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Sex Residential Setting and Retention in Lower Secondary Education in Two Schools in Zinder, Niger

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Abstract

Student retention in lower secondary education is an educational planning concern in Niger. This article examines differences in school trajectories by sex and school setting in two schools in Zinder. The study draws on administrative tables covering five school years, from 2015–2016 to 2019–2020, and a supplementary survey that the dissertation dates to March–April 2022. Responses from 40 students, divided into four groups of ten, shed light on reported constraints. The dissertation's projections for hypothetical cohorts of 1,000 entrants indicate that 13.6% reach the final grade of lower secondary education in each school, whereas 5.4% obtain the BEPC certificate in the urban school and 4.7% in the rural school. Girls' advantage in the urban setting is reversed in the rural school. Students report financial, academic and agricultural constraints. These findings remain descriptive and conditional on the dissertation's calculations, whose inconsistencies limit precision. They call for stronger individual tracking of school trajectories and support tailored to local difficulties.

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School retention; reconstructed cohort; sex; rural setting; lower secondary education; Niger.

Introduction

Expanding access to education does not guarantee that students will remain in school until the end of the cycle they enter. In lower secondary education, each transition between grades may involve promotion, repetition or departure from the school. Educational planning therefore requires an understanding of how enrolment changes throughout the cycle and which groups face the greatest obstacles. Focusing solely on enrolment figures may conceal substantial student attrition and a low conversion of entries into qualifications. In Niger, retention difficulties arise within a context of unequal access to educational services. UNICEF Niger (n.d.) highlights obstacles associated with poverty, distance to school and child marriage. This institutional overview establishes the relevance of the issue; it does not provide a measure directly comparable to the local projections examined here. The periods, populations and indicator definitions must be distinguished.

Students' sex and school environment are two useful dimensions for describing trajectories. Girls and boys may face different constraints, while urban and rural schools do not necessarily have the same resources. However, these categories alone do not explain outcomes. They encompass family, educational and institutional conditions that may vary within the same

setting. A meaningful comparison must therefore specify what is actually observed and avoid interpreting a descriptive difference as a causal relationship.

This article is based on Issa's (2025) dissertation, entitled "Gender, Residential Setting and School Survival Rates in Lower Secondary Education", submitted for the professional master's degree in educational sciences at Université André Salifou. The dissertation compares the CES franco-arabe de Zengou and CEG 11 de Babban Tapki. It brings together school flow tables and information on the difficulties experienced by students, their families and education personnel.

The overall objective is to examine differences in school retention by sex and school setting in the two schools. Three specific objectives structure the analysis: to describe promotion, repetition and exit flows; to compare projections of progression to the final grade and BEPC attainment; and to relate these findings to the constraints reported by stakeholders. The central question is: what patterns of school trajectories emerge when sex and school setting are examined together?

Two expectations drawn from the dissertation are retained as exploratory propositions: trajectories may differ between girls and boys, and between the two settings. These propositions are not statistically tested because the available data cannot estimate the independent effect of sex or location. The article's contribution lies in comparing the groups across both dimensions and clarifying the indicators used.

Distinguishing Retention Progression and Certification

Here, school retention refers to continuing within the educational cycle, whereas progression refers to advancing to a higher grade. Certification means obtaining the final qualification. These processes are related but distinct: a student may reach the final grade and fail the BEPC, or remain in school by repeating a grade. An assessment of internal efficiency must identify these situations separately.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2009) describes the reconstructed cohort as a tool for estimating trajectories from flows observed between school years. Its results describe what would happen to a hypothetical cohort under the specified conditions. They do not constitute a count of an actual cohort followed over time. Their quality depends on data consistency and the assumptions governing transitions.

In this study, that distinction changes the scope of the central finding. The 13.6% proportion described in the dissertation as lower secondary school survival corresponds to projected progression to the final grade. The proportion obtaining the BEPC is different and lower. Accordingly, the expression "completing the cycle" is reserved for a clearly defined outcome; reaching the final grade and obtaining the qualification are always presented separately.

Sex Socialisation and Schooling Conditions

Comparisons between girls and boys should not assume innate dispositions towards schooling. The Conseil du statut de la femme (2016) examines how stereotypes and school socialisation contribute to inequalities between the sexes. Conducted in Quebec, this analysis offers conceptual insight into social expectations; its empirical findings cannot be directly transferred to Niger.

In the study setting, the categories girls and boys derive from administrative tables. They provide a breakdown by recorded sex. Gender is used as an interpretive perspective on social expectations and responsibilities, without claiming that it was measured using a specific instrument. This clarification avoids attributing explanatory power to administrative categories beyond what they can support.

Constraints may operate before entry into lower secondary school, during schooling or as the examination approaches. An advantage observed among students still enrolled therefore does not demonstrate equal opportunities across the whole population.

It may reflect earlier selection, family support or conditions specific to a school. Retention analysis must remain attentive to these successive stages, even when the data cannot document them all.

Living Environments and Educational Inequalities

The distinction between urban and rural areas is useful for identifying differences in study conditions. However, it does not directly measure travel distance, household income, teacher availability or infrastructure quality. UNESCO's (2020) profile on inclusion in Niger describes inclusion policies that address access to resources and support for school attendance, among

other issues. This approach encourages consideration of several obstacles simultaneously.

For this study, setting is primarily identified through the school attended. The data contain neither individual home geolocations nor travel times. The expression "residential setting", retained in the dissertation's topic, must therefore be interpreted cautiously. The study compares two sites characterised as urban and rural without isolating the specific contribution of each student's place of residence.

The same aggregate value may arise from different processes. Two schools may bring a similar proportion of students to the final grade while differing in repetition, the pace of progression or certification. Comparisons should therefore examine several stages and subgroups, rather than a single rate assumed to summarise the functioning of the cycle.

Theoretical Frameworks

Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) offer an interpretation of the relationship between schooling and the reproduction of social inequalities. Their perspective encourages examination of resource distribution and how school requirements interact with unequal family circumstances. It does not imply an automatic effect of sex on achievement. In this article, it informs questions about differences in support and material obstacles reported by students.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological approach locates development within relationships between individuals and their environments. Its relevance here lies in connecting family, school and community.

It supports the hypothesis that difficulties in progression may arise from several interacting conditions rather than an isolated student characteristic. It is used as an interpretive framework, not as a statistically tested model.

These perspectives lead to an examination of trajectories at three complementary levels. Administrative results describe enrolment flows; student responses indicate certain study conditions; and reported adult accounts shed light on forms of support. Comparing these materials aims to develop a contextualised interpretation. It does not replace individual measurement of economic and social mechanisms.

Methodology

Study Design and Setting

The research is a descriptive comparative study based on administrative documents and a supplementary survey. Its quantitative component concerns enrolment, flow rates and cohort projections. Questionnaires and interviews provide information on perceived obstacles. Combining these materials constitutes an exploratory mixed methods approach in which integration involves relating the findings to one another.

The CES franco-arabe de Zengou represents the urban site and CEG 11 de Babban Tapki the rural site. The dissertation explains their selection in terms of the availability of usable end-of-year reports. This was therefore purposive selection based on access to archives, rather than representative sampling of lower secondary schools in Zinder. The first school's Franco-Arabic status is also an institutional characteristic that must be considered in the comparison.

The comparison is limited to one school per setting. Any difference may therefore reflect location, school functioning or student composition. These dimensions cannot be separated using the available data. The findings concern the two sites studied; they do not describe all urban and rural schools in Niger.

Data Sources and Timing

The quantitative tables cover five school years, from 2015–2016 to 2019–2020. The dissertation's rates are calculated from four successive annual transitions. The documents used are described as reports containing recommendations for promotion, repetition and exclusion, commonly referred to by the acronym PAREX. This article relies on their transcription in the dissertation; the original registers were not independently audited.

The dissertation dates the supplementary data collection to March–April 2022. This information is retained as stated, although the title page bears the academic year 2024–2025. This chronology must be confirmed before journal submission. The reported perceptions are therefore not treated as contemporaneous observations of each transition between 2015 and 2020.

The student tables present four groups of ten respondents: urban boys, rural boys, urban girls and rural girls. They thus document 40 students. The teacher table is based on five respondents. The final numbers of parents and school officials interviewed are not precisely established in the presentation of results. No figures are invented in this article.

The pilot survey mentioned in the dissertation involved 20 students, five parents and five teachers. These numbers describe an instrument preparation phase and are not added to the main sample. Respondent selection procedures, refusals and possible overlap between the pilot and main surveys are insufficiently described to allow full reconstruction.

Indicator Construction

For grade i and year t, the promotion rate is the number of students advancing to the next grade in t + 1 divided by enrolment in grade i in t. The repetition rate is the number repeating that grade in t + 1 divided by the same initial enrolment. The complement to 100% gives a residual exit rate when flow accounting is complete.

Such residual exits should not be equated with permanent dropout without verification. Transfers, changes in educational pathway, temporary interruptions or recording errors may cause students to disappear from local enrolment figures.

The dissertation mentions seeking cohorts without transfers, but provides no individual procedure for checking that this condition was fully met. The rates are therefore described as exits treated as dropout in the source calculations.

The dissertation uses arithmetic means of four annual rates for each grade. These give each transition equal weight, regardless of the numbers involved. They differ from a weighted rate calculated by dividing the total number of events by the total population at risk. This convention is highlighted to avoid presenting the values as directly observed individual probabilities.

The mean rates feed into projections for hypothetical cohorts of 1,000 entrants. The dissertation specifies a convention allowing only one repetition.

This article retains its reported results without claiming to reconstruct longitudinal tracking from unavailable microdata. Retention values are interpreted as outcomes of the source scenario, subject to its rounding and accounting conventions.

Analysis and Consistency Checks

Analysis for this article involved extracting relevant values, standardising labels and comparing groups using the dissertation's tables. Percentages are generally rounded to two decimal places for flows and one decimal place for projections. Differences between rates are expressed in percentage points. No tests of independence or confidence intervals are added using the hypothetical cohorts.

The figure of 1,000 is a projection base, not a sample of 1,000 observed individuals. Treating it as a survey sample size would produce artificial precision. Similarly, the four groups of ten students support reporting response counts, but cannot provide representative estimates of difficulties in each setting.

Responses concerning difficulties are interpreted as multiple mentions because their totals exceed the ten students in each group. This interpretation makes the tables intelligible; however, the dissertation does not explicitly document a multiple response procedure. The "other" categories remain aggregated. No separate counts for marriage, pregnancy or any other situation are inferred from them.

Consistency checks reveal discrepancies between survival tables and intermediate tables, particularly for the rural site. The principal values are therefore reported as the dissertation's results, with their limitations stated. Equality between two rounded results neither demonstrates equivalence nor validates all the calculations that produced them.

Ethical Considerations

The source document does not describe consent procedures, permission from legal guardians for minors or any ethical approval in sufficient detail. This article cannot attest to undocumented procedures.

Only aggregate results are presented, and no student or parent names are reproduced. Schools remain identified as in the dissertation.

Reported judgements concerning motivation, discipline or peer associations are treated as context-specific perceptions. They are not presented as individual

diagnoses. Publication should clarify research authorisations and supplement the ethical information from the original supporting documents.

Results and Discussion

Differences in Enrolment Size between the Two Sites

The administrative series show that the urban school enrols more students than the rural school. This difference appears in every grade examined. Table 1 presents the first and last years in the series to contextualise the populations underlying the calculations. It does not describe the individual trajectories of students enrolled at the start of the period.

At the urban site, first-year lower secondary enrolment falls from 622 to 329 between the two years presented. At the rural site, it falls from 228 to 174.

The decline in enrolment stocks cannot be directly interpreted as the number of dropouts from a cohort: entries, promotion decisions and cohort composition may change over the period.

The same qualification applies to the final grade. Urban enrolment falls from 198 to 126, and rural enrolment from 61 to 34. These changes describe groups present at different points in time. They reinforce the value of transition analysis while reminding us that aggregate archives cannot replace individual trajectory records.

Flow Patterns Differ by Grade

The dissertation's mean rates indicate difficulties from the first year of lower secondary education. Residual exits reach 39.37% at the urban site and 43.82% at the rural site. Promotion to the next grade remains below 40% at both sites. These values identify a vulnerable point at entry into lower secondary education under the accounting conventions adopted.

In the second year, the mean promotion rate is higher in the urban school, at 50.56% compared with 39.48%. Residual exits reach 29.44% and 40.80%, respectively. This pattern indicates a descriptive disadvantage for the rural site at this stage, although the data cannot attribute it to a particular cause.

In the third year, the promotion pattern reverses: the rate reaches 60.31% at the rural site, compared with 42.13% at the urban site. Repetition is also lower at the rural site. Comparisons by setting therefore do not reveal a constant hierarchy throughout the cycle. They depend on the grade and the event examined.

The final grade exhibits two patterns of difficulty. At the urban site, mean repetition reaches 45.53%, compared with 24.07% at the rural site. Residual exits, however, are higher at the rural site, at 46.66% compared with 23.03%. A lower repetition rate therefore does not necessarily indicate greater continuity in schooling.

The final row of the table concerns BEPC attainment, which the dissertation treats as the promotion outcome for the final grade. This outcome differs from simply advancing a grade.

The use of the same label in the calculations must be considered when comparing grades. Certification is a distinct event from progression within lower secondary education.

Reaching the Final Grade and Obtaining the BEPC

The dissertation's survival tables indicate that 136 students from a hypothetical cohort of 1,000 would reach the final grade at each site. Projected BEPC attainment concerns 54 students at the urban site and 47 at the rural site. Equal access to the final grade therefore does not translate into equal final certification.

The projected difference in BEPC attainment is 0.7 percentage points in favour of the urban site. This finding describes a difference between the dissertation's scenarios; it does not estimate the causal effect of setting.

The similarity in progression to the final grade warrants the same caution, given the number of sites and discrepancies in the source calculations.

The rural table indicates 453 survivors entering the second year. Yet the intermediate projection table presents 385 direct promotions and 177 repeaters from the first year. The precise relationship between these values and the total retained in the final table is not explained. This article neither silently corrects that result nor turns the 13.6% value into an independently verified estimate.

At the urban site too, rounding and the treatment of trajectories involving repetition limit full replication from the printed tables alone. The central finding remains the distinction between two outcomes: reaching

the final grade and obtaining the qualification. Both stages must be included in any interpretation of the cycle's performance.

Examining Sex and Setting Together Reveals a Reversal

The comparison across both dimensions changes the interpretation of an overall advantage for girls. At the urban site, projected progression to the final grade reaches 16.8% among girls and 10.6% among boys. At the rural site, it reaches 12.8% among girls and 16.9% among boys. The ordering of the groups therefore reverses between the two schools.

In the urban setting, the girl–boy difference is 6.2 percentage points for reaching the final grade and 1.2 points for BEPC attainment. In the rural setting, the corresponding differences are −4.1 and −4.1 points. The certification difference there corresponds to 30 projected female certificate holders compared with 71 male certificate holders in separate cohorts of 1,000 entrants.

These numbers are not actual counts observed among questionnaire respondents. They derive from the dissertation's flow projections.

Nevertheless, they show that pooling sites may conceal opposing patterns. Describing an advantage for girls without mentioning setting would provide an incomplete account of the available findings.

The dissertation calculates a mean of 14.8% for girls and 13.75% for boys across the two sites, a difference of 1.05 percentage points. This is a simple mean of projected rates, not an overall rate weighted by the actual number of entrants. It should therefore not be presented as the proportion of all girls and boys in the administrative sample.

Constraints Reported by Students

Students' responses indicate heterogeneous study conditions. Difficulties involving academic and financial support are mentioned in all four groups. Agricultural work is more frequently mentioned at the rural site, by both boys and girls. Table 5 retains mention counts to make the small denominators visible.

Lack of academic support is mentioned by three boys and three girls at the urban site, compared with five boys and six girls at the rural site. Lack of financial support concerns four boys and three girls at the first site, compared with six boys and five girls at the second. These differences involve only a few responses and cannot be generalised to all students in these settings.

Agricultural work is mentioned by seven boys and six girls at the rural site, compared with two boys and no girls at the urban site. This pattern provides a concrete indication of possible competition between school and agricultural activities. It measures neither time spent working nor its seasonality or individual effect on progression.

The category labelled "bad company" in the dissertation comprises six mentions among urban boys, three among rural boys, four among urban girls and six among rural girls. The term is retained for traceability but reflects respondents' judgements. No observational instrument concerning peer relationships is available to clarify its nature or intensity.

"Other difficulties" concern four boys and three girls in the urban setting, and six boys and seven girls in the rural setting. The source text associates this category with various situations, including marriage, petty trading, outmigration and difficulties with guardianship. The data cannot assign a separate frequency to each. These situations remain avenues for further investigation.

Insights from Teachers and Families

The five teachers included in the source table report difficulties with the language of instruction and basic academic operations. The dissertation also presents concerns about irregular attendance, lateness and discipline. These observations suggest a need for educational support but do not constitute a standardised assessment of learning.

The teacher table contrasts certain assessments of boys and girls, particularly regarding willingness to study and prerequisite knowledge. The assessment criteria are not specified. This article therefore retains the finding of perceived difficulties without treating these judgements as objective measures of motivation or competence by sex.

The parents interviewed discuss school resources and the expected value of education for employment. At the rural site, the dissertation also reports poverty and distance between home and school. School officials emphasise shortages of sufficiently numerous and qualified teachers. These themes are presented without percentages because their denominators are unavailable.

Taken together, the materials indicate educational, economic and organisational difficulties. Their coexistence is documented, but the sequence connecting them is not established at the individual level. It is therefore impossible to determine which obstacle most strongly explains a particular student's departure or to calculate the share of attrition attributable to each constraint.

Rethinking the Interpretation of School Survival

The first contribution of the findings is to demonstrate the value of separating stages of the school trajectory. Projected progression to the final grade is identical in the dissertation's final tables, whereas certification differs. An overall conclusion that settings do not differ thus loses some relevance when the outcome examined changes. The chosen indicator shapes the answer to the research question.

The distinction between observation and projection is equally decisive. A hypothetical cohort summarises the transition conditions retained over a period. It does not directly measure how many students from the same actual cohort obtained the BEPC. The results of 5.4% and 4.7% must therefore be interpreted within the dissertation's calculation scenario, rather than as national rates or ordinary examination pass rates.

The low projected values draw attention to successive losses throughout the cycle. However, they cannot establish the number of permanent dropouts. Aggregate data cannot distinguish all departures from a particular school from departures from the education system. For planning purposes, this distinction determines whether action should focus on re-enrolment, preventing exclusions or tracking mobility between schools.

Patterns Vary by Sex and Site

The reversal of differences between the two schools is a more informative descriptive finding than the simple mean presented in the dissertation. Girls show higher projected retention at the urban site, whereas boys are advantaged at the rural site. This contrast is not a statistically demonstrated interaction; it identifies a pattern that warrants investigation across a larger set of schools.

The findings rule out the assertion that girls systematically perform better than boys in lower secondary education. Nor do they imply that rural settings uniformly disadvantage all students. The direction of differences varies by group and outcome. Policy based on a single average could therefore fail to identify some disadvantaged groups.

Reports concerning agricultural work and academic support suggest avenues for understanding rural trajectories. However, they are not linked to the administrative trajectories of the same individuals. Directly explaining rural girls' low projected rate through any particular constraint would be excessive. Such a hypothesis requires individual data, in-depth interviews and tracking of changing circumstances.

A social roles perspective primarily encourages questions about who has time to study, who receives support and what expectations adolescents face. These questions may concern both sexes in different ways. The available materials cannot rank these mechanisms. They support contextualised analysis rather than attributing difficulties to personal dispositions.

Connecting Family Resources and School Functioning

Mentions of financial and academic support encourage examination of the practical conditions of learning. A student may remain enrolled while having few resources for schoolwork. Conversely, departure may reflect a combination of earlier failures and family difficulties. Administrative tables record the outcome of these situations without describing the process leading to it.

The interpretation of social inequalities offered by the theoretical framework helps raise these questions without assuming that families entirely determine trajectories. School functioning remains essential. Educational resources, support on entering lower secondary school and opportunities for remedial teaching may help turn initial difficulties into progress or repeated failure.

The high repetition rate in the final grade at the urban site is therefore a signal requiring investigation. Higher residual exits at the rural site suggest a different pattern. Interpreting these differences would require knowledge of exclusion rules, opportunities to retake the examination and the subsequent trajectories of students leaving each school. None of these explanations can be assumed from the rates alone.

Themes reported by families and staff complement this interpretation by emphasising resources and support.

Table.1 Enrolment at the Beginning and End of the Period

Grade	Urban 2015–2016	Urban 2019–2020	Rural 2015–2016	Rural 2019–2020
Year 1	622	329	228	174
Year 2	326	160	98	88
Year 3	257	201	77	39
Year 4	198	126	61	34

Source: Field survey data, 2025

Table.2 Mean Flow Rates by Grade and Site as Percentages

Site	Grade	Promotion[1]	Repetition	Exit[2]
Urban	Year 1	36.51	24.12	39.37
Urban	Year 2	50.56	20.00	29.44
Urban	Year 3	42.13	30.38	27.50
Urban	Year 4	31.44	45.53	23.03
Rural	Year 1	38.46	17.72	43.82
Rural	Year 2	39.48	19.72	40.80
Rural	Year 3	60.31	10.95	28.73
Rural	Year 4	29.27	24.07	46.66

Source: Field survey data, 2025

Table.3 Retention and Certification Projections by Site

Stage	Urban per 1,000	Rural per 1,000
Entry to Year 1	1,000	1,000
Reaching Year 2	453	453
Reaching Year 3	266	209
Reaching Year 4	136	136
BEPC attainment	54	47

Source: Field survey data, 2025

Table.4 Projections by Sex and Site as Percentages

Group	Reaching Year 4	BEPC attainment
Urban boys	10.6	4.8
Urban girls	16.8	6.0
Rural boys	16.9	7.1
Rural girls	12.8	3.0

Source: Field survey data, 2025

Table.5 Student Reported Difficulties by Number of Mentions

Difficulty	Urban boys	Rural boys	Urban girls	Rural girls
Lack of academic support	3	5	3	6
Lack of financial support	4	6	3	5
Agricultural work	2	7	0	6
Bad company as reported by respondents	6	3	4	6
Other difficulties	4	6	3	7
Students surveyed	10	10	10	10

Source: Field survey data, 2025

They do not establish causality but help define variables that future research should measure. The value of the supplementary component lies in opening up possible mechanisms rather than demonstrating a single explanation.

Scope of Territorial Comparisons

The equal 13.6% values in the final tables do not establish that residential setting is unrelated to school trajectories. Two rounded values do not prove equivalence between two populations. More fundamentally, having only one school per setting prevents separation of territorial characteristics from school characteristics. The hypothesis of a territorial effect therefore remains open.

Selecting schools according to their archives may also shape the findings. Schools with well-preserved documents are not necessarily comparable to those with incomplete data. This selection may reflect differences in management or administrative stability. The study retains value as a comparison of cases but does not provide a representative estimate for Zinder as a whole.

Franco-Arabic education at the urban site is another limitation of a comparison reduced to the urban–rural dimension. Curricular characteristics, recruitment practices and family profiles are not controlled for. Mentioning them does not explain the differences; it identifies potentially relevant variables and the caution required in interpretation.

Data Limitations and Strength of Conclusions

Inconsistencies in some tables affect the robustness of the exact values. The rural projection, in particular, requires verification of formulas and repetition accounting rules. An audit should return to annual enrolment figures, identify the events actually observed and reproduce each transition before recalculating the cohort. Numerical conclusions cannot be stronger than the quality of this calculation chain.

The survey chronology is a second qualification. Administrative data concern 2015–2020, whereas supplementary responses are dated 2022 and the dissertation was submitted for 2024–2025. These accounts may illuminate the schools' general context; they cannot retrospectively explain every event observed several years earlier.

The small number of students surveyed and the incomplete description of selection limit the interpretation of differences in mentions. Responses about peer associations and motivation may also be influenced by social desirability or adult judgements. Future research would benefit from distinguishing student accounts, family accounts and independent observations.

Despite these limitations, the dissertation provides useful local materials. It documents school archives over several years and connects flows with practical concerns about support. This article turns those materials into more clearly delimited descriptive findings. It avoids claims of definite dependence or statistically confirmed hypotheses, which would exceed the design's capacity.

Implications for Monitoring and Support

The first priority is information quality. A stable student identifier would enable each student to be followed from year to year, including after a transfer. Exit categories should distinguish confirmed dropout, exclusion, transfer to another school and unknown status. Traceable decisions are necessary to target support and calculate interpretable indicators.

The first year of lower secondary education deserves specific attention, given the substantial residual exits at both sites. Entry assessment followed by tailored support would identify needs before end-of-year failure occurs. Difficulties with the language of instruction and arithmetic reported by teachers may guide diagnostic domains without replacing actual assessment of competencies.

At the rural site, frequent mentions of agricultural work call for examination of periods of high family demand and their relationship with attendance. Dialogue with families could clarify constraints and identify forms of support. Material assistance should be based on documented needs, since the data also show financial difficulties among urban students.

Monitoring in the final grade should distinguish BEPC preparation, repetition and exit. Identifying students who fail repeatedly and documenting opportunities for continued schooling or alternative pathways would be useful. The objective cannot simply be to increase promotion mechanically; it must combine retention, competency acquisition and access to a relevant qualification.

Finally, actions must be evaluated. Comparing indicators before and after implementation, with comparison schools where possible, would help distinguish the effects of measures from ordinary variation between cohorts. The present findings justify improved diagnosis and monitoring; they do not yet demonstrate the effectiveness of any particular programme.

In conclusion, this study describes school trajectories in two schools in Zinder using administrative tables and supplementary information reported in a master's dissertation. It highlights the value of examining sex, site and trajectory stage together. Progression to the final grade, repetition and BEPC attainment provide different information about the functioning of lower secondary education.

The dissertation's final tables project progression to the final grade of 13.6% at each site. They indicate BEPC attainment of 5.4% in the urban school and 4.7% in the rural school. These values are retained as outcomes of the source scenario, whose calculations contain inconsistencies requiring verification. They must not be confused with ordinary examination pass rates or the actual tracking of 1,000 students.

Examining the groups together reveals a projected advantage for girls at the urban site and boys at the rural site. Student responses indicate constraints relating to academic support, funding and participation in agricultural work. These responses help refine questions for further investigation without establishing the causal weight of these difficulties in school trajectories.

The research remains a comparison of two cases. It cannot establish that sex determines school survival or that residential setting plays no role. The absence of individual tracking, limitations of the archives and narrow school coverage require this qualification. Clearer data collection and calculation procedures are a prerequisite for more general conclusions.

Practical priorities include improving registers, preventing difficulties at entry into lower secondary education and supporting students through to certification. Extending the research to several schools per setting and adding longitudinal tracking would permit more precise examination of family and school conditions. The aim is to obtain sufficiently reliable information to support students whose continued schooling is at risk.

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