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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-59823

Title: Educational Challenges for Economic Emergence in Africa.

Recommendation: Minor revision required

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

Reviewer's ID: JPR-212

Detailed Reviewer's Report

This manuscript examines the conditions under which education can contribute to the economic emergence of African countries, revisiting and updating an earlier 2019 analysis through a narrative review of human capital research, education policy studies and recent institutional data. The article is well written, carefully argued and unusually well referenced, and it is among the strongest submissions reviewed for this journal. The revisions required are modest.

Strengths

The central argument is clearly stated and consistently sustained. The proposition that education's contribution to economic emergence depends jointly on equity in educational pathways, demonstrable mastery of knowledge and skills, and opportunities to use those skills in work and public life is a coherent and defensible framework.

The theoretical framework is well developed. The engagement with Durkheim, Perroux, Sen, Lucas, Mankiw, Romer and Weil, Hanushek and Woessmann, Nelson and Phelps, Benhabib and Spiegel, Romer and Toivanen and Väänänen is sophisticated and demonstrates a genuine command of the literature.

The manuscript is commendably cautious about the limits of its evidence. The repeated acknowledgements that the sources differ in geographic coverage and time frame, that the review design cannot estimate joint trends or identify continent-wide causal effects, and that estimating the effect of a specific reform would require longitudinal data and appropriate identification methods demonstrate strong methodological self-awareness.

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The eight challenges framework, covering civic, pedagogical and institutional, legal, demographic, economic, political, security-related and environmental challenges, provides a comprehensive structure, and each section is substantive rather than cursory.

The discussion of foundational learning, drawing on PASEC2019, the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel 2023 report and the Tusome programme in Kenya, is well grounded and practically relevant.

The attention to the language of instruction as a factor shaping the relationship among materials, teaching practices and learning outcomes is particularly welcome, and the discussion of multilingual education is nuanced and context-sensitive.

The discussion of the right to education in section 6 is analytically strong. The distinction between formal legislative commitment and the school-level practices that determine its reach, and the discussion of financial barriers, disability inclusion and recognition of qualifications, are well developed.

The treatment of security challenges in section 10, including the recognition that the ITU indicator measures population-level internet usage rather than school infrastructure, is appropriately careful.

The discussion of environmental challenges in section 11, drawing on the UNICEF 2025 estimate that extreme climate events disrupted schooling for at least 242 million students across 85 countries in 2024, is timely and well integrated into the argument.

The two tables, on indicators and scope of interpretation and on priorities, responsibilities and monitoring indicators, are clear and useful, and the second table in particular provides a practical framework for implementation.

The prose is of a consistently high standard throughout, and the manuscript is genuinely well written.

Minor Weaknesses

Reference list is incomplete. The reference list contains only 27 entries, and several works cited in the text are missing from the bibliography. These include Tchagnaou et al. 2019, UNESCO 2026, African Union 2024, African Union 2025, UNESCO and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 2024, ILO 2024 (which appears in the reference list but is cited in the text as both ILO 2024 and International Labour Organization 2024), ITU 2025, UNESCO 2023, Piper et al. 2018, UNICEF 2025, Miao and Holmes 2023 (which appears in the reference list), and Toivanen and Väänänen 2016. The manuscript therefore has a significant bibliographic gap, and the reference list should be completed.

Reference list is not alphabetised. The reference list begins with World Bank 2017 and World Bank and UNESCO 2024, then continues with Benhabib and Spiegel 1994,

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African Union Commission 2026, CONFEMEN 2020, Durkheim 1922, and so on. The list should be alphabetised throughout.

Inconsistent citation of the same source. The ILO source is cited in the text as "ILO (2024)" and "International Labour Organization (2024)," and the same source appears only once in the reference list as "International Labour Organization. (2024)." A consistent form should be used throughout.

Future-dated references. Several sources are dated in 2025 and 2026, including African Union 2024 and 2025, African Union Commission 2026, UNESCO 2026, ITU 2025 and UNICEF 2025. If the manuscript was written after these dates, this is unproblematic, but the author should verify that these sources have been published and are available, and should provide full publication details for each.

The abstract is slightly compressed. The abstract would benefit from a clearer statement of the central argument and the main contribution, in addition to the summary of the challenges and the recommendations.

Minor stylistic issues. The phrase "The 2019 chapter provides the initial analytical framework" in section 3 is somewhat abrupt and would benefit from a fuller explanation of how the earlier framework has been updated. The phrase "This right becomes effective when children can reach a school, be admitted, learn safely, and continue their education under conditions suited to their circumstances" is rhetorically effective but could be more analytically precise.

Recommendation

Minor revision required. This is a strong and publishable manuscript that makes a genuine contribution to the literature on education and economic development in Africa. The author should first complete the reference list, ensuring that all works cited in the text appear in the bibliography, including Tchagnaou et al. 2019, UNESCO 2026, African Union 2024, African Union 2025, UNESCO and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 2024, ITU 2025, UNESCO 2023, Piper et al. 2018, UNICEF 2025 and Toivanen and Väänänen 2016. Second, the reference list should be alphabetised. Third, the ILO citation should be standardised throughout. Fourth, the author should verify that all future-dated references have been published and are available, and provide full publication details for each. Fifth, the abstract should be revised to include a clearer statement of the central argument and the main contribution. Sixth, minor stylistic revisions should be made to section 3 and to the discussion of the right to education in section 6. With these revisions, the manuscript will be suitable for publication and will make a valuable contribution to the field.