

**TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS
ON CURRICULUM PRACTICES: A SURVEY IN TWO DISTRICTS OF
KIGALI-CITY, RWANDA**

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Abstract

This study is an exploratory investigation on teachers' perceptions of the extent to which the national examinations that are written at the end of primary schooling in Rwanda influence their curriculum practices. The study used a structured questionnaire for data collection, and simple descriptive statistics for data analysis. The study, firstly, examined teachers' views on the link between national examinations and the aims of primary education. The results showed that teachers perceived the national examinations as assessing the prerequisite knowledge for secondary education, on one hand; and to some extent social skills needed for life in the community and society. This is in line with the aim of primary education in Rwanda according to government policy. Secondly, the study explored the impact of the national examinations on teachers' practices as well as on teacher self image. Findings were that a good success rate in these examinations was the main goal-direction for teachers and had a major influence on the curriculum practices. Most teachers indicated that they aimed to produce a large number of candidates who were classified highly on national scale, and were socially well skilled. The impact of the national examination on their practices is evident in some of the strategies they use in negotiating and mediating the curriculum: the focus on the main examination subjects, on the previous examination topics, and on academically good and borderline students who have a greater chance of scoring high grades in the national examination. Finally, the study explored factors that teachers perceived to influence candidates' success and failure in the national examinations. Teacher commitment to preparing candidates for the examinations was most frequently reported, as a factor associated with student success, whereas the very limited places

available in public and subsidized secondary schools was the most contributing factor to poor results.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work described in this dissertation is a product of my original work, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text. It has not previously otherwise been submitted at any University for a degree or diploma.

This dissertation was carried out under the supervision and direction of Dr. R. Cassius Lubisi, who supervised the first step of this dissertation before he left the University for a post in the South African Ministry of Education in Pretoria. Professor Nithi Muthukrishna of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg supervised the completion of this work.

Signed _____

Gabriel NIZEYIMANA

Professor Nithi Muthukrishna

Supervisor

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Dedication

Floride, my wife

Yves, Yvon, and Hervé my sons,

I dedicate this dissertation to you.

Abbreviations

CNDP: National Centre for Curriculum Development

EFA: Education For All

HIV/AIDS: Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

ICT: Information Communication Technology

MICOFIN: Ministry of Commerce and Finance

MINEDUC: 'Ministère de l'Éducation' / Ministry of Education

RNEC: Rwandan National Examination Council

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Scientists

STE: 'Science et Technologie Elementaire' / Science and Elementary Technology

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

USA: United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context of the Study

In the Rwandan education system, the national examinations are organised to select candidates for public and private subsidised secondary schools at the end of primary schooling. The Ministry of Education (1998) mentions that only a small percentage of primary school leavers proceed to secondary schools. The number is limited by the places available in public and private subsidised secondary establishments. The transition rate from primary to secondary education was only approximately 20% of primary school leavers in 1989/99 (Ministry of Commerce and Finance, 2001). This increased to 38.1% by 1999/2000 (Ministry of Commerce and Finance, 2002). The Ministry of Education (1998) argues that the limited access to secondary school inevitably has negative consequences and discourages both parents and students.

The national examination results are published and compared with each other at national, provincial, district, and school levels. These results allow pupils and schools to be compared and to be classified in terms of learners' performances. The result is that the available places in secondary schools are allocated on merit. This practice creates a spirit of competition among teachers, learners and parents. The tendency is to consider a particular teacher or particular school as 'good' or 'bad' in terms of the number of pupils who have succeeded in the national examinations in their class or in that particular school.

Moreover, the competitive national examination leads parents and teachers to involve themselves as much as possible in preparing candidates to succeed in the examination so that children obtain very good results and are classified high on the national scale. The few places in public and subsidised secondary schools are given to those pupils who have scored highest in the national examinations.

During the course of the year, teachers struggle to prepare learners so thoroughly that they will qualify for secondary school places. Their attention tends to be focussed on the approaching competition. Despite the disadvantages of a public examination (see the last paragraph of section 3.2.1.2), teachers' classroom practices seem to be influenced, to some extent for good, by the competitive examinations.

Mathews (1985), a British scholar, when arguing concerning teachers' motivation, which arises from the achievement of realistic and meaningful goals, writes that the hard fact of day-to-day schooling is that teachers seem to rely heavily on the externally prescribed goals of examination results as a prime motivator. He continues that the motivational purpose of examination may be a powerful force in maintaining the momentum and reinforcing the teacher's control of classroom activities. It is likely that this applies also, in Rwanda.

In Rwanda, national examinations are classified as external because they are "prepared, administered and marked by an examination board separate from the schools in which the pupils study" (Desforges, 1989: 61). Marsh (1992) notes that, in an external examination, each paper is set and marked by individuals or groups other than the actual teachers of the

pupils. In this study, I hypothesize that to have a great number of pupils who succeed in the national examination constitutes a determinant motivational factor for teachers since “a motivated behaviour involves an identification of the determinants of action” (Weiner, 1980: 85). In other words, national examination results to a great extent determine teachers’ actions and practices. Furthermore, Desforges (1989) indicates that one of the purposes of an external examination is to increase the motivation of pupils and teachers to strive to do well.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

As a teacher by profession, I have experienced the satisfaction that teachers have when their students have succeeded in the national examination, and how hard they work to prepare pupils for that competition. At present, very few studies have been conducted on Rwandan national examinations for both primary and secondary school levels. In the United Kingdom experience, Marsh (1992) indicates that examinations were still used extensively in the twentieth century although there has been a shift in some countries to remove examinations from the primary school level and to retain them at senior secondary school level. However, a number of researchers have looked at national assessment and national examinations at secondary education level. Their work had aroused my interest in looking at the extent to which a particular type of educational assessment, that is national examinations, influences teachers in their practices.

Very few people can deny that teachers are motivated as a result of the outcomes of their work. Mathews argues that:

No one who has experience of teaching (...) would deny the teacher any motivating influence that can be justified (...). No one would deny to teachers the pleasure which they may experience in the examination results of their students if the results are better than expected or even, let it be admitted, better than their colleagues' students. Indeed, it is not unknown to hear teachers speak of 'my results' (1985: 24).

Moreover, the mode of assessment can shape the pedagogy and content of what is taught in a situation where examination results are important. Capper (1996) argues that tests have an impact on what is taught and learnt in classrooms, especially when the results of the tests are used to make important decisions, for instance, in selecting students for higher levels of education, which is the case in Rwanda.

There is also a risk that teachers will teach 'to the test' by emphasising the aspects that are often set in the national examinations. At primary school level in Rwanda, sixth year pupils write these examinations. The sixth year class is the terminal point of schooling for the majority of pupils.

However, it is known that, in both developed and developing countries, improving national testing systems is an important, perhaps a key strategy for improving the quality of education (The World Bank Group, 2002). As Chapman and Snyder indicate:

Our interest with high-stakes national testing is part of a larger interest in how central education authorities can influence practice at the school and classroom levels, where the real activity of education

occurs. Recent research suggests that ministries (or departments) of education have far fewer mechanisms for influencing and shaping individual teachers' pedagogical practice than most policy makers wish. High stakes tests are one of the few elements of an education system that are controlled at the central level of the system, but which have direct impact at the classroom level (2000: 459).

In conducting the present study, the aim was to find out the extent to which the public or national examinations influence teachers' practices. This study was conducted at micro-level, in schools and the results will be useful, especially for three categories of people. The first category is teachers, who will derive from these results a better understanding of the impact of national examinations on their teaching practices, since their teaching is a strong influence on examination results. In other words, they will become aware of how success in the national examinations impacts on their daily practices and their actions will be directed and motivated by the above goal. The second category is education decision-makers. They should be aware of the context in which some of their decisions are implemented at classroom level. The last category is constituted of parents and the community in general whose hopes for the future depend on the further schooling of their children.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

National examinations are used as an assessment instrument in the Rwandan education system and they may influence teachers' practices. Teachers struggle to reach the ultimate goal, that is, success in the national examination. Locke and Latham (1990) argue that goals play a causal role in action. The nature of the national examinations motivates teachers to

achieve success in these examinations. My investigation into the extent to which national examinations impact on teaching practices at primary education level is sited in the Kacyiru and Nyarugenge districts in Kigali-City, Republic of Rwanda.

1.4 Research Question

The present study will answer the following question: To what extent do teachers perceive the impact of the public examinations on their teaching practices?

CHAPTER TWO: THE EDUCATION AND EXAMINATION SYSTEM IN RWANDA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to develop the reader's awareness of the Rwandan formal educational context in which this study is located. It is articulated in two major sections. The first section offers details of the education system in Rwanda. It includes the characteristics, aims and objectives of the Rwandese system of formal education and its structure. The second section deals with the examination system with emphasis on the level of education focussed on in the present study, that is, primary education.

2.2 The Education System in Rwanda

2.2.1 Characteristics, Aims, and Objectives of the Education System in Rwanda

The Rwandan education system has been subject to many reforms since its birth in 1908, but the original conception of the system has not changed (Ministry of Education, 1998). The Ministry of Education identifies two aspects that characterise the system. The first is the selective aspect of the system. The system has been selective across all levels of schooling, eliminating all those who do not meet the pass criteria. The second is education for 'trades'. This consists, on one hand, of preparing the majority of people to undertake agricultural work and other traditional tasks. A lesser number will train for professions such as teaching, medicine, or the civil service.

At the primary education level, which is the focus of this study, the reports submitted by district inspectors to the Ministry of Education between 1996 and 1997 indicate that those who finish all the years of primary schooling were very few. In effect, only 300 of the average of 1,000 registered students in the first year of primary school reached the final (6th) year of schooling, the remaining 700 students being 'eliminated' by the education system throughout their schooling (Ministry of Education, 1998: 79). Some students are obliged to repeat courses and there is a high dropout rate. At present, however, the policy of free education for all adopted by the Government of National Unity commits Rwanda to the provision of schooling for all school age children. The Rwandan education sector policies are consistent with the Government of Rwanda's macro policies, namely, they stress poverty reduction, human resource development, and national unity and reconciliation. The aim is to give all people the opportunity to achieve basic education which will help lift people out of poverty and to give practical skills with which they can contribute to economic growth in Rwanda.

Bearing in mind the above macro policies, the Ministry of Education has chosen to focus on four key areas. Firstly, increasing the gross enrolment rate at primary education level from 72.1% in 2000 to 100% of all school age children in 2010, and reducing the number of pupils who repeat courses (33.9%), and the dropout rate, which was 12.6% of all pupils enrolled in primary schools in 2000, that is from grade 1 up to grade 6. Secondly, a review of curriculum development is to be conducted to empower people with relevant skills. Thirdly, improve measures to the quality of teaching through in-service training of unqualified teachers and pre-service training of new teachers is being undertaken. Lastly, efforts are being made to

improve science teaching with special attention to practical skills and Information Communication Technology (I.C.T) in Education.

The Ministry of Commerce and Finance (2001) reports that the number of children enrolling in primary schools has been increasing steadily each year since 1993/1994 and for the school year 1999/2000, the gross enrolment rate was 97.1%. The transition rate from primary school to secondary school remained at a low 38.1% of all pupils who finished primary school in 1999/2000. In this school year, there were 68,457 children enrolled in government-owned or subsidised secondary schools, and 56,667 children enrolled in private secondary schools, whilst in 1998/99, these figures were 60,556 and 44,736 respectively. At higher education level, the number of students in public higher education institutes stood at 7,224 in 2000, an increase of 21% compared to 1999. In 2000, there were 982 students studying abroad.

2.2.2 Structure of the Education System in Rwanda

2.2.2.1 Pre-school Education

Pre-school education is located in nursery schools and lasts for a period of two to three years for children aged from three to six years. It is aimed at the socialisation of children and at developing numerous physical, rhythmic and manual abilities. Nursery schools are mainly organised in urban areas through the initiative of parents. The very limited numbers of nursery schools are mainly in two main urban centres of the country: Kigali (the capital) and Butare. They are mostly private and cater for small numbers of children.

2.2.2.2 Primary Education

The Ministry of Education (1998) claims that the structure and the content of primary education evolved in three different phases.

The first phase was before the school reform of 1978-89. According to the law of 27 August 1966 on National Education in the Rwandese Republic and the Presidential Decree No. 175 / 03 of 28 April 1967, which set the General Regulation of Rwandese Education, primary education was compulsory for all children aged from the age of seven years, and lasted six years into two cycles of four and two years respectively. The school year was divided into three terms with breaks at Christmas, Easter and summer vacation. The language of instruction was Kinyarwanda, except in foreign languages classes.

The second phase followed the school reform of 1978/79 (Ministry of Education: 1998). With it, the length of primary instruction was extended from six to eight years into three cycles. The first and the second cycles lasted three years each while the last lasted two years. The language of instruction remained Kinyarwanda except in the teaching of foreign languages.

The last phase coincides with the re-adjustment of the school reform of 1991. Primary education was set at six years in two cycles of three years each. The socio-cultural situation of the country at that time required the use of Kinyarwanda, French and English as official languages. Prior to that, Kinyarwanda and French were the only official languages. However, Kinyarwanda, the only mother tongue in the country remains the language of instruction in

the first cycle, where many of the classes operate in double shifts. For the second cycle, the curriculum is currently taught in French or in English for most of the schools. The language of instruction depends upon the status of the school, either Anglophone or Francophone. Kinyarwanda as well as one of the above two foreign languages is taught as a subject in the second cycle.

The duration of primary education is of six years of which the first three (first cycle) are devoted to learning reading, writing in the first language, Kinyarwanda, as well as basic mathematics. The second cycle (three years) is for general basic education. Thus, the ages seven - thirteen are the ages of primary education from year one to year six.

About the aims of primary education, the Ministry of Education states, “the objective of primary education is to ensure that all children receive a civic, intellectual and physical education. At this stage, the child is prepared for secondary education and for life in society” (Ministry of Education, 1998: 26).

2.2.2.3 Secondary Education

Sixth year primary school pupils sit for the national examinations. Those who succeed proceed to public-owned and subsidised secondary schools. Some of those who fail¹, and who are financially able, could apply to join private secondary schools on the basis of entrance tests organized by particular schools.

¹ National examination results are published for all candidates at a national scale. The minimum marks to proceed to secondary school are determined each school year. That is, the pass mark can vary every school year in accordance with the examination results and the number of places available in secondary schools. Those who are below the pass mark are said to have failed. Those who are above the pass mark had succeeded and were given places in secondary schools.

Secondary education lasts six years in two cycles of three years each. The first cycle, called Orientation Cycle or Common Core ('Tronc Commun' in French), aims to reinforce general knowledge and develop forms of working and thinking. This cycle can be compared to the Senior Phase (Grades seven – nine) in the new structure of South African schooling. A national examination is written to compete for entry into the next cycle and those who succeed are admitted in different sections for specialization. In the second cycle there are several 'streams', which relate to the particular emphasis of the education offered: scientific, arts, teacher training, for example. Students express a preference for particular stream, which is considered by the Ministry of Education, represented by the National Examination Council, which allocates places. This second cycle is equivalent to Grades ten – twelve in South Africa. Parallel to this long cycle, there are also technical and vocational courses offered for four years, at the end of which an A₃ Certificate is awarded, which does not give access to any higher/tertiary education.

Secondary education is recognised by a 'Diplôme A₂'/Certificate of secondary studies, and prepares pupils for entry into social or professional life, and for University or higher learning institutions for those who complete six years.

2.2.2.4 Tertiary/Higher Education

The duration of tertiary education varies according to the establishment in which students are registered. At the National University of Rwanda (N.U.R) for example, studies are now undertaken in one cycle of four years in most of the Departments awarding Bachelors degrees, which is equivalent to a South African Honours degree. Tertiary education is

recognised by university degrees such as Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Engineering Degree and Doctorate in Medicine ("Diplôme de Baccalauréat, de Licence, d'Ingénieur, de Doctorat en Medecine") (Ministry of Education, 1998: 27).

2.3 The Examination System in Rwanda

Deale (1975) states that examinations are a combination of several tests, and other assessment procedures, whether within the school or conducted by an examination board external to the school in which students study. Internal examinations are designed in all subjects taught and are written during specified times. In Rwanda, internal examinations are written towards the end of each of the three terms of the school year at all nursery, primary and secondary school levels. They are used to determine the promotion of learners from one class to the next.

In primary schools, pupils sit for the term examinations, which are set by their teachers internally. The total marks obtained at the end of the year allow learners to pass to the next class if he/she has succeeded, or to repeat the class in case of failure. The pass mark for learners is 50%. In secondary schools, teachers assess learners through a system of continuous assessment and through summative assessment at the end of each term. The total marks at the end of the school year obtained in each subject of the programme allow the student to be promoted to the next class, to repeat the class, or to leave the school in accordance with the regulations already defined by the Ministry of Education.

At the end of primary education and of each cycle in secondary schools, students sit for the national examinations. These national examinations are also called external examinations because “they are prepared, administered and marked by an examination board separate from the schools in which the pupils study” (Desforges, 1989: 61).

Law No19 / 2001 of 12 / 3 / 2001 established the Rwandan National Examinations Council for primary and secondary education which had the following duties:

- to be responsible for National Examinations for Primary and Secondary levels in Rwanda;
- to establish rules regulating the conduct of examinations and for all the purposes incidental there to;
- to uphold transparency and justice in examination administration and other related issues;
- to award Certificates or Diplomas to successful candidates;
- to place successful candidates in different Schools or Institutions and the corresponding subject options or faculties in accordance with their potential abilities;
- to establish the equivalence of Diplomas and Certificates issued in Rwanda or elsewhere in accordance with this law;
- to consult with those in charge of National Educational programmes, and those in charge of National Inspection of schools on matters concerning implementation of school curriculum, (Office of the Prime Minister 2001: 33).

Thus, all primary school leavers sit for the competitive final examination administered at national level at the same time. It is set, administered and marked by the National Examination Council and in this study; I have called this examination a 'public examination'. Its purpose is mainly to select candidates for public and private subsidised secondary schools. Successful candidates are admitted on the basis of their examination results. At present, pupils write three papers on the following subjects, namely: Mathematics, Language (Kinyarwanda, French and English), and General Knowledge. This last category includes other subjects like Elementary Sciences and Technology, Geography and History.

In the following schedule of primary education concerned by this study, the numbers indicate the number of contact hours per week for each subject taught and for each class year. The bolded total numbers indicate the number of contact hours per week for each class year. The schedule is on the next page.

Subject	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th year	6 th year
Kinyarwanda	7	7	6	3	3	3
French	4	4	5	5	5	5
English	4	4	5	5	5	5
Mathematics	6	6	6	5	5	5
Elementary Science and Technology	3	3	3	4	4	4
Introduction to Arts	2	2	2	1	1	1
Physical Education and Sports	2	2	1	1	1	1
Religion	1	1	1	1	1	1
Morality	1	1	1	1	1	1
Civics	1	1	1	2	2	2
History	-	-	-	1	1	1
Geography	-	-	-	1	1	1
Homework	-	-	-	1	1	1
Manual Work	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5

Source: MINEDUC (1998: A54)

At secondary education level, national examinations are set at the end of each cycle. At the end of 'Tronc Commun', students sit for the national examinations and those who succeed proceed to the second cycle in different sections for specialisation. At the end of the second cycle, there is another national examination for certification/matriculation. Students following the same section write the same examinations. The results determine whether the candidate will continue further education to University level or not, according to the places available in public higher education institutions.

At Tertiary Education level, the number of continuous assessments as well as summative assessments depends on the number of credits units of a particular course. One credit unit equals 15 hours theory or 30 hours practical.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, I shall review the literature related to the topic being studied. I shall offer an overview of what has been written on public examinations and their impact on curriculum and teaching practices. The current literature suggests that the primary Rwandan national examinations qualify as ‘high-stake’ tests impacting, therefore, on curriculum and teaching practices. However, it is worth noting that very few studies were conducted on the effect of national examinations at the end of primary education. Most of the studies conducted in this domain concerned secondary education, and the principles are the same at primary education level in Rwanda.

In the present section, I shall describe the nature of public examinations through their history and their characteristics. I shall explain at the same time the aim of these national examinations. The purpose of the present study being to investigate the impact of national examinations on teaching practices, the study fits in the educational assessment domain. It is for this reason that this section explains the relationship between public examinations and testing, assessment, evaluation, and measurement. Lastly, I shall discuss the impact of public examinations on the curriculum as well as on teaching practices.

3.2 The Nature and Purposes of Public Examinations

3.2.1 The Nature of Public Examinations

3.2.1.1 Brief History of Public Examinations

Desforges (1989) indicated that the ancient Chinese are generally credited with the invention of this form of examination. “To ensure parity, candidates sat the same papers at the same time and under the same conditions” (Desforges, 1989: 61). The World Bank Group (2000) states that the first written public examinations were introduced over 2000 years ago in China for the selection of the most able citizens for positions in the civil service. Thereafter, while pupils’ own teachers were setting tests and assessment, the idea of external examinations quickly spread in Europe. Examinations were incorporated into Jesuit schools in the 16th century. After the French Revolution, an examination system for selection was introduced in France in the middle of the 18th century. By the middle of the 19th century, competitive examinations had been introduced in Britain and India to select the increasing numbers of government officials required to service an expanding empire. In 1883, competitive examinations to select personnel for government service in the United States were established by law, but were abandoned when Congress decided that they were inappropriate.

The Baccalaureate (end of secondary education examination) was established in Napoleonic France in 1808 to admit students to the ‘grandes écoles’ (prestigious establishments for tertiary education), and the professions. In Britain, London University held its first matriculation examination in 1838. In 1865, the New York Board of regents conducted their first examination. The European tradition of public examination systems for schools was expanded in the 19th century in the colonies. In the 20th century, America has developed a

different examination system, based on psychometrics, using especially multiple-choice testing. Public examinations are nowadays an integral part of the education systems in the world. Public examinations have in general particular functions in the educational system.

3.2.1.2 Characteristics of Public Examinations

Rwandan primary public examinations are typically competitive. All those competing primary education sit for them but only those individuals who are successful proceed to secondary education. “In highly competitive situations, external examinations are usually preferred because these allow greater standardisation of tasks and conditions and, hence, greater comparability of results” (The World Bank Group, 2002). It is for this reason that, the Rwandan national examinations are done in the same conditions, and the results are compared to rank schools and candidates.

Public examinations are typically formal, summative, and controlled by an agency external to the school where the student has studied. They deal with the content of the cycle concerned, since the purpose of public examinations at the end of the primary courses is specially selection for secondary education. At the end of secondary school, pupils sit an examination for certification. With regard to the characteristics of public examinations, Lambert and Lines note that:

Since the majority of external examinations are sat at the end of a course (for this reason they are often called terminal examinations), the assumption is often made that they are all summative. In their very nature, of course, the vast majority is, but coursework, which is

tested externally, can also perform a formative function. Many teachers will have experienced the motivational benefits derived by students from investigations, as well as the development of important, wider “key skills”, such as decision making and working with others (2000: 15).

Although public examinations are considered the most reliable instrument for selection or certification purposes, Marsh (1992: 39) points out some of the common advantages and disadvantages. He states three advantages of the public examinations. Firstly, it can provide an objective assessment of a student’s performance. Secondly, it can define common standards of performance required for adequate completion of a syllabus, and lastly, it has status in the wider community.

Five disadvantages of public examination are mentioned. Firstly, it can cover a limited part of the course syllabus. Secondly, it can capture only a small sample of the student’ performance, even on the topics tested, within the period of time allocated. Thirdly, it can be biased against students who do not perform well under examination pressures. Fourthly, it may encourage a concentration on teaching those aspects of the course which are most readily assessed by an external examination, and lastly, it may encourage authoritarian teaching and rote learning.

3.2.2 Purposes of Public Examinations

In this study, we have considered the national examination as a public examination, a term which is not often used in Rwanda, referring to the sense given to the public examination by The World Bank Group (2002) when noting that:

Public examination is defined as an examination offered by a national or provincial (State) authority, or a behalf of such an authority, to students at a particular level of an education system. The primary purpose is to certify the level of achievement of individual students and / or to select students for the next level of the education system
(<http://www1.worldbank.org/education/exams/glossary/default.asp>)

Moreover, the term ‘public examination’ is used with a meaning identical to ‘national examination’ since it is given at national level to all candidates, at almost the same time and almost in similar conditions. In this study, the terms ‘entrance examination’, ‘competitive examination’ and ‘final examination’ are also used to mean public examination because Rwandan candidates across the country compete to enter public and private subsidised secondary schools after they complete primary education.

Desforges (1989) gives three purposes of public examinations. The first is to increase the motivation of pupils and teachers to strive to do well. The second is to influence programmes of work (the curriculum) in schools with a view of developing and enriching pupils’ experiences, and the last is to provide a common yardstick for selection purposes in higher education and employment. The World Bank group (2002) recognises two main purposes of public examinations. These are the selection of candidates for educational opportunities and/or employment, on the one hand, and the certification of achievement, on the other hand.

Concerning the selection function of public examinations, The World Bank Group (2002) notes that in a situation in which the number of places available at each successive level of

education diminishes as candidates move into senior years, a public examination is used to distribute the places to those who merit them. Examination results are used, for example, to determine which students pass from primary to secondary school, from junior secondary to higher secondary or from higher secondary to university. However, although public examinations have in general additional functions, some of them are designed solely for selection. This is the case for the French ‘concours’ and the Transfer Tests used for selection to grammar schools in Northern Ireland.

Rwandan public examinations are mainly used for selection and for certification purposes. At primary education level they are used especially for selection purposes. The use of examination results for selection allows places to be filled on the basis of merit. The Rwandan National Examination Council issues Certificates to successful candidates at secondary level. A Certificate is “a testimonial document awarded by the National Examinations Council for Primary and Secondary education which shows the candidate’s results and the highest level attained. It must bear the signature of authorised officials and the National Council’s seal” (Office of the Prime Minister, 2001).

However, beside the two main purposes of public examinations, the terminal examinations sat for in the Rwandan educational system are used for additional purposes (see duties of National Examinations Council, in chapter two of this study). The World Bank Group (2002) defines these additional functions as control of the curriculum and its delivery in schools; motivation of schools, teachers and students; monitoring of educational standards, and reporting on school effectiveness.

The World Bank Group (2002) explains the control, motivation and monitoring functions of public examinations as follows:

By controlling the examination system, the content and 'spirit' of the curriculum can be tailored to national goals. A uniform (standardised) examination system promotes national homogeneity in educational standards and practice. It also allows governments or regional authorities to control disparate elements of the education system. In theory, the motivation function is achieved by providing clear goals to strive for, a sense of purpose, and tangible incentives and rewards. There is evidence that some students, particularly those who consider the demands of the exam to be unrealistic, may be 'demotivated'. By the monitoring function, examination pass rates may be used to gauge changes in achieved educational standards. In some instances, exam results may be used to hold schools and teachers accountable for their students' achievements. This may be done by publishing 'league tables' ranking schools by performance in public examinations

(<http://www1.worldbank.org/education/exams/purposes/default.asp>)

Finally, public examinations are important for: (1) individual candidates who take the examination, and their families, as the results determine future educational, vocational, and opportunities; and (2) teachers and school as their reputation may be affected by examination performance in public examinations.

The Rwandan national examination which occurs at the end of primary schooling, is a form of assessment, which needs to be related to other modes of assessment, often in use in educational setting. In effect, the mode of testing, assessment, evaluation, and measurement

in education influences curriculum development, curriculum implementation, and therefore teaching practices. I shall try to estimate the degree to which primary public examinations as they are experienced in Rwanda play the role of test, assessment, evaluation, or measurement as they impact on teaching practices.

3.3 Public Examination in Relation to Testing, Assessment, Evaluation, and Measurement

3.3.1 Testing and Assessment

Most tests can be defined as achievement, aptitude or personality, interest or sentiment tests. In the classroom context, most tests are achievement tests since “achievement tests are designed to measure the skills or knowledge a student has attained” (Gellman, 1995: 6). Aptitude tests, on the other hand, are specifically to predict the future performance, while tests of personality, interest, and sentiment assess the presence or absence of different personality traits, vocational, interests and feelings.

Blake and Hanley in the United Kingdom note that testing is a form of assessment. For them:

Testing is a form of assessment, which implies a formally prescribed task undertaken in formal conditions. The test is designed to assess the quality and extent of pupils' learning in relation to a particular course or subject. Testing under the national curriculum, for example, takes place at the end of each key stage, when children are aged 7, 11, 14 and 16. Testing is seen as an integral part of the government' s approach to raising standards through the educational reforms of the late 1980s. It was believed that tests would give parents clear information about their children's progress in relation

to commonly understood expectations. They would also allow judgements to be made about the relative effectiveness of schools as test results were published. Thus, successful schools would either improve under pressure from the market place or close down through a failure to attract pupils (1995: 171).

Rowntree considered assessment to be a process by which a person seeks to obtain and interpret information from another. He argues that:

Basically, assessment in education can be thought of as occurring whenever one person, in some kind of interaction, direct or indirect, with another, is conscious of obtaining and interpreting information about the knowledge and understanding, or abilities and attitudes of that other person. To some extent or other, it is an attempt to know that person. In this light, assessment can be seen as human encounter. In education, we are mainly conscious of this 'encounter' in the shape of teachers finding out about their students. But we must not forget that students also assess one another, especially when working together as cooperative teams. They also assess their teachers. Assessment is not obtained only, or even necessarily mainly, through tests and examinations. For instance assessment that takes place between partners in everyday conversation (1987: 4).

Parallel to the United Kingdom situation, the Government of Rwanda uses public examinations to assess primary school leavers' knowledge through national examination in order to select those suitable for secondary education. Furthermore, looking at the nature of assessment, Rowntree (1987) suggests five dimensions, which are the key activities in the process of assessment. These dimensions refer to five different kinds of mental activity among people who undertake assessment, and are summarised in five questions. The first

question is why assessment is undertaken. This focuses on deciding why assessment is to be carried out and what effects or outcomes it is expected to produce. The second question is what to assess: deciding, realising, or otherwise coming to an awareness of what one is looking for in the people one is assessing. The third question is how to assess: selecting, from all the means at our disposal for learning about people, those regarded as being most reliable. The fourth question is how to interpret results: making sense of the outcomes of whatever observations or measurements or impressions we gather, attaching meaning to the raw 'events' of assessment. The last question is how to respond, that is, finding appropriate ways of expressing our responses to whatever has been assessed and of communicating it to the person concerned (and other people).

While Rowntree (1987) looked at the nature of assessment, Lambert and Lines were looking at its purposes in education. For them, assessment is "the process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about pupils' responses to educational tasks" (2000: 4). These authors recognise four purposes of assessment. The first purpose is to provide feedback to teachers and pupils about progress in order to support future learning. This is the formative role. The second is to provide information about the level of pupils' achievements during, and at the end of school. This is the summative role. The third is to provide the means for selection by qualification: this is the certification role. The last purpose is to contribute information on which judgements are made concerning the effectiveness or quality of individuals and institutions in the system as a whole. This is the evaluative role. Desforges (1989) maintained that the main purpose of assessment is to provide information to help people make decisions.

Assessment and testing are therefore related, in that the latter involves more formal contexts and procedures, including written, timed tests marked under strict conditions. The former requires teachers to make judgements about pupils' responses measured against some standards of expectation. Blake and Hanley (1995) agree that assessment involves a judgement about the quality of the pupils' work and the level at which they are operating or performing. Under the national curriculum, tests are in place to help arrive at an assessment of pupil performance at the end of each key stage.

From this perspective, the national examination in Rwanda can be qualified as a mode of assessment, if we consider the key stages they are administered, the conditions in which they are done and their purposes.

3.3.2 Measurement and Evaluation

On the one hand, measurement is, according to the World Bank Group (2002) an assessment made using the concept of a well-defined ability scale to quantify a behaviour or characteristic. Disney (1971) also argues that measurement is a process, which results in a set of symbols representing selected characteristics of aspects in which we are interested. Thus, measurement in education can be considered as a process of using a symbolic system to represent characteristics or data quantitatively.

According to Blake and Hanley, on the other hand, evaluation is "the process through which the worthwhileness and effectiveness of a training or education course is established" (1995: 55). Disney (1971) argues that evaluation deals with value and quality. Therefore, it

incorporates quantitative statements (measurement) as well as value judgements. Evaluation is used to determine the congruence between performance and objectives.

It can be said that educational measurement and evaluation are interconnected. In the teaching-learning process, measurements are made on the subjects that learners studied. Learners' works are marked, and scores obtained. By means of this data, the learner's work is judged, using evaluative words like failure, and pass, good, poor, etc. Decisions about the learner's work are now taken. This is the evaluation stage. Although measurement and evaluation occur in the same assessment process, evaluation follows measurement.

3.3.3 Relationship between Testing, Measurement, Assessment and Evaluation

Some writers assume that evaluation goes beyond testing and measurement, and Disney (1971) agrees that testing deals with the use of tests as measuring instruments. For the World Bank Group (2002), assessment is a general term used for the measurement of a behavioural characteristic, whilst evaluation is an assessment for the purpose of making a value judgement, that is, to judge the effectiveness of a teaching programme.

Relating testing, measurement, and evaluation, Disney (1971) indicates that these terms represent an "interdependent trilogy". They connote a process of determining worth or interpreting information. Evaluation follows a consideration of the traits or characteristics produced through measurement and amounts to a judgement on each candidate.

Lien (1971) maintains that measurement and evaluation involve a three-step process revealed by defining three key terms. The first term is measurement. It corresponds to the collection of data to provide evidence for analysis and interpretation. This is the collection phase. Measurement incorporates the idea of quantity. The second term is statistical methods which correspond to the analysis of data collected through measurement, and which is prepared for interpretation. This preparation of data occurs in the analysis phase. In the last phase, that of evaluation, the results are interpreted to determine how well the learners have achieved their goals. These three terms are integral components in the teaching-learning situation. Measurement is a prerequisite for evaluation. Testing is the application of a measuring instrument to pupils' performance. Evaluation is the interpretation given to information gathered during measurement.

Effectively, Mehrens and Lehmann (1978) note that the terms 'test', 'measurement', and 'evaluation', are sometimes used interchangeably. They wrote that:

Test, in the narrowest sense, connotes the presentation of a standard set of questions to be answered. As a result of a person's answers to such a series of questions, we obtain a measure (that is, a numerical value) of characteristics of that person [...]. Also, measurement can refer to both the score obtained and the process used (1978: 5).

It can be concluded that assessment is a general term used for the measurement of students' characteristics, while measurement is an integral part of evaluation and is related to testing, and therefore, assessment is in a definite relationship with measurement, testing, and evaluation.

3.3.4 Testing, Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation in Relation to the Rwandan National Examinations

Public examinations in Rwanda can be viewed as assessment instruments given to students completing their cycle of education since they allow the State to determine the students' achievements on which to base promotion to a further level of education or for Certification. They also constitute a tool for gathering information from students about the efficiency of the teaching process for the level concerned. This information is recorded and interpreted and forms the basis of decision-making by the National Examination Council.

The Ministry of Education seeks to obtain information about the knowledge of final year students. Once pupils have sat for the public examinations on subjects taught, scores are obtained and are quantified. This is the level of measurement. National examinations are used because these examinations test students by means of formally prescribed tasks (examination papers) undertaken in controlled conditions.

At primary education level, pupils are tested in Mathematics, Languages (Kinyarwanda, French, and English), and General Knowledge. The primary public examination in Rwanda is seen as more than testing. It is an assessment instrument using measurement at a middle stage of the process of schooling. It also serves as an evaluation in that professional judgement of the examination results can be made. Public examination like any other form of educational assessment might influence the programme taught (curriculum) and the pedagogy, which is the teaching practice of teachers. The section below defines the concept of curriculum and

details the impact of public examinations on the curriculum to be taught as well as on teaching practices.

3.4 Perspectives on the Impact of Public Examinations on Curriculum and on Teaching Practices

3.4.1 The Concept of Curriculum and Curriculum Development

3.4.1.1 The Concept of Curriculum

Etymologically, the term curriculum derives from the Latin word ‘currere’ that means ‘to run’ and refers to a course. It was used to describe the running course of the horse chariots in the games of ancient Rome. It is thus the course taken by the chariot of education (Salia-Bao, 1987). Pratt (1994) defines curriculum as a sustained process of teaching and learning, considering it as a blueprint for instruction. Inlow and Kerr argue that curriculum is “all the learning which is planned and guided by the school” (in Salia-Bao, 1987: 2).

In this study however, the term curriculum is considered more broadly. A curriculum is more than the list of subjects to be taught. The broader definition of curriculum includes how the content is presented and assessed. Many authors considered curriculum as the content of education (what is taught), the pedagogy (how that content is transmitted), and evaluation (the methods used to ascertain whether the content has been internalised and understood). Featherstone extends the definition beyond the list of content for instruction in schools. For him,

Curriculum does not consist only of all the experiences pupils have under the guidance of the school but also the limited and selected

experiences (from the society), which the school deliberately and intentionally uses for education purposes (in Salia-Bao, 1987: 3).

Operationally, the concept of curriculum is used in this dissertation to mean what Mathews means by the term. He states that:

Curriculum is multidimensional, involving not only subject-matter, but also the balance between subjects, teaching and learning processes, and the abilities and qualities engendered in students (1985: 26).

3.4.1.2 The Concept of Curriculum Development

Whiles and Bondi (1993: 3) define curriculum development as “a process whereby the choices of designing a learning experience for students are made and then activated through a set of coordinated activities”. Salia-Bao adds to this definition another dimension arguing that:

Curriculum development is a deliberately planned enterprise, which involves syllabus construction and other curriculum materials for teaching purposes (...). The aim is to enhance the students' ability to find meaning in life, and also to contribute to national development (1987: 59).

Through these deliberately planned activities, courses of study or patterns of educational activities are designed and presented to pupils in educational institutions. Curriculum development is thus the process of construction or designing of knowledge that must be acquired by students since “the curriculum developer is concerned by the overall of the

design for learning” (Whiles and Bondi, 1993: 3). To develop curriculum means to design experiences, knowledge, and skills in order to equip students for involvement in developing society after school.

3.4.2 The Impact of Public Examinations on Curriculum and Teaching

3.4.2.1 Impact of Public Examinations on Curriculum and Curriculum Development

Since it is assumed that testing is a strong influence on what is taught, how it is taught, what is learned, and how it is learned, Madaus (1988) argues that there is no doubt that curriculum and examinations do influence each other. In the South African teaching of History, for example, Sieborger, Kallaway, Bottaro, and Hiscock (in Taylor 1993) note that the Senior Certificate has had a powerful ‘backwash’ effect on both the nature of the history taught and the teaching methodologies employed in the classroom. Madaus asserts:

[I]f the skills are well chosen, and if the tests truly measure them, then the goals of instruction are explicit; teachers’ and students’ efforts are focused on well-defined targets; standards are clear and uniform; accountability at all levels is easier and more objective; and the public has concrete information on how well these schools are doing (1988: 84).

It has been claimed that public examinations largely influences what is taught before the examination is written. In an investigation of the linkage between lower secondary and upper secondary education in France where an examination is written at the end of each of these levels, Kangasniemi and Takala (1995) found a very marked difference in teaching several subjects between these two levels. On one side, teaching in the fourth year was strongly

influenced by the tests set for the 'Brevet des Collèges', despite the low 'value' of that examination. Here, teaching in the 'Lycée' was influenced by the way the 'Brevet des Collèges' examination was habitually set because teachers tended to anticipate the way this examination was set and to familiarize their students with its form and content. In France the Brevet des collèges marks the end of the first cycle of secondary education, which is known as 'Collège'; the second cycle is known as 'Lycée' and culminates in the Baccalaureate examination.

If public examinations are well conducted, their impact on curriculum may be positive.

Lambert and Lines confirm this view in these words:

[I]f final examinations are based on a syllabus that everyone knows and has access to, if scripts are sent to independent professionals who have no contact with the students whose work they are marking, and if the entire process is controlled by organisations that have a reputation for ethical working and who are in any case controlled, or at least monitored by a government agency, then, as the saying goes, the playing field is seen to be 'level', and the 'most able', whatever their circumstances, will rise to the top (2000: 90).

It has also been claimed that final examinations influence curriculum, in particular, when they examine the subjects given most attention prior to examinations. Teachers as well as the students neglect the teaching of non-examined curriculum subjects. Not only do such examinations affect subjects assessed by emphasising topics assumed to be tested, they also neglect intangibles which are nevertheless important like politeness, sport, etc. which

however make up the content of the curriculum. Mathews in the United Kingdom argues in the following terms:

The constraining effect of examinations lies not so much in the number of examined subjects which are available, but in the limitation they impose on the kinds of activity within subjects to those activities which can effectively be assessed in large-scale examinations [...]. In general, it can be said that examinations have encouraged a concentration on mental processes, closely akin to the traditional categories of academic disciplines, and have contributed to erosion of other attributes, which could be fostered in institutions of education. Who can honestly claim that the social, moral, artistic, and physical qualities of students can be adequately assessed in examinations, as we know them? And what of the ability to manage, negotiate, or co-operate, and so on which a person may expect to develop in his education as an asset for later life? It is inconceivable that these attributes can be cultivated through the medium of examinations (1985: 27).

A large-scale examination has some limitations due to the fact that it cannot assess all the abilities acquired by the learner. The public examination is more concerned with tasks or activities that are easily assessed. Aiming to see their pupils succeeding in this examination, teachers are likely to consider the topics that are frequently assessed as the content of instruction. When test results are used to make very important decisions, it may happen that a non-official curriculum may be developed through the emphasis given to the teaching of the previous examination topics. Teachers must cope with the pressure of examinations by preparing students to meet them. Madaus notes that:

[I]n every setting where a high-stakes test operates, a tradition of past exams develops, which eventually de facto defines the curriculum. Teachers see the kind of intellectual activity required by previous test questions and prepare the students to meet these demands (1988: 93).

Teachers pay particular attention to the form of the questions on a high-stakes test (for example, short answers, essay, multiple-choice), and adjust their instruction accordingly. In this line, a study carried out in France on the teaching of French has also shown how the Baccalaureate examination influences the knowledge actually taught. A study made of lists of works and texts presented by pupils in the oral part of the advanced French test reveals that, despite the wide choice provided for in the official texts, the corpus constituted by the lists tends to establish a kind of unofficial programme based on a restricted number of literary works (Kangasniemi and Takala, 1995).

Studies have found that past examinations have a powerful effect on preparations for the next examination. Besides the development of a smaller and non-official curriculum, which can result from this pressure to prepare for the examination, there is another negative effect. While pupils may become proficient at passing tests by mastering the tradition of past examinations, they may remain profoundly uneducated in the case where these tests could not deal with the necessary social skills required after school. In the case of pupils who do not qualify to enter secondary school, these skills could be those needed for the integration in society. “When test results are the sole or even partial arbiter of future educational or life choices, society tends to treat test results as the major goal of school rather than as a useful but fallible indicator of achievement” (Madaus, 1988: 97).

On the impact of public examination on curriculum development, de Luca conducted a study for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) looking at the impact of examination systems on curriculum development in Columbia, Egypt, Japan, Scotland, the USA and Zimbabwe. She identified positive and negative influences of examination on curriculum development as follows:

Examination systems can have a powerful impact on curriculum development, and while the potential for positive effects can be impressive, the overall impact as experienced by pupils is, more often than not, tilted towards negative effects. This is especially the case if the examination is high stakes for pupils and schools (...). At the same time, of course, no one would deny the value of summative assessment that is undertaken through external examinations; in one form or another, all European countries use it (1994: 123).

The national examinations control the content of instruction in schools. The World Bank Group (2002) argues, “By controlling the examination system, the content and ‘spirit’ of the curriculum can be tailored to national goals”.

3.4.2.2 Perspectives on the Impact of Public Examination on Teaching Practices

Public examination results serve as a measure of the schools’ and teachers’ performances. From this perspective, Lambert and Lines (2000) in the United Kingdom write that:

By the start of the 1980s, attention was increasingly focused on the performance of schools (and staff) as much as individual students.

The 'simple' way of measuring this performance was through external examination results. They were, after all, apparently 'objective', trusted and they offered evidence that could be used to compare performance across schools. If any stakeholder, and especially government, wanted to know how well a school was performing, external examination results gave apparent measures of outputs.

Teachers also perceive public examination results as reflecting the way they have performed. Hence, Wood (cited in Gipps 1994:10) concludes that: "teachers see test and examination results as saying something about their teaching rather than just about the pupil". It is therefore normal that this belief influences their teaching since, as says Madaus:

When people perceive a phenomenon to be true, their actions are guided by the importance perceived to be associated with it. The greater the stakes perceived to be linked to test results, the greater the impact on instruction and learning (1988: 88-89).

The same author asserts that if important decisions are presumed to be related to test results, then teachers will teach 'to the test'. High-stakes tests can focus instruction, giving students and teachers specific goals to attain. Madaus notices that, when the results of the examinations are so important to many students, teachers, and parents, their own self-interest dictates that teaching and learning focus on test preparation. Indeed, Kangasniemi and Takala (1995: 50) report a French mathematician, André Revuz, who does not hesitate "to ask very seriously whether pupils are taught mathematics or else taught how to sit an examination in mathematics". Thus, teaching in France was focused not on the subject matter but on the examination of the subject concerned.

In the same vein, Chapman and Snyder affirm:

Teachers teach to the test. Particularly in high-stakes testing, teachers think they would be foolish not to. Governments evaluate schools, and often teachers, on the basis of students' test scores. Parents do too. Moreover, it has been shown that testing can be used to influence instructional activities at classroom level. The study carried out by London in 1997 on the Common Entrance Examination for allocating eligible primary school students to secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago showed that through the changes to a national test, a curriculum policy was implemented and, over time, teachers' classroom practices did change (2000: 460).

Therefore, changes in high-stakes testing can lead to the changes in teaching practices. As the World Bank Group (2002) indicates, the stakes of an examination affects key aspects of teaching, learning, and testing. Here, it is said that when the importance of the examination increases, the influence of the examination over teaching ('backwash effect') increases; neglect of non-examined curriculum subjects increases; pressures on students and teachers increase; confidence in external, objective modes of assessment increases, as does mistrust of school-based testing and subjective modes of assessment.

The Rwandan public examinations are seen as high-stakes tests. As Madaus (1988) argues, people, including teachers, perceive test results as linked to a high-stakes decision as they serve determine who receives graduation certification, who proceeds to further levels of education, and consequently, influence teachers and thus their teaching practices.

Finally, testing can be used to motivate teachers to improve their teaching. If achievement results are low, teachers may understand that they need to improve their teaching. If results are better, teachers may be positively motivated to work harder in order to produce an equally creditable performance or even more the following school year by their pupils.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide the theoretical framework underpinning the study on the impact of national examinations on teachers' practices. My work is based on two theories: motivational theory, and achievement motivation theory. I have two reasons for choosing these theories. It can be said that due to the important decisions which are made on the basis of national examination results, and considering the fact that a particular teacher is seen as 'good' or 'bad' based on the number of candidates who have succeeded in his/her class, teachers are throughout the academic year motivated by the examination to meet the standard required in preparing candidates to succeed. The examination results are the motive for teachers' particular practices. Studies discussed in Chapter three suggest that teachers are influenced by the "achievement needs that are made up of the following factors: wanting approval from experts, wanting to make money, wanting to succeed on [their] own, wanting respect from friends, wanting to compete and win, and wanting to work hard and excel" (<http://mentalhelp.net/psyhelp/chap4/chap4j.htm>). This encapsulates the reason why teachers perform the way they do, and motives that impacts their practices.

Concerning achievement motivation theory, teachers need to achieve success and tend to work towards success. This is the teachers' tendency to achieve success (Ts). Therefore, they have the motive to achieve success (Ms), or simply are motivated to achieve success.

Teachers have a need for achievement defined as “behaviour toward competition with a standard of excellence” (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell: 1953). Their success rate in public examinations motivates teachers personally. This is the incentive value of success (Is). Finally, teachers in their daily practices expect to be successful. They know that if they work hard, they will reach their goal, that is, a good success rate. Teachers come to believe that it is possible to succeed. There is the probability of success in national examination (Ps). Teachers’ tendency to achieve success would therefore be equal to their motivation to succeed x the way that success attracts them in their teaching practices x the probability that the success will occur. That is, $T_s = M_s \times P_s \times I_s$ (Atkinson and Raynor, 1974).

4.2. Motivation theory

In order to explain the theory of motivation, we need to define what ‘motive’ is because ‘motive’ and ‘motivation’ are two psychological terms that are related, and both serve to answer the question of why people in general behave the way they do. ‘Motive’ can be understood in the sense of need.

Atkinson (1957, 1981) argues that a large number of competing motives or needs are striving for expression at the same time, such as the need for achievement, the need for relationships, the need for power, and the need to be respected by others. Indeed initially, “research on achievement motivation focussed on the measurement of a particular motive denoted as “need for achievement or N-ACH” (Fyans, 1980: 3).

On one hand, motive can be seen as the reason for doing something, especially something that is hidden or not obvious. The word 'motive' is used when there is a specific social function to be performed. Someone's motive explains his or her behaviour. In this regard, teachers' 'outcomes' are the public examination results, and they form a large part of their motives. Then, the examination results could tell about teachers' practices. Peters (1960: 35) suggests that the word 'motive' is used to refer to a reason for and implies a directed disposition in the individual whose conduct is being assessed. He explains that a motive explains the reason why a person acts, a reason that is operative in the situation. Therefore, the motive may coincide with his reason but it must be the reason why he acts.

On the other hand, the term 'motivation' is derived from the Latin word motivus (a moving cause). It has been given many definitions, which have general consensus. That consensus is that motivation is "an internal state or condition (sometimes described as need, desire, or want) that serves to activate or energise behaviour and give it direction" (Huitt, 2001: 1). Franken (1994) added to this definition "the arousal, direction, and persistence of behaviour". McClelland has noted that: "From the commonsense point of view, motivation refers on one hand to conscious intents, to such inner thoughts, and on the other hand, looking at behaviours from the outside, motivation refers to inferences about conscious intents that we make from observing behaviours" (1987: 4). In other words, motivation refers to internal states of the individual that lead to instigation, persistence, energy, and direction of behaviour. Ordinarily, motivation includes goal direction. An individual may be likely to become fearful or anxious or hungry in certain circumstances as a motivational disposition,

but motivation as an active state occurs only in a given moment or situation when the organism is actually aroused, that is, motivated.

Psychologists distinguish between two sources of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Weiner, 1980). On one side, intrinsic motivation occurs when an activity satisfies basic human needs for competence and control, which makes the activity interesting and likely to be performed for its own sake rather than as a means to an end (Harackiewicz and Sansone, 2000). It occurs when individuals are motivated to feel interest in a particular task or course of action. Other psychologists maintain that interest resulting from a particular set of situational characteristics is not necessarily intrinsic motivation, and suggest that intrinsic motivation occurs when the activity is central to the self, or when it is associated with individual interest.

Extrinsic motivation occurs when motivation is based on something extrinsic to the activity or on something extrinsic to the person. Intrinsic motivation is simply a motivation with a source internal to the individual, while extrinsic motivation is a motivation with a source that is external to the person. Thus, the national examinations concerned by the present study may constitute an extrinsic motivation for final year teachers.

According to Vroom (1964), motivation is a multiplicative function of three factors: expectancy, instrumentality, and valance or value, which must be present in order for motivation to occur. In other words, motivation equals perceived probability of success (expectancy) x connection of success and reward (instrumentality) x value of obtaining goal

(valance, value). That is, if an individual does not believe he or she can be successful at a task or the individual does not see a connection between his or her activity and success, or the individual does not value the results of success, then the probability is lowered that the individual will engage in the required learning activity.

Therefore, all three variables must be high in order for motivation to be high. With regard to the topic under investigation, final year teachers might be expecting success in the national examination, might see the connection between preparing learners to meet the examination and the value of succeeding the examination. There would be, therefore, a probability that teachers would be fully engaged in their teaching activities. Thus, public examinations will have impacted their teaching practices.

In this study, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are considered because they motivate teachers' practices. On the one hand, teachers are intrinsically motivated when they express an interest in teaching. On the other hand, teachers are extrinsically motivated when the source of the motivation is external to them, for example, the national examination results. The way teachers do their work may be determined by the goal-directed motive they have, which is the success in the public examination. It may influence the way final year teachers plan, organise, and execute their daily pedagogic actions. The national examination as impacting on teachers' practices refers to the way it functions as an incentive, the way it attracts and influences their practices. In effect, “the incentive we feel depends on how attractive the possible outcomes are to us personally (relative to how unattractive the possible risks are to us)” (<http://mentalhelp.net/psyhelp/chap4/chap4j.htm>). Sansone and

Harackiewicz (2000: 1) argue that: “behaviour is motivated by the need or desire to achieve particular outcomes”. In our case, teachers’ practices are influenced by the motive to achieve success in national examinations.

Effectively, motivation may be essential to effective teaching. Motivation energises teachers and guides their behaviour toward reaching a particular goal. This is comparable to what Toates says, that: “it was argued that motivational systems are those that guide the animal’s goal-directed behaviour towards particular incentives. The animal will show a variety of different strategies to achieve the same end-point” (1986: 124).

In summary, the word ‘motivation’ brings to mind the image of striving for a goal, some kind of purposeful behaviour to satisfy a desire or need (Eggleton, 1978). Motivation is considered as “ a drive to sustain a particular behaviour and / or aim for a particular goal” (Hamilton, 1995: 150). Theoretically,

How motivated we are depends on (1) the strength of fairly consistent motives or needs inside of us, (2) our expectation of what outcomes certain actions will produce, and (3) how badly at this time we want a certain payoff over all the other wants we have and over the risks we face. The needs, expectations, and incentives are mostly learned; together these factors (our motivation) largely determine what we do and how far we get in life (<http://mentalhelp.net/psyhelp/chap4/chap4j.htm>).

4.3 Atkinson' s Theory of Achievement Motivation

4.3.1 Introduction

This sub-section aims to clarify achievement motivation theory and its relevance to the present study. It introduces the theory of achievement motivation developed by Atkinson, who explains the individual's tendencies to achieve success and to avoid failure, the resultant achievement-oriented tendency, the role of extrinsic motivation, and finally the expectancy of success as a motivational variable.

Atkinson developed a theory of achievement motivation, which includes a set of individual, environmental, and experiential variables among the immediate determinants of action. He views achievement-oriented behaviour as the resultant of a conflict between approach and avoidance tendencies. Associated with every achievement-related action are the possibility of success (with the consequent emotion of pride) and the possibility of failure (with the consequent emotion of shame). The different strengths of these anticipated emotions determine whether an individual will approach or avoid achievement-oriented activities. That is, achievement behaviour is viewed as the resultant of an emotional conflict between hopes for success and fears of failure.

Atkinson notes that:

The ideas of the theory are based primarily on the results of experiments in which individuals are classified as relatively high or low in need for achievement (N Achievement) in terms of the

frequency of imaginative responses suggesting their concern over performing well in relation to some standard of excellence (1978: 11).

4.3.2 The Tendency to Achieve Success

According to Atkinson and Raynor (1974), the strength of the tendency to achieve success (Ts), which is expressed in the interest and performance of an individual in a given task, is a function of three variables, which are multiplicatively related:

- Firstly, the need for achievement, also known as motive to achieve success (Ms), conceived of as a relatively general and stable disposition of personality.
- Secondly, the strength of expectancy or the probability that one will be successful at the task: probability of success (Ps).
- Lastly, the relative attraction of success in that particular activity or task, called the incentive value of success (Is).

The two later variables (Ps and Is) represent the effect of the immediate environment in which that individual is operating. In other words, the tendency to achieve success is a multiplicative function of the motive to achieve success, the probability to succeed and the incentive value of the success. Thus, $Ts = Ms \times Ps \times Is$.

The concept of motive to achieve success (Ms) here represents the individual disposition to strive for success. This is the achievement motive defined by McClelland as a relatively stable predisposition to strive for success. Atkinson defines the need for achievement as a

“capacity to experience pride in accomplishment” (1964: 214). Therefore, the achievement need is an affective disposition.

The concept of expectancy refers to the degree of belief that some act will be followed by some consequence. Thus, the probability of success (Ps) refers to the anticipation that an instrumental action will lead to the goal. Atkinson (1964: 275) explains that the expectancy or subjective probability serves to represent the associative link between performance of an act and the attainment of the goal. The incentive value of success (Is) or incentive value of an achievement goal is an affect, labelled ‘pride in accomplishment’. It is thus the attraction of success.

One can influence motivation by manipulating cues, which define an individual’s expectations concerning the consequences of his actions, and/or the incentive value of the consequences (or goals) produced by the action. It is assumed that the more difficult the task, the greater the incentive value or attractiveness of success at that task. This idea expresses a relationship between the incentive value of success (Is) and the subjective probability of success (Ps): $Is = 1 - Ps$.

However, anxiety is another factor to be taken into account in studies dealing with achievement motivation, as Atkinson and Raynor emphasise:

Whenever performance is related to some standard of excellence, what constitutes the challenge to achieve for one individual poses the threat of failure for another. The tendency to avoid failure associated

with anxiety is as fundamentally important a factor in achievement-oriented action as the tendency to achieve success. We treat this tendency, which is conceived of as an inhibitory tendency that functions to oppose and dampen the tendency to undertake achievement-oriented activities, as the source of the conscious experience of anxiety (1974: 16).

It can, I hope, be assumed that teachers tend to succeed. They may be motivated to achieve success. Good performance in the national examination might be the goal-direction for their practices. The possibility of succeeding as well as the incentive value of public examination results may influence their practices.

4.3.3 The Tendency to Avoid Failure

Atkinson (1978) notes that the tendency to avoid failure (T_f) is also a multiplicative function of the motive to avoid failure (M_{AF}), the probability of failure (P_f), and the incentive value of failure at that particular activity (I_f). Then, $T_f = M_{AF} \times P_f \times I_f$. The motive to avoid failure refers to the capacity to experience shame and humiliation after non-attainment of goal (failure). This is considered as fear of failure. Two environmental factors influence the avoidance of achievement activities: P_f and I_f . It is assumed that the incentive value of failure is a negative affect, 'shame', signifying that it is a dangerous event to be avoided. Atkinson argues, "It is assumed that the negative incentive value of failure, i.e., the repulsiveness of failure, is greater the easier the task. No one feels very bad when he fails at a very difficult task, but to fail when a task appears easy is a source of great embarrassment" (1978: 15). Thus, $I_f = -Ps$.

Since teachers struggle to achieve a good success rate in the national examinations, I assume that the tendency to achieve success is higher than it would otherwise be. Inversely, teachers' aspiration to achieve failure is nil, and the tendency to avoid failure is high.

4.3.4 Resultant Achievement-Oriented Tendency

Atkinson assumes that all individuals have acquired a motive to achieve success (M_s) and a motive to avoid failure (M_{AF}). Both are expressed in any situation when it is apparent to the individual that his/her performance will be evaluated in reference to some standard. One of these motives produces a tendency to undertake the activity; the other produces a tendency not to undertake the activity. There is, therefore, an approach-avoidance conflict.

It is also assumed that the two opposed tendencies combine additively and yield a resultant achievement-oriented tendency, which either motivates a willingness to approach or to avoid a certain strength, depending upon the relative strength of motive to achieve success and motive to avoid failure in the individual. That is, the resultant tendency to approach or avoid an achievement-oriented activity (T_A) equals $T_s - T_{.f}$.

4.3.5 The Role of Extrinsic Motivation

Atkinson claims that:

If for example, there is intrinsic interest or curiosity in a task, or a tendency to seek approval or to comply with an authority - all arbitrarily described as sources of 'extrinsic' motivation when we have focussed attention on the achievement-oriented process - then the tendency to avoid failure which would otherwise inhibit

performance completely may be overcome by a stronger approach (excitatory) tendency. Except in very rare cases, there are always a number of different 'extrinsic' components in the positive tendency to undertake activities that are viewed by an observer, as achievement-oriented activities (1978: 17-18).

Therefore, extrinsic motivation plays a great role for an individual to achieve a particular goal because it acts as an excitatory force. In this study, it is relevant to explore the role of extrinsic motivation in determining one's actions because the public examination results act as an extrinsic motivation for teachers' practices.

4.3.6 Expectancy of Success as a Motivational Variable

Atkinson (1978) writes that it may be assumed that when an individual undertakes an activity and succeeds, the expectancy of success at that task and similar tasks is increased and that when he fails, the expectancy of success at that task and similar tasks is decreased. Since the incentive value of success is inversely related to expectancy of success, the cognitive change produced by success and failure also produces a change in the incentive values of future success and failure. There is, subsequent to success and failure, a change in the strength of the tendency to engage in the same and similar activities or a motivational change.

The above idea can be augmented by what Thorndike called the Law of Effect. It is formulated as follows:

Of several responses made to the same situation, those which are accompanied or closely followed by satisfaction to the animal will,

other things being equal, be more firmly connected with the situation, so that, when it recurs, they will be more likely to recur; those which are accompanied or closely followed by discomfort to the animal will, other things being equal, have their connections with that situation weakened, so that, when it recurs, they will be less likely to occur. The greater the satisfaction or discomfort, the greater is the strengthening or weakening of the bond (in McClelland, 1987: 70).

It is described here ^{that} the satisfying situation as rewarding or reinforcing from the objective point of view, since it rewards or reinforces the responses that lead to it. Therefore, because of the way school authorities and the community in general may treat final year teachers following the publishing of the national examinations results, teachers tend to achieve success and avoid failure. They are extrinsically motivated by the success in these examinations and this expectation has a great impact on their teaching practices. Thus, their teaching practices are influenced by the national examinations.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

5.1 Research Paradigm

This is an empirical study dealing with primary final year teachers in Rwanda. As the title indicates, I have used a quantitative methodology. The research strategies and techniques by which data were collected and analysed attach a measured and quantifiable value to the items of the research instrument. In effect, this study aimed to capture teachers' views of the extent to which the national examinations influence their teaching practices in two districts of Kigali-City in Rwanda. The researcher conducted a survey of all final/sixth year primary teachers in the two districts in order to gather the opinions of a large number of teachers.

The research paradigm used is interpretive and focuses on actions of actors that are all final year teachers in the above districts. Effectively, "actions are only meaningful to us in so far as we are able to ascertain the intentions of actors to share their experiences. Interpretive researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them" (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000: 23).

The preferred procedure for gathering data from the research population was the survey, a systematic method of data collection. "Even when the information is available through other means, survey research may be easier, quicker, less expensive, or a more accurate way to get the required information" (Alreck & Settle, 1995: 3). Indeed, Borg and Gall (1983) note that

surveys are often used simply to collect information, such as the percentage of respondents who hold or do not hold a certain opinion. This was the case in my reporting of teachers' views on the impact of public examination on their practices.

The data collected were quantitative, since "survey designs provide a quantitative or numeric description of some fraction of the population sample through the data collection process of asking questions of people" (Fowler cited in Creswell, 1994: 117; Borg and Gall, 1980). Data were measured, quantified, and analysed. Thus, this study complies with the words of Marsh (1982) when saying that:

A survey refers to an investigation where: (a) systematic measurements are made over a series of cases yielding a rectangle of data; (b) the variables in the matrix are analysed to see if they show any patterns; (c) the subject matter is social.

Considering survey research, Scott and Usher influenced my choice of a research population when they note that:

Survey researchers (...) focus initially on a specified population. That is, they choose to concentrate on a group of seemingly like cases, e.g. all secondary schools in a locality or country, and work backwards so that the case is defined by the characteristics of the parent population, as it is presently understood (1999: 88).

This study concerns the whole population, composed of all sixth year teachers in Kacyiru and Nyarugenge. For this reason, the study is similar to a census when information is collected from the entire population (Borg and Gall, 1980).

5.2 Designing the Research Instrument

In survey research, Borg and Gall note, “the questionnaire and individual interview are the most common instruments for data collection” (1980: 406). I chose the use of the questionnaire as a tool for gathering data. This choice was made for practical reasons. Firstly, the administration of the research instrument had to be completed between April and May 2002 when teachers were working hard in preparing learners for the national examination. This national examination is generally written in June of each year. Teachers often do not have time for anything else during this period. The timetable extends from 8h00 to 17h00 for most of them. Secondly, it was not easy to reach the research sites (different schools) on several occasions. It would have been very difficult or even impossible to conduct individual interviews with teachers.

The construction of the questionnaire followed a long process, largely influenced by Gibbs (1997). It resulted from two focus group interviews. Gibbs (1997) indicates that a focus group research involves organised discussion with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences of a topic. A focus group is “a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research” (Gibbs, 1997).

Two focus group interviews were conducted and allowed the researcher to obtain several perspectives on teachers' views on the influence that the national examination had on their daily practice. I conducted focus group discussions because these discussions help to develop questions or concepts for the questionnaire. During focus group discussions, open-ended questions were used to maximise opportunities for discussion and response.

The first focus group interview was conducted at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus on the 6th of October 2001. Four Rwandan Masters students participated in that interview. All of them were male and former teachers. The discussion lasted two hours, i.e. from 16h00 to 18h00. This period is acceptable, as Gibbs (1997) affirms that a focus group session usually lasts from one to two hours.

The second focus group interview was conducted in Rwanda on the 4th of March 2002 with 6th year teachers affected directly by the study. Six teachers from two schools participated in the discussion. There were five females and one male. This focus group lasted one hour and 40 minutes, i.e. from 15h20 – 17h00.

During the focus group interviews, the researcher manually recorded the different views of the participants. The discussion could have been tape-recorded but it was felt that teachers might not have talked freely about such a sensitive topic as, the national examination. From the focus group interview results, the researcher generated a list of questions for the final questionnaire. At the end of each focus group discussion, refreshments were enjoyed, during which informal discussions on the topic continued.

The questionnaire was not only the result of the focus group interviews but also of the readings and experience of the researcher in the teaching profession. I myself have sat for the national examinations at all levels and have taught the final year of both primary and secondary schools. Students at both levels write national examinations with a common element: although the purpose of the national examination for the latter level is to certify the secondary school achievement, it enables secondary school leavers to qualify for further studies in public tertiary educational institutions. In the same manner, the purpose of the earlier level is to enable primary school leavers to further their studies in public and private subsidised secondary schools.

The questionnaire was in a structured format in order to require all respondents to answer within the same framework, and thus to facilitate data analysis. Youngman (1987:3) argues that “the questionnaire structure must include all facilities deemed to be necessary for a successful analysis”. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) justify the structure of the questionnaire used while noting, the larger the size of the sample, the more structured, ‘closed’ – that, highly directive of responses and numerical the questionnaire has to be. Furthermore, the study had to use some descriptive statistical techniques, as Cohen et al. (2000) point out that highly structured, closed questions are useful in that they can generate frequencies of response amenable to statistical treatment.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Each section had a heading under which the statements were numbered. The first section aimed to understand teachers’ views on the link between the national examination and the aims of primary education. This is justified

because teachers' practices might be influenced by the aims of primary school curriculum to which they should be teaching and the primary national examinations should assess these aims as well. In this section, for example, teachers were asked whether "*national examinations assess the skills needed to enter secondary school*". The second section dealt with teachers' perceptions of the impact of national examinations on their practices and on teacher self-image. Teachers' self-image, as produced by public examinations results, may act as an intrinsic motivation for their practices. One of the items of this section was, for instance, "*public examination results have a great impact on my teaching practice*". The last section concerned factors that teachers perceived to impact on candidates' success or failure in the public examinations. In this section for example, teachers had to reveal a level of agreement or disagreement on whether success in the national examination was due to the previous public examination papers on which they focused in their teaching. Actually, factors that teachers perceive as influencing or impacting on national examination results are likely to influence also their ways of teaching when preparing candidates to succeed in such examinations.

For the gradation of responses, a Likert scale was used. Youngman (1987) has argued that the Likert scale is the most common system, and it uses levels of agreement, usually with five response categories. In this study, the categories were respectively 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree', and 'don't know'. Following Youngman (1987) who noted that the respondents should be asked to tick their level of agreement for the list of statements, the respondents were asked to tick on the Likert scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of the statements listed (see Appendix 4: 4.1).

Before administering the questionnaire, it was first tested. It was given to three teachers who had participated in the second focus group interview to complete. The respondents were requested to make comments on the questionnaire, if necessary. Some items were revised as a result of the pilot study.

5.3 Research Site and the Research Population

The population of Rwanda, which occupies an area of 26,338 square kilometres, was estimated at 8.3 million in 2000, predominantly rural (90%), growing at 2.9% per annum, which is the highest population growth rate in the world. The majority of the population is young. Fifty per cent of the population were less than fifteen years of age (Ministry of Commerce and Finance, 2001: 257).

Kigali is the capital city of Rwanda. It has eight districts, including Kacyiru and Nyarugenge, where the survey was conducted. All final year teachers in these two districts formed a group of teachers for the study. The administrative map of Rwanda is shown in Appendix 1. However, the legend of the map is in French. Thus, 'ville' means town or city and 'Kigali-Ville' is Kigali-City.

All sixth year teachers in Kacyiru and Nyarugenge constituted the research population for this study. Not all of them completed all questions in the questionnaire. The data analysis showed that 44 teachers were located in Kacyiru and 31 in Nyarugenge. The age group of the majority (38) was 31 to 40 years. Twenty-six had taught in primary school for between

seven and eleven years, while thirty-eight had been teaching at the last year of that level for less than seven years. Sixty-one were trained in the primary teacher-training centres in their secondary education and 46 possessed the secondary certificate in teacher training (D₆ / D₇ leading eventually to university studies).

The census showed that Kacyiru district had eighteen schools with sixth year classrooms and fifty-three sixth year teachers, while Nyarugenge had eight schools with sixth year classrooms and thirty-eight sixth year teachers.

At district level, and through the Inspection of Education office, I identified the number of sixth year classrooms in each school per district. I found eighteen schools with 40 sixth year classrooms in Kacyiru and eight schools with 34 sixth year classrooms in Nyarugenge, the equivalent respectively to 40 class-teachers in Kacyiru and 34 class-teachers in Nyarugenge, making a total of 74 class-teachers. When administering the questionnaires at different schools, I realised that some schools had English-teachers who circulated between different classrooms. Others had specialist teachers of other subjects as well and for these schools, there was more than one teacher per 6th year classroom. For these reasons, the number of teachers has increased from 40 to 53 in Kacyiru and from 34 to 38 in Nyarugenge. The total population being studied thus became thus 91 sixth year teachers.

While identifying schools and sixth year classrooms in the office of Inspection of Education at district level, I asked to be helped to locate those schools. I then drew a sketch map of the school location in each district. This sketch map assisted a great deal in administering and

collecting the completed questionnaires. The sub-section which follows details the way in which I accessed data in the fieldwork.

5.4 Gaining Access to Data

5.4.1 Authorization by Local Administrators

I had a letter from my supervisor at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus (See Appendix 2) addressed to the people concerned, introducing me to them in order to gain access. I attached it to the letter I wrote to the Mayor of Kigali-City asking for authorisation to conduct the study in Kacyiru and Nyarugenge primary schools. I obtained the permission, signed by the Director of Education of Kigali-City. It was addressed to the Inspectors of Education in both districts where the survey was to be conducted. However, at Nyarugenge Inspection of Education office, it took two weeks to identify schools and class-teachers because the necessary documentation was not available on time.

5.4.2 Access to the Research Site (School Level)

The distribution of the questionnaire started on the 26 April 2002. I delivered the questionnaire personally to all schools and had therefore grouped schools according to their geographical location. I moved from one school to another referring to the sketch map since I was visiting schools located in the same region.

I met the Head of the school or in his/her absence his/her deputy. The bad starting point, however, was that, even if the Mayor of Kigali-City had written to the Inspectors of Education in the concerned districts authorising me to conduct the study and asking them to

support the study, none of the Heads of the schools was officially informed about it. I had to introduce myself to the Head of the school, and then show him / her the letter of authorisation from the Mayor of Kigali-City signed by the Director of Education in that entity (See Appendix 3).

In most of the schools, the Head of the school introduced me to the teachers. I then explained to the teachers how to complete the questionnaire. The distribution of the questionnaires was thus administered directly. In other schools, the distribution and return was administered indirectly. It was necessary to contact the respondents indirectly, using an agent within the group or the Head of the school or the person responsible for the school when teachers did not want to interrupt classes. In this case, the above persons had to give the questionnaires to the teachers. Teachers completed and returned them to the Head's office from which I collected them. In this case, the distribution and return of the questionnaires were achieved indirectly.

It was not easy for me to access the sites of schools or to have access to data for two main reasons. Firstly, the period before sitting the national examinations was difficult for both 6th year teachers and learners. That is why I stopped data collection during the whole week from Monday, 29 April till Friday, 2 May 2002 because teachers were invigilating and marking the preparatory competitive examinations that familiarised learners with the protocols of competitive examinations. Any task not related to preparing for that test was considered as unnecessarily time-consuming by teachers. In some schools, the Heads of the school asked me to come to collect the questionnaires a month later because teachers did not have time to

complete them. Secondly, this is a period of high rainfall in Rwanda. It was often raining heavily, causing flood disaster, for instance, in Nyabugogo valley in Kigali-City. As I did not have funds for research, it was very difficult and often impossible to acquire appropriate transport. I used bicycles, motorbikes and public taxis when possible, and even went on foot.

In one of the schools, the Head of the school complained that he had not benefited from the previous studies in which either he or his teachers participated. He said he would have prevented teachers from filling the questionnaires if he had been present when I distributed the questionnaires. However, when he realized that I was a lecturer in a higher/tertiary institution in which he could be a student, his attitude changed and he willingly assisted me.

5.4.3 Questionnaire Administration and Return

After the Head of the school had introduced me to teachers, each teacher received the questionnaire written in his / her language. I explained how to complete it and asked the teachers when they intended to finish completing the questionnaire. The date of collecting the completed questionnaires was then fixed. The questionnaires were left with teachers. In Nyarugenge district, a total of 38 questionnaires were given to sixth year teachers and 53 questionnaires to sixth year teachers in Kacyiru. The total number of questionnaires distributed to teachers was thus 91.

The distribution of the questionnaires took less time than the return. Almost everybody concerned was available at school, though it was sometimes necessary to distribute them

indirectly, as I have mentioned earlier. Collecting the completed questionnaires was most difficult and I went to schools several times to collect them from some respondents.

In effect, some teachers had left the completed questionnaires at home; others had simply forgotten about them, others had remembered but had forgotten to complete them, others did not have time to complete them. One teacher lost the questionnaire. For those who had forgotten, I had to return twice or even three or four times. For those who did not have time, I decided to abandon the process. The return of questionnaire ended on the 14 May 2002.

The distribution and return thus took three weeks. Out of 38 questionnaires distributed in Nyarugenge, 31 were returned. Out of 53 questionnaires distributed in Kacyiru, 45 were returned. In total, out of 91 questionnaires distributed, 76 questionnaires were therefore returned, that is, 83.51%. The loss rate of the questionnaire was 16.49%. Once the questionnaires were collected, data were then analysed and the data analysis procedures are developed below.

5.5. Data Analysis Procedures

I began by numbering all the questionnaires from one to 76 to avoid loss, double counting of results and confusion of the information when analysing data on the questionnaires. To analyse data, I specially referred to Brace, Kemp, and Snelgar (2000) and to Bryman and Cramer (1997) whose work made valuable suggestions on how to analyse data using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) for Windows. This program has the great

advantage of enabling researchers to count and analyse quantitative data very quickly and in many different ways (Bryman et al., 1997).

Referring to the information demanded on the questionnaire, variables were defined. In defining each variable, it was necessary to define variable labels, the missing values, types of variable and levels of measurement. Each question was considered as a variable under investigation. Therefore, data relating to the identification of respondents and each of the statements constituted variables to be studied. They were given names as suggested by the language of SPSS (See Appendix 5). The variables were then described by variable labels, which identified and categorised the data that had been collected. Each variable label was then given a value or code (See Appendix 5). This means that all data collected were coded and then introduced into the computer. Missing values were also coded as 0 for each variable label. The type of variable was defined as numeric, as Brace et al. (2000) recommend. The level of measurement was also defined for each variable. For the variables, such as sex, age, district, section followed in secondary school, experience in the teaching profession and experience in teaching the last year of primary school, the level of measurement has been defined as nominal. In effect, data collected was indicating how often a particular event occurred: this was frequency data or nominal data in the terms of Brace et al. (2000). For other variables, the level of measurement was ordinal, since the respondents had to answer by their level of agreement, i.e. strongly agree: 1; agree: 2; disagree: 3; strongly disagree: 4; don't know: 5.

Variables and their labels were noted in the computer in the same order as they were numbered on the questionnaire to facilitate the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire. In the same line, the level of agreement was noted in the same order from one to five, to facilitate reading of responses and their notation on the computer. The data file was then obtained. The data for the same variable were placed in the same column, and the data supplied by each respondent was placed in a single row, represented by the respondent's number.

When analysing the answers to the questionnaire, I realised that one respondent had misunderstood the instructions. Instead of ticking one level of agreement for each statement as indicated, he had chosen the level of agreement for only one statement within the whole section. He/she thus gave only three responses across the whole questionnaire. We could not therefore consider the blank responses as missing values. I decided to exclude that questionnaire, and 75 respondents therefore remained.

Data were introduced into the computer using SPSS software. The data file was then established using the defined variable names. The data file however used acronyms to simplify data presentation. These acronyms are defined in Appendix 5. The tables of frequencies of responses were given through SPSS when analysing data. Using descriptive statistics, I present and discuss the results in the next Chapter. Then, Chapter seven concludes and gives the implications of the study.

CHAPTER SIX: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

This study is a survey that used a quantitative approach to data analysis. Thus, descriptive statistics, using a Likert Scale were used to show the extent to which teachers perceive the impact of the national examinations on their teaching practices. The Likert Scale had five categories of responses, namely: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree', and 'don't know'. Teachers investigated had to reveal their level of agreement or disagreement for each of the items in the questionnaire.

The attention was focussed on three main issues. The first deals with teachers' views on the link between primary national examinations and the aims of primary education in Rwanda. Primary teachers have to aim to achieve the objectives assigned to primary education on one hand, and the primary national examination aims to assess whether these objectives have been met, on the other hand. Therefore, these objectives are likely to have an impact on teachers' practices. The second issue concerns the impact of these public examinations on teachers' practices and on teacher self-image. The last issue examines teachers' perceptions of the factors that impact on success or failure in the national examinations.

The tables presenting the results are given through the SPSS program. The word 'valid' in the tables is used to specify the value labels for which the respondents gave answers, in opposition to 'missing' of which the value is 0. In other words, the word 'missing' is used to

mark an answer which has been omitted, or which is confusing, while ‘valid’ indicates those who answered appropriately. Not all data are included in the tables within this chapter; some key tables have been selected for inclusion in the text, while other data, which are statistically described, are available in Appendix 6.

6.2 Teachers’ Perceptions of the Link between National Examinations and the Aims of Primary Education in Rwanda

6.2.1 The Selection Function of the National Examinations

As mentioned in chapter two, primary school children are prepared for secondary education and for life in society. In addition, at the end of primary education, the national examination results are used to select candidates for secondary education. These are the two aims of primary education with which this section will deal.

Two questions in the questionnaire focussed on the selection function of the national examinations. In this sub-section, the intention is to obtain teachers’ perceptions of whether their teaching aims, embodied in the curriculum, correspond with the public examination’s function of selecting candidates for secondary school. There is an obvious need to link the selection function of the national examination and the aim of preparing students for secondary education, as they constitute the goal-direction that might impact on teachers’ practices.

The following statement was formulated in the questionnaire: *"National examinations assess the knowledge needed to enter secondary school"*. Teachers had to reveal their level of agreement or disagreement on that item. Teachers' views are summarized in the table below.

Table 1: National examinations assess knowledge needed for secondary school

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	28	37.3	37.3	37.3
agree	36	48.0	48.0	85.3
disagree	4	5.3	5.3	90.7
strongly disagree	6	8.0	8.0	98.7
don' t know	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that 36 (48%) agreed and 28 (37.3%) strongly agreed with the statement. Only four (5.3%) disagreed and six (8%) strongly disagreed. Thus, 85.3% affirmed that the content of the national examinations assessed the knowledge needed to enter secondary education. With regard to these data, we can confirm that in the Rwandan national examinations as in other countries, the main purpose of the content included in the public examinations is to select the most able for a further level of education or for employment, and to certify their level of achievement (Desforges: 1989). These examinations should assess the curriculum taught that constitutes the prerequisites for further studies. For this reason, 85.3% of final year teachers believed that public examinations in Rwanda adequately assess the knowledge needed by students to enter secondary education.

Primary public examinations are given to pupils who are in their last year, and who have entered for them². This study explored whether teachers viewed the purpose of public examinations not as the evaluation of the achievement of primary education's objectives but only to select candidates for secondary school. Twenty-eight (37.3%) teachers under survey strongly agreed and eighteen (24%) agreed with the statement that: "*The purpose of the national examinations is not to evaluate the achievement of primary education's objectives but only to select candidates for secondary school*", while 22 (29.3%) disagreed and only seven (9.3%) strongly disagreed (See Table n° 1; Appendix 6). Hence, this study revealed that, for 61.3% of final year teachers, the aim of the national examinations was not to evaluate the achievement of primary school objectives but to select candidates for secondary school, as opposed to 38.6% with a different view.

The 38.6% may have paid more attention to the issue of the assessment function of the examination included in the statement. If the statement had simply asked whether the purpose of the national examinations was to select candidates for secondary school, the percentage of agreement might have been higher. In effect, the World Bank Group (2002) argues that the public examination is generally used to select students for the next level of education in a situation in which the number of places at each successive level is limited, and this is the case in Rwanda.

² It is necessary for each pupil to register formally for the national examination and it is therefore possible for a child or his/her parents to opt out of the examination. In fact, very few do so. A long illness, for example, might cause a pupil to defer examination to the following academic year.

However, 85.3% of teachers recognised that public examinations assess the knowledge needed for secondary school. Firstly, the national examinations are set on the primary school curriculum, which equips learners with knowledge that constitutes the necessary prerequisite for secondary education. Secondly, from the above findings, one can deduce that most of the teachers (85.3%) under investigation perceived the national examinations as a tool to assess pupils' level of achievement of primary school curriculum, and as the basis on whether to select them for secondary education.

6.2.2 National Examinations and Primary School Leavers' Social Skills

Looking at integration into social life as one of the objectives of primary education, teachers were asked whether: *"Throughout the content of the national examination, there were some aspects, which assessed social skills"*. These social skills are, for example, HIV/AIDS awareness, life skills, and conflict resolution skills. Thirty-nine (55.7%) teachers agreed and seven (10%) strongly agreed. Twelve (17.1%) disagreed and eight (11.4%) strongly disagreed. 65.7% of all sixth year teachers perceived the content of the national examinations to play some part in assessing social skills, as opposed to 28.5% who disagreed (See Table n^o 2; Appendix 6).

On the other hand, a number of final year teachers did not perceive that the national examinations assess skills needed for social life, which are included in the academic programme. On the statement that, *"All primary school subjects prepare the child in a certain way for social life but this aspect is not assessed by the national examinations"*, responses were: 14 (19.2%) strongly agreed and 27 (37%) agreed, while 21 (28.8%)

disagreed and six (8.2%) strongly disagreed. In total, 56.2% believed that the curriculum of primary education prepared learners for social life. However, they perceived that the social skills are not assessed by the national examinations as opposed to 37% who held an opposite point of view, and 6.8% who did not know (See Table n° 3; Appendix 6).

All subjects except Mathematics and Languages (Kinyarwanda, French, and English), were grouped in one examination paper called General Knowledge. This paper assessed skills such as History, Geography, Science and Elementary Technology (S.T.E) which includes Biology. Therefore, the above figures could show that social skills, such as HIV/AIDS awareness, conflict resolution, may be implicitly included in the content of the national examinations throughout different topics examined. Those who did not agree that the examination tested the necessary social skills (37%) might have wanted these skills to be explicitly assessed. However, there is no specific subject focussing specifically on social skills on the timetable of primary schools (see schedule in chapter two). This can explain the disparity between 37% of agreement, 28.8% of disagreement and only 8.2% of strong disagreement. The number of disagreements almost equals the number of agreement, but the difference between disagreement and strong disagreement is huge.

Since the primary school curriculum is intended both to prepare learners for secondary education and to provide skills for social life, the study examined whether teachers perceived that those students who succeed in the national examinations have acquired the necessary social skills for life in society. The following item aimed to gather teachers' views on whether those who perform well in the national examinations have actually acquired social

skills for life: “Those who succeed in the national examinations are *ipso facto* prepared for social life”. I am looking here at whether students were in fact exposed to critical social skills through the curriculum. In other words, do teachers perceive successful candidates to be at the same time skilled for social life? The table below contains teachers’ responses.

Table 2: Those who succeed are ipso facto prepared for social life

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	6	8.0	8.3	8.3
agree	26	34.7	36.1	44.4
disagree	18	24.0	25.0	69.4
strongly disagree	17	22.7	23.6	93.1
don' t know	5	6.7	6.9	100.0
Total	72	96.0	100.0	
Missing 0	3	4.0		
Total	75	100.0		

With regard to this issue, 26 (36.1%) teachers agreed and six (8.3%) strongly agreed with the idea whilst eighteen (25%) disagreed and seventeen (23.6%) strongly disagreed. Five (6.9%) did not know. The study found that 48.6% agreed that pupils who succeeded in the public examinations were *de facto* prepared for social life while 44.4% disagreed. Firstly, the content of the curriculum focussed on the knowledge required to enter secondary school and for integration into society. Secondly, the public examination papers were based on the same curriculum. Consequently, those who succeeded can be said to have mastered the primary curriculum, and as Madaus says (1988), if the skills are well chosen, and if the tests truly measure them, then the goals of instruction are explicit, and teachers as well as students’ efforts are focussed on well-defined targets.

6.3 Teachers’ Perceptions of the Impact of the National Examinations on their Practices and on their Self-image

6.3.1 Teachers’ ‘Goal direction’ in their Teaching

This sub-heading aims to capture teachers’ ‘goal directions’ for their teaching. ‘Goal direction’ refers to the ultimate goal, as the teachers’ first objective, which guides their pedagogical practice. This is related to the two main objectives of primary education mentioned above.

Teachers had to reveal their level of agreement or disagreement on the statement that, “*In my teaching practice, my first objective is to prepare pupils for the national examination*”. To prepare learners for the national examinations as the first objective of teaching reveals the ‘goal-direction’ for teachers’ practices. In other words, the above statement aimed to capture teachers’ views on what they think is the motive for their daily teaching practices. Teachers’ responses are summed up below:

Table 3: Preparing for the examination as the first objective of teachers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	21	28.0	28.0	28.0
agree	30	40.0	40.0	68.0
disagree	15	20.0	20.0	88.0
strongly disagree	8	10.7	10.7	98.7
don' t know	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that 21 (28%) strongly agreed and 30 (40%) agreed. Fifteen (20%) disagreed and eight (10.7%) strongly disagreed. If teachers’ first objective was to prepare learners for the national examinations, it may be concluded that they were teaching to them. With regard

to this assumption, this study revealed that 68% of final year teachers reported that they were teaching to the national examinations, as opposed to 30.7% who said they were not teaching to them. For the latter, even if they prepared pupils for the national examination, this was not their first objective. Thus, the competitive examinations were a 'goal direction' for 68% of teachers investigated.

In effect, to understand of teachers' practices, it is necessary to look at what they try to do in the teaching-learning situation. They have a goal to attain, which is success in the national examination. Teachers have the need for achievement (N-ACH), and strive to achieve the goal-directed action, which is success in the national examinations. Since the Rwandan national examinations are 'high-stakes' tests, due to the important decisions made on the basis of the examination results for both pupils and teachers, the study suggests that many teachers were teaching to the tests. Moreover, Madaus (1988) asserts that if important decisions are presumed to be related to test results, like in Rwanda, teachers will teach to the test, and that 'high-stakes' tests have a strong influence on instruction, giving students and teachers specific goals to attain.

The second goal investigated was the issue of the cultivation in pupils of skills for social life as the first objective of teachers in their daily practices. Again, if this is the first objective of teachers, it will be a 'goal direction' for their teaching. The intention here is to gather teachers' perceptions as to whether, when they teach, they prioritise the preparation of learners for social life as a motive for their teaching. This means, to equip them with social skills, such as life skills, HIV/AIDS awareness, conflict resolution. Teachers had to say

whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or they don't know, to the statement that: *"In my practice, my first objective is to prepare pupils for social life"*. Their responses showed that most of them had such an objective. In fact, 24 (33.8%) strongly agreed and 33 (46.5%) agreed that in their daily practices, their first objective was to equip learners with skills for social life. This means that it was the goal aimed for in the case of 80.3% of final year teachers under survey. Only eight (11.3%) disagreed and five (7%) strongly disagreed, that is 18.3%. The table below summarizes the responses.

Table 4: Preparing for social life as the first objective of teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	24	32.0	33.8	33.8
	agree	33	44.0	46.5	80.3
	disagree	8	10.7	11.3	91.5
	strongly disagree	5	6.7	7.0	98.6
	don' t know	1	1.3	1.4	100.0
	Total	71	94.7	100.0	
Missing	0	4	5.3		
Total		75	100.0		

It is clear that more teachers report that their aim is to equip learners with skills for social life (80.3%) than those reporting that it is to prepare pupils for secondary education (68%) as a first objective. These two objectives are not mutually exclusive. In preparing students for secondary education, teachers should give equal attention to all parts of the curriculum prescribed for primary education, which would meet the above two objectives of teachers. The preparation for social life is broader than the preparation for secondary school because students need social skills for life in the school community or outside the school.

6.3.2 Impact of the National Examinations on Curriculum Implementation

Given the fact that the examination system influences teaching practices, it therefore impacts on curriculum. This study looks at the extent to which final year teachers in their daily practices gave priority to all subjects prescribed by the official timetable.

Teachers had to deal with the statement that, *“More time and attention are devoted to preparing for the main national examination subjects”*, that is, Mathematics, French or English, for example. On the above statement, 26 (35.6%) strongly agreed and 32 (43.8%) agreed while nine (12.3%) disagreed and six (8.2%) strongly disagreed with the statement (See Table n° 4; Appendix 6). In their daily practices, 79.5% of final year teachers reported that they focus on the main subjects prescribed on the timetable, as opposed to 20.5 % who did not. In fact, the main subjects were the most important as they are allotted more marks and thus, influence the national examination results to a greater extent.

Furthermore, when teachers are teaching to the test, there is a risk that they may focus on the previous examination topics that have frequently been assessed. This motivated me to enquire whether teachers were doing so. In this study, however, only seven (9.3%) strongly agreed and 29 (38.7%) agreed that teaching emphasised the previous public examination topics, which were likely to be repeated. Twenty-one (28%) disagreed and eighteen (24%) strongly disagreed. Forty-eight percent of final year teachers reported that they focussed on the previous examination topics, as opposed to 52% who disagreed (See Table n° 5; Appendix 6). Thus, teachers were divided on this statement. In effect, topics may change every year but in the main subjects such as Mathematics and Languages, teachers often

repeated the previous exam topics while preparing learners for the examination in order to familiarize them with the way the examinations are set.

At primary education level in Rwanda, there is a fixed timetable but teachers may make it flexible according to a particular moment and particular need. On the statement that the timetable was followed absolutely without any consideration of importance of subjects, ten (13.5%) strongly agreed and 24 (32.4%) agreed when 22 (29.7%) disagreed and eighteen (24.3%) strongly disagreed. Teachers who said they did not care about the importance of subjects and followed the official timetable as it was given represented 45.9%, and those who said they were flexible according to what was needed represented 54% (See Table n^o 6; Appendix 6). Since public examination results will be used to judge teachers, it seems that much effort is devoted to it to avoid humiliation, and to increase the good reputation of the teacher as well as that of the school. Some courses like Sports or Religious knowledge, for instance, might not be taught when the public examination approaches, and this time will be devoted to subjects such as Mathematics or Languages that will most influence the examination results.

6.3.3 The Impact of the National Examinations on Teaching Practices and on Teacher Self Image

Teachers, when preparing learners for the national examination, aim to achieve the goal of success. This goal is a force in their teaching practices as it drives them to act in the way they do. In this study, teachers had to respond to the statement that, *“The national examination is the driving force for my teaching practices”*. Responses are summarized below:

Table 5: National examination as a driving force for teachers' practices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	18	24.0	24.3	24.3
	agree	20	26.7	27.0	51.4
	disagree	18	24.0	24.3	75.7
	strongly disagree	15	20.0	20.3	95.9
	don' t know	3	4.0	4.1	100.0
	Total	74	98.7	100.0	
Missing	0	1	1.3		
Total		75	100.0		

Their levels of agreement or disagreement on the above statement were that eighteen (24.3%) and 20 (27%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed whereas eighteen (24.3%) and fifteen (20.3%) respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed with the idea that the national examination was the driving force that determined their practices. Consequently, 51.3% of teachers recognised the incentive function of the national examination, as opposed to 44.3% who had a different view.

It is clear that teachers must cope with the pressure of the national examinations in preparing candidates to meet them. Many strive to teach well so that their pupils obtain very good results and are classified high on a national scale. In the Rwandan context, it is as if final year teachers are pushed by the “achievement needs that are made up of the following factors: wanting approval from experts, wanting to make money, wanting to succeed on [their] own, wanting respect from friends, wanting to compete and win, and wanting to work hard and excel” (<http://mentalhelp.net/psyhelp/chap4/chap4j.htm>). For this reason, the public examinations act as an incentive for teachers to strive to achieve success. “The incentive we feel depends on how attractive the possible outcomes are to us personally”

(<http://mentalhelp.net/psyhelp/chap4/chap4j.htm>). The incentive value of the national examinations was revealed in the efforts that teachers put into focussing heavily on the main examination subjects when preparing pupils for the examinations (79.5%), as shown earlier in Sub-section 6.3.2. Since national examination results may be used ‘to judge’ teachers, much effort is devoted to it to obtaining good results to avoid humiliation, and to increase good standing in the community and maintain their credibility.

Being a mode of assessment, the national examination results allow for evaluation of pupils’ as well as teachers’ work. Thus, these results have a great impact on teachers’ self image as well as on their teaching practices. In order to find out whether 6th year teachers were aware of the effect of the public examination results on their teaching, they were asked to reveal their level of agreement or disagreement on the statement that, “*National examination results have a great impact on my teaching practices*”. Results on this issue are presented below:

Table 6: The impact of the national examination results on teachers' practices

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	36	48.0	48.0	48.0
agree	34	45.3	45.3	93.3
disagree	2	2.7	2.7	96.0
strongly disagree	1	1.3	1.3	97.3
don' t know	2	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

Thirty-six (48%) strongly agreed and 34 (45.3%) agreed while only two (2.7%) disagreed and one (1.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. For most of the teachers under investigation (93.3%), national examination results were perceived as having a great impact on their teaching practices. School authorities, parents, and the community in general

appraised teachers on the basis of pupils' performance in the public examinations. Therefore, good performance leads to a positive self-image for the teacher. He/she is motivated to achieve the same or better performance in the following academic year. Owing to the importance given to the use of public examination results by education decision-makers, competitive examinations may determine the way teachers plan, execute, and evaluate their pedagogic actions.

This study found that 61 (81.3%) of 75 teachers under survey strongly agreed that good results led to honour for the teachers and their respective schools, and fourteen (18.7%) agreed. Not even one teacher disagreed, as indicate in this Table:

Table 7: Good results bring honour to the teacher and the school

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	61	81.3	81.3	81.3
agree	14	18.7	18.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

All teachers under survey (100%) reported the positive effect of good examination results on themselves as well as on the school. When pupils have failed, teachers in turn were humiliated or not highly viewed by the community. Moreover, the study also explained the extent to which teachers agree or disagree with the statement that, "*The teacher is looked down upon by the community when his/her results are poor*". Here, teachers were divided. Fourteen (18%) strongly agreed and 24 (32.4%) agreed while nineteen (25.7%) disagreed and eleven (14.9%) strongly disagreed with that statement while eight (8.1%) did not know and one (1.3%) omitted the response. Thus, half (50.4%) of the teachers perceived the

community as viewing them negatively when their pupils have badly performed in the national examination, as opposed to 40.6% who disagreed (See Table n° 7; Appendix 6)

The above findings seem to show that the national examination results do not impact only teachers' practices but also on their self-esteem. Teachers' self-image inevitably affects their teaching practices. The success rates per school, per district and per province are compared and classified. Sometimes the best pupils at national, provincial, district or school levels are rewarded. A particular teacher, school, district or province could be seen as 'good' or 'bad', based on whether the results have been good or bad. For instance, when this study was being carried out, the National Examinations Council published the primary national examination results for the school year 2001/2002. Kigali-City came first on the list of twelve provinces in Rwanda. The Kacyiru and Nyarugenge districts targeted in the present study were respectively the second and the third over eight districts in Kigali-City. This situation is likely to influence teachers' daily practices for the next school year as well as the way they view themselves.

For both teaching practices and teacher self-image, it can be said that when pupils have written the public examinations, all actors, namely students, teachers, parents, wait for the results with anticipation. Public examination results (the possible outcomes that are the results) might influence final year teachers' practices in the sense of extrinsic motivation, because the tendency is to teach to the examinations, owing to the feedback from the examination results. Teachers are appraised on the basis of the examination results. This

appraisal affects them and seems to act as a positive reinforcement in case of a good success rate.

Even if only 51.3% recognised the incentive value of the national examinations as influencing their practices as opposed to 44.3% who do not, this study shows that teachers pursued one goal which directed their pedagogical action: good success rate in the national examination. It is worth noting that, this goal does not exclude skills needed for social life that 65.7% of teachers reported as being assessed by the national examinations. To be effective, students entering secondary school should be equipped with specific skills for integration in society, as discussed earlier in Sub-section 6.3.1. These goals are likely to be achieved by final year teachers. As Locke & Latham (1990) explain, goals and intentions are immediate precursors and regulators of human action.

Basing the argument on Atkinson's theory of achievement motivation discussed in the theoretical framework of this study (chapter four), I can say that final year teachers need to achieve success in order to maintain their self-esteem. This is the teachers' tendency to achieve success (Ts). Therefore, they had the motive to achieve success (Ms). Consequently, final year teachers had the need for achievement defined as "behaviour toward competition with a standard of excellence" (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell, 1953). The achievement of a good success rate in public examinations reinforced teachers in their practices. Here, 51.3% reported the national examination to be a driving force for their practices. This is the incentive value of success (Is). Finally, teachers in their daily practices expected to be successful. They knew that it was possible to succeed, because, as discusses

later in 6.4.1.1, 90.6% reported that the success was due to their effort in preparing learners for the examinations. There was a probability of success (P_s). Final year teachers' tendency to achieve success would therefore be equal their motivation to obtain good success rate \times the way that success drives their good teaching practices \times the probability for the success to occur. That is, $T_s = M_s \times P_s \times I_s$ (Atkinson and Raynor, 1974).

At the same time, "trying to meet a standard of excellence may not be motivated solely by hope for success, but also fear of failure" (Pawlik and Rosenzweig, 2000:199). Final year teachers tended to avoid failure (T_f) by striving for success and adopting different strategies in preparing learners to succeed the examinations. In their teaching, 68% said that to prepare learners for the examination was their first objective. Most of the teachers (79.5%) indicated that more time and attention was devoted to preparing learners for the examinations. For 93.3%, the examination results had a great impact on their teaching practices. All teachers (100%) reported that good examination results brought honour to them as well as to the school to which they belonged. Therefore, teachers did their best to avoid shame and humiliation, resulting from given non-attainment of a goal (success), that is, failure. Teachers had a fear of failure, and were motivated to avoid it (M_{AF}) because with it, they were humiliated, seen as losers, and this in turn negatively impacted on their reputation and credibility. Teachers' probability of failure (P_f) was revealed by their determination to succeed. For instance, 90.6% of teachers reported that success was due to the effort they put into preparing learners for the examination (see 6.4.1.1). In other words, final year teachers strove to do well and to reduce the probability of failure. The incentive value of failure avoidance (I_f) was revealed by the negative belief that failure was a risky event to be

avoided, since it led to humiliation (a kind of punishment). Furthermore, 51.3% reported that they could expect to be looked down on by the community in the case of poor results in the national examinations (Atkinson and Rynor, 1974).

Effectively, “being rewarded for striving increases our achievement motive; being punished for unsatisfactory behaviour and having our successes disregarded leads to a fear of failure. To the extent that we are self-reinforcing, we could presumably increase our achievement motivation by emphasising our successes and simply using our failures as cues for us to try harder” (<http://mentalhelp.net/psyhelp/chap4/chap4j.htm>).

Final year teachers operated within two reinforcing tendencies. That is, they wanted to achieve success and at the same time, they wanted to avoid failure, thus, experiencing an approach-avoidance conflict. This was due to the evaluation of their performance in reference to examination results. Hence, there is the resultant tendency to approach or avoid an achievement-oriented activity in their practices.

In addition, a good success rate (goal attained) is likely to be a driving force for teachers, and this plays a role in determining their pedagogical actions. Teachers attempt to prepare their class for the examinations in ways they have found successful. It can be said that final year teachers were highly-motivated achievers, closely related to optimistic, highly-motivated students. “They expect to do very well, they work very hard, they enjoy their success, and, if they should fail, they automatically and immediately apply ‘ I couldn’t help it’ defence of the ego (and optimistically take on the next challenge)”

(<http://mentalhelp.net/psyhelp/chap4/chap4j.htm>). In fact, for 93.3% of teachers, good results had an impact on their teaching practices; 100% were positively appreciated from their hard work that led to success, and for 90.6%, success was due to their effort in preparing learners for the exam.

6.4 Factors Impacting on Success and Failure in Public Examinations in Rwanda

6.4.1 Factors that Cause Success

6.4.1.1 Teachers' Commitment

In a teaching–learning situation, the learner is the first agent of his/her education. However, the teacher has also a major role to play in creating an appropriate learning atmosphere. With respect to national examinations, I was interested in the extent to which teachers perceived the role that they play is maximising pupils' success. Therefore, I inquired as to what they attributed pupils' success to. They were asked to give their level of agreement or disagreement on three statements concerning their commitment in achieving success. The first statement related to whether pupils' success was due to the efforts that teachers put into preparing them for the national examinations. The second related to the special attention that teachers paid to the pupils whom they assumed likely to succeed it, and the last was related to the emphasis they put on the previous examination topics. These factors may influence their teaching practices. Although these aspects have been discussed earlier, the aim here was to examine teachers' perceptions on causes of success.

To the statement that success in the public examination was due to "*The effort I put into preparing learners for the national examination*", results are presented below:

Table 8: Success as due to teachers' efforts in preparing for the exam

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	28	37.3	37.3	37.3
agree	40	53.3	53.3	90.7
disagree	4	5.3	5.3	96.0
strongly disagree	3	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

It will be seen that 28 (37.3%) strongly agreed and 40 (53.3%) agreed that their pupils' success was due to the effort they have put into preparing pupils for the examinations, whereas four (5.3%) disagreed and three (4%) strongly disagreed. For the great majority of teachers (90.6%), the success rate in the national examinations was due to the degree of their engagement in preparing learners for them. In effect, as said in chapter three, in high-stakes tests, much effort and attention is devoted into preparing students to meet the examinations.

In this study, I have assumed also that teachers may focus on some students that they assume are more likely to succeed. In this regard, on the item that success was due to "*The special attention I pay to the pupils who have a good chance of succeeding*", eleven (14.7%) strongly agreed and 25 (33.3%) agreed that their pupils' success was due to the special attention they had paid to those pupils whom they assumed to stand a better chance of succeeding in the national examinations while 27 (36%) disagreed and twelve (16%) strongly disagreed. Teachers are fairly equally divided, 48% of agreement against 52% of disagreement (See Table n° 8; Appendix 6).

In their teaching, some teachers in the study focussed on the previous public examination topics in order to produce an increase in the success rate for the current school year. Four

(5.3%) teachers strongly agreed that this was their practice, and 31 (41.3%) agreed, whereas seventeen (22.7%) disagreed and 22 (29.3%) strongly disagreed (See Table n° 9; Appendix 6). This means that 46.7% said that pupils' success was due to the fact that they focussed on the previous examination topics in their teaching. As discussed in the literature review, teachers often do this to familiarize their candidates with the examination setting, and they hope that these or similar topics may be repeated. This practice can lead to the creation of a non-official curriculum. 52% had an opposite view. Experience has shown that, in high-stakes-tests systems, teachers, while preparing students for the test, revise the previous national examinations so that the learners become familiar with the way national examinations are set, and also with the content frequently assessed. In Rwanda, 6th year teachers generally set the term examinations in the same 'spirit' as the national examinations to familiarize candidates with the national examinations. The topics that are assessed in previous public examinations will be set because teachers think they will be assessed again. Indeed, as said in chapter three of this dissertation, one of the disadvantages of a public examination is that teaching can emphasise those topics that are assessed in high-stakes tests instead of teaching the whole curriculum. The special attention paid both to previous examination topics, and to the borderline pupils is aimed at enhancing the success rate in the national examinations.

Effectively, even if public examinations have the advantage of affecting positively the curriculum and teaching, they also have a negative impact. There is no doubt that public examinations often determine in a positive way the content of the curriculum, the pedagogy, and the evaluation of what is taught. But, public examinations have some disadvantages in

the Rwandese context. Firstly, because results are used as a way of making teachers accountable, some teachers focus their attention on able students and thus, neglect many of the pupils who will dropout of the school if they fail. This practice could lead to education only for the *elite*. Secondly, an unofficial curriculum could be created through the emphasis on the previous examination topics. Learners could be taught the previous examinations instead of the entire curriculum, and those elements of the curriculum which were not often assessed, would be neglected. These aspects may nevertheless be important for the great number of school leavers entering life in society out of school.

6.4.1.2 Factors Related to State/Ministry of Education Policies

It is the responsibility of the State represented by the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to decide on the number of those who can enter secondary education in public and private subsidised secondary schools on the basis of the places available. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the National Examinations Council (which belongs to the Ministry of Education) to set the examination, to mark, to publish the results, and to place successful candidates in different secondary schools.

The practice in reality is that the pass rate is contingent upon the number of available places for students in secondary education, and the way in which candidates have performed. In other words, if more places are available, a greater number of students will achieve a pass result. The Ministry sets the cut-off point (that is, the cut-off overall average mark) at which students will pass or fail depending on the number of places available in secondary education. For instance, if for a given academic year, there are 10 000 places in secondary

schools, and 11 000 are above 50%, the cut off can be 53% to fill the 10 000 places. This means that in this year, students below 53% will have failed the examinations. However, if the following academic year, there are 10 000 places in secondary schools, and only 9 000 have got 50% and above, the cut-off will be 47%, for example, to fill 10 000 places. Students below 47% will have failed the examination, while those above 47% have succeeded. The norm for a pass changes depending on the number of seats available for secondary education as well as the general performance of the candidates in that particular national examination, because the principle is to compare a particular candidate with others on a national scale. After completing the national examination, students who do not pass, and whose parents are economically advantaged, can apply for private secondary education. The remaining students leave school, as there is no other alternative for an academic career.

The study looked at whether the number of places available in secondary schools could be a factor of success in public examinations. Seventeen (22.7%) teachers strongly agreed and 25 (33.3%) agreed that the percentage of pupils who succeed in the national examinations depended on increased number of places available in secondary schools, while sixteen (21.3%) disagreed and ten (13.3%) strongly disagreed (See Table n° 10; Appendix 6). That is, 56% agreed and 34.6% disagreed.

The study also examined whether success in the national examination was due to the *"easiness of the examination"*. Twenty-five (33.3%) agreed that pupils succeeded because the examination had been easy, and four (5.3%) strongly agreed, while 25 (33.3%) disagreed and eighteen (24%) strongly disagreed (See Table n° 11; Appendix 6). Thus, for 57.3% of

teachers, the number of those who entered secondary schools did not depend on the easiness of the national examination. Teachers were aware of the objectivity in promoting pupils at secondary education. Due to the limited number of places available in public and private subsidised secondary schools, the public examination is used as a selection instrument of candidates for that level of education. The results of the study suggest that the success rate depended on available places in secondary schools. The State/MINEDUC should focus on that problematic factor, and aim to increase the number of places in secondary education.

6.4.2 Factors that Cause Failure

6.4.2.1 Lack of Teacher Commitment

Teachers were aware of the role they had to play so that pupils succeed. Aiming to know whether they think they could themselves be a cause of failure, I asked them whether the lack of commitment of a particular teacher could be a reason for pupils' failure. The statement was that, pupils failure in the national examination was due to the "*Lack of commitment by the teacher in preparing pupils for the national examinations*". Teachers' responses showed that eight (11%) strongly agreed and 27 (37%) agreed, contrary to seventeen (23.3%) who disagreed and eighteen (24.7%) who strongly disagreed with the statement (See Table n° 12; Appendix 6). The cumulative percent of agreement was 47.9% when the cumulative percent of disagreement was 50%. Thus, teachers are divided on their role in pupils' failure. The fact that there is denial on this issue seems to suggest an ego defence mechanism at work. This finding seems to be a contradiction because the majority of teachers indicated that their main aim is to focus on getting students to pass the examinations, yet, in this response, 50% do not agree that their lack of commitment can cause students' failure.

6.4.2.2 Factors Related to the State/ Ministry of Education

Teachers were asked whether the level of difficulty of the examination was the cause of the pupils' failure. Among them, ten (13.3%) strongly agreed and 30 (40%) agreed that pupils' lack of success was due to the difficulty of the examination, while 22 (29.3%) disagreed and twelve (16%) strongly disagreed (See Table n° 13; Appendix 6). It is thus clear that, 53.3% considered the difficulty of the examination as a cause of pupils' failure as opposed to 45.3%.

Moreover, for some teachers, the number of those who succeed depends upon the places available in secondary schools because the limited places in secondary schools are considered to limit success rates. In this regard, eighteen (24.7%) strongly agreed and 25 (34.2%) agreed that pupils' failure was due to the very limited places available in public and private subsidised secondary schools, while twenty (27.4%) disagreed and only seven (9.6%) strongly disagreed with this view (See Table n° 14; Appendix 6). That is, 58.9% of agreement, as opposed to 37% of disagreement.

Therefore, the study can confirm that teachers perceive that if there are fewer opportunities in public and private subsidised secondary schools, fewer pupils will pass. Teachers who had a different point of view may believe that success in the national examinations means that students have mastered the primary education curriculum. Primary school leavers who are not selected for public and subsidised secondary schools have the opportunity to enter private secondary schools. All secondary school students in Rwanda, either in public and subsidised, and private schools sit for the same national examinations, for both ends of first cycle and

second cycle. Therefore, there is a contradiction between the notion of a competitive examination and level of difficulty of the examination in the Rwandan context. In most countries, a pass mark is set for a competitive examination which remains fixed and applied each year, for example, 50% denotes a pass mark. All students who pass are able to access secondary education. In Rwanda, on the other hand, the pass mark fluctuates depending on the number of places in the secondary education. If for example, the examination proved difficult and overall average pass mark was low, the cut-off for a pass, and for access to secondary education will change. For example, if the highest mark in one particular year is 75%, the Rwandan National Examinations Council will list students from the highest to the lowest, and will start counting students from 75% downwards until the number of available places in secondary schools is filled. All students below the cut-off, which may be 45%, will then have failed the examination.

If in another year the examination proved to be easier and students overall scored high, the pass mark for the examination and the cut-off mark to access places in secondary education also changes. If, for example, the highest mark is 97%, Rwandan National Examination Council will start counting from 97% downwards until all places are filled. This may then result in the pass mark set at 50%, and therefore, the cut-off point for places in secondary education changes. Therefore, as said earlier, the number of places available at secondary education level causes success when they are increased and failure when they are reduced.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

7.1 Introduction

This last chapter has two aims. The first aim is to provide a general conclusion while giving at the same time key findings of the study, and answering the research question that guided the study, while the second aim is to deal with the implications of the study.

7.2 Conclusion

The present study was conducted in the Kacyiru and Nyarugenge districts in Kigali-City, Republic of Rwanda. A quantitative methodology using a survey approach was used to capture final year teachers' perceptions of the extent to which national examinations impact on their teaching practices. The study used a structured questionnaire as a tool for data gathering.

The study considered three key elements. Firstly, the study looked at teachers' views on the link between national examinations and the aims of primary education, as these two may influence curriculum practices. Secondly, the study was concerned with the impact of public examinations on teachers' practices and on teacher self-image. Lastly, it dealt with the factors that teachers perceived to influence candidates' success or failure in the national examinations.

In linking the aims of primary education and the national examinations written at the end of this level of education in Rwanda, most final year teachers perceived the national examinations as assessing the skills needed to enter secondary education. A large number of teachers were of the view that within the content of national examinations, there were some aspects that assessed social skills needed for life. However, opinions were divided on whether pupils who succeeded in these public examinations were *ipso facto* prepared with skills for social life.

Throughout the school year, a good success rate in these national examinations was a goal-direction for teachers' practices. High-stakes test results acted as a motivational factor for teachers' practices. In the Rwandan primary national examinations, most of final year teachers aimed to produce a large number of candidates who were highly classified at national scale, and socially well skilled. These teachers strive to achieve the above goals. Many were motivated to achieve success (a good success rate), which in turn, acted as an incentive for their practices.

Effectively, in their teaching practices, most of the teachers agreed that an important objective was to prepare pupils for social life. However, for many final year teachers, the first objective was to prepare learners for the final examinations and thus, it may be implied they were teaching to them. More time and attention was devoted to the main competitive examination subjects that were known to influence the examination results to a greater extent.

In fact, since the beginning of the school year, a good success rate is the goal for teachers to attain. The incentive value of the national examination was revealed through different strategies adopted to obtain good results. Teachers reported that they direct their attention and energies in preparing candidates to succeed in national examinations by emphasising the main examination subjects, focussing on the previous examination topics, and putting their efforts on good students and borderline candidates. More than half of the teachers in the survey declared the national examinations to be the driving force for their practices. In fact, most of the teachers reported that, a good success rate affected the teacher positively leading to his/her honour and increasing his/her reputation, whereas failure led to his/her humiliation, and decreased credibility.

Indeed, most of the teachers were aware of the influence of the national examination results on their teaching practices. In effect, these results were used for important decisions for the future of the learners on one hand, and, teachers themselves were 'judged' in accordance with their pupils' performances, on the other hand. All teachers investigated were aware of the positive effect of good national examination results on themselves, and on the school to which they belonged. This served to enhance their self-image. Teachers were motivated to achieve success because they wanted to be appreciated by the school authorities, parents and by the community in general.

The majority of teachers perceived success in the public examinations as caused by their full involvement in preparing candidates for the examinations. The focus on students who teachers assumed to have a good chances of succeeding, and on the previous examination

topic was a trend in the study. However, teachers were divided on this issue, in particular whether these practices led to good results. In case of poor results, some teachers reported the lack of commitment to be a contributing factor. Many reported that the very limited places available in public and private subsidised secondary schools was the main contributing factor to poor results.

7.3 Implications of the Study

The findings in this study have important implications for improving final year teacher curriculum practices in Rwanda, and for the Ministry of Education policies and their implementation.

To be effective, the Rwandan National Examinations Council (R.N.E.C) in the Ministry of Education should re-examine policies in the light of the five purposes of the public examinations suggested by the World Bank Group (2002). These are: selection, certification, control, motivation, monitoring and reporting functions. The Ministry of Education needs to evaluate and monitor educational standards more closely. Rwandan national examinations should be set within the 'spirit' of certifying pupils' achievement of primary education objectives. This means that the certification would reflect that students have mastered the curriculum at the end of primary phase of schooling.

Operationally, the Rwandan National Examinations Council should determine each year the pass mark (cut off point) to enter secondary school in view of the fact that the number of

available places changes each year, and the pass mark for obtaining the certificate of primary studies is adjusted. As explained earlier, in essence, this means that many pupils can be placed below the pass mark to enter secondary school due to the limited places at secondary school, while having mastered the primary curriculum.

A primary studies certificate should be given to all those who successfully complete the six years of primary schooling. Under this condition, the public examination will serve two purposes, that is, selection to secondary education as well as certification of pupils' achievement at the end of the primary phase. The examination results should also be used to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of schools and students' performance across the country.

The Ministry of Education should take some measures to alleviate or minimize discrepancy between educational policy and teacher curriculum practices. As the study revealed, teachers use various educationally unsound strategies in order to increase their chances of having a large number of students who would qualify for secondary education, for example, focussing on good students, on the main national examination subjects, and on the previous examination topics. Teachers may be neglecting weaker students and students who may not be academically inclined. In addition, the whole content of the curriculum as prescribed by the Ministry of Education, represented by the National Centre for Curriculum Development (C.N.D.P) is not taught. Since certain subjects are given priority, this results in a non-official curriculum. These practices are inconsistent with the principle of quality Education For All to which the Rwandese Government is committed. The Heads of the schools, the Inspectorate

of Education at District level as well as the Director of Education at Provincial level should put in place mechanisms to ensure that current curriculum practices are interrogated and solutions to the problem explored. The ongoing professional development of teachers needs to sensitise them to strive for quality education for all students in line with national and the international educational standards.

The Ministry of Education should work towards increasing the number of places available in secondary schools. One possibility may be to allow students who complete primary education to continue the first cycle of secondary education at the same school. However, this would mean that the Government would have to commit to the training of more teachers for the secondary level.

Teachers should understand that all learners have the same rights to quality education, whether academically inclined or not. Currently, the study shows that there are barriers to learning embedded in the way in which the curriculum is negotiated by teachers in the face of the pressures placed on them by expectations from various stakeholders.

The World Education Forum (26-28 April 2000, Dakar), that took place in Senegal adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All (EFA): Meeting our Collective Commitments. Through the framework, all countries that participated in the Forum (including Rwanda) reaffirmed the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All, adopted ten years earlier in Jomtein, Thailand, 1990, of a rights based approach to education supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The international community made

a collective commitment to uphold the vision that all children, young people and adults have the right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term. Countries committed to the belief that education is a fundamental human right at the core of development. It is the pathway to sustainable development and stability, and a critical means for effective participation in societies and economies of the 21st century, which are affected by rapid globalisation. As it is argued in the Expanded Commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action, “No one should be denied the opportunity to complete a good quality primary education because it is unaffordable” www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000/expanded_com_eng.shtml.

In conclusion, this was a quantitative study that used a very structured instrument with closed items for gathering data. This may be a limitation of the present study since respondents answered within a confined frame. A similar study should use both a structured questionnaire, and the interview to allow for the capture of more in depth information. Such a methodology would be extremely useful for further research in the field, allowing the capture of more qualitative data.

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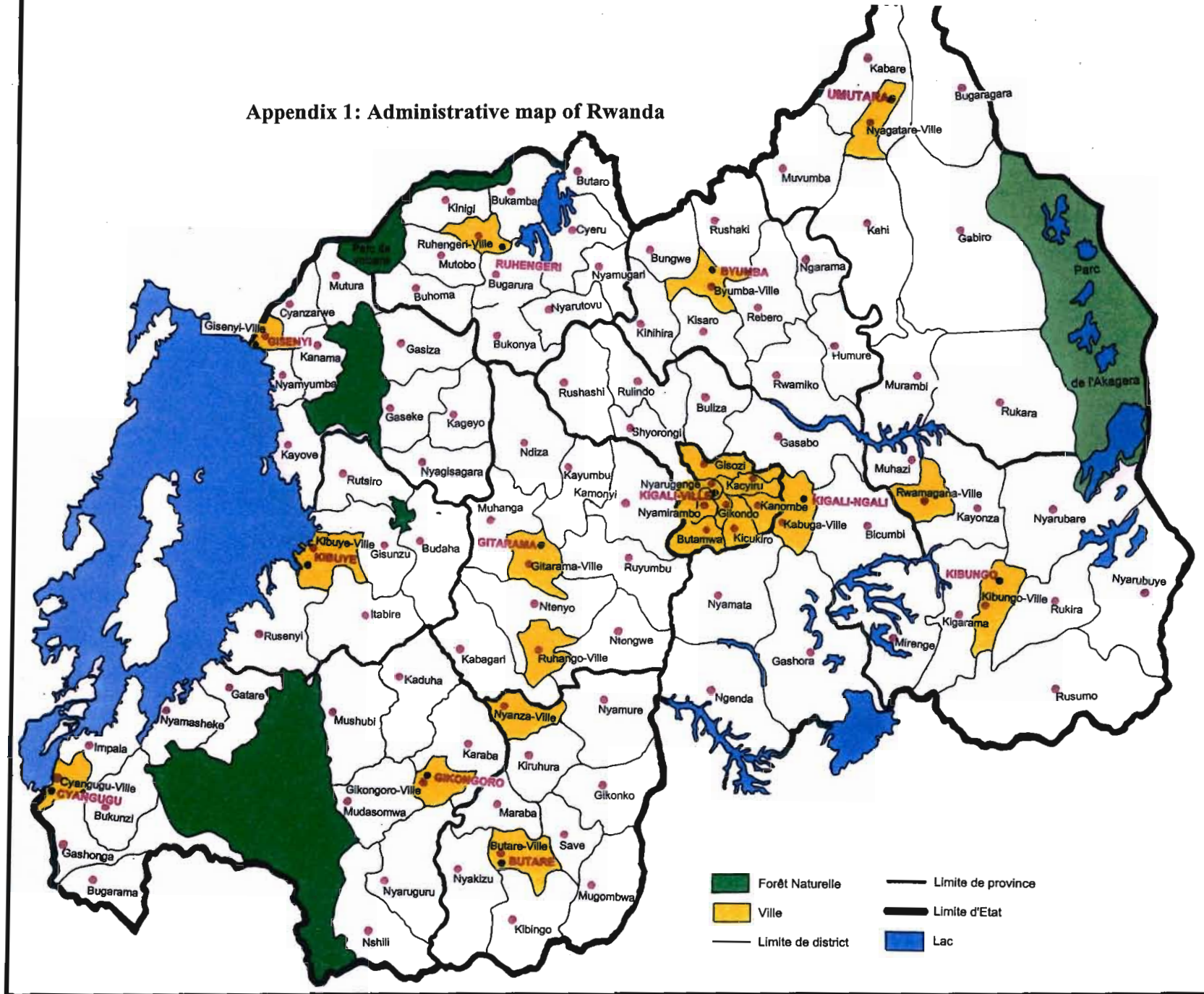
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Administrative map of Rwanda



Appendix 2: Letter from the Supervisor requesting access to the study



School of Education, Training and Development
Faculty of Education

Private Bag X01, Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg 3209, South Africa
Tel: (0333) 260 5368
Fax: (0333) 260 5080

5 November 2001

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr Gabriel Nizeyimana is a bona fide full-time student of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus in South Africa. He is registered for a Master of Education (M.Ed) degree in Curriculum Development.

As part of his M.Ed degree, Mr Nizeyimana is conducting an empirical study on teachers' perceptions of the influences of the national primary school examination on their practices. His study is based on two districts in Kigali-City Province.

In my capacity as Mr Nizeyimana's supervisor, I kindly request you to grant him access to do the study.

The data that will be collected will be treated as confidential. For purposes of ensuring anonymity, people's names will not be revealed when reporting on the study.

Thank you in advance for facilitating Mr Nizeyimana's research study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cassius Lubisi'.

Dr R. Cassius Lubisi
Lecturer in Education

Appendix 3: Letter of authorisation from the Mayor of Kigali-City

REPUBLIKA Y'U RWANDA
UMUJYI WA KIGALI

Kigali, kuwa 18/02/2002

B.P. 3527

Réf. N°: 07.02/0302/02.

Madamu,
Bwana Muyobozi w'amashuri abanza
mu Karere ka : Nyarugenge
Kacyiru

KIGALI

Impamvu : Kwemerera Bwana NIZEYIMANA
Gabriel gukora ubushakashatsi


Muyobozi,

Mbandikiye mbamenyesha ko uwo
NIZEYIMANA Gabriel yemerewe gukora ubushakashatsi mu bigo
by'amashuri muyobora mu rwego rwo kurangiza icyiciro cya gatatu
cy'amashuri yiga muri Afrika y'Epfo.

Mugire akazi keza.

Umuyobozi w'Umujyi wa Kigali
MUTSINDASHYAKA Theoneste

Po
RUTAGIRA
Directeur de l'Éducation.



BIMENYESHEJWE :

Umugenzuzi w'Akarere k'Amashuri ka

- Kacyiru
- Nyarugenge

KIGALI

(Language: Kinyarwanda)

Appendix 4: Research Questionnaire

4.1 Research Questionnaire (English Version)

Start by completing the general information and reading carefully the instructions.

General information:

Sex: How many years did you teach in
primary school:
Age: How many years did you teach
the final year of primary school:
District:
Section followed in secondary school:
Level of qualification:

Instructions:

According to your level of agreement with the statements suggested, specify for **each statement** whether you **strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree** or you **don't know** by placing only one tick (✓) in the relevant box. These statements are the items of responses for the respective headline in bold.

1. Teachers' views on the link between public examinations and the aims of primary education.		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
1.1	National examinations assess knowledge needed to enter secondary school					
1.2	The purpose of national examinations is not to evaluate the achievement of primary education's objectives but only to select candidates for secondary school					
1.3	Through the content of national examinations, there are some aspects which assess social skills					
1.4	All primary school subjects prepare the child in a certain way for social life but this aspect is not assessed by the national examination					
1.5	Those who succeed in national examinations are ipso facto prepared for social life					
2. Impact of public examinations on teachers' practices and on teacher self image.						
2.1	In my practice, my first objective is to prepare pupils for the national examination					
2.2	In my practice, my first objective is to prepare pupils for social life					
2.3	The national examination is the driving force for my teaching practices					
2.4	More time and attention are devoted to preparing for the main public examination subjects					
2.5	While teaching, I focus on the previous public examination topics					
2.6	The timetable is followed as given without any consideration of importance of subjects					
2.7	Public examination results have a great impact on my teaching practices					
2.8	Good examination results bring honour to the teacher and the school					
2.9	The teacher is looked down by the community when his/her results are poor					

3. Factors impacting candidates' success and failure		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<i>3a. Factors impacting success</i>						
3a.1	The effort I put into preparing learners for the national examination					
3a.2	The special attention I pay to the pupils who have a good chance of succeeding					
3a.3	The easiness of the examination					
3a.4	The increased number of places available in secondary schools					
3a.5	The previous public examination topics on which I focus in my teaching					
<i>3b. Factors impacting failure</i>						
3b.1	Lack of commitment by the teacher in preparing pupils for the national examination					
3b.2	The difficulty of the national examination					
3b.3	The very limited places available in secondary schools					

Thank you for your co-operation !!

4.2: Research Questionnaire (French Version)

Fournissez l'**information générale** et puis, lisez attentivement les **instructions**.

Information générale

Sexe: Combien d'années avez-vous enseigné
 au primaire :
 Age: Combien d'années avez-vous enseigné la
 classe sortante de l'école de primaire :
 District :
 Section suivie à l'école secondaire :
 Niveau de qualification:

Instructions:

Pour les propositions suivantes, spécifiez pour **chacune d'elle** si tu es **très d'accord** ; **d'accord** ; **pas du tout d'accord** ; **pas d'accord** ou alors **tu ne sais pas** en mettant (√) dans la case correspondante.

1. Opinions des enseignants sur le lien entre l'examen national et les objectifs de l'école secondaire		Très d'accord	D'accord	Pas d'accord	Pas du tout d'accord	Je ne sais pas
1.1	L'examen national évalue les connaissances nécessaires pour entrer à l'école secondaire					
1.2	Le but de l'examen national n'est pas d'évaluer l'atteinte des objectifs de l'école primaire mais de sélectionner les candidats pour l'école secondaire					
1.3	A travers le contenu de l'examen national, il y a des aspects qui évaluent les habiletés sociales					
1.4	Tous les cours de l'école primaire préparent l'enfant dans une certaine mesure à la vie sociale mais cet aspect n'est pas évalué par l'examen national					
1.5	Ceux qui réussissent l'examen national sont également préparés pour la vie sociale					
2. L'impact des examens nationaux sur la pratique de l'enseignement et sur l'image de l'enseignant						
2.1	Dans ma pratique, l'objectif n° 1 est de préparer les élèves à l'examen national					
2.2	Dans ma pratique, l'objectif n° 1 est de préparer les élèves à la vie sociale					
2.3	L'examen national agit comme une force qui détermine ma pratique d'enseignement					
2.4	Beaucoup de temps et d'attentions sont consacrés à la préparation des cours importants de l'examen national					
2.5	Lorsque j'enseigne, je met un accent particulier sur les sujets ayant fait objet des examens nationaux antérieurs.					
2.6	L'horaire est suivi comme il a été donné sans considérer l'importance des cours sur la masse horaire					
2.7	Les résultats aux examens nationaux ont un grand impact sur ma pratique					
2.8	De bons résultats aux examens nationaux conduisent à l'honneur de l'enseignant et de l'école					
2.9	l'enseignant est mal vu par la communauté lorsque sa classe a eu de mauvais résultats					

3. Les facteurs influençant la réussite ou l'échec des élèves		Très d'accord	D'accord	Pas d'accord	Pas du tout d'accord	Je ne sais pas
3a Facteurs de réussite						
3a.1	L'effort que j'ai fourni en préparant les élèves à l'examen national					
3a.2	Une attention spéciale que je porte aux élèves que je présume avoir beaucoup de chance de réussir					
3a.3	La facilité de l'examen					
3a.4	Une augmentation de places disponibles dans les écoles secondaires publiques et libres subsidiées					
3a.5	Les précédents examens nationaux sur lesquels j'ai insistés dans mon enseignement					
3b. Les facteurs d'échec						
3b.1	Paresse de l'enseignant dans la préparation des élèves à l'examen national					
3b.2	Difficulté de l'examen					
3b.3	Des places disponibles très limitées dans les écoles secondaires					

Merci beaucoup pour votre franche collaboration !!

Appendix 5: Table of variables, acronyms, variable names, variable labels, and the codes of variable labels.

N.B: The missing value was coded 0.

Variables	Acronym	Variable names	Variable labels	Code
Sex	a	Sex	Female	1
			Male	2
District	b	District	Kacyiru	1
			Nyarugenge	2
Section followed	bk	Section	Teacher-training	1
			Science	2
			Arts	3
			Other	4
Level of qualification	bl	Lequali	Lic.	1
			Bac.	2
			D6-D7	3
			D4-D5	4
			Others	5
Age	c	Age	<25 years	1
			26-30 years	2
			31-35 years	3
			36-40 years	4
			41-45 years	5
			46-50 years	6
			51-55 years	7
			56-60 years	8
61-65 years	9			
Experience in teaching profession	bm	extprof	1-3 years	1

			4-6 years	2
			7-9 years	3
			10-12 years	4
			13-15 years	5
			16-19 years	6
			20-22 years	7
			23-25 years	8
			26-28 years	9
			29-31 years	10
			32-33 years	11
Experience in teaching final year of primary school	bn	extfina	1-3 years	1
			4-6 years	2
			7-9 years	3
			10-12 years	4
			13-15 years	5
			16-18 years	6
			19-21 years	7
			22-24 years	8
			25-27 years	9

The following variable labels (from the questionnaire) have the same value labels identically coded as follows.

Value labels	Code
Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Strongly disagree	3
Disagree	4
Don't know	5

Variable labels from the questionnaire	Acronym	Variable name
Evaluation of knowledge needed to enter secondary school	l	nesksec
Purpose of the exam: to select candidates	m	purpsel
Public examination has some aspects which assess social skills	o	socski
Social skills are not assessed	q	noevsoc
Success equal to be prepared for social life	u	susoc
The first objective is to prepare for the public examination	v	objexa
The first objective is to prepare for social life	w	objsoc
Public examination is the driving force for my practices	x	incenti
More time and attentions devoted to main subjects	y	msubj
Emphasising on previous examination topics	ad	prevexa
The timetable is followed as it is	ae	timefol
Impact of examination results on teachers' practices	af	resimpa
Good results leading to honour of teacher and of the school	ai	reshon

Teacher looked down by the community	aj	comeff
Success as due to the effort put into preparing for the public examination	ar	efprexa
The special attention paid to pupils with good chance to succeed	as	pchasuc
Easiness of the examination	at	easex
Increased number of place available in secondary schools	au	Plaincr
Success as due to the emphasis on previous examination topics	aw	prevtop
Lack of teachers' commitment in preparing for the examination	az	latexa
Difficulty of the examinations	bb	difexa
Limited places available in secondary schools	bc	limpla

Appendix 6: Tables Referenced in the Text

Table no 2: Some aspects of the exam assess social skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	7	9.3	10.0	10.0
	agree	39	52.0	55.7	65.7
	disagree	12	16.0	17.1	82.9
	strongly disagree	8	10.7	11.4	94.3
	don' t know	4	5.3	5.7	100.0
	Total	70	93.3	100.0	
Missing	0	5	6.7		
Total		75	100.0		

Tble no 3: Curriculum with social skills but not assessed by the exam

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	14	18.7	19.2	19.2
	agree	27	36.0	37.0	56.2
	disagree	21	28.0	28.8	84.9
	strongly disagree	6	8.0	8.2	93.2
	don' t know	5	6.7	6.8	100.0
	Total	73	97.3	100.0	
Missing	0	2	2.7		
Total		75	100.0		

Table no 4: Teaching focuses on the main exam subjects

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	26	34.7	35.6	35.6
	agree	32	42.7	43.8	79.5
	disagree	9	12.0	12.3	91.8
	strongly disagree	6	8.0	8.2	100.0
	Total	73	97.3	100.0	
Missing	0	2	2.7		
Total		75	100.0		

Table no 5: Teaching focuses on the previous examination topics

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	7	9.3	9.3	9.3
agree	29	38.7	38.7	48.0
disagree	21	28.0	28.0	76.0
strongly disagree	18	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

Table no 6: Teachers following the timetable as it was given

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	10	13.3	13.5	13.5
agree	24	32.0	32.4	45.9
disagree	22	29.3	29.7	75.7
strongly disagree	18	24.0	24.3	100.0
Total	74	98.7	100.0	
Missing 0	1	1.3		
Total	75	100.0		

Table no 7: Teachers looked down by the community for poor results

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	14	18.7	18.9	18.9
agree	24	32.0	32.4	51.4
disagree	19	25.3	25.7	77.0
strongly disagree	11	14.7	14.9	91.9
don' t know	6	8.0	8.1	100.0
Total	74	98.7	100.0	
Missing 0	1	1.3		
Total	75	100.0		

Table no 8: Success as due to a special attention paid to borderline pupils

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	11	14.7	14.7	14.7
agree	25	33.3	33.3	48.0
disagree	27	36.0	36.0	84.0
strongly disagree	12	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

Table no 9: Success as due to focus on previous exam topics

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	4	5.3	5.3	5.3
agree	31	41.3	41.3	46.7
disagree	17	22.7	22.7	69.3
strongly disagree	22	29.3	29.3	98.7
don't know	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

Table no 10: Success as due to the increase of places at secondary school

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	17	22.7	22.7	22.7
agree	25	33.3	33.3	56.0
disagree	16	21.3	21.3	77.3
strongly disagree	10	13.3	13.3	90.7
don ' t know	7	9.3	9.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	