

Educational Practices in the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi

A

Thesis Abstract Submitted to
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara

**For the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In Education**

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VADODARA-390002

October, 2024

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1. Introduction

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

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

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

1.1. Clarification of Key Concepts

i) Educational Practices

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

ii) Administrative Practices

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

iii) Human Resources

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

iv) Community Participation

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

v) Stakeholders

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

vi) Perception

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

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. Currently, the country has migrated to a new system. The pre-primary school has become a pre-fundamental school, primary school has become a fundamental school (covering the old primary school and old junior secondary school), secondary school has become a post-fundamental school (covering the old senior secondary schools), and higher education has developed as it has opened masters and doctoral studies.

2.1. Pre-Primary School (Pre-Fundamental School)

The pre-primary school was a preparatory stage that trained kids and familiarised them with the learning environment. It consisted of 3 years of preparation, and successful candidates could join

the primary school. Since 2012, this educational stage has changed into pre-fundamental schools and covers the same years as in the old system.

2.2. Primary School (Fundamental School)

From its independence in the '60s until 2012, the Burundian educational system had four subdivisions: pre-primary, primary, secondary, and Higher Education. The Primary School was a continuous cycle of six (6) years, and children aged seven (7) years were likely to get admission. At the end of primary school, candidates were subject to passing a national-level test (Concours National) held by the Evaluation Board of the Education System of Burundi (Bureau des Evaluation du Système Educatif Burundais). Top scorers in the primary national test were allowed to access the secondary school only depending on the available slots in the junior high schools. Since the school years 2013-2014., the primary school has transformed into a fundamental school with nine years of schooling and four (4) cycles: The first cycle is 1st and 2nd classes; the second cycle is 3rd and 4th classes; the third cycle is 5th and 6th classes; and the fourth cycle: 7th to 9th classes, respectively.

2.3. Secondary School (Post-Fundamental School)

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

education system changed into the fundamental national test. The candidate's score in the fundamental national test determines whether one gets admitted to the post-fundamental school.

2.4. Higher Education

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

2.5. Policy Perspective

According to the Government Action's Observatory, cited by Rurihose (2001), the education sector policy had established an official program of actions to be carried out in general Post-Fundamental Education. Those activities include better management of municipal colleges, rational use of existing infrastructure, the promotion of private Education and qualified teacher training in sufficient numbers. It also highlights improving teachers' living and working conditions, producing school books and other sufficient educational materials, strengthening the pedagogical and administrative framework, and improving teaching performance.

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

The law on the organisation of primary and Post-Fundamental Education of 2013 stipulates that the mission of Secondary Education is to train young people in civic, moral, religious and intellectual values. It targets the capability of fostering an awareness of national realities and

leading them to work for the country's socio-economic development, promoting national culture and patriotic spirit.

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

2.6. Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi: Objectives

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

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

- To prepare efficient, professional teachers for elementary schools and the laureates to pursue higher Education in specialised courses in trainers' training;
- To respond to the real needs of the country in terms of the development of Science and Technology for the development of Education and training;
- To ensure continuity and coherence of disciplines operated in fundamental Education, taking into consideration the specificities of Higher Education;
- To develop a specialisation in the field of Science from secondary school;
- To respond to regional and global needs regarding the readability of certificates;
- To foster better integration of Burundi in the sub-region and the world;
- To promote mastery of communication and cultural openness of students;
- To prepare section laureates for linguistic research; - To prepare learners for the courses provided in Higher Education;

To prepare social and community leaders capable of transmitting consistent messages leading to changes and controlling the phenomena of galloping demography, HIV/AIDS pandemic;

To train technicians skilled in helping others to generate plans for development through economic notions, creation of wealth, its management and equitable distribution;

To prepare people who can enlighten others in the interpretation of economic phenomena to make a relevant choice that fits well with the country's needs;

To prepare Post-Fundamental laureates to face higher Education, especially in the Economics faculties, enabling them to work in Burundi and elsewhere.

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

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

As stated before, Burundi has introduced post-fundamental schools for a decade, and an evaluation of the implemented education practices would be necessary at this stage. To undergo the same, the analysis of the current scenario of the school system would provide an idea. The post-fundamental schools of Burundi have numerous problems that impede their 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.

Other problems are current and related to the contemporary African reality. They include lack and ignorance of ICT, shortage of qualified human resources, non-adapted curriculum which does not fulfil the needs of the learners nor the global needs, overcrowdedness of students in classes, shortage of class materials such as teachers and learners' books, lack of adequate

infrastructure, and many more issues to be identified (UNICEF, 2023). According to Mihretie et al. (2023), among female students attending night schools, the lifetime prevalence of sexual and reproductive health issues was high and linked to being single, having secondary education, not talking to family about sexual and reproductive health issues and not understanding of sexual and reproductive health services well. These issues affect the quality of education offered at the post-fundamental level.

UNICEF (2023) has monitored more challenges in Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi, including reducing the minimum schooling time of Post-Fundamental Education from eight to six years and the wrong weekly average learning time of 20 hours compared to 30 hours in the neighbouring countries. It was concluded by UNICEF (2023) that the lack of previous studies focusing on the quality of Education in Burundi, the overpopulated classes and theories-based training of the students in post-fundamental schools, the lack of enough textbooks and other essential school materials, the lack of enough qualified workforce, school materials and equipment in the field of education constitute the challenges for this Burundi education system still looking for its highest best level. It was also observed by Jackson (2000) that there are other challenges in Burundi's educational system, including the absence of the well-being of the teachers due to their low average salary, the dropout phenomenon of students due to household poverty, early pregnancy, coupled with school violence and low-quality education, lack of a national strategy for pre and in-service teacher training, the low budget dedicated to the education sector, and lack of early learning strategies, inadequate teacher preparation, and poor curriculum, are among the forefront challenges stalking the post-fundamental education of Burundi. Therefore, there is a need to investigate and examine the educational practices currently implemented in Burundi's post-fundamental schools to find out the notable issues and attempt to address them with propositions of sustainable solutions.

2.8. Rationale of the Present Study

Three major post-colonial innovations have affected Burundi's educational system: (a) the 1973 reform, which addressed the kirundization and ruralisation of schools; (b) the curriculum reform of schools in 1989; and (c) the reform of the so-called fundamental school, which commenced in

the 2013–2014 academic year. Mazunya (2017) found that these three reforms pursued the same intercultural approach to learning early language and mother tongue.

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

Regarding curricula standards and content, Burundi could implement a reading curriculum with greater ambition for the younger grades. The elevated rates of repetition may be explained by the slightly more stringent requirements for advancing to a new grade than other nations. According to Kamanga (2020), although the textbooks' presentation and sequencing are relatively simple, they use a mixed approach, whole word and syllabic, which is ineffective in the context of developing nations. It's reasonable to say that Burundi's official curriculum cannot adequately explain its performance. Better instructional strategies, however, might be able to explain it. Therefore, the curriculum content and its adequacy must be studied.

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

of workers, shows that the country is falling behind other nations in investing in human capital (UNICEF, 2018). Therefore, it has impacted the functioning of post-fundamental schools in Burund. Hence, the status of local human resources needs to be examined.

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

Burundi has introduced a universal education policy for all children. However, the facilities, including school infrastructure and materials, are still lacking, which impedes the success of implementing educational practices in classes (Irambona & Syomwene, 2023). Teachers' opinions of implementing universal secondary education were overwhelmingly negative except for their capacity to instruct a diverse student body (Lesforis, 2011). Teachers, ministry officials, and other vital informants had similar opinions about some aspects of universal secondary education, such as teachers' lack of preparation. Some students take courses in a standing position or sit improperly, affecting the quality of education, educational practices, and learning outcomes. This large number of students in classes associated with the low budget allotted to education causes the precarity of students' and teachers' materials, such as textbooks (Mazunya, 2017). Therefore, there seems to be a lack of enough proper infrastructure facilities and other material resources. The low budget allotted to education in the yearly government dispenses does not allow the stakeholders to meet all the requirements to ensure effective implementation of educational practices, rendering Burundi's education system ineffective. UNICEF (2018) stated that critical educational resources have been jeopardised, including textbook purchases, teacher preparation, curriculum development, and school maintenance. Thus, there is a need to examine

the severity of the inadequacy of required school resources and school infrastructure and the perceptions of Burundi's post-fundamental education stakeholders. At present, the infrastructure needs to be examined.

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

Burundi's education system has undergone several changes, but practitioners and learners still report some issues with evaluation procedures. The curriculum requires that student acquisition be assessed regularly, which the teachers cannot do due to the plethoric number of students to evaluate. The curriculum states, "In Burundi, and most countries, the evaluation is too much and bad (Mazunya, 2017). Another severe academic challenge is the low success rate of 14%, causing the dropout phenomenon in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi (Misago, 2019). Despite the abovementioned issues, a lack of research studies on education, the highest unemployment rate reaching 65% in urban localities (Kuriyo, 2019), gender inequality in post-fundamental schools and unfavourable geographical conditions complicate some students' schooling lives. The post-fundamental school students' performance in their first year of university shows that the educational practices implemented in Burundi's post-fundamental schools may be ineffective. Thus, the evaluation procedures and the students' facilities at school need to be studied.

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

2.9. 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?

2.10. 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.

3. Review of the Related Literature

The literature review facilitates the understanding of research. While conducting a study on the educational practices implemented in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, the researcher reviewed 56 studies. The reviewed studies were related to curriculum and Assessment, pedagogy,

community participation, administrative practices and human resources, school infrastructure, and perceptions of educational practices.

3.1. Methods and Designs Used in the Reviewed Studies

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

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

3.2. Implications of the Reviewed Studies

Out of the reviewed studies, the researcher found that the majority of the reviewed studies were conducted outside of Burundi. The researcher could not find many studies that combined different aspects, including curriculum, pedagogy, administrative practices, school infrastructure, evaluation procedures, and community participation, in one study. Neither has located research on other educational practices used in Burundi's post-fundamental schools. Furthermore, the few available studies only examined a single aspect of educational practices, such as curriculum, pedagogy, infrastructure, or administrative practices, separately. The researcher could not find research on the educational practices components of Burundi's post-fundamental schools, domestically or internationally. Thus, the researcher decided to undertake the present study to examine the status of educational practices in Burundi's post-fundamental schools.

4. Research Methodology of the Study

4.1. Research Design

The study followed a descriptive survey method.

4.2. Population of the Study

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

4.3. 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.

4.4. 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.

4.5. 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.

4.6. 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.

4.7. 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.

4.8. Key Findings

4.8.1. 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 most teachers had their specialisation in Art and Craft.

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

The majority of teachers and principals stated that educational visits were the learning experiences provided at the post-fundamental schools and mentioned participation in professional development programs as a process of updating students' curricula content. They stated that the curriculum provided the required theoretical knowledge and vocational skills to motivate students for higher education and that employment needs and promotion of science and technology were the country's needs reflected in the curriculum at the post-fundamental schools. Most teachers and principals mentioned the congruence of lesson content with students' needs, that the curriculum enhanced students' motivation for higher education, and that the curriculum provided a guiding program on higher education and ensured the continuity of disciplines from one stage to another to prepare students for higher education, and mentioned the conduction of direct classroom teaching and the organisation of remedial classes as means of helping students to develop their english language skills.

The majority of teachers stated that teachers were involved in the curriculum evaluation process. However, curriculum modification did not occur occasionally, and the curriculum changes did not improve similarly. Participating in teachers' periodic meetings to find appropriate teaching methods and discussing the new syllabus with other subject teachers were the teachers'

familiarisation with the latest syllabus; they mentioned that the curriculum content was based on the country's needs.

Most teachers and principals stated that providing adequate human and material resources and relevant content material to teach students were the rules for the students' goal achievement. They mentioned that global education and community development were lacking in the post-fundamental schools' curriculum and stated debates, drama, and dance were the co-curricular activities provided to students, acknowledged the availability of clubs for students in schools, confirmed debate clubs as the most available in schools, mentioned that a pre-decided programme in clubs was available, that ideas from teachers and choices from the literature were the origin of discussion themes in school clubs, 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 as adequate. Students' sanitary facilities were available, drinking water facilities were available, and record files were available. Except for the staff sanitation facility, which was enough and adequate, all other documents, recreational and sanitation facilities were classified as insufficient and inadequate.

Administrative Practices

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

The majority of teachers stated that, based on teacher requirements, the principal decided to sanction teachers under his responsibility. The majority of teachers indicated that they possessed equal opportunities to participate in decision-making in schools. It was found that there were no eligibility requirements for teachers' recruitment, and most teachers mentioned being aware of the recruitment guidelines.

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

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

Most principals stated that the availability of student admission rules and regulations in schools and possessing the admission documents were the main criteria for students' admission to schools. They mentioned that interviews and meritocracy were the student's admission procedures in schools. It was found that students' admission to schools was performed once a year. Most teachers mentioned that dividing students into learning groups was the strategy to manage overcrowded classes. They ensured the students' discipline guidelines were given as part of student discipline management.

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

Human Resources

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

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

Most teachers and principals stated that grievances existed among teachers in schools. It was found that in case of grievances, the school principal confronted the conflicting parties, and the school principal listened to every complaint from teachers as a grievance redressal in schools. However, participants mentioned that grievance redressal among school teachers was ineffective, as some conflicts were left unresolved. Cent per cent of teachers and principals stated the government was the teachers' salary payment agency. However, most teachers and principals mentioned the inadequacy of the teachers' salaries even if teachers' salaries were increased yearly.

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

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

Community Participation

Most teachers and principals stated that the involvement of parents in school activities was at an insufficient rate. They were regularly involved in school activities. It was found that the parents' central 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.

4.8.2. 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.

4.8.3. 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.

4.8.4. 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 on the benefits of post-fundamental schools in the community.

5. 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.