information are not reported. These details are necessary to establish the reliability of the mixed-methods approach.
4. **Mixed-methods integration:** Although the authors describe the study as using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the results are dominated by quantitative survey data. The qualitative findings are limited mainly to a few statements attributed

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to local officials. The authors should explain how qualitative and quantitative findings were integrated and include relevant interview evidence where available.

5. **Statistical analysis:** The authors mention descriptive and cross-tabulation analyses using SPSS. However, the statistical procedures are not sufficiently described. The manuscript should specify which variables were cross-tabulated, which statistical tests were used, and whether any tests of association or significance were performed.

6. **Relationship between age and land area:** Section 2.1.6 describes a positive relationship between respondents' age and the average cultivated area. However, the manuscript does not provide the number of respondents in each age group, measures of variability, or statistical test results. The authors should avoid using the term "influence" unless an appropriate statistical analysis supports this interpretation.

7. **Land fragmentation:** The number of fields per household is used to interpret land fragmentation. However, the number of fields alone does not establish the degree of fragmentation. The authors should consider parcel size, spatial distribution, distance between fields, and total cultivated area, where such information is available. The statement that fragmentation is moderate and widespread requires clearer supporting evidence.

8. **Figure 5 interpretation:** The authors discuss medians, interquartile ranges, and extreme values, including households possessing up to 20 fields. The figure should clearly display the distribution, axis labels, sample sizes, and statistical elements. The authors should also explain how the number of fields was recorded and whether the reported extreme values were checked.

9. **Multiple-response questions:** The tables on factors and consequences indicate that the total percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select multiple answers. This is acceptable, but the authors should provide the number of respondents or total valid responses for each question and clearly state that percentages are calculated using the number of respondents rather than the total number of selections.

10. **Measurement of land transactions:** The study reports that 81.91% of respondents believe land transactions are increasing. However, this result reflects respondents' perceptions rather than an objectively measured trend. The authors should clarify the reference period used when respondents assessed whether transactions were increasing, stable, or decreasing.

11. **Ethical considerations:** The manuscript does not mention informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, or ethical approval. The authors should provide the relevant ethical information and explain how respondents' personal information was protected during data collection.

12. **Geographical information:** The coordinates provided for Madarounfa require verification. The manuscript describes the location using latitude and longitude, but the longitude is incorrectly labelled as latitude in the text ("longitude nord"). The authors should correct the geographical terminology and verify the coordinates, boundaries, and area of the study department against an authoritative geographical source.

4. Language and Presentation

1. The manuscript is generally understandable in French, but several grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and sentence-construction problems need correction.

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2. There are missing spaces between words and sentences in several places, particularly in the discussion of results. Examples include "socio163 économiques", "unnombre élevé", and "difficultés.Les problèmes". These appear to be formatting or editing errors and should be corrected throughout the manuscript.
3. Some expressions are repetitive or overly descriptive. For example, the explanations of household size and the consequences of land transactions contain lengthy interpretations that could be shortened without losing important information.
4. Certain expressions should be revised for academic precision. Terms such as *mauvaise pratique*, *prolétarisation*, *dépaysannisation foncière*, and *déclin des solidarités communautaires* should be used only when clearly defined and supported by the evidence.
5. The English abstract should be carefully proofread to ensure consistency with the French résumé. In particular, the terminology relating to land transactions, land fragmentation, landlessness, and food insecurity should be used consistently.
6. The title and keywords should be reviewed for clarity and consistency. The keyword *dynamic* in the English abstract is too general; a more precise term related to land transactions or land tenure dynamics would be preferable.

5. Structure and Organization

1. The overall manuscript structure is appropriate, with an introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion, conclusion, and references. However, the presentation of the results requires better organisation.
2. There is an inconsistency in figure numbering. The section on household size refers to Figure 4, while the corresponding caption identifies it as Figure 4; however, the preceding figure caption for secondary activities is also presented as Figure 3 after the graph. The authors should verify the numbering and ensure that all figures are cited in the correct sequence.
3. The numbering and captions of tables should be checked. The text refers to "tableau 2" when introducing the factors of land transactions, whereas the actual caption identifies it as Table 1. The consequences are presented as Table 2. All table references should be made consistent.
4. The section on household size contains an unusual category of "0–7 persons". A household cannot have zero members. The authors should revise this category to the intended range, possibly 1–7 persons, after checking the original dataset.
5. The interpretation of household size needs correction. The manuscript states that households with 0–15 members represent 74% of the sample. This calculation combines the 0–7 and 7–15 categories, which overlap at seven. The authors should define mutually exclusive categories and recalculate the percentages.
6. The discussion should be organised around the main research findings: land access and fragmentation, factors driving land transactions, farmers' perceptions of their evolution, and perceived socioeconomic consequences. This would improve the logical connection between the results and existing literature.
7. The conclusion is informative but contains several strong statements that go beyond the data. It should focus on the main findings, acknowledge the study's limitations, and present recommendations directly linked to the evidence.
8. A separate limitations subsection would strengthen the manuscript. It should acknowledge the cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported perceptions, geographical coverage of only five localities, and the absence of longitudinal or independently verified land transaction data.

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6. References and Citations

1. The reference list requires careful checking for completeness and consistency. Several references lack essential bibliographic information, including journal titles, volume and issue numbers, page ranges, publisher details, or publication information.
2. Some references contain incomplete or inconsistent DOI formatting. For example, the DOI for Ahomadikpohou (2026) is written with a duplicated URL prefix. The DOI for Ali et al. (2025) also contains an unnecessary URL prefix. DOI information should be presented in a standard format and verified.
3. The reference by Gavian and Fafchamps (1996) provides only page numbers and a DOI, without the complete journal title, volume, and issue information. These details should be added.
4. The references by Lawali et al. (2014) and Paraiso Cecil et al. (2025) appear incomplete. The authors should provide the complete publication details and verify that the cited works are accessible and correctly identified.
5. The citation "Yamba, B., Mounkaïla, A., & M. A., K. (2008)" appears incorrectly formatted. The authors' names should be checked against the original publication and presented consistently.
6. The manuscript cites several recent publications from 2025 and 2026. These references should be verified to ensure that the cited publications are published or formally available and that their findings are accurately represented.
7. The authors should ensure that every in-text citation appears in the reference list and that every listed reference is cited in the manuscript.
8. The literature review and discussion would benefit from additional recent peer-reviewed studies on land markets, distress land sales, land tenure security, land fragmentation, and rural household vulnerability in the Sahel and West Africa.

7. Overall Recommendation

The manuscript addresses a relevant and important issue in rural land management and provides useful preliminary information about farmers' perceptions of land transactions in the Department of Madarounfa. The sample of 335 household heads and the examination of different socioeconomic factors offer a potentially valuable contribution to understanding land tenure dynamics in the region.

However, the manuscript has several significant weaknesses that affect the reliability and interpretation of its findings. These include insufficient information about the sampling procedure and qualitative research methods, inconsistencies in numerical results and figure descriptions, inadequate statistical analysis, and conclusions that sometimes present perceived consequences as established causal effects. The presentation of figures, tables, references, and language also requires substantial revision.

The authors should carefully recheck the original dataset, correct all numerical inconsistencies, strengthen the methodological description, and revise the discussion to ensure that conclusions remain within the limits of the evidence.

8. Final Decision

Minor Revision

The manuscript has potential for publication after substantial revision. The authors are strongly encouraged to address all methodological, statistical, interpretative, and presentation-related concerns before resubmission. In particular, the numerical inconsistencies and the distinction between farmers' perceptions and objectively established consequences must be addressed carefully.