

Factors Affecting Provision of Quality Basic Education in Nyagatare District-Rwanda

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Abstract

Rwanda has shown significant progress in improving access to education and Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has also highlighted the improvement of educational quality as its main priority for the next five years – a position clearly detailed in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2010-2015, equitable provision of quality education remains a challenge in Rwanda. While Rwanda has shown significant progress in improving access to education, equitable provision of quality education remains a challenge. The purpose of the study was to establish factors affecting provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district-Rwanda. The three research questions were formulated to guide the study. This study adopted the ex-post- facto research design simple and stratified random sampling technique was used to select the participant for the study. The sample consisted of 260 teachers, 346 pupils and 36 principals in Nyagatare district. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires in the case of pupils and teachers while interview schedule was used to collect data from the principals. To data collected were coded using SPSS computer programme. The data was further analyzed and interpreted to provide meaningful and final results. The researcher presented the research findings in the percentages and frequency tables. Open-ended questions were analyzed using excerpts of the respondents. The findings revealed that majority of the teachers (72.8%) did not use apparatus in teaching of science subjects while (55.6 %) of the pupils felt that their science laboratories were not well equipped. From the study (55.7%) of schools had no libraries and where they exist, they were poorly equipped. Lecture method was widely used than any other method of teaching. Most teachers live outside the school as indicated by (57.3%) of the pupils' respondents, hence remedial teaching during morning and evening was not possible. From the study, internal supervision of the implementation of the curriculum by principal need to be intensified, the research revealed that there was inadequate assessment done by department of quality assurance and standard officers from the ministry of education. For example (50%) of the pupils stated that these offices do not visit their schools. Majority of the pupils (56.9%) revealed the syllabus was never covered before the end of every year. Based on the findings, it was recommended that board of governor should equip the sciences laboratories, libraries and put up teachers houses. Variety of teaching methods should be used to create interest and focus on value addition of learners. There is need to intensify assessment by the quality assurance and standards officers as well as the internal assessment by principals.

Key words: Basic Education, Curriculum, Academic performance, teaching methodologies

Introduction

Quality education can be viewed as one that prepares learners to participate meaningfully and effectively in the development of their lives and their nation. In schools, quality education can be determined by a number of factors such as the teaching and learning processes, supervision and implementation of curriculum, the infrastructure, equipment, teaching methods, teaching and learning materials, and the availability of suitably qualified and competent teaching personnel For most ordinary people, quality is determined through learning achievements and usually these are measured through examination results (Bernard, 1999). According to UNESCO (2008) quality education largely depends on the teaching and learning process, the relevance of the curriculum, as well as the availability of materials and enabling learning

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environments. A good combination of these attributes promotes the attainment of quality education for the learners.

Education in Rwanda

Since the genocide of 1994, Rwanda has undergone a period of remarkable economic progress and along with it, increased investment and expansion of its public education system. As the Rwandan economy has grown, the percentage of government expenditure on education increased from 3.2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1996 to over 5% of GDP in 2009. During that same period, recurrent spending as a percentage of total spending on education grew from 63% to 87%. Over 65% of that sum was spent on basic education (Ministry of Education 2010: Appraisal: Education Sector Strategic Plan 2010-2015), with education share of the national budget reaching 19%. And nearly 49% of education spending was invested in primary education, approaching the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative Indicative benchmark of 50 percent (Education Sector Strategic Plan 2010-2015).

Rwanda's education system has expanded, particularly in the area of provision of basic education. Through the 1990s and early 2000s, government support for public education was already resulting in Gross Enrollment Rates (GER) of above 120%. Then in February 2006, the government passed the Nine-Year Basic Education Policy (9YBE), a policy of that guaranteed all Rwandan children fee-free education for the first 9 years of schooling – i.e, from P1 to S3 (Education Sector Strategic Plan 2010-2015). This policy accelerated primary enrolment even further. In 2009, the GER reached 128% and the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) 93% (92% for boys, 94% for girls). This expansion was due to the abolition of primary school fees in 2003 and lower secondary fees in 2007, later enshrined in 9YBE.

In their broadest terms, the educational priorities of the Government of Rwanda are captured in the vision statement presented in the document *Vision 2020*, which states that Vision 2020 aspires for Rwanda to become a modern, strong and united nation, proud of its fundamental values, politically stable and without discrimination amongst its citizens. The major aspiration of Vision 2020 is to transform Rwanda's economy into a middle income country (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000).

The Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 cites seven priority areas in which the Government of Rwanda and development partners should focus their efforts to improve educational quality over the next five years. The seven priorities for improving educational quality are: Improving completion and transition rates whilst reducing drop out and repetition in basic education, Ensuring that educational quality continues to improve, Developing a skilled and motivated teaching, training and lecturing workforce, Ensuring that the post-basic education system is better tailored to meet labor market needs, Ensuring equity within all fields and throughout all levels of education and training and Strengthening of education in science and technology, and strengthening the institutional framework and management capacity for effective delivery of education services at all levels (The Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2010-2015).

Statement of the Problem

Rwanda has shown significant progress in improving access to education and Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has also highlighted the improvement of educational quality as its main priority for the next five years – a position clearly detailed in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP 2010-2015), equitable access to quality education remains a challenge in Rwanda. In spite of impressive gains in providing access to basic education, Rwanda is not sufficiently preparing its children to participate in a knowledge economy. Many children

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leave primary school without solid literacy and numeracy skills, as well as the capacity to use their knowledge effectively for critical thinking and problem-solving (ESSP 2010-2015).

Study Objectives

- i. To establish how teaching and learning materials affect provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district.
- ii. To analyze the effect of teaching methodologies on provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district.
- iii. To determine how supervision and implementation curriculum affect provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district.

Research Methodology

The researcher selected appropriate design, supported by a target population using sampling techniques and instruments. Katana (2007) citing Omer (1996) defined research design as a framework of planning and conducting research. Borg & Gall (1997), classified research design mainly by the method of data collection. The data was collected using an ex- post facto design. According to Best & Kahn (1998) an ex-post facto- research design deals with research variables that have already occurred and hence they cannot be deliberately arranged and manipulated by the researcher. This research therefore is in ex-post facto design because independent variables such as teaching and learning materials, teaching methodologies and supervision and implementation of curriculum cannot be manipulated. The study sought to establish to what extent the quality of basic education (dependent variable) is affected by school environment (independent variable). The study was mainly qualitative and descriptive in nature. The research design was used in the study whose purpose was to find out the extent to which variation in one factor corresponds with variation in another.

Target Population

For the purpose of this study the target population consisted of 40 public primary schools, 3500 primary six pupils, 800 teachers and 40 principals in Nyagatare district. A sample is a set of the target population to which the researcher intends to generalize the results (Wiersma, 1996). Random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. Stratified sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such way that identified subgroups in the population are represented in the sample in the same population in which they exist (Gay, 1992). The researcher used simple and stratified random sampling procedures and Krejcie and Morgan's table of determining sample size for research activities.

To determine the sample size from 40 public schools, 800 teachers and 3500 primary six pupils, the researcher used the Krejcie and Morgan's table. This table helped the researcher to determine (with 95% certainty) what the results would have been if the entire population had been surveyed. Therefore a sample size of 36 was used where 9 day schools, 9 boys' boarding schools, 9 girls boarding schools, 9 mixed boarding schools were used giving a total of 36 schools. Pieces of paper with names of all primary schools in each category were put in their respective baskets and someone with no interest in this research asked to pick one paper from each basket at a time without replacement until desired sample was achieved (Rotary Method). Since the target population of primary six pupils and teachers is 3500 and 800 respectively, 346 Pupils and 260 teachers were used this is according to the above table.

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The nine primary six pupils in the boys and girls boarding category were selected using simple random sampling rotary method. In other categories, they were categorized to boys and girls and simple and stratified sampling methods were used. Each school had 5 boys and 4 girls or 4 boys and 5 girls depending on who are more in the school. To ensure all schools have equal teacher's representative, at least 7 teachers per school were utilized. The teachers must have stayed in school for at least 3 years. To ensure gender balance, 3 female and 4 male or 4 female and male teachers were utilized depending on who were more. Each gender was grouped to gather and selected through lottery method.

Research Instruments

The study mainly relied on the use of questionnaires as the major tool for data collection. The tool was considered appropriate because the respondents were literate enough to answer the questions on their own. The items on the questionnaires were appropriate items of saving time for both researcher and respondents. The tool helped the respondents to give answers to sensitive questions, as they were not required to give their own names. The researcher used questionnaires for the teachers and pupils and interview guide to principals. The questionnaires sought information on factors affecting provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district.

Research Findings/Results

The research findings were guided by the following research objectives; to establish how teaching and learning materials affect provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district, to analyze the effect of teaching methodologies on provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district and to determine how supervision and implementation curriculum affect provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district.

The analysis of the data solicited from the Pupils, Teachers and Principals in Nyagatare district showed that there are several factors affecting provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district.

Questionnaire return rate

The sample for the study consisted of 260 teachers, 346 pupils and 36 principals in Nyagatare district. The questionnaires were administered to 260 teacher respondents, out of which 246 (94.6%) returned the questionnaires. Only 246 (71.1%) pupils' respondents returned the questionnaires out of 346 targeted primary six pupils. The researcher targeted 36 principals but was able to interview 34 principals representing (94.4%) of the sample size. The two principals who were not interviewed were on leave. For the purpose of this study the questionnaires return rate was acceptable. According to Babbie (2002) any response of 50% and above is adequate for analysis.

The effect teaching and learning materials

The provision of teaching and learning materials needs improvement. From the study, Majority of pupils (72.8%) indicated that most of the science teachers did not use apparatus in the teaching of science subjects. About 55.8% of the pupils further indicated that their laboratories were not well equipped. From the findings it was clear that most of the schools have not equipped their laboratories. Poorly equipped laboratories results to low quality teaching in the science subjects because pupils are not exposed to practical skills resulting to poor academic performance in science subjects which finally affect the mean scores. Above

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54.1% of teachers indicated that teaching and learning materials are adequate while 52.1% of the principal concurred with teachers.

The effect of teaching methodologies

From the findings, a lecturer method was widely used as a method of teaching than any other method of teaching as agreed by majority of teachers (59.05%) and Pupils (55.85%) respectively. Project/experiment as a method of teaching was rarely used (26.0%), very rarely used (32.5%) or not used at all (24.0%) as shown by teacher's responses.

The effect of Supervision and implementation curriculum

According to the principals, visits by quality assurance and standards officers to schools for assessment were rare. This was supported by 50% of the pupils' responses. The syllabus was not covered by the end of each year as shown by 56.9% of the pupils' responses. During the assessment exercise by the ministry officials, the following were identified as the major weak areas that need re-dress; poor syllabus coverage, schemes of work and lesson notes were in most cases not up to date, teacher friendly time table, a variety of teaching methods to be used, supervision and implementation of curriculum by the administration intensified and provision of more internal examination. The study found out that where assessment was done due to crisis, it was after pupils' poor performance. Internal quality assurance mechanisms were also lacking.

Discussion of the Research findings

This section presents a discussion of the research findings. The discussion is presented using the variable approach as it is in the presentation of other sections of this report. For example the effect of teaching and learning materials on provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district. The findings on this variable were that most of pupils (72.8%) indicated that most of the science teachers did not use apparatus in the teaching of science subjects. About 55.8% and 55.7% of the pupils further indicated that their laboratories and libraries respectively were not well equipped.

This negatively affected provision of quality basic education in the district. The need to avoid this is emphasized by Mwiria (1985), who recommended that the availability and use teaching aids and resources in schools is ranked among the most influential factors which affect the provision of quality education in schools.

Ayot (1984) supports the above view when he suggested that "all that we hear and see, we learn only 10% through our sense of hearing and 80% through the sense of sight. We retain 20% of all that we hear and 80% of both what we hear and see". Maundu (1987) argues that good performance demanded that every school be equipped with relevant text books. Indeed, the mentioned research studies and this research have demonstrated that availability of teaching and learning materials are critical in the provision of quality education in schools.

The effect of teaching methodologies on provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district, the findings on this variable were that a lecturer method was widely used as a method of teaching than any other method of teaching as agreed by majority of teachers (59.05%) and Pupils (55.85%) respectively. This negatively affected provision of quality basic education in the district. The need to avoid this is emphasized by Muindi, Kiio, Kithinji, Twoli, Maundu (2004), who recommended that there is no single best method of teaching. A good teacher uses several methods of teaching in a single lesson depending on the teaching/learning situation of given lesson. Indeed, the mentioned research studies and this

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research have demonstrated that the use of different teaching methods by teachers is critical in the provision of quality education in schools.

The effect of supervision and implementation curriculum on provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district, the findings on this variable were that visits by quality assurance and standards officers to schools for assessment were rare. This was supported by principals and pupils' responses while syllabus was not covered by the end of each year as shown by 56.9% of the pupils' responses. This negatively affected provision of quality basic education in the district

The need to avoid this is emphasized by Shiundu and Omulando (1992), who recommended as in detail in the literature review that a well-designed curriculum must be implemented if it is to make any impact or if students are to attain its goals and objectives. Indeed, the mentioned research studies and this research have demonstrated that the supervision and implementation curriculum is critical in the provision of quality education in schools.

Conclusion of the Study

The conclusions arising from this study are summarized as follows; majority of the schools (55.6%) did not have equipped laboratories and where such facilities were found they were not adequately used. About 55.7% of the school had no libraries and where one existed, it had inadequate books. Lecture method was dominantly used as a method of teaching. Majority (57.3%) of teachers stayed outside the school as shown by pupils' respondents hence denying the pupils opportunity to interact with teachers in the evening, before lessons in the morning and during weekend.

Assessment by the quality assurance and standard officers were rare, while there was general lack of internal supervision of implementation of the curriculum. Majority of schools never completed the syllabus as indicated by (56.9%) of Pupils' responses hence denying the candidate the opportunity to answer a variety of questions in National examinations and therefore reducing their chances to perform well.

Recommendations of the Study

The findings of this study have revealed several implications; therefore the following recommendations may help to improve the quality basic education Nyagatare district. The school management need to urgently equip the sciences laboratories to enhance teaching of science subjects and establish libraries where pupils can supplement what they learn with teachers. Teachers should use variety of teaching methods like lecture, demonstration, class experiment, group discussions and excursions. This is necessary to make the learning interesting. School management should consider putting up teachers' houses to create more contact hours between learners and teachers during the evening and morning. There is need to increase the frequency of assessment by the district quality assurance and standard officers to update the teachers on issues of curriculum implementations. There is need for principals to intensify thorough and quality internal assessment as a measure of curriculum implementation.

Recommendations for Further Studies

From the findings of this study the researcher made the following recommendations; Given that this study focused only on Nyagatare district, a similar study in other parts of the country would be useful for comparative purposes. Indeed, a nationwide study would be useful, comparing the results in the various regions in the country. This study investigated a limited number of factors that affect provision of quality basic education namely teaching and

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learning materials, teaching methodologies and the supervision implementation of curriculum. There are however other factors that may affect the provision of quality basic education in Nyagatare district like infrastructure development, quality of teachers, administrative set up, parental occupation, lack of commitment by teachers and many others. It would therefore, be useful to explore the extent to which these other factors affect the quality of basic education.

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APPENDIX : Krejcie and Morgan, Table of Determining Sample Size

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	110	86	300	169	950	274	4500	354
15	14	120	92	320	175	1000	278	5000	357
20	19	130	97	340	181	1100	285	6000	361
25	24	140	103	360	186	1200	291	7000	364
30	28	150	108	380	191	1300	297	8000	367
35	32	160	113	400	196	1400	302	9000	368
40	36	170	118	420	201	1500	306	10000	373
45	40	180	123	440	205	1600	310	15000	375
50	44	190	127	460	210	1700	313	20000	377
55	48	200	132	480	214	1800	317	30000	379
60	52	210	136	500	217	1900	320	40000	380
65	56	220	140	550	226	2000	322	50000	381
70	59	230	144	600	234	2200	327	75000	382
75	63	240	148	650	242	2400	331	1000000	384
80	66	250	152	700	248	2600	335		
85	70	260	155	750	254	2800	338		
90	73	270	159	800	260	3000	341		
95	66	280	162	850	265	3500	346		
100	80	290	165	900	269	4000	351		

Source: Krejcie, R.V & Morgan, D.W (1970). Determining sample size for research activities educational and psychological measurement

Note: N is population size, while S is sample size