

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-54483

Title: Morphological Characterization of Alternaria Brassicicola Strains Combined with Cabbage Cultivation in CÔte d'Ivoire,

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

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

Reviewer Name:

Dr Thirunahari Ugandhar

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Reviewer Comments

General Evaluation

The manuscript presents a study on the morphological characterisation of *Alternaria brassicicola* strains isolated from cabbage (*Brassica oleracea* L.) cultivated in Côte d'Ivoire. The topic is relevant and timely, as *A. brassicicola* is a major phytopathogen that affects cabbage yield and quality. The research contributes to the understanding of fungal diversity and disease epidemiology in tropical agricultural systems. The study is generally well-organised, with a clear objective and appropriate methodology. However, several issues related to structure, clarity, data presentation, and referencing need to be addressed to improve the manuscript's scientific quality and readability.

Major Comments

1. Title and Abstract

The title is clear and descriptive but could be refined for grammatical precision. Suggestion:
"Morphological Characterization of Alternaria brassicicola Strains Associated with Cabbage Cultivation in Côte d'Ivoire."

REVIEWER'S REPORT

The abstract effectively summarizes the work but should avoid redundancy (e.g., repeated mention of strain A5's dominance).

Please include a sentence in the abstract highlighting the potential implication of morphological variation for disease management or control strategies.

2. Introduction

The introduction provides adequate background on cabbage cultivation and the importance of *Alternaria* diseases.

However, the literature review could be strengthened by citing **recent global studies** (post-2020) that describe morphological or molecular diversity in *Alternaria brassicicola*.

The research gap should be more explicitly stated — i.e., why morphological characterization of isolates from Côte d'Ivoire is particularly important or previously unexplored.

3. Materials and Methods

The methodology is detailed and reproducible; however:

- Indicate **whether the fungal isolates were identified molecularly (e.g., ITS sequencing)** before morphological characterization. If not, please justify why only morphological identification was used.
- Specify **the source of the isolates** (locations, number of samples collected, and environmental conditions).
- In the section on *Measurement of colony diameters*, the formula is slightly unclear due to formatting. Ensure correct mathematical representation.
- Mention the **criteria for defining growth completion** (e.g., when colonies reached Petri dish borders).
- Provide more details about **microscopic observation** (staining methods, number of conidia measured per strain, etc.).
- Clarify whether experiments were conducted **in replicates** (n = 6 is mentioned, but specify if this refers to biological or technical replicates).

4. Results

The results are presented clearly, but the following improvements are recommended:

- Figures and tables should be properly labeled, formatted, and referenced within the text. For instance, Figure 1 should include high-resolution images with clear scale bars and captions describing each strain.
- Include **standard deviations or error bars** in graphical or tabular representations for clarity.
- The text should refer to *Tables I and II* before discussing the numerical results.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

- Consider adding a **growth curve figure** (colony diameter vs. time) to better visualize differences among strains.

5. Discussion

The discussion correctly interprets morphological variability but could be expanded to include:

- Comparative insights with studies from other regions (Africa, Asia, or Europe).
- Possible **environmental or genetic factors** influencing morphological variation.
- Implications for **pathogenicity, epidemiology, or resistance breeding** in cabbage.
- The citation "Blacuttet al., 218" seems incorrect — please verify and correct to the appropriate year (possibly 2018).
- References such as "Umashankar and Arsia, 2024" should be checked for accuracy and inclusion in the reference list.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion is concise but could be strengthened by mentioning potential applications of these findings (e.g., use in pathogen monitoring, disease management strategies, or future molecular studies).

Minor Comments

1. Formatting and Grammar

Ensure consistent formatting of *Alternaria brassicicola* (italicized throughout).

Several minor typographical errors are present (e.g., "Alternariagenus" → "Alternaria genus," "rural and urban household incomediversification" → "income diversification").

Correct spacing issues (e.g., "Alternariabrassicicolastrains" → "Alternaria brassicicola strains").

Use consistent units and formatting (e.g., "10⁶ conidia/mL" instead of "106 conidia/ ml").

2. References

Reference formatting needs to follow the journal's style guide.

Several citations in the text (e.g., Bany & Barnett, Botton et al., Attrassi et al.) are missing from the reference list — ensure all are included and formatted properly.

3. Statistical Analysis

Provide details on how data normality and homogeneity were tested.

Indicate whether post-hoc tests were adjusted for multiple comparisons.

Overall Recommendation:

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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Major Revision

The study presents interesting and relevant findings on the morphological diversity of *A. brassicicola* in cabbage from Côte d'Ivoire. However, improvements in presentation, methodological clarity, reference accuracy, and discussion depth are necessary before the manuscript can be considered for publication.