

# **Educational Practices in the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi**

**A**

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## **1. Introduction**

Education is essential in every human life, and there are different steps to reach it through educational practices appropriate to a given stage. Educational practices are determinants of implementation towards a successful educational process and a stable and sustainable community. The educational system in Burundi comprises pre-fundamental schools, fundamental schools, post-fundamental schools, and higher education. In post-fundamental schools, French is the primary language of instruction, and the curriculum offers technical and vocational tracks as well as general academic subjects. The post-fundamental schools encounter language barriers brought on by the switch from Kirundi in primary school to French in secondary school, a lack of qualified teachers, a non-adapted curriculum, and poor infrastructure as just a few of the system's many problems. Financial difficulties further restrict access, as many families cannot afford the hidden costs of education, and gender inequality leads to a higher dropout rate among girls because of early pregnancies and household duties. Poverty and political unrest also interfere with education. Notwithstanding these challenges, continuous reforms seek to enhance teacher preparation, school infrastructure improvement, access, and curriculum relevance to enhance educational opportunities for Burundian youth. Post-fundamental education is thus crucial for personal development, future success, and societal advancement.

There are currently no studies conducted on educational practices in post-fundamental schools in Burundi, which causes a substantial knowledge vacuum regarding the operations of post-fundamental schools, the quality of instruction, and the difficulties that both teachers and students encounter. Thus, evaluating the efficacy of these schools' curricula, pedagogical strategies, and human resource availability is challenging without empirical data. Furthermore, there is little information about the influence of socioeconomic factors on learning and transitions to higher education. The lack of research also makes it more challenging to create focused interventions that raise the standard and accessibility of education.

Stakeholders, educators, and policymakers lack the evidence-based understanding to make wise choices. This disparity emphasises the necessity of thorough research to assess and improve post-fundamental educational practices. Resolving this issue through research initiatives would advance knowledge of how to assist teachers and students in achieving their academic and career

goals, identifying areas for improvement, and, ultimately, strengthening Burundi's educational system.

The researcher conducted the current study to examine the educational practices being implemented in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, analysing the challenges encountered and proposing means of improvement to enhance the overall educational system of Burundi.

## **2. 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 by then. Currently, the country has migrated to a new system. The pre-primary school has become a pre-fundamental school with 3 years of preparation to join the primary school. The primary school has become a fundamental school (covering the old primary school and old junior secondary school). The primary school consists of nine years of schooling and four (4) cycles: The first cycle is 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade; the second cycle is 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade; the third cycle is 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade; and the fourth cycle is 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grades, respectively. The secondary school has become a post-fundamental school (covering the old senior secondary schools) with three to four years, depending on the student's choice of study (Kuriyo, 2019). 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).

## **3. The Rationale of the Study**

Burundi's post-colonial education system has undergone several key reforms, including the 1973 reform focused on Kirundization and ruralisation, the 1989 curriculum reform, and the 2013–2014 fundamental school reform. These reforms shared an intercultural approach to early language learning and the use of mother tongue instruction. However, despite these efforts, Burundi's education system continues to face significant challenges, particularly in post-fundamental schools, necessitating further research into educational practices.

The inadequate amount of instructional time is one of the main issues. Although Burundian students attend class for a fair amount of time, a significant amount is spent on tests rather than instruction. Class repetition rates are still high, which raises questions about how effective the educational system is. Furthermore, Burundi's curriculum could be more ambitious, particularly in the early grades. Compared to other nations in the region, the strict grade promotion requirements may be the actual cause of the high repetition rates. The curriculum uses a hybrid approach, employing strategies that haven't worked well in developing countries. However, teaching strategies and teacher preparation are also important factors, so Burundi's educational problems cannot be entirely attributed to the curriculum.

Economic instability is another critical issue impacting the education sector. Since gaining independence in 1962, Burundi has struggled with poverty, political instability, and civil conflict, severely hindering its economic growth and, consequently, the ability to invest in education. The country relies heavily on foreign aid to fund significant development projects, including education. The lack of adequate human resources further exacerbates the situation, with a low Human Capital Index indicating insufficient investment in the future workforce. The shortage of trained teachers, inadequate instructional materials, and poor infrastructure all contribute to the inefficiencies of post-fundamental education.

Educational inequality, rooted in historical exclusion, affects Burundi's education system. During colonial rule, the Tutsi population was given preferential access to education, creating a long-standing divide regardless of the large proportion of Hutus in the country's population. The Batwa community, in particular, remains marginalised in the education sector, facing significant barriers to access and retention. These structural inequities impact learning conditions, student achievement, and educational outcomes. Furthermore, while well-intentioned, the government's universal education policy suffers from severe resource constraints. Schools lack proper infrastructure, materials, and trained teachers, limiting the effectiveness of classroom instruction. Overcrowded classrooms, inadequate seating arrangement, and textbook shortages further diminish education quality.

Administrative inefficiencies further hamper post-fundamental educational effectiveness; school inspectors, who used to monitor learning practices and ensure that teachers adhered to quality standards, have been largely sidelined, resulting in a decline in accountability and instructional

quality; the evaluation system is another weak point; as teachers find it difficult to conduct regular assessments due to large class sizes; the low student success rate of 14% contributes to high dropout rates, especially in post-fundamental schools; and access to high-quality education is further complicated by geographic difficulties, gender inequality, and unemployment rates of up to 65% in urban areas.

Despite these challenges, there is a striking lack of research on Burundi's post-fundamental education system. No comprehensive study has examined the educational practices, including curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation procedures, infrastructure, administrative practices, human resources, and community participation. Given these gaps, further investigation was needed to develop effective solutions that enhance the quality and accessibility of post-fundamental education in Burundi.

#### **4. Research Questions**

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

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

#### **5. Objectives of the study**

1. To examine the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi with respect to:
  - (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 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;
4. To suggest measures for improvement of educational practices by the stakeholders in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi.

## **6. Explanation of Key Concepts**

### **i) Educational Practices**

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

### **ii) Human Resources**

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

### **iii) Community Participation**

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

### **iv) Stakeholders**

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

## **Operational Definition**

### **v) Perception**

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

## **7. Review of the Related Literature**

While conducting a study on the educational practices implemented in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, the researcher reviewed 56 studies. The reviewed studies were related to curriculum and assessment, pedagogy, community participation, administrative practices and human resources, school infrastructure, and perceptions of educational practices. Among the reviewed studies, nine (9) studies were conducted with exploratory design, five (5) were pure exploratory studies, 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.

Out of the reviewed studies, the researcher found that the majority of the reviewed studies were conducted outside of Burundi. Also, the researcher could not find many studies that combined different aspects under study in one research work. Neither has found 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, human resource, or administrative practices, separately. The researcher could not find studies on the educational practices components of Burundi's post-fundamental schools under study, 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.

## **8. Research Methodology of the Study**

### **8.1. Research Design**

The study followed a descriptive survey method.

### **8.2. Population of the Study**

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

### **8.3. 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 comprised all the principals and ten (10) students, teachers, and parents from each selected school.

#### **8.4. 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:

1. Questionnaires;
2. Perception scales;
3. Observation schedule;
4. Semi-Structured Interviews.

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.

#### **8.5. 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.

#### **8.6. Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher sought prior permission from the Ministry of Education and met with provincial directors of education and school principals to accommodate the data collection task. 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. 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.

### **8.7. 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.

## **9. Key Findings**

### **9.1. Key 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 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, and that 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 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 daily. 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 involvement 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.

## **9.2. Key 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.

### **9.3. Key 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.

#### **9.4. Key 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 found 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.

#### **10. 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 organisations helps schools better meet students' real-world needs and ensure learning happens outside the classroom.

## **11. Educational Implications of the Present Study**

The present study, focusing on analysing the educational practices being implemented at the post-fundamental schools of Burundi and examining the problems encountered while implementing educational practices and ways of improving them for quality education, has generated key findings, as mentioned above. The findings from the study helped the researcher derive the following implications for the present study.

### **Government of Burundi**

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

## **Ministry of Education and Teacher Training Institutions**

- Evaluate on an urgent basis the post-fundamental school system;
- Set and enforce updated national educational standards;
- Formulate a well-developed and detailed national education policy;
- Develop a reformed and updated curriculum;
- Ensure intensive and robust teacher training and professional development.

## **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.

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.

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