

CHAPTER I

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1. Introduction

Education plays a vital role in human development, shaping knowledge, skills, and attitudes to contribute meaningfully to society. It sharpens the mind, reinforces thinking, and strengthens character and social behaviour (Vithalrao, 2012). According to the World Bank (2025), education equips individuals with the skills needed to succeed in school, the workforce, and throughout life. Without access to quality education, people are less likely to engage in decision-making processes that impact their lives, limiting their potential to build a better future for themselves and their communities (UNICEF, n.d.).

To ensure individuals receive quality educational experiences, society needs to establish a structured and effective education system. Building such a system is key to developing substantial human capital and fostering national progress (Rustiadi, 2015). According to the World Bank (2025), a well-functioning education system should effectively prepare and motivate learners, employ qualified and committed teachers, provide accessible and relevant learning resources (including educational technology), ensure schools are safe and inclusive, and maintain strong management with sufficient implementation capacity and financing.

Educational practices are designed to achieve these outcomes by employing methods that are inclusive, participatory, and reflective (Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC), 2015). As Arendale (2010) notes, they encompass a diverse range of individual actions, policies, and programs aimed at fostering positive shifts in student attitudes and academic behaviours. Hordern (2023) further emphasizes that educational practice entails both the routine actions of educators and the broader societal values that underpin education.

As the demand for human development grows, so does the opportunity to create and implement more effective educational practices (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey et al., 2020). Transforming these practices is essential to equip learners for future challenges, address global issues, and promote a more inclusive and equitable society. This transformation involves rethinking curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods, integrating technology for

personalised learning and skill development, strengthening human resource capacities, and encouraging active community involvement in educational processes (UNESCO, 2022).

However, a lack of effective education is widely recognised as a significant barrier to the development of African countries (Krzykawska & Żur, 2020). Research shows that many teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa enter the profession without formal training (Krzykawska & Żur, 2020; Hardman et al., 2011), and existing training programs are often outdated and Eurocentric (Krzykawska & Żur, 2020; Chang'ach, 2016). Moreover, teachers in the region frequently manage classrooms nearly twice the size of those in developed countries (Krzykawska & Żur, 2020; Thakrar, Wolfenden, & Zinn, 2009).

Classroom overcrowding remains one of the most critical challenges in Sub-Saharan education systems (Krzykawska & Żur, 2020; Dembélé & Lefoka, 2007; Fehrler, Michaelowa, & Wechtler, 2009), exacerbated by poor physical infrastructure. Approximately half of public schools lack basic hygiene facilities such as toilets (Krzykawska & Żur, 2020; WHO, 2015), and the absence of electricity in many areas limits not only instructional time but also the integration of modern technologies into teaching and learning (Krzykawska & Żur, 2020; Alzouma, 2005; Donou-Adonsou, 2019).

Burundi's education system reflects many of the broader challenges facing Sub-Saharan Africa, with weak educational practices contributing significantly to its difficulties. The rapid and unstructured expansion of post-fundamental schools has further strained the system (Jackson, 2000). As noted by UNICEF (2023) and Jackson (2000), issues such as an outdated curriculum, inadequate teacher preparation, poor classroom conditions, limited ICT knowledge and infrastructure, and insufficient funding all hinder the effectiveness of teaching and learning. These factors not only reflect weak educational practices but also perpetuate systemic inefficiencies that undermine the quality and equity of education in Burundi. Therefore, this study focuses on examining the educational practices in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi.

1.0. Educational Practices at the Secondary Level: Importance

At every level of education, educational practices are at the core, like what oil is to the motor. In the present situation, the educational practices in secondary education include all the means implemented by teachers, students, principals, and parents to address education in a general way.

For the present study, essential educational practices implemented in secondary education included curriculum, pedagogical practices, evaluation process, administrative practices, school infrastructure, human resources, and school-industry interface.

These educational practices tend to address the problems that impede the smooth running of an education system and propose improvement strategies for each aspect. According to Nianren (1987), when education is provided well, and the quality of our people is generally improved, population growth would not only result in an explosion of consumption but also an expansion of technique and skill as well as an increase in labour productivity and efficiency rate. The secondary school curriculum intends to offer students subjects and topics that prepare them to face schooling life and after-school life issues and opportunities. The curriculum is a deliberate design for learning negotiated by teachers based on their specialized knowledge, social norms, and the needs of the students (Dyjur & Kalu, 2018). The secondary school curriculum goes through reviews and changes any time the policymakers realise the need, especially to address the current challenges in job markets, community development and integration of technology into teaching-learning content and life handling. Dyjur & Kalu (2018) highlighted that reviewing the curriculum will result in an action plan for enhancing the program, and the results of its successful implementation will judge the effectiveness of the review. Technology integration in secondary schools is crucial in this digital era. It adds value to the already existing teaching methods and gives the students the required means to succeed in the current world. Crawford (1999) said that both instructing and learning IT are constructivist fields by nature, and educators who try to apply learning programs primarily created from behaviourist viewpoints soon discover that these are less successful.

Teachers' teaching strategies and tactics for post-secondary school students significantly impact their intellectual, social, and emotional development during this crucial period. It leads to building up a philosophical mindset, which helps everyone pursue higher education studies and real-life situations. Although teachers' ethical awareness and moral development have frequently been pushed to the periphery of teacher education, teachers are still expected to perform their duties ethically and serve as moral role models (Kim, 2013). Secondary studies require pedagogical diversity as various pedagogical techniques define secondary education in a way where each intends to attract and summon students in different school subjects.

According to diversity pedagogy theory, a body of ideas highlights the inherent and inseparable relationship between culture and cognition, and a successful teacher must recognise and comprehend the crucial role of culture in the teaching-learning process (Sheets, 2009). Teachers implement various teaching methods, from the most traditional ones to the modern ones, focusing on learner-centred strategy and project-learning techniques, from the more conventional lecture-style instruction to more modern ones like project-based learning, flipped classrooms, and experiment-based learning to design their methods to the needs of diverse learners. Islam et al. (2018) clarified that the same is a well-liked teaching strategy for students of all grades; the flipped classroom varies based on the class's demands, the student's involvement, and the lecturers themselves. In addition to transmitting knowledge, secondary education tends to elevate the students' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities to prepare them for the current world's complications. According to Farrelly (2023), in addition to their teaching experience, teachers' personal education and professional development play a significant role in helping them develop their metacognitive abilities and capacity to impart metacognitive strategies to their students.

Secondary education also deals with the teacher-student relationship because teachers play various roles in secondary education apart from sharing knowledge with students through class lessons. They engage students in mentorship, help students overcome life issues, and work on personal development. Building solid relationships between teachers and students is essential to establish a strong and caring teaching-learning situation where learners are motivated to do and discover their most tremendous potential. The secondary schools of Burundi incorporated the concept of inclusive education in their teaching-learning content. Teachers are now used to stimulating a diversified and inclusive teaching-learning environment regardless of a student's adaptedness, educational history, or favoured learning method. Post-fundamental education in Burundi also ensures and continuously improves its educational practices. This assurance includes permitting the teachers to grow professionally through in-service teacher training and professional development programmes.

However, post-fundamental education in Burundi needs regular assessment to improve the teaching skills of its teachers. Continually reviewing the curriculum content is necessary to ensure its permanent excitement and relevance. It emphasises developing multi-trained people with the capabilities and information required to flourish in a speedily switching globe.

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

1.1. Burundi: The Country and its Educational System

1.1.1. Geographical Background

Burundi is a country located in East Africa with a total size of 27.834 km². Rwanda neighbours Burundi in the North, Tanzania in the South and East, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West. Burundi has 18 provinces, which can be observed from the map in Figure-1.

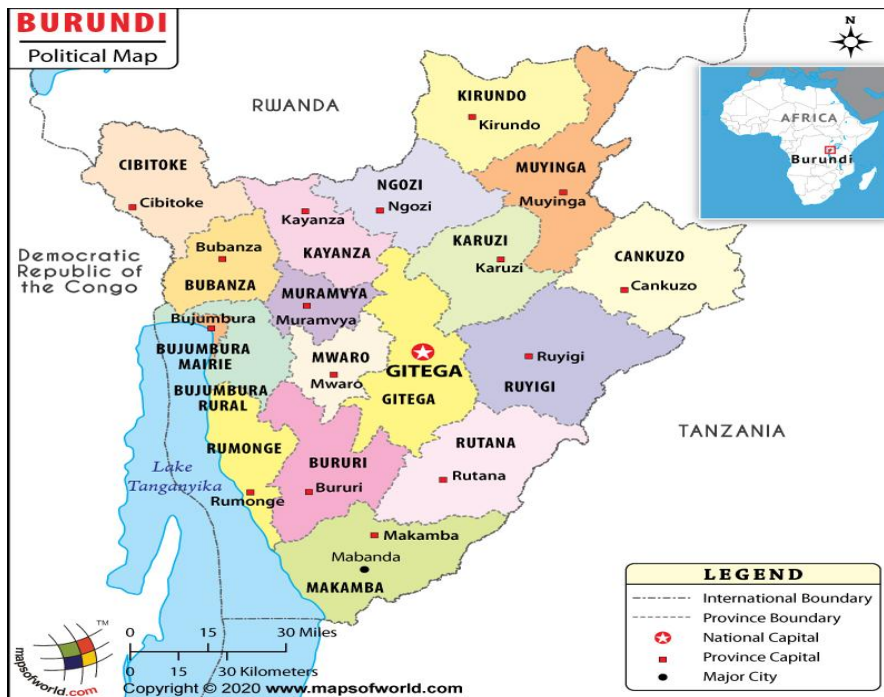


Figure 2: The Political Map of Burundi.

Among the 18 provinces observed in the figure, three, namely, Bujumbura Mairie, Gitega, and Ngozi, are the country's big cities. In contrast, Gitega is the political capital, and Bujumbura Mairie is the economic capital. According to the latest news from the worldometers, Burundi's population reached 12,557,773 (Worldometer, 2022).

1.1.2. Historical background

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

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

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

Given the country's geo-historical background, its educational system structure will be developed along the following lines.

1.1.3. 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. The details of the educational system structure are given below.

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

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

b) Primary School (Fundamental School)

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

c) Secondary School (Post-Fundamental School)

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

depending on the student's choice of study (Kuriyo, 2019). The national test in the former education system changed into the fundamental national test. The candidate's score in the fundamental national test determines whether one gets admitted to the post-fundamental school.

d) Higher Education

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

Structure of Education System (Old & New) in Burundi

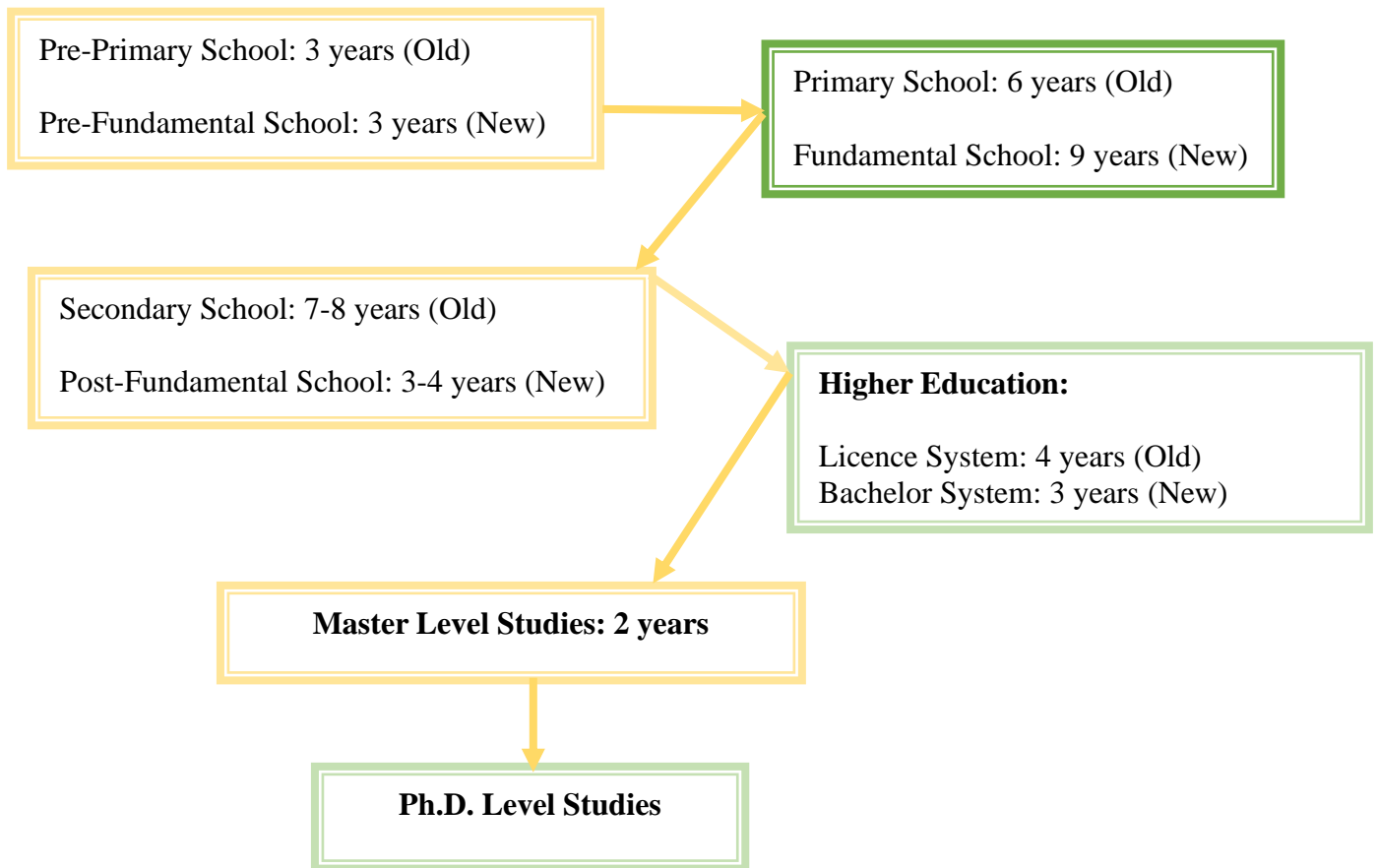


Chart 1: The Structure of the Educational System in Burundi

As stated before, Burundi's education system relies on pre-fundamental Education, fundamental Education, and post-fundamental Education, followed by higher Education. As per the 2021-2022 school year, the numbers of Post-Fundamental Schools, students, and principals are 1001, 261734, and 1001, respectively. Further, in the context of the present study, the policy perspectives, objectives, and current scenario of post-fundamental schools in Burundi will be discussed. After the education system, the government's policies on the importance of post-fundamental education have been discussed below.

1.1.4. Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi: Policy Perspectives

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

It also counts as enhancing girls' Education, increasing parental and community involvement in local funding for Post-Fundamental Education, rehabilitating moral and civic Education, fighting fraudulent practices, and providing environmental Education and Education against AIDS.

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. Indeed, it is worth realising that we are witnessing unemployment among graduates increasingly, which raises questions about the relevance of the training provided or the conditions of adequate training employment.

The reform of fundamental Education was a significant innovation in Burundi's education system and has direct implications for Post-Fundamental Education. The vision must establish a logical connection between the components of the reform of fundamental education and general and

pedagogical post-fundamental education and provide efficient preparation for the student to embrace higher education.

The **law on the organisation of primary and Post-Fundamental Education 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. It also focuses on training middle managers, technicians, and skilled workers to meet the country's human needs and ensure adequate preparation for higher education and academics.

The state guarantees the diversification of post-fundamental education by organising all the necessary school training for the level of fundamental education and that of higher education. The diversification and specialisation of post-fundamental education should enable pupils to acquire, in addition to a solid general culture, in-depth training or specialisation, giving them access to further studies in higher education and vocational training at a high level of integration into working life.

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

From the three bodies mentioned above, Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi has retained the full attention of all education stakeholders. They shaped an image of how an effective education system should be designed. In their daily duties, educationists always search for scientific ways to improve and create new strategies. The policy perspectives towards Post-Fundamental Education in Burundi state that Post-Fundamental Education, if curricula are effectively prepared, help to foster a sustainable economy by inculcating into learners the

awareness of themselves being the foundation and beneficiaries of the same education system outcomes. Secondary school laureates are the holders of their future as they have a small way to go with their studies and a long time to live to implement the knowledge they have acquired from generation to generation.

1.1.5. 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 system in 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.

It is crucial to note that every section or option of Post-Fundamental Education has a strong point of coherence with fundamental Education, a new and vital component of Post-Fundamental Education. Nevertheless, its content across the 12-year reform period is a concern raised by this requirement. There are no divisions or options in the sphere of the arts. Even if the objectives are well settled, one may wonder if they are being achieved. To clear out such doubts, the researcher will describe the present scenario of the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi in the following lines.

After highlighting Burundi, its educational system, post-fundamental education, and objectives, the researcher developed the aspects related to educational practices in the following lines.

1.2. Educational Practices at the Post-Fundamental School Level

1.2.1. Curriculum Development

The systematic planning, creation, and implementation of educational programs that direct the teaching and learning processes constitute curriculum design and implementation in secondary education. A thorough summary that addresses all the crucial facets of secondary education curriculum design and implementation includes planning and developing the curriculum as the first step in creating a secondary school curriculum by determining the learning outcomes and educational objectives. It demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and abilities students should possess at particular stages of their studies. This was supported by Pellegrino & Hilton (2013), who stated that children today can handle future challenges if their education and extracurricular activities equip them for adult responsibilities as volunteers, parents, workers, managers, citizens,

and business owners. For young people to reach their full potential as adults, they must acquire a variety of abilities and knowledge that will help them master and apply English, math, and other academic subjects.

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

The next step talks about range and order as a key component of curriculum development, figuring out the scope or the breadth of the material and the sequence or the order in which the content is taught, which guarantees that the content is appropriately organised, building on fundamental ideas and abilities before moving on to more complicated subjects. After that comes the instruction means and adaptations to ensure that all students have access to the learning opportunities that best suit them; strategies and materials are modified to account for various learning styles, abilities, and needs. In this digital era, technology integration has its due place in the curriculum. Instructional software and internet resources are a clear picture of incorporating technology into the curriculum, and they are involved in supporting project-based learning, research, and interactive learning.

The curriculum design also addresses assessment and evaluation techniques through digital means to gauge the development and accomplishment of students. Evaluating learning outcomes may include a combination of summative and formative assessments. Vashe et al. (2023) highlighted that within the framework of outcome-based education, curriculum components must enable students to meet anticipated results; therefore, curriculum components must be evaluated. Curriculum design should be flexible enough to accommodate evolving societal norms and

technological progress and adapt to educational needs. Strategic planning, teacher support, and good communication are necessary to implement the curriculum successfully.

For a smooth curriculum transaction, teachers need a supporting system, resources, and availability of professional development programs. Then, curriculum review encompasses getting insights from teachers, students, and other stakeholders and incorporating them into the curriculum content in light of new knowledge and developments in education. A final step in curriculum design consists of alignment with educational standards to guarantee that students fulfil predetermined educational benchmarks and requirements and that the curriculum design aligns with regional, national, or worldwide educational standards.

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

Therefore, there is a need to highlight the importance of co-curricular activities for post-fundamental school students.

1.2.2. Importance of Co-Curricular Activities

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

and critical thinking. Despite crucial educational studies, well-rounded development states that extracurricular activities have added value to universal education. They impact the development of the personalities and characters of the learners and help them explore hobbies.

Socio-emotional development states that students' participation in extracurricular activities permits them to develop their social skills as they interact with their classmates and neighbours outside the classroom. These activities help them develop social skills and emotional intelligence because they frequently call for cooperation, communication, and teamwork. It was also found by Durlak, Joseph A., and Weissberg (2007) when they mentioned that school performance, behavioural adjustment indicators, and feelings and attitudes are all improved for kids participating in after-school programs that foster social and personal skills. Stress reduction and mental health acknowledge that students who participate in extracurricular activities can find a way to decompress. Mental health can be positively affected by reducing stress and getting a break from educational sessions. Balancing the demands of educational work and enjoying one's hobbies positively affects mental health.

Engaging students in assuming leadership roles in extracurricular activities and gaining responsibility, decision-making, and teamwork skills through leading teams in sports or planning events is essential in both personal and professional life. Career and personal development admits that students participating in extracurricular activities can learn about their strengths and weaknesses, which might impact their passions or career decisions and help them to clarify their goals and possible career pathways. Character development and values stipulate that volunteering and community service projects foster virtues like empathy, generosity, and a sense of social duty, which aid students' moral and ethical development.

Extracurricular activities encourage the creation of networks operating through friendships or even professionals. It benefits the students in ensuring their professional growth. Time Management and Discipline emphasize that combining extracurricular activities and academic obligations teaches students how to manage time effectively and instil discipline by learning effective time management skills, performance, and task prioritization. According to Larson et al. (2006), despite the fact that sports were also linked to high levels of stress, sports and arts programs stood out for offering more experiences related to the development of the initiative.

Experiences pertaining to the growth of social capital, constructive relationships, and teamwork were linked to service activities.

The final point to discuss here is enhancing the confidence and self-esteem of students through extracurricular activities, which reportedly positively impact students' self-awareness and success. Likewise, co-curricular projects stimulate the development of students' internal thinking in projects other than those provided in educational textbooks. It makes cocurricular activities an indispensable part of the academic knowledge. They shape them into a balanced person. It makes them capable of effectively managing various opportunities and difficulties in the personal and professional sphere. In the same perspective, Alias et al. (2019) stated that the effective and efficient management of extracurricular activities may impact student achievement.

However, there is a need to find a better strategy for consistently encouraging lifelong learning practices in co-curricular at their best in some areas, such as a small school compound, inadequate physical facilities and equipment, and unskilled teachers to train students. Considering that curriculum transaction is carried out through the application of various teaching methods, it becomes evident that an exploration of the diverse instructional approaches employed at the secondary school level is essential. Highlighting these methodologies not only enriches the research by providing a deeper understanding of pedagogical practices but also offers valuable insights to readers, enabling them to grasp the dynamics of effective teaching and learning within the secondary education context.

1.2.3. Pedagogical Practices

In secondary education, innovative methods refer to ideas, practices, and tactics that direct instruction and learning processes. Effective methods for a successful education process cover all works from different education stakeholders. Irvine (2023) identified a model for developing innovative school leadership based on trust, experimentation, goal-setting, a solution-focused mindset, and trust. The study yields significant findings about how school systems perceive innovation as a component of teaching and leadership, suggesting that school systems should place a strong emphasis on teacher engagement and professional learning to develop not only technical teaching expertise but also the kinds of skills and behaviours that innovative teachers and school leaders need. This thorough summary covers many secondary education pedagogical

approaches, including traditional pedagogy, in which students are taught by teachers and textbooks, with lectures and structured classroom activities serving as the primary means of knowledge transmission. It is the cornerstone of many educational programs and provides a basis for conceptual understanding. Talking of traditional pedagogy, Jeng (2015) said that because of the social and material conditions of the educational system, which inadvertently encourage teachers to simplify and present inventions in a reductive manner to gain time and mental energy efficiency, other forms of pedagogies are frequently subverted into a form of current-traditional pedagogy.

It also covers constructivism and learning based on society's demands: the constructivist approach invites and encourages the students to construct their knowledge actively through explorations, inquiries, and realistic experiences. As the Chinese proverb teaches, learning by doing is a privilege for post-fundamental students, allowing them to discover and build their theories and strengthen their problem-solving skills. According to John David Gresham (2019), the theoretical framework of radical constructivism is applied, which posits that people acquire knowledge by drawing comparisons between previously acquired information and comprehension; therefore, learners strive for greater authenticity, autonomy, relevance, purpose, and meaning in their educational pursuits.

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

It also includes collaborative or cooperative learning techniques encouraging student engagement and teamwork. Collaborating on assignments, conversations, or projects in small groups promotes effective communication and the exchange of varied viewpoints. Fonseca, Caviedes, Chantré, & Jayson (2023) stated that in addition to encouraging group work, discussion, and socialization, cooperative learning facilitates the creation of new learning environments that

enable teachers and students to work together to accomplish goals with greater engagement, motivation, and inclusivity. Technology-enhanced learning is also a pedagogical approach using various tools, online resources, and digital resources to improve learning experiences, which is part of integrating technology into education. Nelsen (2023) demonstrated that instructors believe a blended learning approach can successfully energise and inspire their students to value building solid support from the administration, such as a professional learning community for blended educators and clear communication about blended learning procedures for all parties involved.

The flipped classroom model involves implementing traditional teaching methods in reverse. While students watch videos, read books, and engage in open debates with parents or students at home, they engage with their curriculum content. Parents should motivate their children to become proactive in classroom interactions and lead educational debates through home educational discussions. Flipped classes involve more blended classes than physical classes. Sanborn (2023) said that students find technical programming more engaging than academic classes; increasing student engagement in high technology will positively affect staff academy learning time, teacher professional development opportunities, and mentoring programs.

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

In conclusion, inclusive education places a strong emphasis on supporting students with disabilities or different learning styles, as well as accommodating a variety of learning needs and ensuring accessibility. It aims to establish accessible, adaptable learning environments for all students. It goes with competency-based education and mastery learning, which guarantees that students reach a particular level of proficiency before introducing new ideas. Competency-based education bases learning not on how much time students spend in class but on their mastery of knowledge and skills.

In post-fundamental education, pedagogical approaches are varied and constantly changing. Combining these strategies to fit the unique learning objectives of various subjects with the needs of individual students is often the key to effective teaching. The effectiveness of pedagogical practices at the secondary school level is intrinsically linked to the evaluation of students' academic performance. Consequently, a comprehensive and systematic approach to assessment is essential. This necessitates a detailed examination of the assessment process at the secondary level to ensure that it accurately reflects students' learning outcomes, supports instructional goals, and contributes to the overall improvement of teaching and learning practices.

1.2.4. Evaluation of Students Performance: Holistic Approaches

In the digital era, secondary schools' evaluation determines students' growth, learning, and progress. It assists educators in determining their areas of strength and growth, directing their teaching methods to suit the needs of their students better. Evaluation offers a comprehensive picture of student achievement through various techniques, including tests, projects, and ongoing assessments. Strengthening critical thinking and problem-solving abilities also helps students prepare for future academic or professional endeavours. Good evaluation promotes responsibility, personal development, and students' general educational achievement. Saeed & Mohamedali (2022) stated that students can improve their performance, engagement, and retention by putting forth more effort overall when taking summative assessments thanks to feedforward approaches.

Nowadays, assessing students has become complicated following the overcrowdedness of classes. Thus, educationists have shifted to new evaluation methods through online platforms. These digital tools allow teachers to deliver online courses from anywhere without travelling to meet students in presential classes. Digital research and resources assist students in researching using digital resources like databases, online libraries, and scholarly articles. Students develop efficient research techniques by combining self-taught, innovative workarounds like research and Wikipedia with more conventional approaches like libraries (Head & Eisenberg, 2009). As a result, their access to knowledge is expanded beyond traditional textbooks. This is connected with teaching students how to create podcasts, videos, or other multimedia presentations, which will help students demonstrate their conceptual understanding. Online assessments and feedback

systems put online evaluation and feedback tools in place, providing students with instant access to information about their performance.

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

These resources, which assess various facets of knowledge and skill development, include written tests, quizzes, projects, and presentations. Checklists and rubrics offer precise grading standards, guaranteeing uniformity and openness in assessment. More flexible and varied methods of evaluating student performance are made possible by digital tools like e-portfolios and online tests. Teachers can thoroughly grasp students' abilities and modify their teaching strategies by utilizing a range of assessment tools.

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

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

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

Theories and methods for empowering educators through professional development can be operated through a reflective practice that promotes entailment among educators in ongoing self-evaluation and development. Reflective educators evaluate their methods critically, drawing lessons from past mistakes and modifying their strategies in response to the needs of their

students. Professional development also operates through collaborative learning communities, establishing communities in which educators interact, exchange optimal methodologies and have dialogues to promote an environment of ongoing education. Educators collaborate to share ideas, gain knowledge from one another, and develop the most effective teaching techniques. In addition to making significant instructional changes, participating teachers developed conceptual expertise about teaching and reflected on their practice (Butler et al., 2004).

Differentiated professional development provides opportunities for professional development specific to each teacher's needs. Felicia A. Dixon and Nina Yssel (2014) mentioned that teacher efficacy and the teacher's sense of efficacy beliefs were positively correlated with more professional development hours spent on differentiation of instruction. It is imperative to acknowledge that educators possess a range of skill sets, passions, and potential development areas to offer tailored assistance.

Professional development of teachers was also found to be attached to instructional coaching and mentoring, where personalised advice and support can be obtained by offering one-on-one coaching or mentoring opportunities. Skilled instructors or instructional coaches can collaborate closely with instructors, providing constructive criticism and direction to enhance pedagogical approaches. Also, technology integration in education training declares that with ICT's fastest and unstoppable development in education, teachers and their surrounding educational environment must get training related to ICT and its implementation in education to improve the students' learning outcomes. The case study and retrospective evaluation of e-learning initiatives are conducted against the backdrop of ICT integration into teaching and learning activities (Merwe, 2004).

Pedagogical workshops and seminars update teachers on the newest developments in education. It is, therefore, crucial to organise workshops, seminars, and conferences centred on pedagogical advancements, innovative teaching techniques, and educational research. Teachers' participation in professional development programs helps them to examine their classroom instructional strategies. This practical approach encourages method innovation and continuous improvement. Leadership development programs where teachers who want to lead instructional initiatives or assume administrative responsibilities can be empowered to effect positive changes in the school on a larger scale by providing them with leadership development programs. Sujata (1999), as

cited in Hawley (1989), stated that “a leader needs to ensure that teachers have the resource and learning opportunities they need, and create conditions within the school that allow students and teachers to use their motivation and capabilities to be productive learners and managers. Fostering a growth mindset supports teachers in developing a growth mindset where they can continue to learn and improve. Professional development empowers teachers by giving constant support through specialized training and growth opportunities. Professional development programs for teachers improve the quality of their teaching skills and help them to improve their students' learning outcomes.

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

1.2.6. School Infrastructure

Post-fundamental school infrastructure significantly impacts the classroom atmosphere, instructional strategies, and general student experience. The educational setting, such as well-planned labs, libraries, classrooms, and outdoor areas, supports a positive learning atmosphere. According to Dericioğlu, Sapmaz & Öznacar (2023), the administration of the school has softened their stance on the disruptions to classroom management brought about by crowded classrooms, a high proportion of international students, a lack of parental involvement, the presence of students who are causing discipline issues, and the general lack of knowledge among students about rules and responsibility. Administrators at the school claimed that students' lack of respect for their teachers and the poor infrastructure was to blame for the issues, underlining the necessity of building new secondary education facilities and recommending that educators participate in in-service training programs to improve their classroom management abilities.

Cosy, well-ventilated, and well-lit classrooms positively impact students' focus and engagement. Well-designed and adequate infrastructure allows students access to various resources, such as ICT materials, reference books, textbooks, and more class equipment required for teaching-learning facilitation. It facilitates students' overall growth by providing a variety of

educational opportunities. (Marongedza, Hlungwani & Hove (2023) demonstrated how difficult it is for rural students to get an education due to a lack of resources, long commutes, and uninspired teachers. The authors added that apart from establishing the need for further research into issues pertaining to the realization of inclusive and equitable education systems, addressing institutional constraints affecting student performance in rural secondary schools necessitates a holistic approach that involves all parties involved in the pursuit of high-quality education and leaving no one behind. The use of technology in education is also facilitated by current infrastructure. Smart boards, computers, internet access, and other technological resources improve research abilities, teaching strategies, and students' readiness for the digital demands of the modern world. Proper infrastructure allows staff and students to work in a secure atmosphere.

This concerns the safe campus buildings with different entry and exit gates, security around and on campuses and assurance of maintenance of the existing infrastructure. Modern infrastructure should also have ways to be accessed by all attendants, including ramps, elevators, and special buildings meant to facilitate students with infirmities to purposively ensure inclusivity is maintained to offer equal chances to each student. Extracurricular activities and facilities such as sports, the arts, music, theatre, and clubs are all supported by a well-equipped infrastructure. Facilities for these kinds of activities promote students' overall growth beyond the classroom.

Different classroom configurations appropriate for different teaching modalities are made possible by a well-structured infrastructure. This could include areas for group activities, flexible seating arrangements, or collaborative spaces that support a variety of pedagogical approaches. Staff rooms, administrative offices, and support spaces are all included in the infrastructure category and are essential to the school's general operation. Well-designed administrative spaces facilitate coordination and administration in schools. Facilities that assist teachers, such as furnished staff rooms, conference rooms, and areas for professional growth, have a favourable effect on their morale and productivity, affecting the calibre of instruction provided. Students should also have access to hygiene and sanitation facilities to encourage their health and well-being through hygienic canteens, clean and well-maintained restrooms, and sufficient sanitation facilities and staff.

In post-fundamental education, a good infrastructure assists in creating a space that develops learning, general development and the well-being of students and teachers. Establishing an

environment favourable to learning, teaching, and personal growth is necessary for teachers to achieve their golden goals and for students to orient themselves correctly. Ajayi, Moosa & Aloba (2023) showed that schools do not have the infrastructure needed to give students the career guidance and instruction they need, and due to improper subject combinations and limited access to career information services, students were unable to select suitable career pathways after completing their secondary education.

1.2.7. School-Community Interface

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

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

job satisfaction, which improves student outcomes. School leadership plays a critical role in the development of school culture.

Community participation at this stage helps to promote educational policies and address school problems. Collaboration among the education stakeholders will enable the main parties to overcome obstacles and increase the standard of education. In post-fundamental schools of Burundi, some students lack parental motivation to succeed in their education. Nowadays, parents and teachers meet regularly in teacher-parent associations to initiate and improve volunteering works and strengthen the collaborations between parents, teachers, and students, promoting a more cohesive educational experience.

In the same perspective, Furey (2023) shared a common understanding of how teachers and schools communicate with one another, how this communication fosters relationships of trust between the schools and parents, and how parent involvement affects student outcomes. He highlighted opportunities for more focused, two-way communication between parents and schools to promote and strengthen that involvement. Keeping clean and open, communities help schools endorse the educational process by maintaining active physical education programs and promoting healthcare assistance.

Through community participation in education, schools establish partnerships with other educational groups or libraries, which offer extra educational opportunities. The community intervene in resource management through volunteering and curriculum innovations. Community participation creates professional networking opportunities and career guidance for students. Students needing assistance exploring career options and making decisions can get it. According to Johnson (2023), parental involvement is a crucial aspect of every student's educational journey. It is closely associated with their success and achievement, even though parents encounter barriers that keep them from being more active and involved in their kids' education. Community participation in post-fundamental education promotes a rich teaching-learning environment. The following section will provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of post-fundamental education institutions in Burundi. It will explore the existing infrastructure, enrollment trends, quality of instruction, and the challenges these schools face, thereby offering critical insights into the educational landscape at this level.

1.3. 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 in the colonial era and had an impact on African society. Quist (2001) stated that the "triple cultural heritage" of West African, Euro-Christian, and Islamic cultures has created push and pull forces that have put significant pressure on secondary school students and secondary education in general.

The complex postcolonial situation and its consequences for the development and nation-building of African countries argue that secondary education and secondary school students tend toward neocolonial influences due to cultural pull and push factors and forces of globalisation emerging from the West. Other problems are current and related to the contemporary African reality. They include lack and ignorance of ICT, shortage of qualified human resources, non-adapted curriculum which does not fulfil the needs of the learners nor the global needs, overcrowdedness of students in classes, shortage of class materials such as teachers and learners' books, lack of adequate infrastructure, and many more issues to be identified (UNICEF, 2023). Mihretie et al. (2023) stated that 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 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 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. Undeniably, the country is progressively noticing a drop in post-fundamental laureates' self-confidence and an increase in graduates' unemployment (UNICEF, 2023). These issues, among others, raise doubts about the relevance of the training provided or the prerequisites for a suitable training-employment match. As students, teachers, principals, and parents are the significant actors in every drop and development in the quality of education in a system of Education, their point of view is more valuable in analysing the educational practices.

In conclusion, the educational system needs to be examined. Since fundamental education reform immediately impacts Post-Fundamental Education, further research is required to solve the problems with the current educational system. Kapur (2019) states that the most delicate post-fundamental education access numbers conceal many issues. The chaotic growth of post-fundamental schools, which have proliferated without consideration of the need for trained teachers or instructional materials, has been caused by the desire to increase the number of students. Students with a poor quality of schooling have resulted in their lack of training and education.

The Ministry of Education recently released a statement that acknowledged several deficiencies at the secondary school level. Jackson (2000) stated that these deficiencies include a qualitative and numerical shortage of qualified staff and a lack of adequate infrastructure, instructional materials, and equipment. It has also been noticed that there is one book for every four students. Even fewer laboratories and scientific texts are available. With critical thinking and reflections on the subject matter and the situation of post-fundamental education in Burundi from a specific perspective, the researcher describes educational practices as a crucial element of quality education. Effective educational practices provide a solid basis for sound teaching and learning.

Educational practices have been extensively studied across higher education, and they have been provided as a place to start for educators to construct and deliver lessons.

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

1.4. 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 in 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 cannot 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 adequate human resources. Burundi's low Human Capital Index, which gauges how much a nation contributes to the health and education of the next generation of workers, shows that the country is falling behind other nations in investing in human capital (UNICEF, 2018). Therefore, it has impacted the functioning of post-fundamental schools in Burundi. 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) Significant normative, economic, and structural constraints impede real change as Batwa continue to experience 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 education performance. 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 and 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.

1.5. Research Questions

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

- a) Which educational practices are being implemented in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi, and how are they implemented?
- 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?

1.6. Statement of the Problem

Educational Practices in the Post-Fundamental Schools of Burundi

1.7. 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 the improvement of educational practices by the stakeholders in the post-fundamental schools of Burundi.

1.8. Explanation of the Terms

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.

1.9. Operational Definition

Perception

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