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SECONDARY SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES IN NIGER: A CASE STUDY OF LYCÉE AMADOU KOURAN DAGA IN ZINDER

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ABSTRACT

Secondary school governance is a major concern in efforts to improve educational quality in Niger. Despite the institutional and regulatory frameworks governing school management, several challenges persist, particularly in administrative coordination, stakeholder engagement, and instructional monitoring. This study aims to analyse the influence of governance on academic outcomes at Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga in Zinder. It uses a methodological approach combining documentary research, questionnaires, and interviews. The analysis examines governance practices, the participation of administrative and teaching staff, and trends in academic outcomes over the past five years. The study seeks to identify ways to improve school management and student performance.

Keywords: School Governance, Secondary School, Academic Outcomes, Educational Management, Niger.

1 INTRODUCTION

Education is a key driver of nations' economic, social, and cultural development. It contributes to human resource development, knowledge transmission, and the acquisition of skills required for social and occupational integration. However, achieving these objectives depends not only on curricula and teacher qualifications but also on the quality of school governance. Governance encompasses administrative organisation, the coordination of teaching and learning activities, resource management, and the participation of stakeholders in the school community.

School governance refers to the mechanisms and practices that structure decision-making, the allocation of responsibilities, and the monitoring of school activities. Effective governance rests on transparency, communication, stakeholder coordination, and participation in decision-making. Conversely, organisational weaknesses, resource shortages, and difficulties in instructional monitoring can affect school operations and hinder improvements in student outcomes.

In Niger, Law No. 98-12 of 1 June 1998 establishing the guiding framework for the Nigerien education system (LOSEN) provides a key reference for the organisation of education. However, the existence of a regulatory framework does not always ensure its effective implementation in schools. Material constraints, difficulties in administrative and instructional coordination, and inadequate monitoring of learning can limit the effectiveness of school management.

Academic outcomes are an important indicator of student performance. They nevertheless depend on several factors, including teaching practices, socioeconomic conditions, family environments, and available resources. Governance should therefore be examined as a factor that may support learning, without systematically attributing responsibility for observed outcomes to it.

Against this background, Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga in Zinder provides a relevant setting for analysing governance practices and their relationship with academic performance. This study addresses the following question: to what extent does governance at this school contribute to changes in students' academic outcomes? Its overall objective is to examine the influence of governance on these outcomes. More specifically, it seeks to identify the characteristics of school governance, assess administrative and teaching staff involvement in management, and analyse trends in academic outcomes over the past five years.

To achieve these objectives, the study adopts a mixed methods approach based on documentary research, questionnaires, and interviews with relevant stakeholders. Triangulating these data will make it possible to examine the links between management practices and school performance. The article presents the conceptual foundations of school governance, the methodology, the findings, and their discussion, before proposing recommendations to improve the management of secondary schools.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

School governance is an important issue in educational research because of its potential role in improving institutional functioning and academic outcomes. It encompasses decision-making mechanisms, the allocation of responsibilities, resource management, and collaboration among members of the school community. The literature provides three perspectives on this issue: the relationship between governance and academic achievement, the role of management in school performance, and the importance of stakeholder participation.

2.1 School governance and academic achievement

School governance extends beyond administrative and material management. It also encompasses activity planning, instructional coordination, and the creation of conditions conducive to learning. Merrien (1998) analyses governance as a transformation in the coordination of public action, characterised by increased cooperation among stakeholders beyond strictly hierarchical relationships. Applied to education, this perspective highlights the importance of dialogue, coordination, and collective mobilisation around shared objectives.

In the Nigerien context, Maazou Issa's (2019) research on the management and planning of activities at CES Barma Moustapha in Zinder provides a local reference for examining the relationship between school management and academic performance. This work highlights the importance of administrative skills, leadership, and communication in school operations. However, these findings must be interpreted in light of the particular characteristics of the setting studied.

School performance can be assessed through examination pass rates, grade repetition rates, promotion rates, and dropout rates. Sound governance may help improve these indicators through better organisation of activities, instructional monitoring, and the identification of learning difficulties. However, academic outcomes also depend on pedagogical, family, social, and economic factors. Governance is therefore a potential contributor to achievement rather than its sole determinant.

2.2 School management and performance

School management comprises the planning, organisation, coordination, supervision, and evaluation required for a school to function. Its effectiveness depends particularly on administrators' skills, information flows, procedural clarity, and staff involvement.

Fournier and Masou (2016) examine the relationship between school leaders' management practices and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in France.

Participatory management, particularly as promoted in training and support initiatives for education stakeholders, encourages collaboration among school leaders, teachers, parents, and partners. It preserves the school head's

responsibilities while enabling different stakeholders to contribute to finding solutions. In practical terms, scheduling teaching activities, monitoring absences, holding coordination meetings, analysing assessment results, and implementing remedial measures can help improve learning conditions. Conversely, inadequate coordination and irregular instructional monitoring may limit school effectiveness.

2.3 Educational governance and stakeholder participation

Participatory governance rests on consultation, transparency, and stakeholder accountability. In its White Paper on European Governance, the European Commission (2001) highlights the principles of openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and coherence. Although this document concerns European governance, these principles provide useful reference points for analysing school management practices.

Teachers, through their knowledge of instructional difficulties; parents, through their support for students' learning; and administrators, through their coordinating role, can contribute to improving school operations. This approach is consistent with Durkheim's (1922) conception of education as a process of socialisation and transmission of collective norms. The school is thus both a place of learning and a setting for collective organisation based on shared responsibilities.

In Niger, Law No. 98-12 of 1 June 1998 establishing the guiding framework for the Nigerien education system provides an institutional reference. However, governance effectiveness depends not only on regulations but also on their implementation, available resources, and administrators' competencies.

Overall, the literature highlights the importance of leadership, planning, instructional monitoring, and stakeholder participation in school governance. It does not, however, support the conclusion that management practices automatically have a causal relationship with academic performance. This study adopts this perspective by examining governance practices at Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga in Zinder, staff involvement, and trends in student outcomes over the past five years.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research setting and design

This study examines secondary school governance and academic outcomes through the case of Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga (LAKD) in Zinder, Niger. The school was selected because of its importance within the regional education system, its history, and the availability of data on enrolment and examination results. The study focuses particularly on administrative and instructional management practices, staff involvement in decision-making, and trends in school performance.

The research adopts a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative component describes staff perceptions of governance practices and examines trends in academic outcomes using available statistical data. The qualitative component seeks to deepen understanding of management practices, coordination mechanisms, and the difficulties encountered by school stakeholders. Combining these approaches allows numerical data to be considered alongside respondents' experiences and perceptions.

3.2 Study population and sampling

The study population consists of stakeholders involved in the governance and operation of Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga. It primarily includes administrative staff, teachers, and representatives of the school management committee (COGES). These groups were selected because of their participation in planning, organisation, coordination, and instructional monitoring.

According to the data provided for the school, administrative staff include the principal, deputy principals responsible for academic affairs, student supervisors, librarians, and clerical staff. Teaching staff comprise several categories, including permanent teachers, contract teachers, and national civic service personnel. Student enrolment figures and examination statistics also provide an important documentary source for analysing academic outcomes.

The study uses purposive sampling based on participants' relevance to the research focus. This approach prioritises stakeholders directly involved in school management and the implementation of teaching activities. The sample specified in the data collection protocol comprises 120 key informants, including 100 teachers and 20 administrative staff members, with COGES representatives included in accordance with the survey arrangements. Data collected from these participants are intended to assess their perceptions of governance and their involvement in the school's operations.

3.3 Data collection methods and instruments

Data collection draws on three complementary methods: documentary research, a questionnaire survey, and interviews.

Documentary research involves examining administrative and instructional documents available from Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga and the relevant education authorities. These include student enrolment statistics, baccalaureate examination results, grade repetition data, and documents explaining the school's organisation and operation. Regulatory texts and academic research on educational governance are also used to develop the analytical framework.

The questionnaire survey is the main instrument for collecting quantitative data from the staff concerned. It seeks information on administrative management practices, internal communication, teacher participation in decision-making, the organisation of teaching activities, and learning monitoring. It also identifies perceived difficulties and respondents' proposals for improving school governance. Responses are subsequently organised to facilitate statistical processing.

Interviews explore aspects that cannot be adequately explained through questionnaire responses alone. They address decision-making procedures, the allocation of responsibilities, staff collaboration, and mechanisms for monitoring student outcomes. Interview data supplement and clarify the quantitative findings.

A pilot survey is planned at CES Barma Moustapha in Zinder to assess question clarity, respondents' understanding, and alignment with the research objectives. Necessary adjustments are to be made before the instruments are administered at Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga.

3.4 Data collection procedures and analysis

Data collection is organised into several stages. The first involves reviewing available documents and contacting school administrators to clarify the information required. The second concerns the pilot survey and refinement of the instruments. The third involves administering the questionnaire and conducting interviews with selected participants. Finally, the data are checked, classified, and organised according to the specific research objectives.

Quantitative data are analysed primarily using descriptive statistics. Questionnaire responses are grouped into categories and presented as counts, frequencies, and percentages. Where the data permit, comparisons are made across respondent groups to identify similarities and differences in perceptions of school governance.

The analysis of academic outcomes draws on the statistics available for the school years covered by the study. It examines trends in baccalaureate pass rates, taking account of academic streams and candidate numbers where sufficiently complete data are available. Grade repetition data and other school indicators are also used to supplement the analysis. Rates are checked against the numbers enrolled, sitting the examination, and passing, as appropriate to each indicator.

Qualitative interview data are subjected to thematic analysis. Participants' accounts are organised around the principal research themes: school head leadership, stakeholder participation, internal communication, instructional organisation, teacher monitoring, and the management of student outcomes. This approach identifies recurring perceptions, reported difficulties, and participants' proposals.

Finally, data triangulation is undertaken by comparing questionnaire responses, interview information, and school statistics wherever possible. This comparison seeks to strengthen the coherence of interpretation and avoid drawing conclusions from a single source of information.

3.5 Ethical considerations and methodological limitations

Conducting this research requires adherence to the ethical principles applicable to educational research. Participation must be voluntary and follow adequate information about the study objectives. Collected information must be used for scientific purposes, with particular attention to the confidentiality of individual responses. Administrative and school data are used in accordance with authorisations obtained from the relevant officials.

Methodologically, the study focuses on a single secondary school. Its findings will therefore illuminate the particular circumstances of Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga without claiming automatically to represent all secondary schools in Niger. Moreover, analysing trends in academic outcomes can identify patterns and examine their relationship with governance practices, but cannot by itself establish causality. Other factors, including teaching conditions, student characteristics, and available resources, must be considered when interpreting the findings.

4 RESULTS

This section analyses data collected from staff at Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga (LAKD) in Zinder. It addresses three main areas: the characteristics of school governance, administrative and teaching staff involvement in school operations, and the perceived contribution of governance to academic outcomes. The analysis draws on questionnaire data and available school statistics for 2020–2024.

4.1 Characteristics of good school governance

Good school governance rests on several complementary principles. These include compliance with regulations, regular monitoring of teaching activities, staff participation in decision-making bodies, and consideration of staff proposals. These principles help structure school operations, strengthen stakeholder accountability, and foster an environment conducive to learning.

In this study, these dimensions serve as criteria for assessing governance practices at Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga. The aim is to determine the extent to which observed practices reflect participatory, organised management directed towards improving teaching quality.

4.2 Characteristics of governance at Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga

4.2.1 Compliance with regulatory texts and rules

Compliance with regulatory texts and rules is an essential dimension of school governance. It helps ensure orderly administrative and instructional operations, clarifies stakeholders' responsibilities, and promotes equitable treatment of situations arising within the school.

Survey findings indicate that 51.25% of respondents believe that regulatory texts and rules are often followed at LAKD. A further 13.75% report that they are always followed, whereas 12.50% consider that they are sometimes followed and 22.50% that they are rarely followed.

These findings show that 65% of respondents view regulatory compliance favourably, reporting that regulations are often or always applied. However, the 35% who report only occasional or rare application indicate difficulties or, at the very least, differing perceptions of how effectively rules are implemented.

The analysis suggests that regulatory compliance is a relatively established practice within the school, although greater consistency and transparency in implementation remain necessary. Effective governance depends not only on the existence of regulations but also on stakeholder awareness, consistent application, and mechanisms for monitoring compliance.

4.2.2 Instructional monitoring and professional support for teachers

Instructional monitoring is an important means of improving teaching practices. At Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga, it is described as being undertaken particularly by the principal through the activities of pedagogical units and classroom observations. According to the information collected, inspectors and pedagogical advisers from the Zinder 1 Education Inspectorate also provide support for teachers.

The data in the table addressing this issue show two response counts: 77 and 33. However, these sum to 110, whereas the table reports a total of 80 respondents. This inconsistency prevents the actual distribution of responses from being calculated with certainty. Counts and percentages must therefore be checked against the original dataset before a definitive statistical conclusion can be drawn.

Qualitatively, the information presented nevertheless highlights the importance attached to instructional monitoring in school operations. To assess its effectiveness, it would be necessary to distinguish the frequency of visits, the stakeholders conducting them, the observations made, and the support measures proposed for teachers.

Thus, monitoring frequency alone does not demonstrate effectiveness. Professional support should also help identify instructional difficulties, provide appropriate advice, and promote continuous improvement in professional practice.

4.2.3 Teacher and administrative staff involvement in decision-making

Stakeholder participation in decisions is a fundamental principle of participatory governance. It helps align decisions with realities on the ground, recognises staff expertise, and encourages commitment to the school's chosen priorities.

According to the findings in Figure 2, 61.25% of respondents report that they are always involved in decisions concerning the planning of academic and teaching activities. A further 33.75% indicate that they sometimes participate, while 5% report that they are not involved.

Overall, 95% of respondents therefore report always or sometimes participating in decision-making processes. This finding reflects a broadly favourable perception of staff participation in school operations. It suggests that decisions are not consistently perceived as the exclusive responsibility of administrators and that teaching staff contributions are given a place.

However, the 33.75% of respondents who are only sometimes involved warrant particular attention. This may reflect participation that varies according to activities, responsibilities, or circumstances. It would therefore be useful to specify the bodies involved, meeting frequency, and the staff categories actually represented.

Overall, the data indicate substantial reported participation, although this should also be assessed in terms of the regularity of consultation and the actual influence of staff proposals on final decisions.

4.2.4 Consideration of staff proposals

Involvement in decisions extends beyond staff attendance at meetings. It also requires their views, suggestions, and proposals to be examined and, where appropriate, taken into account in school management.

The results show that 65% of respondents believe their proposals are often taken into account. A further 17.50% report that this always occurs, while 13.75% indicate that it sometimes occurs. Finally, 3.75% consider that their proposals are rarely taken into account.

Thus, 82.50% of respondents view the consideration of their proposals favourably, reporting that they are often or always considered. This pattern complements the findings on decision-making participation: staff appear not only to be involved in discussions, at least occasionally, but also to perceive some consideration of their contributions.

Nevertheless, participation does not necessarily mean that all proposals are adopted. Some may be rejected for regulatory, budgetary, or organisational reasons. Transparent governance therefore requires explaining decisions and reporting on the follow-up given to submitted proposals.

These findings suggest that LAKD has participatory practices appreciated by most respondents. However, consultation, communication, and feedback mechanisms still need to be strengthened to make participation more regular and transparent.

4.3 Contribution of governance to academic outcomes

School governance may help improve academic outcomes by promoting better work organisation, regular instructional monitoring, effective information flows, and collective mobilisation around achievement goals. However, school performance also depends on other factors, including student characteristics, available resources, teaching conditions, attendance, and family environments.

In this study, the contribution of governance is examined through two complementary sources: respondents' assessments and trends in baccalaureate pass rates between 2020 and 2024.

4.3.1 Staff assessments of the contribution of governance

The findings indicate that 86.25% of respondents consider that governance at Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga makes a positive contribution to student outcomes. A further 1.25% attribute a very positive contribution to it, while 12.50% believe it has no impact.

These findings reflect a broadly favourable perception of the role of governance in academic achievement. The vast majority of respondents thus identify a positive link between school management practices and academic outcomes. This assessment may reflect the importance attached to activity coordination, staff participation, and instructional monitoring.

However, stakeholder perceptions must be distinguished from objective measurement of the effects of governance. Questionnaire responses reveal how staff understand their school's functioning, but do not establish that governance practices are directly responsible for changes in outcomes. This relationship must be examined alongside school statistics and other factors that may influence achievement.

4.3.2 Trends in baccalaureate pass rates from 2020 to 2024

Trends in baccalaureate results provide an indicator for assessing school performance over several years. The data presented in Table 6 report pass rates of 22.96% in 2020, 26.16% in 2021, 22.96% in 2022, 26.16% in 2023, and 34.56% in 2024.

Subject to verification of the source data, this series shows an uneven pattern between 2020 and 2023, with alternating increases and decreases, followed by a larger increase in 2024. Between 2020 and 2024, the reported rate rose from 22.96% to 34.56%, an increase of 11.60 percentage points.

This is an encouraging descriptive finding. It indicates that the reported pass rate for 2024 exceeds that for 2020. However, candidate numbers, numbers passing, and pass rates must be checked before this trend can be confirmed. In particular, total school enrolment must not be confused with the number of baccalaureate candidates.

Moreover, the observed increase alone does not establish that improved outcomes can be attributed to governance. Such a conclusion would require relating changes in management practices to changes in outcomes while examining other factors that might explain the observed variations.

4.3.3 Overall assessment of governance quality

The findings show that 57.50% of respondents rate governance as average, while 5% rate it as poor. By contrast, 35% rate it as good and 2.50% as very good.

Thus, 62.50% of respondents rate governance as average or poor, compared with 37.50% who rate it as good or very good. This distribution reveals a nuanced assessment of school operations. Although previous findings indicate substantial reported participation and relatively favourable consideration of proposals, the overall assessment remains predominantly average.

This difference may arise because respondents are assessing governance as a whole rather than participation in decisions alone. Their overall judgement may incorporate other dimensions, such as material resources, working conditions, administrative organisation, internal communication, and instructional monitoring.

It is therefore necessary to avoid reducing governance quality to staff participation alone. Sustained improvement also requires strengthening resources, planning, activity monitoring, and the school's capacity to meet the needs of its community.

4.3.4 Material resource needs

This concerns data regarding the need to increase the educational institution's material resources. Of the 80 respondents, 58 (72.50%) answered in the affirmative, while 22 (27.50%) felt that such an increase was not necessary.

Most respondents therefore regard strengthening material resources as a school need. This finding highlights the importance of material conditions for school operations. Available resources may affect the organisation of teaching, access to instructional materials, and opportunities to implement school activities.

These data suggest that improving governance involves more than administrative practices or participation in decisions. It also requires identifying needs, planning expenditure, and mobilising available resources appropriately.

4.3.5 Assessment of the influence of governance on student outcomes

The findings indicate that 86.25% of respondents consider that governance makes a very positive contribution to student outcomes, 1.25% consider its contribution positive, and 12.50% report that it has no impact.

This distribution confirms that most staff respondents attribute a favourable role to governance in academic achievement. It demonstrates recognition of the importance of school organisation and the coordination of teaching activities.

Overall, the survey data support the conclusion that perceptions of the contribution of governance to student outcomes are largely positive. They do not, however, establish a direct causal relationship. The analysis must be supplemented by verification of school statistics and examination of actual management and support practices.

5 DISCUSSION

This study sought to analyse the contribution of governance to academic outcomes at Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga (LAKD) in Zinder. The findings concern regulatory compliance, instructional monitoring, staff participation, material resources, and trends in baccalaureate pass rates.

5.1 Governance and stakeholder participation

The findings show that 65% of respondents believe regulatory texts are often or always followed, whereas 35% consider that they are sometimes or rarely applied. This situation indicates scope for improvement in implementing rules and clarifying responsibilities. The European Commission (2001) highlights the importance of transparency, accountability, and participation in governance. These principles can inform the analysis of school operations.

Furthermore, 95% of respondents report being always or sometimes involved in decisions, and 82.5% believe that their proposals are often or always taken into account. These findings suggest some openness to staff participation. They are consistent with Merrien's (1998) discussion of stakeholder coordination in public action. However, reported participation does not necessarily guarantee actual influence over decisions. It is therefore important to strengthen opportunities for consultation and improve communication about decisions taken.

This assessment remains qualified: 62.5% of respondents rate governance as average or poor, compared with 37.5% who consider it good or very good. This difference shows that participation alone is insufficient to ensure satisfactory management. Indeed, 72.5% of respondents call for increased material resources, highlighting the need to combine consultation with better resource planning.

5.2 Instructional monitoring and school performance

Instructional monitoring is a potential means of improving teaching practices, particularly through coordination among administrators, pedagogical units, and supervisory staff. The discussion of school management in Maazou Issa's (2019) study of CES Barma Moustapha in Zinder offers a relevant point of comparison, subject to verification of that work's exact conclusions.

The data also indicate that 87.5% of respondents perceive a positive or very positive contribution of governance to student outcomes. The baccalaureate pass rates presented for 2020–2024 are 22.96%, 26.16%, 22.96%, 26.16%, and 34.56%, respectively. If accurate, these figures indicate an overall increase of 11.60 percentage points between 2020 and 2024, despite intermediate fluctuations.

However, this trend does not establish a causal relationship between governance and achievement. Performance also depends on teaching practices, student attendance, available resources, and students' socioeconomic environments. As Durkheim's (1922) sociological perspective suggests, education is situated within an institutional and collective framework, but this approach does not provide direct evidence of the effect of governance on examination results.

6 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyse the contribution of governance to academic outcomes at Lycée Amadou Kouran Daga (LAKD) in Zinder. It examined management practices, compliance with regulatory texts, staff participation in decision-making, instructional monitoring, and trends in baccalaureate results.

The findings reveal that 65% of respondents believe regulatory texts are often or always followed. Furthermore, 95% report being always or sometimes involved in decisions, while 82.5% consider that their proposals are often or always taken into account. These data indicate some staff participation in school management. However, the overall assessment of governance remains mixed: 62.5% of respondents rate it as average or poor. In addition, 72.5% consider it necessary to increase material resources, highlighting the constraints facing the school.

Regarding academic outcomes, 87.5% of respondents perceive a positive or very positive contribution of governance to achievement. The baccalaureate pass rates presented for 2020–2024 also suggest an overall improvement, subject to data verification. Nevertheless, these observations do not establish a direct causal relationship between governance practices and student performance, which also depends on pedagogical, social, family, and material factors.

In light of these findings, it appears necessary to strengthen participatory management, improve instructional monitoring, promote transparent decision-making, and better plan the use of available resources. Collaboration among administrators, teachers, parents, and other education stakeholders should also be strengthened to create conditions more conducive to learning.

Overall, this research highlights the importance of governance in LAKD's operations while acknowledging the limitations of an analysis based on stakeholder perceptions and school data that still require verification. Further research across several schools, incorporating more detailed indicators, would help clarify the mechanisms through which governance contributes to improved academic outcomes in Niger.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript

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