

**Paper: “Impact des Écoles Maternelles sur les Performances des Écoliers de la République Démocratique du Congo”**

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Peer review:

Reviewer 1: Jan VAN Damme  
KU Leuven, Belgium

Reviewer 2: Elena Hunt  
Laurentian University, Canada

Reviewer 3: Blinded

Reviewer 4: Blinded

# ESJ Manuscript Evaluation Form 2021

This form is designed to summarize the manuscript peer review that you have completed and to ensure that you have considered all appropriate criteria in your review. Your review should provide a clear statement, to the authors and editors, of the modifications necessary before the paper can be published or the specific reasons for rejection.

Please respond within the appointed time so that we can give the authors timely responses and feedback.

NOTE: ESJ promotes peer review procedure based on scientific validity and technical quality of the paper (not perceived the impact). You are also not required to do proofreading of the paper. It could be recommended as part of the revision.

*ESJ editorial office would like to express its special gratitude for your time and efforts. Our editorial team is a substantial reason that stands ESJ out from the crowd!*

Reviewer Name: Jan VAN DAMME	
University/Country: KU Leuven / Belgium	
Date Manuscript Received: April 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	Date Review Report Submitted: April, 27 <sup>th</sup>
Manuscript Title: Impact des écoles maternelles sur les performances des écoliers de la RDC	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 0423	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: Yes	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the “review history” of the paper: Yes	
You approve, this review report is available in the “review history” of the paper: Yes	

## Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Rating Result</i> [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
<b>1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.</b>	<b>3</b>

<i>There is some ambivalence : The title does not make clear whether it is about differences amongst preschools or about the difference between preschool or no preschool.</i>	
<b>2. The abstract clearly presents objects, methods and results.</b>	<b>3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Same ambivalence as mentioned in relation to the title</i></li> <li>• <i>It is unclear whether there can be an effect of the primary school and whether it is considered by the authors.</i></li> <li>• <i>'effet brut du financement' is a strange expression</i></li> <li>• <i>Can 'financement' explain a part of the variance at the student level? (I guess this is a school characteristic, so it is the same for all students within a school.)</i></li> <li>• <i>There are mentioned a lot of percentages of the variance, but is not always clear whether it is about percentages of the total variance or of the variance at a separate level.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>3. There are few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>My impression on the language is rather good, but I am myself not a native speaker of French...</i>	
<b>4. The study methods are explained clearly.</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><i>There are several problems in relation to the methodological but also to the conceptual aspects.</i></p> <p><i>The research questions are not always clear a.o. because the variables are not always clear. E. g.</i></p> <p>a. <i>Pupil characteristics : what is the code for boys and girls? What are the categories of 'emat' ? And what is the distribution of emat?</i></p> <p>b. <i>School characteristics : please give a very clear definition of what you have measured, what are the categories and what is the distribution.?</i></p> <p>c. <i>Idem for the dependent variable : performances in the primary school... in the beginning of primary school (p.9)... from les 'palmarès' (p.13)</i>  <i>So, only at p.13 becomes clear that it must be at least after the first trimester of primary school...</i>  <i>But this means that the dependent variable is also influenced by the primary school.</i>  <i>This element has important implications which are not treated in the text. The question raises whether there is in fact a link between the preschool and the primary school, in the sense that all students of one preschool also go to the same primary school is the same (and the other way around). Or do students from one preschool go to different primary schools (and the other way around). In the last alternative, there is a form of cross classification. (In the first alternative the studied school effect is an effect of a preschool and/or a primary school)....</i></p> <p><i>The steps during the analysis are a bit unusual. Why not consider the individual characteristics first, and only in the next step consider the school characteristics?</i></p>	

<i>So, my impression is the authors need more support by a colleague with a strong methodological knowledge.</i>	
<b>5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.</b>	<b>3?</b>
<i>There is needed more info on the relation between preschool and primary school (and on the exact moment of the measuring of the dependent variable) to be able to evaluate this topic.</i>	
<b>6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.</b>	<b>3?</b>
<i>See point 5</i>	
<b>7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>In general the references are ok, but perhaps a bit old and sometimes not ok (see further)</i>	

**Overall Recommendation** (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revision needed	
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

**Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):**

The topic is interesting and important. The authors have done already a lot of work on the study of the literature and on the analysis of the data. But there is still a lot of work to do.

I give some more detailed comments in the order of the text.

- p.1 The number of only 8 preschools is of course very low to use multilevel analysis. One can expect the power of the analysis is low. That has to be considered in the text.
- Mots clés : add : école maternelle (idem Key words)
- P.2, first par. : ‘Lifulu et al. 2022’ : not in list of references
- P.3 first par. : please make clear what the background is of the different kinds of financial resources of the different preschools in RDC and how this was specifically measured...
- P.3 last line of last full par. : ‘des tests d’intelligence’ please add : or achievement tests?
- P.3 and 4 : Synthèse de la littérature  
My impression is that recent re-analyses of the Coleman data are a bit more positive in evaluating/interpreting the results of

Coleman et al.. They mention more or less the same size of the school effects as in more recent research. And this is also the case for the evaluation of programs as Head Star. Please have a look at the last years of Teacher College Record.

- Is it possible to include more recent literature? Please have a look in Scheerens, 2016 (which you refer too).
- P.6 Origine des recherches sur l'efficacité : is it necessary to treat this so extensively (and so late in the text)? (second par. : précifiquement)
- P.6 last par. : is 'biais' the good term?
- P.7 : 2<sup>nd</sup> par., last word : what is the meaning of 'communautés' here?
- P.9 4<sup>th</sup> par. Malheureusement.... Pourtant cette école EST utile...
- The next line gives the impression that the State give some support to preschools.... While in previous parts of the text was said : pas un sou ?!
- P.11 3<sup>rd</sup> par. : Une autre étude de cette cohorte... What does that mean ? You refer to Mokonzi et al. (2019) ... is this 2019 a or b in the list? Is it the fourth year of primary school? (Better mention this in the text)
- P.12 1<sup>st</sup> par. : you mention a questionnaire and an alpha. Please give more info on this questionnaire (What was exactly asked to who? Is there only one scale (cf. alpha) ?
- P.12 2<sup>nd</sup> par : Is the raw effect of the schools not clear from the null model? (You say you include the school characteristics to estimate the raw effect of the schools ?! This is rather strange. )
- P.13
- What is the exact meaning of (and the categories or possible answers to) 'salaire', of 'appréciation of salaire', of 'subvention' and of 'contribution des parents'? That must be given and discussed beforehand.
- I guess it is more appropriate to give only what you call the net effect of these variables on the 'financement'
- P.14 : normally 'school characteristics' do not explain anything at the student level as all students of the same school experience the same school characteristics.
- P.15 : - code pour sexe? Who do better, boys or girls? ( in e.g. Tableau 6 on p.16)

- P.15 2<sup>nd</sup> par. Is about correlation! What is significant, is the correlation between Emat and age. For who emat is higher?
- Is ‘Khi-deux’ the right expression in French? (Chi square in English)
- P.17 1<sup>st</sup> full par. At the student level : only individual effects, no effects of financing.
- Discussion : 1<sup>st</sup> par. : please consider only the significant variables as contributing to the achievement level. You did not study interaction effects. So the meaning of ‘agissent en connivence ‘ is non existent I think.
- P.18 1<sup>st</sup> par. : you always use the expression ‘au niveau élève’; you can also say ‘différences entr’élèves d’une même classe.
- ‘si cette différence est due au fait des variables retenue...’ : I guess you give here results of the null model. So, the variables are not yet considered....
- P.18 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> par : probably the study of PASEC includes schools in which is used French as a language of instruction, and other schools in which a local language is used as language of instruction? That can explain the high school effect. I guess there exists no ‘postulat’...
- Next par : is the age positively linked to achievement? And what does mean that sex is linked positively to achievement? Please say whether boys or girls perform higher..
- Next par : ‘...agirent toujours en premier.’ Is this really always the case?
- P.18, last par : établie QUE deux .... Il s’agit bien DE l’appréciation...
- P.19 1<sup>st</sup> par : please don’t speak on effet-brut of school characteristics. The text is difficult to follow. And school characteristics are not expected to explain a part of the variance at the student level (as already said).
- P.19 Limites En dépit des analyses réalisées... Or : When considering the results of the analyses réalisées, we have to take into account at least trois limites.... Perhaps there are more limits.. e.g. the small number of schools.
- As for ‘les cotes notés dans les palmarès’ : please give more info on these in an earlier phase : what is the base of these cotes? What do you think on their validity, their reliability, their comparability amongst schools...

- Références : I give just a few examples of lacking or wrong data
- Dumay X. : place of the editor?
- Duru-Bellat : Title in italics
- Jencks : Title in italics
- Lifulu (2017) : mentioned in text?
- Mokonzi, DE FRAINE, B. & Van Damme, J.
- Opdenakker, .... DE FRAINE, B., ...
- Scheerens & Bosker : 2X
- Van Damme, Opdenakker, Van de gaer & DE FRAINE
- Next : Van Damme... Van de gaer... In : Dumay & Dupriez : not in italics
- Next : Van de gaer...

**Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:**

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Reviewer Name: Elena Hunt	
University/Country: Laurentian University, Canada	
Date Manuscript Received: April 5	Date Review Report Submitted: April 14, 2022
Manuscript Title: <b>Impact des écoles maternelles sur les performances des écoliers de la République Démocratique du Congo</b>	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 042322	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: Yes	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the “review history” of the paper: Yes	
You approve, this review report is available in the “review history” of the paper: Yes	

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<i>Questions</i>	<i>Rating Result</i> [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
<b>1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.</b>	<b>5</b>



<i>(Please insert your comments)</i>	
<b>2. The abstract clearly presents objects, methods and results.</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Il manque la présentation claire des instruments et de la méthode de collecte des données.</i>	
<b>3. There are few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Veillez voir directement dans le texte annoté et envoyé avec ce formulaire.</i>	
<b>4. The study methods are explained clearly.</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Veillez remarquer les annotations dans le texte.</i>	
<b>5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i>	
<b>6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i>	
<b>7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i>	

**Overall Recommendation** (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accepted, minor revision needed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Return for major revision and resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reject	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):**

**Excellent travail, utile et important. Merci de m'avoir donné l'occasion de le lire.**

**Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:**