

Educational Practices in the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi

A Synopsis of the Thesis
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Guide:
Prof. Sujata Srivastava

Researcher:
Mr. Elvis Manariyo



Centre Of Advanced Study In Education (Case)
Department Of Education
Faculty Of Education And Psychology
The Maharaja Sayajirao University Of Baroda
VADODARA-390002

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A Synopsis of the Thesis

1. Introduction

Education is essential at any stage of the life journey. 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)). It has specific significance for those benefiting. Primary education helps to welcome a new learner to the world of learning, while post-fundamental education prepares the learners for higher education and complex real-life situations. Therefore, post-fundamental education is crucial because it prepares a person for present and future endeavours. According to Lewin & Caillods (2001), since secondary education is where most primary school teachers receive their training and where future college students are chosen and taught fundamental skills, it is undoubtedly a critical stage in the educational process. Essential educational practices implemented in post-fundamental education include curriculum development, co-curricular activities, pedagogical approaches, assessment and administrative procedures, school infrastructure, human resource management, and school-industry interface. Post-fundamental education characteristics are complex and have changing technological integrations and vital interaction between teachers and students on their boards. This crucial stage of education connects the fundamental knowledge acquired in primary years and the specific apprehension needed for higher studies or employment life. Michaelowa (2007) stated that education policy should consider inadequacies at lower educational levels in addition to higher education to improve higher education outcomes.

Throughout this chapter, the research will develop different aspects to clarify the concept of educational practices in general, particularly concerning Burundi's education system. These aspects include the structure of the educational system, the policy perspectives, the objectives of post-fundamental education in Burundi, the curriculum structure and development, the teaching approaches, the integration of technology into learning, the empowerment of teachers through professional development, the impact of infrastructure on teaching-learning, the school community interface, and the present scenario of the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, which thus is the current research under study.

1.1. Educational Practices

Educational practices include all the means implemented by teachers, students, principals, and parents to address education in a general way. They target educational issues that impede the smooth running of an education system and propose improvement methods for each aspect. According to Nianren (1987), when education is provided well, and the quality of 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. Curriculum, pedagogy, technology integration, an adequate school infrastructure, the precise practices of the school administration, the management of human resources, and a school-industry interface in post-fundamental schools are crucial and form a set of educational practices in the current context. 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, as a well-liked teaching strategy for all grades, the flipped classroom varies based on the class's demands, the students' involvement, and the lecturers themselves.

Post-fundamental education also deals with the teacher-student relationship because teachers play various roles in post-fundamental education apart from sharing knowledge with students through class lessons. They engage students in mentorship, help students overcome life issues, and work on personal development. Building solid relationships between teachers and students is essential to establish a strong and caring teaching-learning situation where learners are motivated to do and discover their greatest potential. At this stage, they decide on the subsequent procedures of their life. Bringeland (2023) highlighted that, in the end, social justice concerns about access to education arise because unequal access to education negatively impacts society.

1.2. Burundi: The Country and its Educational System

1.2.1. 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).

1.2.2. The Educational System in Burundi

a) Primary Education

From its independence in the '60s until 2012, the Burundian educational system had three subdivisions: Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education. At the end of primary school, candidates were subject to passing a national-level test (Concours National). 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.

b) Secondary Education

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) were allowed to access higher Education. 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).

c) Higher Education

Higher education in Burundi was under the licence system, organised in a four-year course sanctioned by a licence degree. From 2011 to 2012, the higher education system in Burundi changed into 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.

1.2.3. Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi: Policy Perspectives

The Government Action's Observatory, cited by Rurihose (2001), stated that the education sector policy had settled 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, private education promotion 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. It also counts as enhancing girls' Education, increasing parental and community involvement in local funding for post-fundamental education, rehabilitation of moral and civic education, the fight against fraudulent practices, and environmental Education and Education against AIDS.

The General Directorate of Pedagogical Bureau (2014) stated that 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 vision must establish a logical connection between the components of the reform of fundamental education and general and pedagogical post-fundamental education and provide efficient preparation for the student to embrace higher education.

The Law on the Organisation of Primary and Post-Fundamental Education (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. It also focuses on training middle managers, technicians, and skilled workers to meet the country's human needs and ensure adequate preparation for higher education and academics. The State guarantees the diversification of post-fundamental education by organising all the necessary school training for the level of fundamental education and that of higher education.

The Presidency of the Republic of Burundi highlighted that 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. Post-basic schools use teaching materials either manufactured on-site or imported from outside. The State exempts imported educational materials. The evaluation of curricula is carried out every five years to measure the impact of the reform and take stock of it. The curricula are subject to reform every ten years, considering the observations from the evaluation referred to in the article (Présidence de la République, 2017).

From the three bodies mentioned above, the policy perspectives towards post-fundamental education in Burundi state that if curricula are effectively prepared, they help to foster a sustainable economy by inculcating into learners the awareness of themselves being the foundation and beneficiaries of the same education system outcomes.

1.2.4. Objectives of Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi

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 fixed the following objectives for different streams (Pedagogical, Sciences, Languages, Social and Human Sciences, and Economic) of the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. They include: - The preparation of efficient professional teachers for elementary schools and the laureates to pursue higher Education in specialised courses in trainers' training;

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

1.2.5. Curriculum Structure at Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi

The post-fundamental education system in Burundi has settled different subjects to offer students. The architecture of the post-fundamental streams and options refers in part to the areas of fundamental education:

- The pedagogical stream: 4 years;
- The science stream with two options: 3 years; (i) Maths, Physics; (ii) Biology, Chemistry and Earth Sciences (Geology);
- The languages stream: 3 years;
- The stream of Social and Human Sciences: 3 years;
- The Economics stream: 3 years.

It is crucial to note that every section or option of post-fundamental education has a strong point of coherence with fundamental education, a new and vital component of post-fundamental education. Nevertheless, its content across the 12-year reform period is a concern raised by this requirement. There are no divisions or options in the sphere of the arts. Even if the objectives are well settled, one may wonder if they are being achieved.

1.3. Aspects of Educational Practices

1.3.1. 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. Developing a curriculum is also about choosing experiences, knowledge, and skills 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 would 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.

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.

1.3.2. The Teaching Methods: A Comprehensive Overview

In secondary education, teaching methods refer to ideas, practices, and tactics that direct instruction and learning processes. Teaching methods for a successful education process cover all works from different stakeholders. Irvine (2023) identified a model for developing innovative school leadership based on trust, experimentation, goal-setting, a solution-focused mindset, and trust. The study yields significant findings about how school systems perceive innovation as a

component of teaching and leadership, suggesting that school systems should place a strong emphasis on teacher engagement and professional learning to develop not only technical teaching expertise but also the kinds of skills and behaviours that innovative teachers and school leaders need. This thorough summary covers many secondary education pedagogical approaches:

- a) Traditional pedagogy, in which students are taught by teachers and textbooks, with lectures and structured classroom activities serving as the primary means of knowledge transmission.
- b) Constructivism and learning based on society's demands: the constructivist approach invites and encourages the students to construct their knowledge actively through explorations, inquiries, and realistic experiences.
- c) 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.
- d) Cooperative learning: Collaborative or cooperative learning techniques encourage student engagement and teamwork. Collaborating on assignments, conversations, or projects in small groups promotes effective communication and the exchange of varied viewpoints.
- e) Technology-Enhanced Learning: Using various tools, online resources, and digital resources to improve learning experiences is part of integrating technology into education.
- f) The flipped classroom model involves implementing traditional teaching methods in reverse.
- g) Critical Pedagogy: This method strongly emphasises social justice and equity and gives students the tools to examine, question, and critically analyse societal norms and hierarchies.
- h) Inclusive Education places a strong emphasis on supporting students with disabilities or different learning styles, as well as accommodating a variety of learning needs and ensuring accessibility. It aims to establish accessible, adaptable learning environments for all students.
- i) Competency-based education and mastery learning: Master learning guarantees that students reach a particular level of proficiency before introducing new ideas.

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.

1.3.3. Technology Integration into Learning

A vast range of resources and platforms are available for post-fundamental education that can significantly improve the quality of instruction. Technology is a cross-cutting subject of

knowledge and skills in the secondary education curriculum. Because of the demands placed on it by society and educational regulations, its curriculum must be updated frequently (Torres-Barchino et al., 2022). Some strategies for using technology to enhance post-fundamental education learning include a) Interactive learning platforms: Educational apps, learning management systems, and interactive platforms that provide exciting and dynamic content. b) Digital research and resources assist students in researching using digital resources like databases, online libraries, and scholarly articles. c) Teaching students how to create podcasts, videos, or other multimedia presentations will help them demonstrate their conceptual understanding. d) The “flipped classroom” approach involves using technology to deliver learning materials outside the classroom, giving teachers more time for in-class discussions, practical exercises, and knowledge application. e) Adaptive learning software uses tools for adaptive learning that modify content and pacing based on each student's unique performance and progress. f) Collaborative tools and cloud computing use cloud-based platforms that facilitate real-time collaboration on documents, presentations, and other collaborative tools such as Google Workspace, Microsoft Teams, and group projects. g) Online assessments and feedback systems put online evaluation and feedback tools in place that provide students instant access to information about their performance. h) Using virtual labs and simulations gives students access to virtual labs and simulations to investigate ideas or carry out experiments that might not be possible in a traditional classroom. i) Remote collaboration and distance learning asserts that digitalised education's utility has been felt in exceptional circumstances such as COVID-19 or similar scenarios where students have to attend online applications in such conditions that they cannot attend classes physically. j) Professional development for teachers: Train educators and assist them in integrating technology into their lesson plans to ensure that educators feel at ease utilising the available platforms and tools. Implementing technology in post-fundamental education aims to give students a rich and exciting education. Appropriate utilisation of technology in education is a beneficial tool for engaging students in personalising their education and preparing them for the unlimited digital demands of the modern world.

1.3.4. Empowerment of Teachers through Professional Development

Enhancing post-fundamental school teachers' skills, knowledge, and effectiveness in the classroom requires them to be empowered through professional development. 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. b) Communities of collaborative learning establish communities in which educators interact, exchange optimal methodologies and have dialogues to promote an environment of ongoing education. c) Differentiated professional development provides opportunities for professional development specific to each teacher's needs. d) Instructional coaching and mentoring where personalised advice and support can be obtained by offering one-on-one coaching or mentoring opportunities. e) Technology integration in education training declares that with ICT's fastest and unstoppable development in education, teachers and their surrounding educational environment must get training related to ICT and its implementation in education to improve the students' learning outcomes. f) Pedagogical workshops and seminars update teachers on the newest developments in education. g) 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". h) Fostering a growth mindset supports teachers in developing a growth mindset where they can continue to learn and improve.

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. Therefore, for understanding purposes, the researcher has developed the impact of infrastructure and school-community interfaces in succeeding in the teaching-learning situation.

1.3.5. Impact of Infrastructure on Teaching-Learning

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. These authors stated that administrators at the school claimed that students' lack of respect for their teachers and the poor infrastructure were to blame for the issues, underlined the necessity of building new secondary education facilities and recommended that educators take part in in-service training programs to improve their classroom management abilities.

Cosy, well-ventilated, and well-lit classrooms positively impact students' focus and engagement. The 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. 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.

1.3.6. 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 parents actively participate in many facets of their kids' educational journeys, emphasising academic expectations, progress monitoring, teacher interactions, and obstacles faced, emphasising 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. On another path,

local industries and businesses help the students benefit from internships and apprenticeships. Internships allow students to fill the gap between theory and practice. Community members can act as young generation mentors, workshop facilitators, or guest speakers to enhance the curriculum. The learners get used to participating in community assistance or project requirements in their local area and create their civic engagement and social responsibilities. Diversity of cultures teaches tolerance, understanding, and respect among the students. Zambukos (2023) affirmed that leaders have a plethora of planning and details to consider when starting a new school, which are putting together a capable team of experts and focusing on creating a positive school culture, two of the most crucial factors.

Community participation creates professional networking opportunities and career guidance for students. Students needing assistance exploring career options and making decisions can get it. Johnson (2023) states parental involvement is crucial to students' educational journey. 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.

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

The post-fundamental schools of Burundi have numerous issues that impede their flourishing. 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. The complex post-colonial situation and its consequences for the development and nation-building of African countries argue that secondary education and secondary school students tend toward neocolonial influences due to cultural pull and push factors and forces of globalisation emerging from the West. 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). Gender inequality also impedes the smooth run of post-fundamental

education. 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. 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, lack of enough textbooks and other essential school materials, lack of enough qualified workforce, school materials and equipment in the field of Education also constitute the challenges for this Burundi education system still looking for its highest best level UNICEF (2023). According to Jackson (2000), 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. Undeniably, the country is progressively noticing a drop in post-fundamental laureates' self-confidence and an increase in graduates' unemployment UNICEF (2023). These issues, among others, raise doubts about the relevance of the training provided or the prerequisites for a suitable training-employment match. As students, teachers, principals, and parents are the significant actors in every drop and development in the quality of Education in a system of Education, their point of view is more valuable in analysing the educational practices.

In conclusion, there are issues with the educational system that need to be examined. Since fundamental education reform immediately impacts Post-Fundamental Education, further research is required to solve the problems with the current educational system. Kapur (2019) states that the most delicate post-fundamental education access numbers conceal many issues. The chaotic growth of post-fundamental schools, which have proliferated without consideration

of the need for trained teachers or instructional materials, has been caused by the desire to increase the number of students. Students with a poor quality of schooling have resulted in their lack of training and Education. The Ministry of Education recently released a statement that acknowledged several deficiencies at the secondary school level. According to Jackson (2000), these deficiencies include a qualitative and numerical shortage of qualified staff and a lack of adequate infrastructure, instructional materials, and equipment. It has also been noticed that there is one book for every four students. Even fewer laboratories and scientific texts are available. With critical thinking and reflections on the subject matter and the situation of Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi from a specific perspective, the researcher describes educational practices as a crucial element of quality education. Effective educational practices provide a solid basis for sound teaching and learning. Educational Practices have been extensively studied across higher education, which has been provided as a place to start for educators to construct and deliver lessons.

Departing from the present scenario that currently prevails in Burundi's educational system, considering the issues raised by the cited authors regarding the challenging learning conditions students face and the poor quality of the taught content, there is a need to investigate and examine the educational practices that are currently implemented in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, to find out the notable issues, and attempt to address them with propositions of sustainable solutions.

2. Review of Related Literature

A literature review is an essential stage in the research process that makes sure the research is credible and relevant, places the study in the larger academic context, and guides the study's design. It is an essential tool for highlighting a research project's academic rigour and expanding knowledge in any field. According to Baumeister & Leary (1997), literature reviews have several advantages over empirical reports, including the ability to address more expansive and abstract questions, engage in more post hoc theorising without running the risk of profiting from chance, strengthen the case for a null hypothesis conclusion, and better recognise and utilise methodological diversity. 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 74 studies. The reviewed studies are related to pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, co-curricular activities, administrative procedures related to

educational practices in schools, human resource management, availability of infrastructure, and community participation in secondary schools and how all these aspects impact the student's performance in one way or another.

Out of the reviewed studies, the researcher did not find many studies on current parameters, like parental involvement and administrative activities in post-fundamental schools of Burundi. Neither has located research on the educational practices used in Burundi's post-fundamental schools. Concerns about the abovementioned parameters impact students' academic performance and the standard of instruction provided in Burundi's post-fundamental schools. Furthermore, the available studies only examined a single facet of educational practices, such as curriculum, pedagogy, infrastructure, administration, teacher participation, and inter-cooperation tactics. The researcher could not find research on the educational practice components of Burundi's post-fundamental schools, domestically or internationally. The research field lacks even these few studies on a single aspect of the studied factors. The current study will examine the status of educational practices in Burundi's post-fundamental schools.

3. Rationale of the Present Study

Burundi has been an independent country since 1962. However, its economic level is still rudimentary, as it is currently topping the list of poor countries (U.N. Human Development, 2022). Consequently, Burundi's educational system is not robust, as the basic needs to support the population, learners and teachers to survive are unavailable. Financially, 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. Burundi's education system has been unstable following the weakness of its political and social forces. Ntahonkiriye (2020) said that Burundi is struggling with an inadequate educational system among developing countries. The effect of its economic level on the education system must be examined. Due to its rudimentary poverty level, the government relies upon foreign countries' aid to sponsor significant development projects, including the education system. Burundi is among the countries that still employ external professors due to insufficient human resources (Muhoza, 2021). The reasons for the lack of skilled local human resources need to be examined, and the role of the education process at the secondary level needs to be studied. 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. Rwantabagu (2009) stated that despite the government-adopted policy and some tangible progress made so far in the schooling of Batwa children, significant constraints of a normative, economic, and structural nature do impede real change as Batwa keep experiencing exclusion in school education from the colonial era to the present. The situation is especially so in a society and economy where state employment has been virtually the only alternative to peasant agriculture.

Burundi has introduced a universal education policy for all children, but the facilities are still lacking, which impedes the success of the quality education provided. Lesforis (2011) highlighted that teachers' opinions of implementing universal secondary education were overwhelmingly negative except for their capacity to instruct a diverse student body. Teachers, ministry officials, and other vital informants had similar opinions about some aspects of universal secondary education, such as teachers' lack of preparation; there was disagreement about how involved teachers should be in planning and implementing it. To help guarantee that the new policy is successful, it is necessary to highlight how crucial it is to include teachers in the change process. Therefore, teachers' perceptions concerning the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi must be studied.

In contrast, Education is the only path to such advancement. The participation of children from all backgrounds in the schooling process needs to be studied. Academically, 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. Another academic challenge is the low success rate of 14%, causing the dropout phenomenon in the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi (Misago, 2019). For that, the reasons behind the high rate of students' failure, the causes of dropout, and the teachers' recruitment process need to be examined. Socially, the wide dispersion of Burundi's rapidly growing population hampers the delivery of social services by primarily handicapping access to education in terms of cost and equity as it is directed to overcrowded classes (Muhoza, 2021). Some students take courses in a standing position or sit improperly, which affects the quality of

Education, educational practices, and learning outcomes in such conditions. This large number of students in classes associated with the low budget allotted to Education affects the availability of students' and teachers' textbooks. According to official World Bank figures, Burundi's GDP was 2.90 billion U.S. dollars in 2021, less than 0.01 per cent of the global economy (Trading Economics, 2022). Valry et al. (2017) noticed the lack of textbooks and books and fewer opportunities to practice homework. The investigators further stated that the learning conditions in Burundi are not good; they affect the student's achievement and cannot explain Burundi's excellent performance in education. Therefore, there seems to be a lack of enough proper infrastructure facilities and other material resources that must be studied. Despite the abovementioned issues, a lack of research studies on Education, the highest unemployment rate reaching 65% in urban localities (Bukuru, 2019), gender inequality in Post-Fundamental Schools and unfavourable geographical conditions complicate some students' schooling lives. The secondary school laureates' performance in their first year of university reveals that the educational practices implemented in Burundi's Post-Fundamental Schools may be ineffective. For that, the evaluation procedures and the students' facilities at school need to be studied; the reasons above motivated the researcher to examine the Educational Practices in Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi.

3.1. Statement of the Problem

“Educational Practices in the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi”

3.2. Objectives of the study

1. To examine the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi concerning:
 - (i) Curriculum;
 - (ii) Pedagogy;
 - (iii) Evaluation procedure;
 - (iv) School infrastructure;
 - (v) Administrative practices;
 - (vi) Human resources;
 - (vii) Community participation;
2. To measure the perception of teachers, students, principals, and parents towards educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi;

3. To study the problems encountered in the educational practices by the stakeholders of the post-fundamental schools of Burundi;
4. To suggest measures for improving various educational practices by different stakeholders in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi.

3.3. Explanation of the Terms

i) Educational Practices

Educational practices are different elements that participate in the teaching-learning process. In the present context, educational practices include pedagogy, curriculum, evaluation procedures, school infrastructure, administrative practices, human resources, and community participation.

ii) Administrative Practices

In Education, administrative practices include teaching supervision, provision of results, recruitment procedures, organisational process and respect for timing.

iii) Human Resources

Human resources in the present context involve professional teachers, principals, non-teaching staff, teachers' qualifications, professional development programmes, and working conditions, viz., facilities and salary.

iv) Community Participation

Community participation in educational practices means parents' involvement, involvement in parent-teacher associations, involvement in interpersonal development clubs for students, and school industry collaboration.

v) Stakeholders

The stakeholders of the present study are the teachers, principals, parents and provincial Directors of Education.

3.4. Operational Definition

Perception

Perception is the act of observing what is readily apparent. However, the perceiver, the object, and the environment impact what is observed. The process through which people arrange and

interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their surroundings can be referred to as perception. Perception in the present context is the score obtained on the perception scale.

3.5. Delimitation of the Study

The study will be delimited to post-fundamental schools, referring to all 3/4 years programs after the fundamental school in all streams. The study is delimited to only seven components of educational practices, i.e. curriculum, pedagogy, assessment procedures, school infrastructure, human resources, administrative practices, and community participation.

4. Methodology

4.1. Design of the Study

The present study will use a Descriptive Survey Research Design.

4.2. Population

The population for the present study consisted of all the public post-fundamental students, teachers, principals, parents, and Provincial Directors of Education of Burundi.

4.3. Sample

The researcher applied a stratified random sampling technique during data collection. 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 stratified random sampling technique helped the research to:

- (i) Select four (4) provinces and their directors of education from the country's zones;
- (ii) Select twenty 20 per cent (20%) of the post-fundamental schools from the provinces chosen;
- (iii) Select between five (5) and ten (10) students from each selected school;
- (iv) Select between five (5) and ten (10) teachers from each school chosen;
- (v) Select between five (5) and ten (10) parents from each selected school.

All the principals of the selected schools were part of the sample. The numbers reprised in the following chart constituted the Study's final sample. All the principals of the selected schools were part of the sample. As per the predictions, the researcher selected four (4) provinces from the country's four regions, i.e. North, South, East, and West. Those provinces were Kayanza from

the North region, Rumonge from the South Region, Karusi from the East, and Cibitoke from the Western region of Burundi. Cibitoke, Kayanza, and Rumonge provinces had a sample of ten (10) schools each, while Karusi had eight (8) schools as the sample. The sample was calculated at 20% of the total schools in the sampled province. The final sample that participated in the study comprised 37 school principals, 345 teachers, 395 parents, and 405 students.

4.4. Tools and Techniques for Data Collection

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. Thus, different studies utilise diversified tools while collecting data for a particular study. For the present study, the researcher used the following tools:

1. Questionnaires;
2. Perception scales;
3. Observation schedules;
4. Interviews.

4.4.1. Questionnaires for Teachers and Principals

The researcher constructed the questionnaire for teachers and principals to collect data related to educational practices performed in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. The constructed questionnaire focused on curriculum, pedagogy, assessment procedures, school infrastructure, administrative practices, human resource management, and community participation. According to his profile, the questionnaire had a biographic part to help the researcher determine if the participant was eligible for the survey. The questionnaire included questions arranged logically so that some questions were only answered in the order they appeared. i.e. some questions require that you answer the first ones before the following as the subsequent answers are just the follow-up of the previous. The questionnaire for teachers and principals included open-ended and close-ended questions and open-ended questions. All the questions under objective one were close-ended, as the researcher provided options for answers except those under the school infrastructure aspect, which consisted of observing what was available in each sampled school. 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.

4.4.2. Perception Scale

The perception scale implemented within the current Study comprised the perception scale for principals, the perception scale for teachers, the perception scale for parents, and the perception scale for students. These four (4) perception scales were related to the following aspects: curriculum, pedagogy, assessment procedures, school infrastructure, administrative practices, human resource management, and community participation in school activities. This perception scale aimed to measure the perception of teachers, students, principals, and parents towards educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. As per their categories, all the perception scales did not consider all the aspects. For instance, the perception scale for parents focused on curriculum, pedagogy, school infrastructure, administrative practices, and community participation in school activities. The assessment 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.

The perception scale was made of five (5) Likert scales arranged from strongly agree to disagree strongly. Each statement had five points for ratings 5,4,3,2,1, representing Strongly Agree (**SA**), Agree (**A**), Undecided (**UD**), Disagree (**D**), and Strongly Disagree (**SD**). The perception scales comprised 30 items for teachers and principals and 25 for students and parents. No time was allocated to fill out the scale.

4.4.3. Interview Schedule

The interview schedules comprised a set of twenty-two (22) questions, which were directed to provincial directors orally and their answers were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Questions were arranged by aspects under Study, i.e. curriculum, pedagogy, assessment 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. The interview questions covered objective 1, objective 3, and objective 4.

4.5. Data Collection

The researcher constructed tools such as questionnaires, perception scales, observation schedules, and semi-structured interviews 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 researcher also constructed the perception scales to 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 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.

4.6. Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire for objective one and the perception scale for objective two were quantitative and qualitative; thus, descriptive analysis techniques, including frequency, percentage, and intensity index, were the most used to analyse the collected data. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse qualitative data. All the data were analysed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science).

5. Major Findings

5.1. Objective 1

- It was found that the majority of teachers of the post-fundamental schools of Burundi have their specialisation in the Arts & Crafts stream; Technology was the mainstream run at the post-fundamental schools, and the majority of teachers teach in only one stream and taught one subject, namely Economics.
- Mental development was mentioned as the main aim of the post-fundamental school curriculum of Burundi; the activities-centred curriculum was revealed to be the type of curriculum mostly implemented in the post-fundamental schools, and educational visits were the learning experiences provided in post-fundamental schools.
- It was found that participation in professional development programs was the principal way of updating curriculum content for students; the curriculum provides the required theoretical knowledge that reflects the country's needs, and its content connects with the student's needs.

- Most teachers and principals acknowledged that the curriculum enhances the students' motivation for higher education by providing vocational skills and a guiding program on higher education to prepare them for higher studies.
- Most teachers and principals stated that they organise remedial classes to develop their students' English language skills, acknowledge the involvement of teachers in the curriculum evaluation process and that the curriculum is not subject to changes more often and even the changes don't improve the same.
- The majority of teachers and principals participate in periodicals with staff to find out appropriate teaching methods for their familiarisation with the new syllabus; the curriculum content is based on the country's needs, and the curriculum enhances the students' educational goal achievement by giving students adequate human and material resources through global education.
- Most teachers and principals revealed that debates are the type of co-curricular activities mostly provided to students, the availability of clubs for students in class, debate clubs were the most available in classes, the availability of pre-decided programmes in clubs, the origin of themes of discussion in clubs was the ideas from teachers, and that the most famous club in classes was the dance club.
- The majority of teachers stated that the methodology implementation is based on the content's objectives; they use a different teaching method for different content; charts models are the learning tools and resources used by teachers; constructive learning is the type of learning primarily implemented in classes; the discussion method is the teaching method implemented in classes; they integrate the technology-based facilities in teaching; they use google classroom as the digital tool in the classes; questioning is the technique used in classes by teachers; and they initiate the pedagogy improvement.
- The majority of teachers acknowledge the availability of assessment work rubrics; formative and summative evaluations are the type of assessments conducted by teachers; the frequency of students' work assessment is performed weekly; diagnostic assignments are the formative assessment provided to students; teachers motivate students through evaluation by providing students with daily homework; and the selection of topics for student's assignments refers to the current teaching topic.

- Most schools' infrastructure had rooms in reasonable quantities, with adequacy marked as less and remarked as insufficient; furniture was also available and mostly adequate and remarked as sufficient even though some few were lacking; ICT facilities were available, its adequacy was less, and the remarks were insufficient and inexistent for some of them including class proctors; documents, leisure, and hygienic facilities were available in reasonable quantities, less in adequacy and remarked as insufficient.
- Teachers participate in an induction program on behalf of new teachers as part of their activities towards professional development; teacher pedagogical meetings are the professional development programmes organised in schools; they once participated in professional development activities; they recognised the availability of incentives in professional development programmes mainly a merit certificate, and the principal decides on needed teacher requirements for the teachers' performance evaluation and sanctions.
- The majority of teachers have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making; they declined the laydown recruitment eligibility criteria; they were aware of recruitment guidelines, whereas qualification was the recruitment criteria, which process was not direct; the central government was the recruiting agency; they recognised the existence of conditions required for recruitment in school, and stated that graduation in a teacher education institution was needed to become a post-fundamental school in Burundi.
- Most teachers stated that the school principal was the primary supervisor of teachers in schools; the supervision occurred on a daily basis; going through training programs was a follow-up action advocated after the supervision of teaching activities, and the supervision of teachers' activities followed daily reports from colleagues.
- Most of the teachers highlighted the availability of student admission rules and regulations, the possession of the admission documents was the criteria for admission in schools, an interview was part of the admission procedure, and the admission frequency was once a year.
- The majority of teachers stated that they divide students into learning groups as a measure of managing overcrowded classes; they ensure the discipline guidelines are given to students and monitor their strict applicability as a means of controlling the students' discipline; they highlighted the availability of fee regulation in school and the government funding for schools performed once a semester/year where development programs are the primary aspect considered in government's budget for schools; they stated that the government funds to

schools were not sufficient to cover all the school's needs which push the teachers to ask students for development funds. There were no regulations on school funds use.

- Some teachers and principals stated the presence of unqualified teachers, while others did not; most teachers and principals said that the motives behind recruiting unqualified teachers were mainly because they showed a teaching charisma and that teachers teach courses of their specialisation.
- 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 majority of school principals disclosed that conflicts are left unresolved; they suggest teachers take membership in recognised academic organisations as a means of ensuring teachers' professional development; they indicated that schools employ librarians as non-teaching staff; they agreed that non-teaching staff members are given responsibilities based on their qualifications, and they stated that their role is to help teachers enforce regular discipline on students.
- All teachers and principals agreed that the government is responsible for paying their salaries; the majority of them confirmed the inadequacy of their salaries; they agreed to the increment of teachers' salaries every year even though the increment amount is too small; the majority declined the motion of their school providing them with performance-based benefits; they indicated that schools waive fees for teachers' extended families to facilitate the life of their teachers; they unveiled that the schools relieve stressed teachers on stressful days as a means of managing the working stress; they disagreed that the school contribute to the life insurance of teachers, and they admitted that the schools provide a predetermined job contract to ensure the teachers' job security.
- Most teachers and principals acknowledged the involvement of parents in school activities; they said that parents are involved in school activities, revealed that parents contribute to the food supply in the school canteen, confirmed that schools contribute to the development of the community, and indicated that the schools teach unprivileged children as their contribution to community development.

- The majority of the respondents declined the availability of parent-teacher associations, indicated that parent-teacher associations do not conduct meetings regularly, stated that the parent-teacher association raises money for school supplies as activities performed by the parent-teacher association, refuted the intervention of parent-teacher associations in school social programmes, revealed that the parent-teacher association campaign for community cleanliness as part of Social interventions performed by PTA in schools, disagreed with the existence of school industry interfaces, indicated that the organisation approaches the school to initiate the few school-industry interface that exist in schools, and revealed that the industry prepares the students for future endeavours.

5.2. 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.

5.3. Objective 3

- The major problems encountered within the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools included insufficient content of the curriculum, difficulties in applying the integration pedagogy and implementation of inappropriate teaching methods, the lack of a clear purpose for conducting assessments, the inadequacy of IT equipment in schools, the promotion of students who could not obtain 50% in classes to a higher grade, the inadequacy of professional development programmes, and the lack the courage to demand accountability.

5.4. Objective 4

- The majority of teachers and principals emulated significant suggestions to improve the implementation of educational practices at the post-fundamental schools of Burundi. The crucial suggestions made were that the curriculum content must apply to real-life situations, there should be a development of teachers' mastery of a new pedagogical approach, the assessment should relate to teaching/learning objectives, there should be a provision of sufficient school furniture, concerned parties should initiate regular and strict supervision and adequate professional development programmes, and enhance the parent-teacher association boards.

6. Conclusion

Educational practices are a core component of an education system. A well-structured education system is rooted in improved educational practices and well-informed practitioners. Educational practices are broad, but in the present context, they refer to curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation process, school infrastructure, administrative practices, human resources, and community participation in school activities. The study has found that in the context of Burundi, the curriculum is relevant but lacks some essential components related to 21st-century skills. It unveiled some difficulties in the teaching methods that do not adapt to the learner's capacities and some unpurposely evaluation. The schools lack adequate infrastructure, and teachers are unsatisfied with their salaries. The participants suggested improving the components under study, including updating the teaching-learning approaches and preparing students for after-school life opportunities.

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