CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

Education needs to consider the big picture and support people in recognising and comprehending the relationships between inner and outer worlds (Boyd & Gordon Myers (1988) as it has specific significance for those benefiting. Primary education helps to welcome a new learner to the world of learning, while secondary education prepares the learners for higher education and complex real-life situations. Secondary education forges the foundation of a person's intellectual, emotional, and social development. Schools have long been involved in addressing students' moral guidance and social-emotional health in addition to their academic performance because students' social interactions and efficacy are greatly influenced by their emotional responses to events (Maurice J. Elias, Sarah J. Parker, 2021).

Secondary education is thus crucial for personal development, future success, and societal advancement. Students must learn to see the connections between local and global events, develop civic virtues to speak up and believe that their opinions count, and possess the intercultural competencies to call for the establishment of a more equitable society and create the confidence to demand accountability (Musil, 2009).

Therefore, it is a requirement for all the stakeholders of this essential stage of education to deliver quality and valuable instruction for the students to get what will later become a core to the whole education system and communities. Among other requirements, educational practices are determinants of implementation towards a successful educational process and a stable and sustainable community.

5.2. Policy Perspective

According to the Government Action's Observatory, cited by Rurihose (2001), the education sector policy had established an official program of actions to be carried out in general Post-Fundamental Education. Those activities include better management of municipal colleges, rational use of existing infrastructure, the promotion of private Education and qualified teacher

training in sufficient numbers. It also highlights improving teachers' living and working conditions, producing school books and other sufficient educational materials, strengthening the pedagogical and administrative framework, and improving teaching performance.

According to the General Directorate of Pedagogical Bureau (2014), fundamental Education aims to improve the development of the individual and better participation of the latter in the socio-economic development of society. This reform responds to a UNESCO recommendation that advocates extending primary Education to 9/10 years. The main objective of this political will is to introduce primary education, which will allow learners to face life through appropriate training.

The law on the organisation of primary and Post-Fundamental Education of 2013 stipulates that the mission of Secondary Education is to train young people in civic, moral, religious and intellectual values. It targets the capability of fostering an awareness of national realities and leading them to work for the country's socio-economic development, promoting national culture and patriotic spirit.

According to the Presidency of the Republic of Burundi, the implementation of the post-fundamental education curriculum requires prerequisites such as the planning of human resources, the production of educational tools, awareness raising of the stakeholders concerned, the training of teachers as well as the availability of Supports and educational equipment in schools. All public and private schools must comply with timetables and official curricula.

5.3. Educational Practices at the Secondary Level: Importance

At every level of education, educational practices are at the core, like what oil is to the motor. In the present situation, the educational practices in secondary education include all the means implemented by teachers, students, principals, and parents to address education in a general way. For the present study, essential educational practices implemented in secondary education included curriculum, pedagogical practices, evaluation process, administrative practices, school infrastructure, human resources, and school-industry interface.

These educational practices tend to address the problems that impede the smooth running of an education system and propose improvement strategies for each aspect. According to Nianren (1987), when education is provided well, and the quality of our people is generally improved, population growth would not only result in an explosion of consumption but also an expansion of technique and skill as well as an increase in labour productivity and efficiency rate. The secondary school curriculum intends to offer students subjects and topics that prepare them to face schooling life and after-school life issues and opportunities.

The curriculum is a deliberate design for learning negotiated by teachers based on their specialised knowledge, social norms, and the needs of the students (Dyjur & Kalu, 2018). The secondary school curriculum goes through reviews and changes any time the policymakers realise the need, especially to address the current challenges in job markets, community development and integration of technology into teaching-learning content and life handling. Dyjur & Kalu (2018) highlighted that reviewing the curriculum will result in an action plan for enhancing the program, and the results of its successful implementation will judge the effectiveness of the review. Technology integration in secondary schools is crucial in this digital era. It adds value to the already existing teaching methods and gives the students the required means to succeed in the current world. Crawford (1999) said that both instructing and learning IT are constructivist fields by nature, and educators who try to apply learning programs primarily created from behaviourist viewpoints soon discover that these are less successful.

Teachers' teaching strategies and tactics for post-secondary school students significantly impact their intellectual, social, and emotional development during this crucial period. Teachers implement various teaching methods, from the most traditional ones to the modern ones, focusing on learner-centred strategy and project-learning techniques, from the more conventional lecture-style instruction to more modern ones like project-based learning, flipped classrooms, and experiment-based learning to design their methods to the needs of diverse learners. Islam et al. (2018) clarified that the same is a well-liked teaching strategy for students of all grades; the flipped classroom varies based on the class's demands, the student's involvement, and the lecturers themselves. In addition to transmitting knowledge, secondary education tends to elevate the students' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities to prepare them for the current world's complications. According to Farrelly (2023), in addition to their teaching

experience, teachers' personal education and professional development play a significant role in helping them develop their metacognitive abilities and capacity to impart metacognitive strategies to their students.

Secondary education is crucial for students to prepare for their future studies or situations as they decide on their life's subsequent aims and purpose at this stage. Bringeland (2023) demonstrated the potential significance of low self-esteem and confidence in youth decision-making regarding post-secondary education attendance. In the end, social justice concerns about access to education arise because unequal access to education negatively impacts society as a whole. Secondary education is the post-fundamental education in the present study.

5.4. Burundi: The Country and its Educational System

5.4.1. Geographical Background

Burundi is a country located in East Africa with a total size of 27.834 km^2. Rwanda neighbours Burundi in the North, Tanzania in the South and East, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West. Burundi has 18 provinces. Among the 18 provinces, three, namely, Bujumbura Mairie, Gitega, and Ngozi, are the country's big cities. In contrast, Gitega is the political capital, and Bujumbura Mairie is the economic capital. According to the latest news from the worldometers, Burundi's population reached 12,557,773 (Worldometer, 2022).

5.4.2. Historical background

The political tempers have influenced the educational system in Burundi. This country is made up of only three tribes: Hutu (85% of the population), Tutsi (14% of the population), and Twa (1% of the population). Before colonialism, Burundi was among the promising African countries in terms of organisation and development until the colonisers came, created misunderstandings, divided them based on tribes, and destroyed their societal ties.

Instead of promoting all the society's members, one tribe was chosen by the colonists to benefit from the right to Education. Other tribes began to revolt against the colonial rules and the mistreatment of the other privileged tribes. The country scrolled into a civil war from its independence in 1962 until 2005 (Lemarchand, 1996).

Nevertheless, as the conflict was ethnically motivated, it complicated the educational environment. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) calls it an

attack against Education as warring parties neglected one of the most basic rules of war: protecting children. Atrocities against children continue unabated worldwide. The long-term nature of today's wars impacts entire generations of youngsters. Many children living in violence would grow up without the skills to contribute to their countries and economies if they do not have access to school, aggravating the already dire situation for millions of children and their families (UNICEF, 2023).

5.5. The Educational System in Burundi

The educational system in Burundi used to be of 4 subdivisions, including pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education (with junior and senior secondary education), and higher education, which consisted only of bachelor's degree level studies. Currently, the country has migrated to a new system. The pre-primary school has become a pre-fundamental school, primary school has become a fundamental school (covering the old primary school and old junior secondary school), secondary school has become a post-fundamental school (covering the old senior secondary schools), and higher education has developed as it has opened masters and doctoral studies.

a) Pre-Primary School (Pre-Fundamental School)

The pre-primary school was a preparatory stage that trained kids and familiarised them with the learning environment. It consisted of 3 years of preparation, and successful candidates could join the primary school. Since 2012, this educational stage has changed into pre-fundamental schools and covers the same years as in the old system.

b) Primary School (Fundamental School)

From its independence in the '60s until 2012, the Burundian educational system had four subdivisions: pre-primary, primary, secondary, and Higher Education. The Primary School was a continuous cycle of six (6) years, and children aged seven (7) years were likely to get admission. At the end of primary school, candidates were subject to passing a national-level test (Concours National) held by the Evaluation Board of the Education System of Burundi (Bureau des Evaluation du Système Educatif Burundais). Top scorers in the primary national test were allowed to access the secondary school only depending on the available slots in the junior high schools. Since the school years 2013-2014., the primary school has transformed into a

fundamental school with nine years of schooling and four (4) cycles: The first cycle is 1st and 2nd classes; the second cycle is 3rd and 4th classes; the third cycle is 5th and 6th classes; and the fourth cycle: 7th to 9th classes, respectively.

c) Secondary School (Post-Fundamental School)

The secondary school comprised the junior high school of four (4) years and the senior high school of three to four years, depending on the student's field of choice (general/technical). After junior high school, candidates passed a national test (college test). Top scorers could decide their majors (Science, Art, Vocational courses, Teacher Training Schools, Technical Schools) in the senior high schools. At the end of senior high school, only successful candidates in the state examination (Examen d'Etat) could access higher education. The number of candidates who could access higher education was determined by the passing mark from the state exam and the slots available in the single public university of the country (University of Burundi) by then. Therefore, this university enrolled those who could score from 100% to decreasing percentages until the available slots were filled. While those enrolled in the public university were hosted, fed, and given a monthly stipend, the remaining candidates had to enrol in private universities at their own cost. From 2011-2012, Burundi's educational system profoundly and the secondary school (senior high school) changed into a post-fundamental school with three to four years, depending on the student's choice of study (Kuriyo, 2019). The national test in the former education system changed into the fundamental national test. The candidate's score in the fundamental national test determines whether one gets admitted to the post-fundamental school.

d) Higher Education

Higher education in Burundi used to be under the licence system, which was organised in a four-year course sanctioned by a licence degree. From 2011 to 2012, the higher education system in Burundi changed from the licence system and now relies on the (B-M-D) system (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate). There was neither a Master's nor PhD level course until late 2017. Today, the University of Burundi is the only higher education institution that offers PhD courses (Doctoral School of the University of Burundi, 2018). Figure 2 describes the structure of Burundi's educational system.

5.6. Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi: Objectives

Fundamental Education aims to improve the development of individuals and their participation in the socio-economic development of society. The main objective of Fundamental Education is to enable learners to face life through appropriate training. Post-Fundamental Education aims to integrate individuals into society and promote the construction of civic beings. The Post-Fundamental Education of Burundi has settled significant objectives regarding the goals to achieve for its candidates at the end of their training.

The General Directorate of the Pedagogical Bureau (2014) has formulated the following objectives for different sections (Pedagogical, Sciences, Languages, Social and Human Sciences, and Economic) of the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi:

- To prepare efficient, professional teachers for elementary schools and the laureates to pursue higher Education in specialised courses in trainers' training;
- To respond to the real needs of the country in terms of the development of Science and Technology for the development of Education and training;
- To ensure continuity and coherence of disciplines operated in fundamental Education, taking into consideration the specificities of Higher Education;
- To develop a specialisation in the field of Science from secondary school;
- To respond to regional and global needs regarding the readability of certificates;
- To foster better integration of Burundi in the sub-region and the world;
- To promote mastery of communication and cultural openness of students;
- To prepare section laureates for linguistic research; - To prepare learners for the courses provided in Higher Education;
- To prepare social and community leaders capable of transmitting consistent messages leading to changes and controlling the phenomena of galloping demography, HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- To train technicians skilled in helping others to generate plans for development through economic notions, creation of wealth, its management and equitable distribution;
- To prepare people who can enlighten others in the interpretation of economic phenomena to make a relevant choice that fits well with the country's needs;
- To prepare Post-Fundamental laureates to face higher Education, especially in the Economics faculties, enabling them to work in Burundi and elsewhere.

The post-fundamental education of Burundi has settled different subjects to offer to students. The architecture of the post-fundamental sections (streams) and options refers in part to the areas of fundamental Education: The Pedagogical section: 4 years; The Science section with two options: 3 years; (i) Maths, Physics; (ii) Biology, Chemistry and Earth Sciences; The Languages section: 3 years; The section of Social and Human Sciences: 3 years; The Economics section: 3 years.

5.7. Educational Practices at the Post-Fundamental School Level

5.7.1. Curriculum Development

The systematic planning, creation, and implementation of educational programs that direct the teaching and learning processes constitute curriculum design and implementation in secondary education. A thorough summary that addresses all the crucial facets of secondary education curriculum design and implementation includes planning and developing curriculum as the first step in creating a secondary school curriculum by determining the learning outcomes and educational objectives. It demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and abilities students should possess at particular stages of their studies. This was supported by Pellegrino & Hilton (2013), who stated that children today can handle future challenges if their education and extracurricular activities equip them for adult responsibilities as volunteers, parents, workers, managers, citizens, and business owners. For young people to reach their full potential as adults, they must acquire a variety of abilities and knowledge that will help them master and apply English, math, and other academic subjects.

Developing a curriculum is also about choosing experiences, knowledge, and abilities that support the expected objectives. The post-fundamental curricula are frequently arranged according to subject areas. Each subject area's curriculum is designed with particular content and learning objectives. Besides, endeavours are undertaken to establish linkages and amalgamations among topics to furnish a more comprehensive educational encounter. Mahajan et al. (2022) asserted that the curriculum will guide the training needs of students and provide consistency in the instruction they receive. It ought to assist in the work of peer coordinators, learners' supervisors, and those providing instruction and training. They further stated that the curriculum would be a living document, requiring revisions as the role evolves, such as in response to new regulations and the possibility of subsequent prescribing rights. The next step talks about range and order as a key component of curriculum development, figuring out the scope or the breadth

of the material and the sequence or the order in which the content is taught, which guarantees that the content is appropriately organised, building on fundamental ideas and abilities before moving on to more complicated subjects. After that comes the instruction means and adaptations to ensure that all students have access to the learning opportunities that best suit them; strategies and materials are modified to account for various learning styles, abilities, and needs. A final step in curriculum design consists of alignment with educational standards to guarantee that students fulfil predetermined educational benchmarks and requirements and that the curriculum design aligns with regional, national, or worldwide educational standards.

Post-fundamental curriculum design and implementation is a dynamic process that calls for careful planning, continuous assessment, and modifications to remain updated, engaging, and successful in fulfilling the varied needs of students in the quickly evolving field of education. As a critical aspect in every learning situation, co-curricular activities always complete the curriculum, which is its non-negotiable part. Ahmad & Mancha (2016) highlighted that engaging in leisure activities also encourages students to interact with the environment, with others, and with learning both inside and outside of the classroom, which results in the development of excellent human capital.

5.7.2. Importance of Co-Curricular Activities

Co-curricular activities are essential to post-fundamental students' overall development. Once they fit into a well-designed educational context, the co-curricular activities become exceptionally important in various angles of a student’s life. Olewnik et al. (2023) demonstrated that Research to support co-curricular program design and policies to increase student engagement and persistence in those programs is required to create and maintain co-curricular programs that offer the anticipated comprehensive educational experiences and learning. Off-academic skill development sharpens different utilizable skills beyond the classroom.

Engaging students in assuming leadership roles in extracurricular activities and gaining responsibility, decision-making, and teamwork skills through leading teams in sports or planning events is essential in both personal and professional life. Career and personal development admits that students participating in extracurricular activities can learn about their strengths and

weaknesses, which might impact their passions or career decisions and help them to clarify their goals and possible career pathways.

However, there is a need to find a better strategy for consistently encouraging lifelong learning practices in co-curricular at their best in some areas, such as a small school compound, inadequate physical facilities and equipment, and unskilled teachers to train students. Given the fact that curriculum transaction is performed with the help of teaching methods, it is thus evident that different approaches in use at the secondary level are highlighted to enrich the research and give insight to it and the readers.

5.7.3. Pedagogical Practices

In secondary education, innovative methods refer to ideas, practices, and tactics that direct instruction and learning processes. Effective methods for a successful education process cover all works from different education stakeholders. Talking of traditional pedagogy, Jeng (2015) said that because of the social and material conditions of the educational system, which inadvertently encourage teachers to simplify and present inventions in a reductive manner to gain time and mental energy efficiency, other forms of pedagogies are frequently subverted into a form of current-traditional pedagogy.

According to John David Gresham (2019), the theoretical framework of radical constructivism is applied, which posits that people acquire knowledge by drawing comparisons between previously acquired information and comprehension; therefore, learners strive for greater authenticity, autonomy, relevance, purpose, and meaning in their educational pursuits.

Another important aspect of pedagogical practices is differentiated learning. This teaching method applies various lesson transactions, class management, and evaluation procedures to demonstrate to the learners that different ways may be applicable in the same lesson, and all lead to the expected outcomes. According to Tahiri et al. (2017), learning outcomes are improved when learners can more effectively regulate their learning through deep understanding, which is made possible by diversifying learning situations and practices.

It also includes collaborative or cooperative learning techniques encouraging student engagement and teamwork. Collaborating on assignments, conversations, or projects in small groups

promotes effective communication and the exchange of varied viewpoints. Fonseca, Caviedes, Chantré, & Jayson (2023) stated that in addition to encouraging group work, discussion, and socialization, cooperative learning facilitates the creation of new learning environments that enable teachers and students to work together to accomplish goals with greater engagement, motivation, and inclusivity. Technology-enhanced learning is also a pedagogical approach using various tools, online resources, and digital resources to improve learning experiences, which is part of integrating technology into education.

Critical Pedagogy: This method strongly emphasises social justice and equity and gives students the tools to examine, question, and critically analyze societal norms and hierarchies. Masood & Haque (2021) highlighted that critical pedagogy is a teaching approach that challenges the current power dynamics in traditional classrooms by having teachers and students jointly construct knowledge. According to Bennett (2023), educators believe that inquiry results in a practice or product, incorporates student-centred activities and curricular agency, and that the teacher's role is that of a facilitator.

In post-fundamental education, pedagogical approaches are varied and constantly changing. Combining these strategies to fit the unique learning objectives of various subjects with the needs of individual students is often the key to effective teaching. The effectiveness of pedagogical practices at the secondary school is directly connected with evaluating students' work. Therefore, the assessment process at the secondary level will be detailed.

5.7.4. Evaluation of Students Performance: Holistic Approaches

In the digital era, secondary schools' evaluation determines students' growth, learning, and progress. It assists educators in determining their areas of strength and growth, directing their teaching methods to suit the needs of their students better. Evaluation offers a comprehensive picture of student achievement through various techniques, including tests, projects, and ongoing assessments. Saeed & Mohamedali (2022) stated that students can improve their performance, engagement, and retention by putting forth more effort overall when taking summative assessments thanks to feedforward approaches.

Nowadays, assessing students has become complicated following the overcrowdedness of classes. Thus, educationists have shifted to new evaluation methods through online platforms. These

digital tools allow teachers to deliver online courses from anywhere without travelling to meet students in presential classes. Digital research and resources assist students in researching using digital resources like databases, online libraries, and scholarly articles. Students develop efficient research techniques by combining self-taught, innovative workarounds like research and Wikipedia with more conventional approaches like libraries (Head & Eisenberg, 2009).

Assessment tools are crucial for tracking students' progress and learning in education. To improve teaching and learning experiences, educators and professionals in educational assessment now depend heavily on technological advancements. (Owan et al., 2023).

N. Li (2022) declared that the ongoing advancement of educational technology has made modern education an essential component of people's daily lives as multimedia, computers, and other high-tech tools are used in primary and secondary school education to increase student learning efficiency. For teachers to remain updated and serve successfully, they require professional development, which includes technology integration in their daily activities. Thus, in the following lines, the researcher will demonstrate the teachers' empowerment through professional development as a strategic method to keep them growing intellectually.

5.7.5. Teachers Professional Development: A Strategic Approach to Human Resource Development

Enhancing post-fundamental school teachers' skills, knowledge, and effectiveness in the classroom requires them to be empowered through professional development. Unimna et al. (2020) stated that to address global realities in society effectively, social studies curricula should incorporate all facets of moral values, democratic values, dedication, decision-making processes, and problem-solving abilities.

Theories and methods for empowering educators through professional development can be operated through a reflective practice that promotes entailment among educators in ongoing self-evaluation and development. Professional development also operates through collaborative learning communities, establishing communities in which educators interact, exchange optimal methodologies and have dialogues to promote an environment of ongoing education. Educators collaborate to share ideas, gain knowledge from one another, and develop the most effective teaching techniques. In addition to making significant instructional changes, participating

teachers developed conceptual knowledge about teaching and reflected on their practice. (Butler et al., 2004). Differentiated professional development provides opportunities for professional development specific to each teacher's needs. Felicia A. Dixon and Nina Yssel (2014) mentioned that teacher efficacy and the teacher's sense of efficacy beliefs were positively correlated with more professional development hours spent on differentiation of instruction.

Leadership development programs where teachers who want to lead instructional initiatives or assume administrative responsibilities can be empowered to effect positive changes in the school on a larger scale by providing them with leadership development programs. Sujata (1999), as cited in Hawley (1989), stated that "a leader needs to ensure that teachers have the resource and learning opportunities they need, and create conditions within the school that allow students and teachers to use their motivation and capabilities to be productive learners and managers. Fostering a growth mindset supports teachers in developing a growth mindset where they can continue to learn and improve. Professional development empowers teachers by giving constant support through specialized training and growth opportunities. Professional development programs for teachers improve the quality of their teaching skills and help them to improve their students' learning outcomes.

No matter how much effort can be invested into an educational system, it will only achieve its fixed goals once it finds other ingredients available. Among others, educational infrastructure and the school-community interface play a crucial role in the teaching-learning environment.

5.7.6. School Infrastructure

Post-fundamental school infrastructure significantly impacts the classroom atmosphere, instructional strategies, and general student experience. The educational setting, such as well-planned labs, libraries, classrooms, and outdoor areas, supports a positive learning atmosphere. According to Dericioğlu, Sapmaz &Öznacar (2023), the administration of the school has softened their stance on the disruptions to classroom management brought about by crowded classrooms, a high proportion of international students, a lack of parental involvement, the presence of students who are causing discipline issues, and the general lack of knowledge among students about rules and responsibility.

Cosy, well-ventilated, and well-lit classrooms positively impact students' focus and engagement. Well-designed and adequate infrastructure allows students access to various resources, such as ICT materials, reference books, textbooks, and more class equipment required for teaching-learning facilitation. It facilitates students' overall growth by providing a variety of educational opportunities. (Marongedza, Hlungwani & Hove (2023) demonstrated how difficult it is for rural students to get an education due to a lack of resources, long commutes, and uninspired teachers.

Modern infrastructure should also have ways to be accessed by all attendants, including ramps, elevators, and special buildings meant to facilitate students with infirmities to purposively ensure inclusivity is maintained to offer equal chances to each student. Extracurricular activities and facilities such as sports, the arts, music, theatre, and clubs are all supported by a well-equipped infrastructure. Facilities for these kinds of activities promote students' overall growth beyond the classroom. Different classroom configurations appropriate for different teaching modalities are made possible by a well-structured infrastructure. This could include areas for group activities, flexible seating arrangements, or collaborative spaces that support a variety of pedagogical approaches. Staff rooms, administrative offices, and support spaces are all included in the infrastructure category and are essential to the school's general operation. Well-designed administrative spaces facilitate coordination and administration in schools. Facilities that assist teachers, such as furnished staff rooms, conference rooms, and areas for professional growth, have a favourable effect on their morale and productivity, affecting the calibre of instruction provided. Students should also have access to hygiene and sanitation facilities to encourage their health and well-being through hygienic canteens, clean and well-maintained restrooms, and sufficient sanitation facilities and staff.

In post-fundamental education, a good infrastructure assists in creating a space that develops learning, general development and the well-being of students and teachers. Establishing an environment favourable to learning, teaching, and personal growth is necessary for teachers to achieve their golden goals and for students to orient themselves correctly. Ajayi, Moosa &Aloka (2023) showed that schools do not have the infrastructure needed to give students the career guidance and instruction they need, and due to improper subject combinations and limited access

to career information services, students were unable to select suitable career pathways after completing their secondary education.

5.7.7. School-Community Interface

Community participation in the post-fundamental schools implicates building a comprehensive and encouraging learning environment. Community involvement in post-fundamental education helps provide school material and financial support for a smooth run of educational activities. Community participation means the involvement of parents in educating their children. Mitchell (2023) highlighted that both parents actively participate in many facets of their kids' educational journeys, emphasising academic expectations, progress monitoring, teacher interactions, and obstacles faced, emphasizing academic excellence and dealing with issues like work schedules and transportation. Sujata (1999), as cited in Stout and Langdon (1957), stated that it was found that parents were highly interested in their children's schools and wanted a variety of information grouped around curriculum, methods of teaching, school services, the details of school operation, the teacher and other relationships in the school.

Community participation at this stage helps to promote educational policies and address school problems. Collaboration among the education stakeholders will enable the main parties to overcome obstacles and increase the standard of education. In the same perspective, Furey (2023) shared a common understanding of how teachers and schools communicate with one another, how this communication fosters relationships of trust between the schools and parents, and how parent involvement affects student outcomes. He highlighted opportunities for more focused, two-way communication between parents and schools to promote and strengthen that involvement. Keeping clean and open, communities help schools endorse the educational process by maintaining active physical education programs and promoting healthcare assistance. Through community participation in education, schools establish partnerships with other educational groups or libraries, which offer extra educational opportunities. Community participation creates professional networking opportunities and career guidance for students. Students needing assistance exploring career options and making decisions can get it. According to Johnson (2023), parental involvement is a crucial aspect of every student's educational journey as it is closely associated with their success and achievement, even though parents encounter

barriers that keep them from being more active and involved in their kids' education. Community participation in post-fundamental education promotes a rich teaching-learning environment.

5.8. Educational Practices in the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi: The Present Scenario

As stated before, Burundi has introduced post-fundamental schools for a decade, and an evaluation of the implemented education practices would be necessary at this stage. To undergo the same, the analysis of the current scenario of the school system would provide an idea. The post-fundamental schools of Burundi have numerous problems that impede their flourishment. Some took place from the colonial era and its impact on African society. Quist (2001) stated that the "triple cultural heritage" of West African, EuroChristian, and Islamic cultures has created push and pull forces that have put significant pressure on secondary school students and secondary education in general.

Other problems are current and related to the contemporary African reality. They include lack and ignorance of ICT, shortage of qualified human resources, non-adapted curriculum which does not fulfil the needs of the learners nor the global needs, overcrowdedness of students in classes, shortage of class materials such as teachers and learners' books, lack of adequate infrastructure, and many more issues to be identified (UNICEF, 2023). According to Mihretie et al. (2023), among female students attending night schools, the lifetime prevalence of sexual and reproductive health issues was high. It is linked to being single, having secondary education, not talking to family about sexual and reproductive health issues and not understanding sexual and reproductive health services well. These issues affect the quality of education offered at the post-fundamental level.

UNICEF (2023) has monitored more challenges in Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi, including reducing the minimum schooling time of Post-Fundamental Education from eight to six years and the wrong weekly average learning time of 20 hours compared to 30 hours in the neighbouring countries. It was concluded by UNICEF (2023) that the lack of previous studies focusing on the quality of Education in Burundi, the overpopulated classes and theories-based training of the students in post-fundamental schools, the lack of enough textbooks and other essential school materials, the lack of enough qualified workforce, school materials and

equipment in the field of education constitute the challenges for this Burundi education system still looking for its highest best level.

It was also observed by Jackson (2000) that there are other challenges in Burundi's educational system, including the absence of the well-being of the teachers due to their low average salary, the dropout phenomenon of students due to household poverty, early pregnancy, coupled with school violence and low-quality education, lack of a national strategy for pre and in-service teacher training, the low budget dedicated to the education sector, and lack of early learning strategies, inadequate teacher preparation, and poor curriculum, are among the forefront challenges stalking the post-fundamental education of Burundi. Therefore, there is a need to investigate and examine the educational practices currently implemented in Burundi's post-fundamental schools to find out the notable issues and attempt to address them with propositions of sustainable solutions.

5.9. Rationale of the Present Study

Three major post-colonial innovations have affected Burundi's educational system: (a) the 1973 reform, which addressed the kirundization and ruralisation of schools; (b) the curriculum reform of schools in 1989; and (c) the reform of the so-called fundamental school, which commenced in the 2013–2014 academic year. Mazunya (2017) found that these three reforms pursued the same intercultural approach to learning early language and mother tongue.

Even though the reforms occurred, some challenges still exist. Regarding teaching hours, attendance appears to be average compared to other nations, where official instruction time is short, and classrooms frequently have two shifts. Students spend roughly a month studying and taking tests at the end of each trimester. It cannot be concluded that Burundian students spend more time in contact with teachers than their African counterparts (Kamanga, 2020). This may be the reason for learners repeating classes at an alarming rate. Thus, the learning conditions at post-fundamental schools need to be studied.

Regarding curricula standards and content, Burundi could implement a reading curriculum with greater ambition for the younger grades. The elevated rates of repetition may be explained by the slightly more stringent requirements for advancing to a new grade than other nations. According to Kamanga (2020), although the textbooks' presentation and sequencing are relatively simple, they use a mixed approach, whole word and syllabic, which is ineffective in the context of

developing nations. It's reasonable to say that Burundi's official curriculum cannot adequately explain its performance. Better instructional strategies, however, might be able to explain it. Therefore, the curriculum content and its adequacy must be studied.

Burundi has been an independent country since 1962. However, its economic level is still rudimentary due to repetitive civil wars and is currently topping the list of poor countries, negatively affecting its education system. With a population of over 11 million, Burundi is a small landlocked nation in East Africa that has experienced political unrest and violence throughout its history. These issues have negatively influenced the nation's educational system, impeding advancement and development (Kamanga, 2020). Consequently, Burundi's educational system is not robust, as the country can not provide the resources to support the learners' and teachers' survival. Due to its rudimentary poverty level, the government relies upon foreign countries' aid to sponsor significant development projects, including the education system. Its educational system lacks enough and adequate human resources. Burundi's low Human Capital Index, which gauges how much a nation contributes to the health and education of the next generation of workers, shows that the country is falling behind other nations in investing in human capital (UNICEF, 2018). Therefore, it has impacted the functioning of post-fundamental schools in Burund. Hence, the status of local human resources needs to be examined.

Segregation and exclusion among Burundi's education stakeholders have weakened its educational system. Jackson (2000) stated that exclusion originated in the colonial period when the colonial power educated the Tutsi to form a local administrative caste for over half a century. It begins with differential access to Education. The situation is especially so in a society where state employment has been virtually the only alternative to peasant agriculture. Rwantabagu (2009) stated that significant normative, economic, and structural constraints impede real change as Batwa keeps experiencing exclusion from the colonial era in school education. The learning conditions in Burundi are not good; they affect the student's achievement and cannot explain Burundi's excellent performance in education. Thus, students' learning conditions and class treatment must be examined.

Burundi has introduced a universal education policy for all children. However, the facilities, including school infrastructure and materials, are still lacking, which impedes the success of implementing educational practices in classes (Irambona & Syomwene, 2023). Teachers'

opinions of implementing universal secondary education were overwhelmingly negative except for their capacity to instruct a diverse student body (Lesforis, 2011). Teachers, ministry officials, and other vital informants had similar opinions about some aspects of universal secondary education, such as teachers' lack of preparation. Some students take courses in a standing position or sit improperly, affecting the quality of education, educational practices, and learning outcomes. This large number of students in classes associated with the low budget allotted to education causes the precarity of students' and teachers' materials, such as textbooks (Mazunya, 2017).

Therefore, there seems to be a lack of enough proper infrastructure facilities and other material resources. The low budget allotted to education in the yearly government dispenses does not allow the stakeholders to meet all the requirements to ensure effective implementation of educational practices, rendering Burundi's education system ineffective. UNICEF (2018) stated that critical educational resources have been jeopardised, including textbook purchases, teacher preparation, curriculum development, and school maintenance. Thus, there is a need to examine the severity of the inadequacy of required school resources and school infrastructure and the perceptions of Burundi’s post-fundamental education stakeholders. At present, the infrastructure needs to be examined.

Administratively, Burundi's educational system has neglected its significant ways of assuring the quality of its educational practices by ignoring school inspectors, also known as academic supervisors, who used to control the quality of teachers' and teaching-learning practices. School inspectors were strict about the teachers' regularity and, most importantly, their performance based on the student's outcomes. Thus, the administrative practices in the post-fundamental schools must be analysed.

Burundi's education system has undergone several changes, but practitioners and learners still report some issues with evaluation procedures. The curriculum requires that student acquisition be assessed regularly, which the teachers cannot do due to the plethoric number of students to evaluate. The curriculum states, "In Burundi, and most countries, the evaluation is too much and bad (Mazunya, 2017). Another severe academic challenge is the low success rate of 14%, causing the dropout phenomenon in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi (Misago, 2019). Despite the abovementioned issues, a lack of research studies on education, the highest

unemployment rate reaching 65% in urban localities (Kuriyo, 2019), gender inequality in post-fundamental schools and unfavourable geographical conditions complicate some students' schooling lives. The post-fundamental school students' performance in their first year of university shows that the educational practices implemented in Burundi's post-fundamental schools may be ineffective. Thus, the evaluation procedures and the students' facilities at school need to be studied.

However, the researcher could not find any descriptive study on the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, which involved seven aspects: curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation procedure, infrastructure, administrative practices, human resources, and community participation; therefore, this study was undertaken.

5.10. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated based on the rationale mentioned above;

d) How are the educational practices being implemented in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, and how are they implemented?
e) What are students', teachers', principals', and parents' perceptions of educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi?
f) What are the problems encountered, and what are the suggestions for improvement given regarding educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi?

5.11. Statement of the Problem

Educational Practices in the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi

5.12. Objectives of the study

1. To examine the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi with respect to:
   a) Curriculum;
   b) Pedagogy;
   c) Evaluation procedure;
   d) School infrastructure;
   e) Administrative practices;
   f) Human resources;
   g) Community participation;

2. To measure the perception of teachers, students, principals, and parents towards the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi;
3. To study the problems encountered in the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi.
6. To suggest measures for improvement of educational practices by the stakeholders in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi.

5.13. Explanation of the Terms

a) Educational Practices

Educational practices were different dimensions of the teaching-learning process. In the present study, educational practices included curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation procedures, school infrastructure, administrative practices, human resources, and community participation.

b) Administrative Practices

In Education, administrative practices included students' admission procedures, teachers' recruitment procedures, supervision procedures, and grievance redressal.

c) Human Resources

The study's human resources include teaching staff qualifications, professional development programmes, and working conditions.

d) Community Participation

Community participation in educational practices included parents' involvement in school activities, parent-teacher associations, and school industry interface.

e) Stakeholders

The stakeholders of the present study were the teachers, principals, students, parents and provincial directors of education.

5.13.1. Operational Definition

Perception

Perception in the present study referred to the score obtained on the perception scale administered to teachers, students, principals and parents.

5.14. Review of Related Literature: Implications for the Present Study

The literature review facilitates the understanding of research. While conducting a study on the educational practices implemented in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, the researcher reviewed 56 studies. The reviewed studies are related to curriculum and Assessment, pedagogy, community participation, administrative practices and human resources, school infrastructure, and perceptions of educational practices.

Out of the reviewed studies, nineteen (19) studies were related to Curriculum, such as: **[** Taylor (1985), Yildirim & Simsek (2001), Chen (2010), Kimiti, Mulwa, Waweru, and Muindi (2011), Sang Chan & Chung Lam (2012), W. Bunyi (2013), Carlos, Opertti, and Amadio (2014), Blândul & Bradea (2015), Mazunya and Valry (2017), Chang & Huang (2019), Ouahbi, Darhmaoui, Kaddari, and Bemmouna (2019), Ndzimbomvu, Rampedi, and Kemp (2021), Ajemunigbohun & Banjo (2022), Gough (2006), Ajoke, Shapii, and Hasan (2015), Alias, Mansor, and Ishak (2019), McMullen, Brooks, Iannucci, and Fan (2022), and Cojocaru (2023).**]**

Researches related to Pedagogy were seventeen (17) studies which are under reprised: [Birenbaum (2003), Sikdar, Pillai, Bhagwat, and Nair (2008), Poromaa (2013), Ramsey, Nemeth, and Haberkorn (2013), Mendenhall, Peterson, Bartlett, Ndirangu, Imonje, Gakunga, Gichuhi, Nyagah, Okoth, and Tangelder (2015), DeRossett (2016), Bahari (2018), Tucker (2020), Kawatachi (2020), Hlungwani (2022), Abrha, Kelkay, and Seifu (2023), Effiong & Anangabor (2023), Perelman (2023), Li & Xu (2023), Oladejo, Okebukola, Akinola, Amusa, Akintoye, Owolabi, Shabani, and Olateju (2023), Machisi (2023).

Four (4) studies were related to community participation: [Deslandes and Bertrand (2010), Adeyeye (2023), Luecke, Allison, Apeksha, Huang, and Shannon (2023), and Xia, Jing, Chen, Sun, and Lu (2023).

Eight (8) studies were related to administrative practices and human resources: **[** Ogunniyi, Lawal, and Sheji (2018), Madzimure & Mashishi (2020), Nwokorie (2023), Okunlola (2023), Tamkivi & Eisenschmidt (2023), Marongedza, Hlungwani, and Hove (2023), Sandner (2023).**]**

Five (5) studies were conducted on the school infrastructure: **[** Zipporah (2013), Cuesta, Glewwe, and Krause (2016), Barrett, Treves, Shmis, & Ambasz (2019), Lemp, Jabbarian, Werner,

Kagone´, McMahon, Horstick, Kazianga, Kobiane, Fink & De Neve (2022), Ajayi, Moosa & Aloka (2023).**]**

Three (3) studies were related to perceptions of educational practices: **[** Pettigrew, Miller, Kannan, Raj, Jun, and Jones (2022), Brinia, Vasiliki, Christos, Gkouma, and Ioannis (2023), and Shure (2023).**]**

Concerning the methodology part, the reviewed studies implemented the following research methods and designs: Nine (9) studies were conducted exploratory design, five (5) were pure exploratory studies while one was an exploratory case study, one was an exploratory psychometric study, another one was a qualitative exploration, and a last one focusing on review exploratory research design.

Most of the reviewed studies were conducted using a descriptive survey design. The details reprised here show that fifteen (15) studies implemented a survey descriptive design, with one study conducted under only descriptive design, another under the descriptive and correlational approaches, and a final one under a qualitative descriptive study. There were also studies conducted using experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Four (4) studies were under quasi-experimental design, whereas nine (9) implemented an experimental research design.

The researcher has reviewed more studies conducted under different designs such as inventory research methodology, comparative research design, narrative review study, phenomenological studies, ethnographic study, case study design, critical and quantitative comparative method, cross-sectional studies, qualitative review studies, narrative qualitative study, qualitative multiple-case study research design. Throughout the reviewed studies, both qualitative and quantitative methods were implemented. Some studies incorporated only qualitative data, others used quantitative data, whereas many utilised a mixed-method approach.

Throughout the reviewed studies, The results demonstrated that the following sampling strategies assisted the writers in reaching their objectives: Random sampling techniques were used in many reviewed studies. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques, along with purposive sampling techniques, were utilized by a significant proportion of the reviewed studies. Additional studies used multistage sampling, multi-level mixed methods sampling, self-selected sample technique, convenient sampling, and non-probability sampling carried out through a purposive

sampling technique, total enumeration sampling technique, Snowball sampling, and convenient and purposive sampling techniques.

Regarding data gathering, the authors employed the following tools and techniques to obtain information from their respondents: questionnaires, surveys, checklists, interviews, individual and group interviews, semi-structured interviews, closed-ended questionnaires, structured questionnaires, pretest-posttest experimental and control groups, direct observation, and recorded live classes. The authors employed methodical observation tools, focus group discussions, class syllabi, online qualtrics survey, teacher observation schedules, unstructured interviews, policy documents, and more to gather data for the reviewed studies. A self-administered questionnaire, a cross-sectional survey, open- and closed-ended questionnaires, a transliteracy framework, ethnographic interviews based on an open questionnaire, and participatory observation were also used. Some studies utilised self-made tools to gather their data, such as semi-structured online interviews, unstructured individual interviews, student written reports, field notes, photos, a cross-sectional student survey, and observation checklists.

The gathered data were analysed using different data analysis techniques. The data analysis employed within the reviewed studies included interviews and qualitative analysis, frequencies, percentages, mean, mode and median, archival analysis, Mann–Whitney U and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks tests, descriptive statistics and multiple regressions, thematic analysis, Simple percentages and independent t-test statistics, cross-case analyses, descriptive statistics of frequency counts and mean scores through SPSS 21 software program, five response categories, mean rank analysis and ANCOVA, SPSS 20 statistical software and thematic analysis, the analysis of school reports on their involvement in sustainable schools and the analysis of sustainable schools program documents, manual analysis, narrative analysis, factor analysis, One-way ANOVA, descriptive analyses and logistic regressions, binary logistic regression, descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation, content analysis, inductive approach, SPSS and Microsoft Excel, and systematic analysis using the diathesis-stress model.

The researcher found that the majority of the reviewed studies were conducted outside of Burundi. The researcher could not find many studies that combined different aspects, including curriculum, pedagogy, administrative practices, school infrastructure, evaluation procedures, and community participation, in one study. Neither has located research on other educational

practices used in Burundi's post-fundamental schools. Furthermore, the few available studies only examined a single aspect of educational practices, such as curriculum, pedagogy, infrastructure, or administrative practices, separately. The researcher could not find research on the educational practices components of Burundi's post-fundamental schools, domestically or internationally. Thus, the researcher decided to undertake the present study to examine the status of educational practices in Burundi's post-fundamental schools.

5.15. Methodology of the Study

5.15.1. Research Design

The study followed a descriptive survey method.

5.15.2. Population of the Study

The population for the present study consisted of all the post-fundamental schools of Burundi.

5.15.3. Sample of the Study

During the study, the researcher applied a stratified random sampling technique. Burundi's eighteen (18) provinces were divided into four zones, i.e., North, South, East, and West. The researcher randomly selected one province in each zone, of which twenty per cent (20%) of the total schools were chosen to constitute the study's sample. The study sample was all the principals and ten (10) students, teachers, and parents from each selected school.

5.15.4. Description of Tools

Tools are imperative to carry out a study requiring data collection. A good tool procures accurate data from respondents and helps the researcher ease the work, targeting the generation of new findings/theories. For the present study, the researcher used the following tools:

5.0. Questionnaires;
6.0. Perception scales;
7.0. Observation schedule;
8.0. Semi-Structured Interview Schedule.

For the researcher to carry out a study examining the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, the construction of the tools mentioned above was among other requirements. According to those who participated in the study, some provided data through questionnaires, while others performed the same task through perception scales, observation schedules and interviews. It should be noted that some participants used more than one tool to provide data regarding the topic under Study. The following table shows the objectives each tool targeted, their corresponding data collection tools, and the participants.

5.15.4.1. Questionnaire for Teachers

The questionnaire for teachers included open-ended and closed-ended questions. It comprised 98 questions for the six (6) dimensions except school infrastructure. All the questions under objective one were close-ended, as they had options for answers except those under the school infrastructure dimension, which consisted of observing what was available in each sampled school through an observation schedule. Questions under objectives three (3) and four (4) were all open-ended, as the respondents were requested to find out the problems found in Burundi's post-fundamental schools and suggest strategies for improving the situation.

5.15.4.2. Questionnaire for Principals

The questionnaire for principals presented huge similarities with the one for teachers. They were set to be administered to the same respondents, except for some differences in the formulation of questions. The questionnaire for principals was made of 115 questions and was meant to cover six (6) dimensions of the study, excluding the school infrastructure, which was performed under the observation schedule. The questionnaire included open-ended and closed-ended questions. All the questions under objective one were close-ended, as they had options for answers. Questions under objectives three (3) and four (4) were all open-ended, as the respondents were requested to find out the problems found in Burundi's post-fundamental schools and suggest strategies for improving the situation.

5.15.4.3. Infrastructure Observation Schedule

During data collection, under the aspect of School Infrastructure, no questions were prepared to avoid information bias. Instead, an observation schedule was set to observe and note down which

school materials and infrastructure are available in each sample school. Four aspects were studied: rooms, furniture, ICT facilities, documents, leisure, and hygienic facilities. The details are shown in the following chart and table.

5.15.4.4.Perception Scale for Teachers

The teachers' perception scale considered the aspects related to curriculum, pedagogy, Evaluation procedures, school infrastructure, administrative practices, human resource management, and community participation in school activities in its content. Teachers are one of the critical components of the teaching-learning environment, as they are aware of every detail related to teaching, teachers and school management, from learning to students' regulatory measures.

5.15.4.5. Perception Scale for Principals

The perception scale for principals aimed to assess the perceptions of school principals on the seven (7) aspects under study, i.e. curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation procedures, school infrastructure, administrative practices, human resource management, and community participation in school activities. Principals, as crucial actors in any educational institution, have expressed their perceptions of educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. The dimensions and components on which they expressed their perceptions are given in the table below.

5.15.4.6.Perception Scale for Students

The perception scale for students was focused on collecting the perceptions from the critical components of the learning situation: students regarding curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation procedures, school infrastructure, and community participation in school activities. Even though they are involved in every procedure and activity of the school, students cannot understand how administrative tasks are performed or how school teaching and non-teaching staff are managed. Therefore, the researcher did not mention any item related to those two (2) aspects in the students' perception scale.

5.15.4.7.Perception Scale for Parents

The perception scale for parents focused on curriculum, pedagogy, school infrastructure, administrative practices, and community participation in school activities. The Evaluation procedures and human resources management aspects were not included in the parent's perception scale, given that parents are not in an excellent position to monitor the school's assessment implementation. Also, asking parents how schools manage their human resources will be unethical as they cannot intervene in managing schools' teaching and non-teaching staff. However, curriculum and pedagogy are aspects that are strange to some parents. Still, their children discuss with them daily the content taught and how it is implemented. Thus, they were subject to express what they perceived on the same. The details are given in the below table.

5.15.4.8.Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interview schedules comprised a set of twenty-two (22) questions, which were directed to provincial directors orally, and the answers were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Questions were arranged by aspects under Study, i.e. curriculum, pedagogy, Evaluation procedures, school infrastructure, administrative practices, human resource management, and community participation in school activities. As the interview contained only open-ended questions, the respondents were requested to answer freely, and all their answers were compiled and interpreted as they were, making them ready for analysis by the researcher—questions in the semi-structured interview schedule covered objective 1, objective 3, and objective 4.

5.16. Validation of the Tools

To ensure the collection of valid data, the researcher submitted the constructed tools to four (4) experts in the field of education for content validity. The researcher requested the experts go through the tools, analyse them, study them thoroughly, and generate their views, observations, and remarks to improve them.

5.17. Data Collection Procedures

Before the data collection process, the researcher sought prior permission from the Ministry of Education. Once this was given, it was the turn of provincial directors of education and school principals to allow the researcher to perform the data collection act. After receiving their consent, the researcher distributed the tools to the concerned respondents. The researcher administered the constructed tools, i.e. questionnaires, perception scales, observation schedules, and semi-structured interviews, to the respondents for data collection. The questionnaires were meant to collect data from teachers and principals regarding the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi.

The perception scales measure the perception of teachers, principals, students, and parents concerning the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. An observation schedule was also constructed to observe and collect data related to school infrastructure in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. In the final point, the researcher developed a semi-structured interview to collect data from provincial directors of education regarding the same aspects under the current study. After answering the questionnaires independently, the principals and teachers returned them to the researcher. After that, teachers, principals, parents, and students participated in measuring their perceptions regarding the same aspects under study. The researcher collected data school-wise to ensure that convenient instructions were given and to explain them to the respondents. The data was collected for a period of three (3) months from March to May 2023.

5.18. Data Analysis

The data collected were qualitative and quantitative. Thus, descriptive analysis techniques were used, including frequency, percentage, and intensity index. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse qualitative data. Data under objectives 1, 3, and 4 were analysed using percentages and frequencies. Data under objective two was analysed using percentages, frequencies, intensity index, and average intensity index.

5.19. Major Findings

5.19.1. Major Findings of Objective 1

Demographics

It was found that most teachers and principals were males. Most principals had more than ten (10) years of experience, while most teachers had experience comprised between five (5) and ten (10) years.

Curriculum

It was found that Most principals and teachers stated that Science was the mainstream offered at the post-fundamental schools, the majority of the teachers were teaching in one stream only, taught only one subject. Most teachers taught Economics as a subject and most teachers had their specialisation in Art and Craft.

The majority of principals and teachers mentioned that mental curriculum was the aim of the post-fundamental school and that the post-fundamental schools offered activities and a subject-centred curriculum.

The majority of teachers and principals stated that educational visits were the learning experiences provided at the post-fundamental schools and mentioned participation in professional development programs as a process of updating students' curricula content. They stated that the curriculum provided the required theoretical knowledge and vocational skills to motivate students for higher education and that employment needs and promotion of science and technology were the country’s needs reflected in the curriculum at the post-fundamental schools.

Most teachers and principals mentioned the congruence of lesson content with students' needs, that the curriculum enhanced students’ motivation for higher education, and that the curriculum provided a guiding program on higher education and ensured the continuity of disciplines from one stage to another to prepare students for higher education, and mentioned the conduction of direct classroom teaching and the organisation of remedial classes as means of helping students to develop their english language skills.

The majority of teachers stated that teachers were involved in the curriculum evaluation process. However, curriculum modification did not occur occasionally, and the curriculum changes did not improve similarly. Participating in teachers' periodic meetings to find appropriate teaching methods and discussing the new syllabus with other subject teachers were the teachers' familiarisation with the latest syllabus; they mentioned that the curriculum content was based on the country's needs.

Most teachers and principals stated that providing adequate human and material resources and relevant content material to teach students were the rules for the students' goal achievement. They mentioned that global education and community development were lacking in the post-fundamental schools' curriculum and stated debates, drama, and dance were the co-curricular activities provided to students, acknowledged the availability of clubs for students in schools, confirmed debate clubs as the most available in schools, mentioned that a pre-decided programme in clubs was available, that ideas from teachers and choices from the literature were the origin of discussion themes in school clubs. Debate and dance clubs were the most popular.

Pedagogy

Most teachers mentioned that the teaching methodology was based on the content's objectives. They used different teaching methods for different content, charts as teaching resources and implemented a constructive learning approach in their pedagogical practices.

Most teachers mentioned that the discussion method was the teaching methodology implemented at the post-fundamental schools; they integrated technology-based facilities into their classes, used Google Classroom as a digital tool in classes, mentioned that they implemented questioning as a pedagogical technique in their classes, and took the initiative to improve their pedagogical practices.

Evaluation Procedures

Most teachers stated that rubrics were available for assessment work. Most teachers said they conducted both formative and summative evaluations and performed the evaluations weekly.

The majority of teachers mentioned that assignments were the most formative assessment provided to students. Most teachers stated that providing students with daily homework was their

means to motivate them to work through evaluations and that students' assignments were chosen from the most current teaching topic.

School Infrastructure

It was found that spacious and lightened classes were available, assembly halls were available, auditoriums with ICT installations were available, well-equipped libraries were available, well-equipped laboratories were available, storage stores were available, and guidance and counselling centres were available. However, all the available rooms were insufficient in size and number and, therefore, were marked as inadequate.

It was found teachers' rooms with teachers' tables were available, teacher chairs were available, shelves were available, and writing boards were available. The observation schedule indicated that there were enough teachers' tables in schools, sufficient teacher's chairs, enough shelves and writing boards. All the furniture items mentioned above were found adequate. On the other side, student desks were available, cupboards were available, and noticeboards were also available. However, students' desks, school cupboards, and notice boards were found insufficient and stood inadequate.

It was revealed that ICT laboratories were available but insufficient. Schools have internet access, but the connection quality is poor, with a slow speed in some schools and inexistent in others. There were no class projectors available, digital writing boards were available, scanners were available, printers were available, laptops were available, desk computers were available, phones were available, and pieces of film equipment were available. However, none of the ICT equipment was sufficient for the number of schools, and all of them were inadequate.

The results also revealed that teacher books were available, student books were available, preparation books were available, curriculum copies were available, and school regulations were available. It was found that "daily/weekly newspapers did not exist. Playgrounds, sports items/facilities, and staff sanitation facilities were available and labelled as adequate. Students' sanitary facilities were available, drinking water facilities were available, and record files were available. Except for the staff sanitation facility, which was enough and adequate, all other documents, recreational and sanitation facilities were classified as insufficient and inadequate.

Administrative Practices

Most teachers mentioned that they participated in an induction program for newly recruited teachers as their professional development programme, pedagogical meetings, and weekly administrative meetings were professional development activities organised in schools. They participated once in professional development programmes. Incentives were provided for professional development activities, and a merit certificate was the main incentive for teachers.

The majority of teachers stated that, based on teacher requirements, the principal decided to sanction teachers under his responsibility. The majority of teachers indicated that they possessed equal opportunities to participate in decision-making in schools.

It was found that there were no eligibility requirements for teachers' recruitment, and most teachers mentioned being aware of the recruitment guidelines.

Most teachers stated that qualification was the teacher's recruitment criteria. They mentioned the central government as the teachers' school recruitment agency. They indicated that recruitment was not held as soon as a teaching vacancy was in school.

Most teachers mentioned that a bachelor's degree in a teacher education institution was required for a post-fundamental teacher. The majority of teachers stated that the school's principal supervised teachers' work in school on a daily basis. They said that principals asked them to go through training programs as a follow-up action performed after the supervision was done. It was found that principals supervised teaching activities in response to daily reports from colleague teachers.

Most principals stated that the availability of student admission rules and regulations in schools and possessing the admission documents were the main criteria for students' admission to schools. They mentioned that interviews and meritocracy were the student's admission procedures in schools. It was found that students' admission to schools was performed once a year.

Most teachers mentioned that dividing students into learning groups was the strategy to manage overcrowded classes. They ensured the students' discipline guidelines were given as part of student discipline management.

The majority of principals mentioned that schools received government funding once a year or once a semester for external development programs. They noted that government funding was inadequate to meet all of the needs of schools and required students to contribute to mobilising school development funds. However, there was no regulation on the use of school funds.

Human Resources

Most teachers and principals stated that schools did not have unqualified teachers. However, in some schools, unqualified teachers were hired because schools lacked qualified teachers; in others, they possessed inborn teaching skills. It was found that teachers were teaching their specialisation courses. It was also found teachers didn't have co-teachers to assist them in class.

Most principals suggested that teachers join recognised academic organisations to ensure that teachers under their responsibility are developing professionally. Most principals stated that librarians were the most non-teaching staff available in schools and that non-teaching staff were assigned some activities in schools, with most of them assisting teachers in applying routine discipline to students, which was the primary assignment given to school non-teaching staff.

Most teachers and principals stated that grievances existed among teachers in schools. It was found that in case of grievances, the school principal confronted the conflicting parties, and the school principal listened to every complaint from teachers as a grievance redressal in schools. However, participants mentioned that grievance redressal among school teachers was ineffective, as some conflicts were left unresolved.

Cent per cent of teachers and principals stated the government was the teachers' salary payment agency. However, most teachers and principals mentioned the inadequacy of the teachers' salaries even if teachers' salaries were increased yearly.

Most teachers and principals stated that the schools did not provide them with performance-based benefits, and the school did not even contribute to teachers' life insurance. However, some other advantages were provided, including the provision of determined or undetermined job contracts to ensure teachers' job security, fee waiver for children of all teaching staff and the school fee waiver for extended family members of teachers as facilities were also provided to teachers by schools.

Most teachers and principals stated that the school directed and accompanied teachers to guidance and counselling centres and relieved the stressed teachers on stressful days as their stress management strategy.

Community Participation

Most teachers and principals stated that the involvement of parents in school activities was at an insufficient rate. They were regularly involved in school activities. It was found that the parents' central participation in school activities was to contribute to the school canteen's food supply and pay school fees for financially weak students.

Most teachers and principals stated that schools contributed to community development by teaching unprivileged children.

Most respondents answered that the parent-teacher association did not exist in schools and did not conduct meetings regularly. However, in a few schools where they existed, participation in school project management and raising money for school supplies were the main teacher-parent association activities in the schools.

Most teachers and principals mentioned that parent-teacher associations were not involved in school social programmes at a high rate. However, at a certain level, they campaigned for the community's cleanliness and the spread of human values as the social activities performed by parent-teacher associations in schools.

Most teachers and principals stated that the school industry interface did not exist except in a few cases. They mentioned that the organisation approached the school, or the school approached the organisation to initiate school industry interfaces. This collaboration between industry and schools prepared the students for future endeavours and provided internships to school students as their primary contribution.

5.19.2. Major Findings of Objective 2

Perceptions of Teachers

The average intensity index of 3.90 showed that teachers had a favourable perception towards understanding the curriculum's aims and objectives, basing the curriculum objectives on societal needs, students' interest in the curriculum, continuity of the subject from one stage to another, and active participation of students in co-curricular activities.

The average intensity index of 3.47 showed that teachers had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the lack of ICT-integrated pedagogy to make learning situations joyful and that the teaching method met the requirements of the latest pedagogy, the pedagogy covering the essential content, the methodology preparing students for real-world challenges, and the appropriateness of the pedagogy.

The average intensity index of 3.68 showed that teachers had a favourable perception of the fairness and justness of assessments, encouraging students to focus on their studies, modifying teaching methods based on assessment results, and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching methods. However, they had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the regularity of formative assessment.

The average intensity index of 2.94 showed that teachers had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the use of library facilities, the effectiveness of guidance and counselling centres, the quality of the mid-day food provided to students, the large number of students in classes, and inadequate school infrastructure.

The average intensity index of 3.40 showed that teachers had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about timely recruitment, appreciation of the teacher's performance, recognition of non-teaching staff in schools, and teachers' satisfaction with their salaries, active participation in professional development programmes.

The average intensity index of 3.43 showed that teachers had had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about community contribution in decision-making, parental involvement in school activities, regular meetings of the parents-teacher association, and

parental involvement's contribution to students' development, and inactivity of the school-industry interface.

Perceptions of Students

The average intensity index of 3.65 indicated that students had a favourable perception towards developing students' thinking skills through content taught, the lack of knowledge of the subject to teach for some teachers, and the development of students' english skills. However, they had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the irrelevance of subject content to societal needs and the adequacy of the learning experiences provided to students.

The average intensity index of 3.62 showed that students had a favourable perception of the effective involvement of students in content-related activities, encouragement of students to participate in co-curricular activities, the flexibility of teachers, and the effectiveness of the teaching methodology. However, they had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about collaborative learning in classes.

The average intensity index of 3.35 showed that students had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about providing formative assessments, encouraging students in language skills development, the delay in assessing students' work, fairness of the assessments, and change of teaching style based on assessment results.

The average intensity index of 2.90 showed that students had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about using school laboratories, ICT facilities in classes, the quality of food provided, the functioning of guidance and counselling centres, and overcrowded classes.

The average intensity index of 3.10 showed that students had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the shortage of teachers in school, fairness of teachers, inactivity of the school-industry interface, the contribution of parent involvement in educational development, and the efficiency of parents' participation in school activities.

Perceptions of Principals

The average intensity index of 3.77 showed that principals had a favourable perception of a curriculum that is interesting to students, subject continuity in the curriculum, basing the curriculum objectives on societal needs, understanding the curriculum aims and objectives, and student participation in co-curricular activities.

The average intensity index of 3.43 showed that principals had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the appropriateness of the pedagogy implemented, the lack of ICT-integrated pedagogy to make the learning environment joyful, the effectiveness of the teaching methodology, the teaching methods meeting the latest pedagogy, and students' preparedness for real-world challenges.

The average intensity index of 3.92 showed that principals had a favourable perception of the fairness and justness of students' assessments, the regularity of formative assessments held, the encouragement of students to study, the modification of teaching methods after evaluations, and the effectiveness of the teaching methods.

The average intensity index of 2.85 showed that principals had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the functioning of guidance and counselling centres, the quality of the mid-day meals provided to students, and the large number of students in schools. However, they had a favourable perception of the use of library facilities and an unfavourable perception of the adequacy of the school infrastructure.

The average intensity index of 2.97 showed that principals had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the effectiveness of teachers, the recognition of non-teaching staff, and the appreciation of teachers for their performance. However, they had an unfavourable perception of the non-participation of teachers in professional development programmes and satisfaction with their salaries.

The average intensity index of 3.43 showed that principals had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the inactivity of the school-industry interface and community participation in schools' decision-making. However, they had a favourable perception of parents' involvement in school activities, the parent-teacher association conducting meetings, and parents' contribution to students' academic development.

Perceptions of Parents

The average intensity index of 3.08 showed that parents had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about teachers helping students develop their english skills, and students were encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities and change the syllabus as per the requirements. However, they had an unfavourable perception of the adequacy of the learning experiences provided and the teacher's knowledge of the courses they teach.

The average intensity index of 2.99 showed that parents had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the fairness of the student's assessment procedures, the interest in the teaching methodology to students, the consistency of the home assignments and the content taught and the organisation of interschool competitions. However, they had an unfavourable perception of the non-integration of technology in class teaching.

The average intensity index of 3.11 showed that parents had an unfavourable perception of overcrowded classes and a lack of spacious and enlightened classrooms. However, they had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about using the school library and laboratories and the functioning of guidance and counselling centres.

The average intensity index of 3.47 showed that parents had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the impartiality of solving students' issues, the effectiveness of co-teacher assistance, and teachers’ knowledge of the courses they teach. However, they had a favourable perception of school teachers' and principals' approachability to solving students' daily concerns.

The average intensity index of 3.20 showed that parents had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the involvement of parents in school activities, the efficiency of parents’ involvement, and the functioning of the parent-teacher association in schools. They also had a favourable perception towards regular parent-teacher association meetings. However, they had an unfavourable perception towards the effectiveness of the school-industry interface.

5.19.3. Major Findings of Objective 3

It was found that the students were taught insufficient content. The existing textbooks contained errors, and the curriculum content did not relate to the student's level of understanding. Most teachers found difficulties in implementing the integration pedagogy. It was found that the major problem in post-fundamental schools was that students were not given enough assessments (homework, tests, projects, etc.). There were inadequate IT equipment, non-spacious classrooms, and insufficient school desks.

It was found that there were progressing students who did not have 50% in classes to the post-fundamental only just because they passed the national; there was a lack of regular and strict supervision, student admissions were not based on the intellectual capacities of students, there was a financial weakness in school activities and an unfairness in teacher transfers and reassignment practices.

It was found that there were inadequate professional development programmes and a lack of induction for newly recruited teachers. It was found that the community was uninterested in school activities and lacked the courage to demand accountability.

5.19.4. Major Findings of Objective 4

It was suggested that curriculum content should be designed in such a way that it can be applied to real-life situations. It was suggested that teaching/learning activities should relate to students' previous knowledge, professional development should be organised to equip them with the latest pedagogy, and suitable teaching methods at the proper levels should be adopted. It was suggested that assessment should relate to teaching/learning objectives.

School furniture, IT equipment, and teachers' and students' manuals should be sufficient, including guides, syllabi, textbooks, lesson notebooks, and classrooms. Fair teacher transfers, reassignment practices, and encouragement of merit-based student promotions should be established to improve school administrative practices.

Adequate professional development programmes should be organised. It was suggested that parent-teacher association boards and public awareness programmes should be enhanced to highlight the benefits of post-fundamental schools in the community.

5.20. Discussion of Major Findings

5.20.1. Discussion of Major Findings for Objective 1

Curriculum

It was found that the majority of teachers of the post-fundamental schools of Burundi had specialisations in the Arts & Crafts stream. Science was also found to be the main stream run at the post-fundamental schools. The study also found that the majority of teachers taught in only one stream and taught one subject. This could be because many teachers had gone through their studies when Arts and Crafts were the main courses available in schools. It might also be because, at the time, Arts and Craft was the most prestigious course before Science took place. However, it must be a challenging time delivering courses in the science stream when most of the teachers have specialisations in arts and crafts. This contradiction may substantially challenge effective instruction (Abrams, Varier & Jackson, 2016).

It was found that most teachers mentioned mental development as the main aim of Burundi's post-fundamental school curriculum, the subject-centred curriculum and activities-centred curriculum were mainly implemented in post-fundamental schools, and educational visits were the learning experiences provided to students in post-fundamental schools. The curriculum's emphasis on mental development as its core objective aligns with the broader educational goals of fostering cognitive growth and critical thinking (Erickson 2007). Such an emphasis aims to cultivate students' intellectual capacities and analytical skills, which are crucial for academic and personal success. However, the curriculum's heavy reliance on an activities-centered approach and educational visits underscores a pedagogical strategy rooted in experiential learning.

The present study found that the participation of teachers in professional development programs was the principal way of updating curriculum content for students. It was also found that the curriculum provided the required theoretical knowledge that motivated students for higher education. It was also found that the curriculum addressed employment needs and promoted Science and Technology to reflect the country's needs. The dependency on professional development programs as the principal means for updating curriculum content highlights the significance of ongoing teacher training (Lieberman & Miller 2001). This could be due to the

fast evolution of Science and changes in global pedagogical practices, which teachers have to get through in-service teacher training or simply in professional development programmes.

It was found that the curriculum provided a guiding program on higher education and ensured the continuity of disciplines from one stage to another to prepare the students for higher studies. This aspect of the program strongly aligns with Domask (2007), who stated that students' long-term academic and professional goals are essential for fostering enduring educational aspirations. This might be due to the reason that continuity of disciplines from one school level to another helps the learners to maintain the material understanding and boost the

The present study found that most teachers and principals conducted direct classroom teaching and organised remedial classes to develop students' english language skills. It revealed that teachers were not involved in the curriculum evaluation process. It was found that curriculum modification was not performed from time to time and that the few curriculum changes did not improve it. This finding was consistent with Paniagua & Istance (2018), who stated that effective curriculum evolution demands that updates be frequent and attuned to the realities of classroom instruction and the evolving pedagogical landscape.

It was found that the participation of teachers in periodic meetings to find appropriate teaching methods and discussion on the new syllabi with other subject teachers were the primary means for teachers' familiarisation with the latest syllabi. However, they stated that the post-fundamental curriculum lacked aspects of global education and community development aspects in its content. However, it was found that providing adequate human and material resources and providing relevant content material to teach students were the means used by the students to achieve their goals. According to Weimer (2013), commitment to professional development indicates a continuous desire to refine instructional practices. The curriculum's alignment with national educational needs and the provision of adequate resources suggest that it is well-positioned to support student achievement.

The study also found that most principals and teachers revealed the availability of co-curricular activities dominated by debates, drama, and dance as the principal types of co-curricular activities provided to students. They mentioned that most students participated in clubs available in schools, mainly debate and dance clubs, where they followed a pre-decided program. In contrast, the discussion themes originated from teachers' ideas and the choices from literature.

These findings were consistent with (Smith, Sheppard, Johnson & Johnson, 2005), who stated that the establishment of various clubs, including dance clubs, reflects a structured approach to student engagement beyond the classroom. Co-curricular activities play a notable role in the educational experience, with debates emerging as a primary focus among co-curricular offerings.

The themes for debates and discussions often originate from teacher suggestions, indicating a systematic approach to extracurricular involvement. Nevertheless, the predominance of debate clubs may reveal a potential gap in the diversity of co-curricular activities. This lack of variety could limit students' exposure to various interests and skills, potentially constraining their holistic development.

Pedagogy

It was found that most teachers implemented a teaching methodology based on the content's objectives and used different teaching methods for different content. The teachers implemented a constructive learning approach in their pedagogical practices and used the discussion method as the central teaching methodology in class. Pedagogically, teachers employed diverse teaching aids, from charts and models to integrating technology through platforms like Google Classroom (Akcil, Uzunboylu & Kinik 2021). This might be because teachers have participated in professional development programs and were trained in using such technological tools.

The emphasis on constructive learning principles and interactive teaching methods highlights a student-centred approach to education. Techniques such as questioning and ongoing improvements in pedagogy further illustrate a dynamic and adaptable teaching strategy.

Evaluation Procedures

In the educational landscape, the majority of teachers highlighted the use of assessment work rubrics as a fundamental aspect of their evaluation processes. This is aligned with (Steinberg & Donaldson 2016). This adoption of rubrics signifies a commitment to structured and transparent assessment practices. By outlining clear criteria, rubrics demystify student expectations and foster a more consistent and objective approach to evaluation. The clarity provided by these rubrics is instrumental in guiding students toward achieving their learning goals, potentially leading to improved educational outcomes.

Teachers' formative and summative evaluations reflected a well-rounded approach to assessment. This was supported by (Panadero & Jonsson (2013), who highlighted that formative assessments, including diagnostic assignments, monitor ongoing student progress and offer timely feedback. This continuous feedback loop is crucial for identifying learning gaps and making necessary adjustments to instruction. Conversely, summative assessments are designed to evaluate student learning at the culmination of an instructional period.

Conducting weekly assessments underscores a commitment to regularly tracking student progress and providing support, thus enhancing the overall educational experience.

The emphasis on diagnostic assignments as a component of formative assessment is particularly noteworthy. These assignments are a diagnostic tool to gauge students' grasp of specific concepts, allowing teachers to tailor their instruction to meet student needs better (Chapman & King, 2005). This practice aligns with best practices in formative assessment, which emphasise the importance of feedback in driving student improvement and fostering more profound understanding.

It was found that most teachers performed the evaluations weekly. Assigning daily homework as a motivational tool indicates an effort to extend learning beyond the classroom (Carr, 2013). Homework can reinforce classroom instruction and encourage students to apply their knowledge independently.

The majority of teachers mentioned that assignments were the most formative assessment provided to students and that students' assignments were chosen from the most current teaching topic. It ensures that evaluations are directly relevant to students' learning. This aligns with Rudner & Schafer (2002) study, stating that it facilitates a more integrated learning experience where students can apply their newly acquired knowledge to their assignments.

School Infrastructure

The findings of the study shed light on the state of school infrastructure, revealing a mixed picture of adequacy and inadequacy across various components. It was found that schools generally had a reasonable number of rooms and pieces of furniture, but the adequacy of these resources often fell short of what was required. This discrepancy points to a critical issue: while

the foundational infrastructure exists, it may not be sufficiently robust to meet the demands of a dynamic educational environment (Zio, 2016). It tells that schools possess a reasonable quantity of rooms and furniture but lack their adequacy. According to Lawanson & Gede (2011), this shortfall suggests a gap between the available resources and the actual needs of students and teachers. The inadequate infrastructure in rooms and furniture might be based on the exponential number of students, which doesn't grow with finances and lack of plannification. The population has increased a lot while the financial situation in the country has remained stuck for decades.

The findings also revealed the inadequacy of ICT facilities. This finding is consistent with Fidelis & Onyango (2021), who found that although ICT facilities are present, their adequacy is marked as insufficient, with some schools reporting a complete lack of these essential tools. The inadequacy of the ICT facilities might be caused by the lack of modern facilities in the country and the lack of long-term planning from the ICT stakeholders and the concerned authorities.

It was found that there was a reasonable yet inadequate availability of documents (textbooks for students and teachers, school regulations, and recreational and sanitation facilities. This finding aligns with White, Kuper, Itimu-Phiri, Holm, & Biran (2016) study, where they found that schools appear to have some supporting amenities. Still, their current state is insufficient to fully cater to student needs. The lack of documentation is due to the shortage of financial means allocated to the Ministry of Education. The expenses for providing adequate school documents might be beyond what the allocated finances might resolve.

The findings underscored the need for a concerted effort to address infrastructure deficiencies, and significant gaps remain even if schools have made strides in providing necessary resources. To enhance the quality of education, it is crucial to focus on improving the adequacy of room space, furniture, ICT facilities, and supporting amenities (Foster & Cecilia; Briceño-Garmendia, 2010).

Administrative Practices

The study revealed that teachers engage in induction programs to facilitate their professional transition. These induction sessions, complemented by regular pedagogical meetings, reflect a structured approach to professional growth (Limongi-Vélez, 2022). Introducing merit certificates as incentives highlights a strategy to acknowledge and motivate teachers. Induction sessions are

organised for newly recruited teachers and cannot be taken as professional development activities. This implies that teachers at the post-fundamental schools lack professional programmes.

The study found that the majority of teachers possessed equal opportunities to participate in decision-making in schools. The equitable participation of teachers in decision-making is a positive sign of collaborative governance. It was found that there were no eligibility requirements for teachers' recruitment. Dissatisfaction with the recruitment criteria and processes signals a broader issue of perceived transparency (Wilden, Gudergan & Lings 2010). Teachers' concerns about recruitment processes' indirect and opaque nature suggest a need for reforms.

It was found that the school's principal supervised teachers' work in school; most teachers stated that their principals supervised their work on a daily basis, the majority of the teachers stated that principals asked them to go through training programs as a follow-up action performed after the supervision was done, and the majority of teachers stated that principals supervised teaching activities in response to daily reports from colleague teachers. This daily supervision and subsequent training programs suggest a dedication to ongoing teacher development and performance enhancement (DiPaola & Hoy, 2013).

The formalised nature of student admissions, including the requirement for specific documents and interviews, points to a structured and selective enrollment process. These procedures' annual frequency and adherence to explicit rules suggest an effort to maintain fairness and integrity in admissions (Boliver, Gorard, Powell & Moreira, 2017). Student admission requires that interviews be organised so schools can admit the most eligible students instead of accepting anyone who comes. This might be because the drop in our rate has increased and because public schools are open to everyone.

It was found that most teachers divide students into learning groups as a strategy to manage overcrowded classes. Classroom management strategies, such as dividing students into smaller learning groups and enforcing discipline guidelines, are essential for maintaining an organised learning environment (Brophy, 1983).

The findings from the study revealed that the majority of principals stated that fee regulation was available in schools, that schools received government funding once a year or once a semester,

and that the government funding was for external development programs. It was also found that the government funding was inadequate to meet all of the needs of schools and that schools required students to contribute to mobilising school development funds. There might be numerous reasons, but the most notable for the short and inadequate funding from the government to schools would be the insufficient budget allocated to education from the government's expenses.

Human Resources

The present study revealed that most teachers and principals stated that schools did not have unqualified teachers. However, some teachers and principals said that unqualified teachers were hired because some schools lacked qualified teachers and others because they possessed inborn teaching skills. Besides, it was mentioned that teachers were teaching their specialisation courses. As feedback from teachers and principals highlights, the presence of unqualified teachers in some schools underscores a pressing issue within the educational system (Ingersoll, Hoxby & Scrupski, 2004). Post-fundamental schools still employ some unqualified teachers because they lack qualified teachers while the demand from students is already there.

The present study found that most teachers and principals mentioned the non-availability of co-teachers in schools and the existence of grievances among teachers; the school principal confronted the conflicting parties as a grievance redressal procedure in school, and they acknowledged having failed to address all the grievances among teachers. The non-availability of co-teachers and the prevalence of staff grievances point to potential deficiencies in human resource management **Subitha (**2017). While grievance redressal procedures, as utilised by school principals, represent a step in the right direction, their effectiveness appears limited, with some grievances remaining unresolved. The co-teacher shortage may strain existing staff, potentially affecting their workload and instruction quality.

The present study found that the majority of principals suggested that teachers take membership in recognised academic organisations to ensure that teachers under their responsibility are developing professionally. Encouraging teachers to join recognised academic organisations for professional development is a proactive approach, but it does not fully address the immediate need for effective conflict resolution. Professional development programs should incorporate

conflict management and interpersonal skills training to foster a more cohesive and effective staff environment (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix & Trochim, 2008).

It was found in the present study that the majority of principals stated that librarians were the most non-teaching staff available in schools and that non-teaching staff were assigned some activities in schools based on their qualifications, including assisting teachers in applying routine discipline to students as the primary assignment, which reflected a structured approach to utilising non-teaching resources. Their role in student discipline demonstrates the importance of collaborative management within schools (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, & Trochim 2008).

The government's role in salary payments and recognised issues of salary inadequacy and minimal annual increments highlight ongoing concerns regarding teacher compensation. The lack of performance-based benefits, reliance on fee waivers, and stress relief measures point to gaps in comprehensive employee support. Although predetermined job contracts offer job security, the absence of life insurance and insufficient salary increments reveal areas needing significant improvement. To enhance teacher satisfaction and retention, reforms in salary structures, the introduction of performance-based incentives, and additional benefits are imperative (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). The lack of comprehensive employee support, such as life insurance for teachers, could be because teachers are paid lower salaries, and insurance companies ignore them because if they get anything to claim, they pressurise them. In contrast, the income from their salary is less, and thus they contribute less amount.

Community Participation

Most teachers and principals stated that parents were regularly involved in school activities. As found in the study, parents contributed substantially, particularly in supporting the school canteen and fostering community development. Such involvement fortifies the link between educational institutions and their surrounding communities and provides crucial additional resources that support and enrich the educational environment (Yulianti, Denessen, Droop & Veerman, 2022). Committing to educating underprivileged children further demonstrates a broader dedication to social responsibility and community upliftment.

However, the parent-teacher associations (PTAs) scenario presents a more sober picture. Despite the potential for PTAs to act as a vital bridge between schools and parents, the irregularity of

their meetings and the general decline in their effectiveness were found. While PTAs have been involved in fundraising for school supplies and advocating for community cleanliness, their sporadic engagement and operational inefficiencies suggest a failure to harness their potential fully. Effective PTAs are essential for fostering robust collaboration between parents and schools, enhancing educational outcomes and supporting various school initiatives (Yulianti et al., 2022).

The current deficit in such practical exposure not only represents missed opportunities for students to acquire valuable skills but also hinders their ability to forge connections with potential employers (Bak & Boulocher-Passet, 2013). Strengthening these interfaces could significantly enrich students' educational experiences and better prepare them for their careers.

5.20.2. Discussion of Major Findings for Objective 2

Perceptions of Teachers

The average intensity index of 3.90 showed that teachers had a favourable perception towards understanding the curriculum's aims and objectives, basing the curriculum objectives on societal needs, students' interest in the curriculum, continuity of the subject from one stage to another, and active participation of students in co-curricular activities. This high rating indicates general confidence among educators regarding their comprehension of curricular goals and dedication to fostering student engagement in co-curricular activities (Fang & Ngee, 2013). Despite their grasp of the curriculum's goals, teachers highlight significant shortcomings.

The average intensity index of 3.47 showed that teachers had an unfavourable perception of the lack of ICT-integrated pedagogy to make learning situations joyful and that the teaching method met the requirements of the latest pedagogy. However, they had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the pedagogy covering the essential content, the methodology preparing students for real-world challenges, and the appropriateness of the pedagogy. This indicates a critical need for updating pedagogical approaches to integrate ICT effectively and address current educational challenges (Stensaker et al., 2007).

The average intensity index of 3.68 showed that teachers had a favourable perception of the fairness and justness of assessments, encouraging students to focus on their studies, modifying teaching methods based on assessment results, and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching

methods. However, they had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the regularity of formative assessment. This underlines the importance of implementing more frequent, fair, and comprehensive formative assessments to inform instructional practices better and ensure equitable student evaluation (Leung, 2004).

The average intensity index of 2.94 showed that teachers had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the use of library facilities, the effectiveness of guidance and counselling centres, the quality of the mid-day food provided to students, the large number of students in classes, and inadequate school infrastructure. Parbie, Phuti & Barfi (2021) found that, while the infrastructure and support services are viewed positively, the limited use of library facilities suggests enhanced resource utilisation to support and enrich the educational experience.

The average intensity index of 3.40 showed that teachers had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about timely recruitment, appreciation of the teacher's performance, recognition of non-teaching staff in schools, teachers' satisfaction with their salaries, and active participation in professional development programmes. The low perception of non-teaching staff recognition further underscores the need for comprehensive professional development opportunities and improved compensation to enhance teacher morale and effectiveness (Makki & Kandil, 2023).

The average intensity index of 3.43 showed that teachers had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about community contribution in decision-making, parental involvement in school activities, regular meetings of the parents-teacher association, parental involvement's contribution to students' development, and inactivity of the school-industry interface. This implies that while teachers appreciate community and parental contributions, there is significant room for improvement in strengthening these partnerships to foster more dynamic and effective collaboration between schools and their communities (Panahi, 2015).

Perceptions of Students

The average intensity index of 3.65 indicated that students had a favourable perception towards developing students' thinking skills through content taught, the lack of knowledge of the subject

to teach for some teachers, and the development of students' english skills. However, they had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the irrelevance of subject content to societal needs and the adequacy of the learning experiences provided to students. This indicates a need for curriculum refinement to enhance real-world applicability (Stuckey et al., 2013).

The average intensity index of 3.62 indicated that students had a favourable perception towards the involvement of students in content-related activities, encouragement of students to participate in co-curricular activities and the approchability of teachers to students. Besides, they had an unfavourable perception of the intriguing nature of collaborative learning and teaching methodology. The discrepancy suggests that while teachers are engaging and supportive, there may be gaps in pedagogical approaches that detract from student interest in collaborative learning and innovative teaching methods (Parsons & Taylor, 2011).

The average intensity index of 3.35 showed that students had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about providing formative assessments, encouraging students in language skills development, the delay in assessing students' work, fairness of the assessments, and change of teaching style based on assessment results. To better support student learning outcomes, it is essential to improve the fairness and timeliness of assessments and to ensure that teaching strategies are responsive to the results of these assessments (Bettencourt, 2015).

The average intensity index of 2.90 showed that students had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about using school laboratories, ICT facilities in classes, the quality of food provided, the functioning of guidance and counselling centres, and overcrowded classes. Brooks, Dobbins, Scott, Rawlinson, and Norman (2014) supported this finding when they stated that deficiencies could affect the quality of the educational environment. Addressing these concerns is crucial for creating a more effective and supportive learning environment.

The average intensity index of 3.10 showed that students had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the shortage of teachers in school, fairness of teachers, inactivity of the school-industry interface, the contribution of parent involvement in educational development, and the efficiency of parents' participation in school activities. These

findings suggest that while parental involvement is valued, there is a need to enhance school-industry partnerships and address staffing shortages to support educational outcomes more effectively (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005).

Perceptions of Principals

The average intensity index of 3.77 showed that principals had a favourable perception of a curriculum that is interesting to students, subject continuity in the curriculum, basing the curriculum objectives on societal needs, understanding the curriculum aims and objectives, and student participation in co-curricular activities. This indicates a pressing need for greater alignment between curriculum objectives and societal expectations (Watermeyer, 2011).

The average intensity index of 3.43 showed that principals had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the appropriateness of the pedagogy implemented, the lack of ICT-integrated pedagogy to make the learning environment joyful, the effectiveness of the teaching methodology, the teaching methods meeting the latest pedagogy, and students' preparedness for real-world challenges. This highlights a critical developmental area: integrating modern pedagogical practices and technological tools. According to Li (2018), addressing these gaps is crucial for modernising teaching methods and equipping students for future challenges by adopting contemporary instructional strategies and technologies.

The average intensity index of 3.92 showed that principals had a favourable perception of the fairness and justness of students' assessments, the regularity of formative assessments held, the encouragement of students to study, the modification of teaching methods after assessments, and the effectiveness of the teaching methods. However, formative assessments are valued for evaluating and improving teaching practices (Bennett, 2011). The perceived lack of fairness and supportive engagement highlights the need for improvements.

The average intensity index of 2.85 showed that principals had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the adequacy of the school infrastructure, the functioning of guidance and counselling centres, the quality of the mid-day meals provided to students, the large number of students in schools, and the use of library facilities.

The average intensity index of 2.97 showed that principals had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the effectiveness of teachers, the recognition of non-teaching staff, the non-participation of teachers in professional development programmes, the teachers's satisfaction with their salaries, and the appreciation of teachers for their performance. Merchie, Tuytens, Devos & Vanderlinde (2018) supported this finding by highlighting that these insights point to a need for more robust professional development initiatives, better recognition practices, and improvements in teacher compensation.

The average intensity index of 3.43 showed that principals had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about parents' involvement in school activities, the parent-teacher association conducting meetings, parents' contribution to students' academic development, the inactivity of the school-industry interface and community participation in schools' decision-making. This finding was supported by Lazarides et al. (2015), who stated that parental contributions are valued, but an opportunity remains to strengthen community involvement and foster more robust school-community partnerships.

Perceptions of Parents

The average intensity index of 3.08 showed that parents had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about teachers helping students develop their english skills, students's encouragement to participate in co-curricular activities, changing the syllabus as per the requirements, the adequacy of the learning experiences provided and the teacher's knowledge of the courses they teach. The apprehension that teachers may not possess adequate subject matter expertise is particularly striking (Ball et al., 2008). This perceived gap suggests a need for significant educational recalibration.

The average intensity index of 2.99 showed that parents had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the fairness of the student's assessment procedures, the non-integration of technology in class teaching, the interest of the teaching methodology to students, the consistency of the home assignments and the content taught and the organisation of interschool competitions. Barker (2008) backed this finding, saying that such feedback underscores a pressing need for pedagogical innovation and suggesting that integrating

modern technology and re-evaluating teaching strategies to make them more dynamic and relevant could address these concerns.

The average intensity index of 3.11 showed that parents had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the overcrowdedness of classes, a lack of spacious and enlightened classrooms, the use of the school library and laboratories and the functioning of guidance and counselling centres. These issues highlight critical areas for infrastructural improvement. Wanyama (2020) endorsed the finding, assuming that effective management of school resources and enhancements to the physical learning environment is necessary to foster a more conducive and supportive educational setting. Addressing these issues might include reducing classroom sizes, optimising the use of educational resources, and revitalising support services to ensure they effectively meet students' needs.

The average intensity index of 3.47 showed that parents had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about school teachers' and principals' approachability to solving students' daily concerns, the impartiality of solving students' issues, the effectiveness of co-teachers assistance, and teachers' knowledge of the courses they teach.

The average intensity index of 3.20 showed that parents had neither a favourable nor an unfavourable perception; they were undecided about the regularity of parent-teacher association meetings, the effectiveness of the school-industry interface, the involvement of parents in school activities, the efficiency of parents' involvement, and the functioning of the parent-teacher association in schools. While supporting the finding, Chrispeels (1996) suggested that although PTAs fulfil their fundamental operational roles, there is a substantial opportunity to enhance parental engagement and strengthen school-community partnerships.

5.20.3. Discussion of Major Findings for Objective 3

5.20.3.1. Problems Encountered in Educational Practices

Teachers and principals found various problems in the functioning of the post-fundamental school of Burundi. The inadequacy of curriculum content emerged as a central concern. The curriculum's current status, characterised by insufficient depth and breadth, failed to cater to students' diverse learning needs and does not align with the evolving demands of the educational

landscape. This deficiency undermines students' preparedness for further education or the workforce (Arafeh, 2016).

The present study found that the difficulties associated with applying integration pedagogy highlighted significant implementation issues. This pedagogical approach, which combines various disciplines and methods to provide a holistic education, is not effectively utilised. This finding was consistent with (Harr, Eichler & Renkl, 2015), stating that educators often struggle with integrating different pedagogical strategies, resulting in inconsistent teaching practices. To overcome these challenges, targeted professional development is needed to equip teachers with the skills and resources necessary for effective integration pedagogy. It was also found that most teachers experienced difficulties applying the latest pedagogy. Ineffective pedagogical strategies hinder student engagement and learning (Sauvé, Fortin, Viger & Landry, 2018). This could result from a lack of professional development programmes, making teachers use the same methods for an extended period.

It was found that less assessment (homework, tests, projects, etc.) was the major evaluation problem in post-fundamental schools of Burundi. There was also an absence of a clear purpose for conducting evaluations, undermining their effectiveness. Evaluations that lack defined objectives fail to provide meaningful insights into student learning and instructional effectiveness (Marsh & Roche, 1997). Establishing clear, purpose-driven evaluation practices to address this problem is crucial.

It was found that most teachers mentioned inadequate IT equipment as the major problem in post-fundamental school infrastructure. It represented a significant barrier to integrating technology into the learning environment. In an era where digital tools and resources are integral to education, the lack of appropriate ICT infrastructure limits students' access to essential technological resources (Mathevula & Uwizeyimana, 2014). Investing in modern ICT equipment and providing comprehensive training for students and teachers is crucial to creating a technologically adept learning environment (Gambari & Okoli, 2007). This could be due to a lack of funding from the ICT Department of State. It might also be due to the deciding educational authorities' lack of will and vision.

It was found that most teachers stated that progressing students only because they passed the national test and not because they were convincing in classes was an administrative problem

encountered in the schools as it raises concerns about academic standards and the integrity of the education system. They also stated a lack of regular and strict supervision and financial weaknesses in school activities. Such practices may undermine educational quality and fail to adequately prepare students for future academic challenges. A country that has been at war for more than a decade must be lacking rigorous measures to impose standards in education, which is suspected to be the reason for the mentioned administrative problem.

Most teachers stated that inadequate professional development programmes and a lack of induction for newly recruited teachers were the major problems in human resources. The limited scope of professional development programs for educators restricts their ability to stay abreast of educational advancements and refine their teaching practices (Collin, Heijden & Lewis, 2012). A lack of allocated budget in the yearly government budget might cause the lack of induction sessions for newly recruited teachers. One cannot also ignore the lack of access to the latest technology, which is lacking in most of the schools.

It was found that most teachers stated that the community is uninterested in school activities, which constitutes a problem for community involvement. They also mentioned a lack of courage to demand accountability. Without a culture of accountability, there is limited impetus to address and resolve the identified problems. This finding was also found by (Rosenblatt & Wubbels, 2021), who highlighted that cultivating a culture of accountability at all levels of the educational system is crucial for driving improvements and ensuring that educational practices adhere to high standards of excellence.

5.20.4. Discussion of Major Findings for Objective 4

5.20.4.1. Suggestions to Improve Educational Practices

The findings revealed that the majority of teachers and principals gave significant suggestions to improve the implementation of educational practices at the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. These suggestions highlighted systemic changes necessary to elevate the quality of education and address existing problems. This discussion analysed each recommendation, exploring its implications and potential impact on the educational landscape. As important stakeholders in the educational system, principals and teachers could have recognised that the entire system was failing and decided to notify everyone so that action could be taken before it was too late.

The need for the curriculum to reflect real-life situations was suggested. Teachers and principals emphasised that educational content should bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. This alignment is crucial for making learning experiences more relevant and engaging for students. Integrating real-world contexts into the curriculum makes educational content more meaningful and applicable outside the classroom (Simanu-Klutz, 1997). This approach not only enhances student engagement but also equips learners with the skills and competencies necessary for navigating the complexities of modern society. Burundi's education system, being supported technically by an external third party, which might be ignoring the local realities, might be why it lacks reflection on real-life situations.

The leading suggestions to improve pedagogical practices included relating teaching/learning activities to students' previous knowledge, equipping teachers with the latest pedagogy through professional development, and applying suitable teaching methods at the proper levels. The suggestions included the enhancement of teachers' mastery of new pedagogical approaches. Educators must stay current with innovative practices as educational theories and methods evolve. Mastery of contemporary pedagogical strategies can substantially improve instructional effectiveness and student outcomes (Wieczorek & Stradomska, 2021). Professional development programs should be designed to equip teachers with the skills needed to implement new teaching methods effectively. Such training can foster a more dynamic and responsive learning environment, leading to better educational practices and enhanced student performance.

Aligning assessments with teaching and learning objectives and adopting evaluation procedures that cater to a high number of students in the class were other critical suggestions intending to improve the evaluation procedures. The effectiveness of assessments relies on their ability to measure educational goals' achievement accurately. This was consistent with Jideani & Jideani (2012), who highlighted that misalignment between assessments and instructional objectives can compromise the validity of student evaluations and impede the feedback loop essential for instructional improvement. Ensuring that assessments are well-aligned with clearly defined learning outcomes enables educators to monitor student progress better and make necessary adjustments to their teaching strategies. This alignment is crucial for improving the reliability of evaluations and enhancing the overall educational experience.

Provision of sufficient school furniture and IT equipment and provision of teachers' and students' manuals, including guides, syllabi, textbooks, and lesson notebooks, enough classrooms were suggested as the major means of improving the school infrastructure, which touches upon a fundamental aspect of the learning environment. Adequate furniture is essential for creating a comfortable and conducive space for learning. Insufficient or poor-quality furniture can negatively impact students' ability to engage effectively in their studies (Muhammad, Sapri & Sipan, 2014). Ensuring schools have appropriate furniture improves the physical learning environment and supports students' overall well-being and productivity (Mumcu & Yilmaz, 2016). Investing in quality furniture is critical to enhancing the learning experience and fostering a more effective educational setting.

Encouraging fair teacher transfers and reassignment practices, encouraging the merit-based promotion of students, and maintaining regular and strict supervision were the major suggestions towards improving administrative practices, highlighting the need to maintain educational standards and implement effective school policy. This finding is aligned with Taxman (2002), stating that supervision provides a mechanism for monitoring progress, identifying areas for improvement, and holding stakeholders accountable. Establishing a robust framework for regular supervision can help address discrepancies in educational practices and ensure adherence to established standards. Adequate supervision is crucial for upholding educational quality and supporting continuous improvement within schools.

It was suggested that there should be a regular, consistent, and recurring organisation of adequate professional development programmes. Effective professional development is vital for enhancing teachers' skills, keeping them abreast of educational advancements, and supporting their career growth (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017). Well-structured programs should address specific needs, incorporate practical strategies, and offer ongoing support. Investing in comprehensive professional development can lead to more effective teaching practices and better student outcomes. This investment is essential for fostering continuous improvement and maintaining high educational standards.

Enhancing the effectiveness of parent-teacher association (PTA) boards is critical to improving school practice. PTAs foster collaboration between parents and schools, support educational initiatives, and address community concerns (Singh, Gupta & Thakur, 2014). Strengthening PTA

boards involves increasing engagement, ensuring active participation, and leveraging their potential to contribute to school improvement efforts. Effective PTAs can serve as valuable resources for bridging gaps between schools and communities, supporting overall educational success.

5.21. Educational Implications of the Present Study

The present study analysed the educational practices being implemented at the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. It also examined the problems encountered while implementing educational practices and ways of improving them for quality education. The findings from the study helped the researcher derive the following implications for the present study.

❖ Government of Burundi

1. Increase the investment in teacher training and development;
2. Organise regular in-service teacher training;
3. Revise the current post-fundamental curriculum to make it modern and flexible;
4. Integrate technology into class teaching;
5. Correct the errors already existing in the textbooks;
6. Promote multilingualism in school education;
7. Establish rubrics for fair and objective evaluations;
8. Develop vocational training programmes;
9. Promote and value lifelong learning.

❖ Ministry of Education and Teacher Training Institutions

1. Evaluate urgent basis the post-fundamental system;
2. Set and enforce national educational standards;
3. Formulate a national education policy;
4. Develop a reformed and updated curriculum;
5. Ensure training and professional development of teachers.

5.22. Suggestions for Further Research

The present study should not be the final one that will be conducted on educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. It was only an insight into the status quo currently prevailing in Burundi's post-fundamental schools. Based on the experience, given that not many studies have been conducted on the educational system of Burundi, the researcher would like to

suggest ways for further research for those willing to undertake studies in the field and/or the area in the future. Thus, further studies may include:

1. Studies on educational practices in the fundamental schools of Burundi.
2. Evaluation studies of the educational system of Burundi after the introduction of the fundamental system.
3. Comparative studies on educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of EAC countries.
4. Case studies on the educational practices implemented in the excellence schools of Burundi.
5. Perception studies on the contribution to the development of the Burundi education system.

5.23. Conclusion

The present has found that educational practices were implemented at the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. However, in most cases, the implemented practices were inadequate. Even though the study participants acknowledged the importance of a well-designed curriculum, appropriate pedagogical practices, holistic evaluation of students' work, an adequate school infrastructure, smooth administrative practices, human resources, and community participation in school activities, it was reported in most schools that many of these mentioned educational practices were lacking in most sampled schools. Teachers and principals had favourable perceptions towards all the aspects under study, which implies that they appreciated what was available. However, a thorough analysis of problems encountered in Burundi's post-fundamental schools demonstrated that an innovation in the educational practices was suggested. Besides, they expressed appreciation for the existing ones. These educational practices are essential for learners to assimilate the curriculum content.

The foundation is the curriculum, which establishes what students learn and the knowledge organisation. In turn, pedagogy refers to teachers' strategies and tactics to successfully teach this curriculum, focusing on encouraging critical thinking, creativity, and active learning. However, curriculum and pedagogy alone cannot produce the best results. In order to strengthen the relevance and contextuality of education, human resources and community involvement is essential. Involving families, neighbourhood stakeholders, and larger community organizations helps schools better meet students' real-world needs and ensure learning happens outside the classroom. Through the creation of spaces for culturally sensitive instruction and locally relevant

solutions to educational problems, this collaboration enables schools to be more inclusive and flexible.

Teachers, students, and community members must participate in ongoing feedback loops to enhance the educational system. In addition to learning new teaching techniques, professional development for educators should emphasize building relationships with local communities. Educational policies must encourage community-based collaborative decision-making to keep curricula current and representative of a range of cultural backgrounds. The gap between academic knowledge and practical application could be filled by incorporating more experiential, hands-on learning opportunities and implementing adaptable pedagogical approaches that suit each student's needs. Therefore, developing a more dynamic, inclusive, and successful educational system requires the interaction of creative pedagogical approaches, curriculum design, and active community engagement.