

Factors Determining Learner's Performance Among Faith-Based and Secular Schools a Comparative Study of Selected Primary Schools in Muhoza Sector, Musanze District, Rwanda

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Abstract:- This study aimed at comparing the factors determining the learners' performance among faith-based and secular schools in Muhoza sector, Musanze district, Rwanda. Specifically, the study aimed at evaluating the learners' performance in selected faith-based and secular schools in the Muhoza Sector and assessing the differences, similarities, and associated factors in the learners' performance between selected faith-based and secular schools in the Muhoza Sector. To achieve these objectives, a causal-comparative descriptive research design was adopted and targeted 22 primary schools, including two faith-based schools and 20 secular schools. From these schools, 98 individuals, made up of teachers and four head teachers, were selected. The sample size included 81 respondents selected using the purposive sampling technique. Questionnaires, interviews, and documentary reviews were used to collect data, which was then analysed using descriptive and content analysis. Findings revealed that learners in faith-based schools performed better on average on the average grade scale than learners in secular schools ($t = -19.78$, $df = 570$, $p .05$), and learners' performance was more satisfactory in faith-based schools than in secular schools. Teachers' qualifications ($p = .214 >.05$) and teachers' experience ($p = .231 >.05$) were not statistically significant determinants of the differences in the learners' performance among these schools. There was no difference in the teachers' qualifications and experience, and both teachers in faith-based and secular schools have almost similar qualifications and experience. Therefore, qualifications and experience cannot explain the difference in learners' performance in these schools. Differences in the performance of learners were accounted for by the average work load ($p = .012 <.05$), average pupil-teacher ratio ($p = .004 <.05$), average pupil-classroom ratio ($p = .002 <.05$), pupils-textbook ratio ($p = .001 <.05$), and mean number of exercises or homework given per week ($p = .002 <.05$), which were statistically significant determinants of the differences in the learners' performance between faith-based and secular schools. These differences account for the difference in the

learners' performances. Moreover, there is a significant difference in the frequency of quizzes and homework, parents' engagement, and coaching hours between these schools ($p = .000 <.05$). Therefore, the frequency of quizzes and homework, parents' engagement, and coaching hours ensure that there is a difference in the learners' performance between these schools. Based on the study findings, it was concluded that faith-based schools perform better as compared to secular schools due to lower workloads for their teachers, lower pupil-teacher ratios, lower classroom-pupil ratios, lower textbook-to-pupil ratios, good leadership, and teachers' supervision. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should provide adequate learning and instructional materials to the secular schools to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching and learning process, and the management in secular schools should create a policy that controls teacher workload so that they are not overworked as compared to their more effective counterparts.

Keywords:- Learner, Performance, Faith-Based School, Secular Schools, Factors, Muhoza Sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

➤ Background to the Study

For the sustainable development of any country, education is key, as it enhances the abilities of the people to realise their potential. By this end, education has the potential to enhance people's productivity, reduce crime rates, and control births, all of which contribute to the sustainable development of the country (Maichibi, 2018). Likewise, education is the keystone of a powerful instrument that can be used to reduce inequality and poverty and as a basis to sustain economic growth (Barbara *et al.*, 2003). Emphasizing the importance of education in improving the country's wealth, UNESCO (2020) states that education greatly contributes to poverty reduction, increases new job opportunities, and accelerates the country's economic growth and sustainable development. Due to the benefits that accrue

from investment in education, UNESCO (2020) recommends countries invest heavily in education. At least 20% of the total government expenditures and at least 6% of the country's gross national product should be allocated to education. This is because a lack of funds to provide various resources to the education sector is the major challenge facing the quality of education.

To have better learners' outcomes in any education system, sufficient funds should be made available to supply direct resources to schools (World Bank *et al.*, 2020). To this end, Hanushek (2019) states that in the education production function process, output quality depends on the amount and quality of inputs as well as how effectively they are utilised in an education system. Here, inputs refer to resources such as learners' and teachers' characteristics, instructional resources, school physical facilities, and financial resources, among others, and outputs refer to both the school's and learners' performance. However, many governments across the world cannot satisfy the educational needs of their increasing populations, so the private sector and faith-based organisations such as churches also play a great role in educational development by creating schools known as faith-based schools.

Learners' performance has been researched globally, with varying results. In the United States, for instance, there remains a gap in academic achievement between students of different races and socioeconomic backgrounds. Aturupane (2011) discovered in her research of both public and private schools in Sri Lanka that students exhibited poor academic performance. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of students do poorly academically, as seen in Namibia (Akpo & Jita, 2016). Moreover, the disparity in academic achievement of Nigerian students is of interest to scholars, educators, government officials, and parents (Igberadja, 2016). It is therefore essential to empirically analyse the impacts of different variables on the academic performance of students in order to precisely determine the contributing components and, in particular, the effects of various variables on students' academic performance.

Edole (2017) and Levine and Lezotle (2018) demonstrated that effective schools possess particular traits and resources that facilitate high-level learning for all students. According to Gakuru (2018) and Okoye (2017), the majority of research has been conducted to determine the causes of increased academic performance. However, the huge number of students with poor grades has resulted in a small proportion of students carrying on to secondary school (Lewin *et al.*,

2009). Despite the efforts made by the government and community of Tanzania to strengthen the education system by extending basic schools to the local level and reducing education costs, academic performance remains low. The percentage of academic achievement in elementary school education did not provide the desired results.

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Rwanda, like any other developing country, regards education as a fundamental human right and a necessary means of ensuring that all Rwandans reach their full potential (Ministry of Education, 2018). Besides, given the importance of education in enhancing economic welfare and expanding the existing economic opportunities in the country, Rwanda, through its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, placed strong emphasis on basic education and education for all (MINECOFIN, 2018). The debate over the learners' performance among these different schools has recently been on the rise. For instance, Wodon (2019) showed that learners in some Catholic schools have also been shown to perform well as compared to learners in secular schools in Latin America. Econometric analyses, especially by Lavado *et al.* (2021), suggest that learners' performance in faith-based schools tends to be high in comparison to learners in secular schools. In sub-Saharan Africa, the econometric evidence base is thin and often based on data for faith-based schools overall, as opposed to Catholic schools specifically (Wodon & Ying, 2020). Okyerefo (2020) indicated that there is an ever-increasing poor performance in most secular schools and revealed that faith-based schools' performance was better due to more effective supervision of work.

Differences and similarities between secular and faith-based schools exist, but not that much in the case of Rwanda, and mainly in the fact that public education is inclusive, both in its treatment and in the admission of learners. Public education is often organised and operated to be a deliberate model of the civil community in which it functions (MINEDUC, 2020). Despite that, the differences found there do not have a significant impact on pupils' and learners' performance;

UNICEF (2019), however, indicated that the quality of education in Rwanda is worsening because most learners perform poorly in both national and international examinations. Moreover, since the creation of the Rwanda National Examination Council (RNEC), the comparison between public and private primary schools shows that pupils of private primary schools tend to perform better than their counterparts in public and/or privately subsidised schools.

➤ *Problem Statement*

The Rwandan education system is largely examination-oriented; from private to secular schools, learners must sit for national examinations (MINEDUC, 2018). The reason for this is that learners' academic achievement is the only criterion for moving from one level of education to another. Public and private primary schools in Rwanda do not perform equally. Some secular primary schools perform better than private ones, and vice versa. MINEDUC (2021) rewarded the best performers in the P6 and S3 national examinations, and the analysis shows that most, if not all, of the best performers were learners from faith-based schools. Thus, this makes many people wonder about the real cause of the disparity in the learners' performances and question the factors attributable to these disparities. The difference in performance between faith-based and secular primary schools in Rwanda has been a reason for privileged parents to opt to enrol their children in religious primary schools. Above all, child education is a collaborative effort involving the school, teachers, parents, and the community. Given that all primary schools in Rwanda follow the same curriculum set by the Ministry of Education, what could be the contributing factors to these disparities in learner performance?

Despite the fact that many efforts have been made by various education stakeholders to address the factors that negatively influence academic performance, it is still observed that while some students perform well, others do not; some are promoted despite poor performance, some are not promoted to high schools, and others drop out. Those who do not do well due to a number of causes that need a comprehensive examination to determine the best remedy are a major source of worry. The aspects that may have favourably affected the academic progress of students were left unregulated, preventing great teaching and learning. While the purpose of primary education is to improve the quality of life of students so that they can serve society in accordance with their roles and responsibilities as good citizens, the performance issues of students have been a concern since the introduction of modern education, but only a few things have been implemented successfully, so the results are still poor.

There are just a few studies comparing the performance of pupils in faith-based schools with that of those in secular institutions. It was clear that there is insufficient information from Rwanda to identify the particular factors that influence the performance of pupils in faith-based and secular schools. Therefore, this study examined the factors determining the learners' performance among faith-based and secular primary schools in Muhoza sector, Musanze district, Rwanda.

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

The main objective of the study is to compare the factors determining the learners' performance among faith-based schools and secular schools in Muhoza sector, Musanze district, Rwanda. Specifically, the study was guided by the following objectives:

- To evaluate the learners' performance and assess the differences and similarities in the learners' performance between selected faith-based and secular schools in Muhoza sector
- To determine the factors accounting for the differences in the learners' performance among selected schools in Muhoza sector.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Theoretical Review*

The current study was anchored on the Effective Schools Model and Kolb-learning style theory as discussed in the following subsections.

➤ *Effective School Model*

The Effective Schools Model was developed by Lezotte (2001). According to Lezotte (2001), an effective school is one that can, in terms of measured learners' achievement, demonstrate the joint presence of quality and equity. There are seven identified correlates of an effective school, which include effective leadership, high expectations for success, a clear mission and vision, a safe school environment, positive school and home relations, and regular monitoring of the progress of learners (Lezotte, 2001). Lezotte (2001) states that strong instructional leaders are proactive and seek help in building team leadership and a culture conducive to learning and professional growth. The principal and others in the school serve as instructional leaders who convey and demonstrate the school's mission to the staff, parents, and pupils in an effective and consistent manner. All members of the team would know exactly where they're going and why they're doing it. Having a defined goal helps to align school development programmes and activities.

The school's leadership and stakeholders employ a collaborative process to identify a few specific school goals and then come to agreement on how to proceed with each of them. Schools that have a safe and orderly atmosphere and culture are defined by reasonable expectations for behavior, consistent and fair enforcement of rules and regulations, as well as caring, responsive relationships between adults and pupils (Lezotte, 2001). Classrooms are warm and inviting, and learning activities are purposeful, engaging, and significant. Personalized learning environments are created to increase positive relationships among learners and between learners and their teachers. Learners feel that they belong in the school community, and children are valued and honored; their heritage and background are viewed as "assets," not deficiencies.

Instructional techniques and teacher behaviour must demonstrate that the educator believes in the pupils, believes in their own ability to educate the learners to high standards, and would continue to teach them in a high-stakes environment. Advanced abilities and education for comprehension must be provided to all pupils in order for them to realise their full potential. In order to keep track of how well pupils are learning as well as the efficiency of school and classroom operations, it is necessary to conduct frequent assessments of both teaching and learning (Lezotte, 2001). Various assessment data, such as test scores, pupils' generated products, performances, and other proof of learning, are used to monitor learning.

Observation of teaching is done by instructors themselves and by supervisors for the evaluation of programmes and teachers. Assessment results are used for planning instruction for individual learners as well as for school-wide decision-making and planning. Classroom and school practises are modified based on the data. According to Lezotte (2001), families and the community are involved in a variety of activities, projects, and programmes to promote pupils' learning and schools by bringing parents, companies, and other stakeholders together. Involving adults and families in young people's education is possible through a range of activities that highlight the value of education and provide support and encouragement for pupils as they progress through their academic careers. Thanks to these methods, it is possible to get involved in your child's education without spending a lot of time on-site at the school.

The correlation between learning opportunities and time spent on a task shows that pupils retain the majority of the information they encounter. In other words, if teachers are spending time on tasks, it means they have a firm grasp on what the most important learning goals are for each grade level and subject area. As soon as it is evident what pupils need to learn, adequate time should be provided for them to do so. Teachers devote a large amount of classroom time to teaching the necessary skills in an effective school. Everyone has equal access to education, regardless of their background or ability to pay. Because the seven correlates of successful schools require good leadership from the principal, this theory is pertinent to this study. The study would not only look at Lezotte's (2001) model for effective schools, but it would also suggest ways that schools that aren't doing well academically could improve.

➤ *Kolb's Learning Style*

Kolb's learning style is used to analyze the applicability of the learning approaches by learners and how they affect their academic performance. Kolb and Kolb (2018) viewed learning as a four-stage cycle which includes concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. McLeod (2017) showed that the concrete experience of learners formed as a basis of future situations where learners learn new experiences.

The theory postulates the four learning styles: Coverger (abstract conceptualization and active experimentation); diverger (concrete experience and reflective observation);

assimilator (abstract conceptualization and reflective observation); and accommodator (concrete experience and active experimentation). According to Kolb and Kolb (2018), divergence prefers to watch rather than do, works in groups, and gets feedback openly, while assimilation requires reasoning and critical thought. Williams *et al.* (2020) indicated that learners' academic performance is positively linked to their learning styles. Cekiso *et al.* (2018) add that diversity in assessment approaches is necessary because of multiple learning styles. Chermahini *et al.* (2020) conclude in their study that learning styles are a good predictor of any second language academic performance. The use of Kolb's learning style assumes that pupils' learning approaches affect their ability to pass the two major assessments of the accounting module. This will assess whether the preferred learning approach of the learners is applicable to the study of the module as well as the strategies imposed by the teachers. The results of the study were mapped with the outcome of the cited relevant studies to critically analyze the assessment of the learning approaches.

B. *Conceptual Review*

➤ *Learners-Based Factors Influencing Learners' Performance*

• *Learners' Attitudes and Habits*

Learners possess the ability to differentiate between what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. Goal-oriented learners usually possess positive feelings regarding their school experiences and have the characteristics of diligence, discipline, and better use of existing resources. (Velasco, 2021). It is therefore vital for the learners to possess positive thinking in terms of their schools, teachers, and academic subjects. Previous studies show that study habits greatly affect learners' academic performance at all levels of study. It keeps them focused on their academic goals and helps them make intelligent use of their learning styles. Icekson *et al.* (2019) believe that there are many factors that influence study habits, including learning plans, strategies, and motivational techniques. These factors include the activities done by the learners inside and outside of the classrooms, including their independent learning hours. Ahinful *et al.* (2019) include motivation and engagement as factors, while Icekson *et al.* (2019) believe in optimism and its positive effect on academic performance. Self-efficacy of learners (Byrne *et al.*, 2020), attendance (Schmulian & Coetzee, 2020), and communication apprehension (Gardner *et al.*, 2018) were identified as determinants of academic performance.

• *Learner' Motivation.*

Motivated pupils who want to perform well in school are likely to make an effort and achieve high scores. Kusurkar *et al.* (2020) explained that there are several factors that motivate a learner to engage in a lesson activity; for example, a teacher's creativity and competency to use a textbook encourage a learner's participation in classroom activities. Eills (2002) indicated that a learner's most powerful motivation to learn comes from his or her prior success in that subject. Levi (2017) showed that motivation affects

learners' attitudes by causing them to have a more positive attitude and confidence in themselves. Learners that lack motivation put in less effort, which in turn leads to poor academic performance. Motivation influences performance through its effects on self-regulatory behaviour and study strategies (Killian 2018). It is therefore important for learners to be actively engaged in their learning for success. Motivation affects attitude by causing learners to have a more positive attitude and more confidence in themselves. Learners' attitude toward reading when they are children produces adults who continue to read in their lives.

➤ *Teachers' Based Factors Influencing Learners' Performance*

- *Educational Qualification.*

Pupils' achievement is crucially determined by the teacher's level of education (Betts *et al.*, 2003). A number of studies have examined the ways in which teachers' highest qualifications are related to learners' achievement. Teachers' qualifications also reflect the teacher's experience, which is the number of years a teacher has taught (Betts *et al.*, 2003). Teachers' professional development refers to the opportunities offered to practising teachers to develop new knowledge, skills, approaches, and dispositions to improve their effectiveness in their classrooms (Loucks-Horsley *et al.*, 2018). However, there is a tendency in secular schools to employ direct school leavers, like Form Six leavers, to teach in school (Laddunuri, 2020). These may lower the education level in the country. In most states, private school teachers can teach without a teaching certificate. Betts *et al.* (2003) observed that teachers with the highest degrees have a positive impact on pupils' performance. Pupils who were taught by teachers with higher degrees did better than those taught by teachers with lower degrees, according to Owalabi (2020). Pupils who were taught by professional teachers did better than those who were taught by nonprofessionals. Pupils taught by trained teachers were more likely to succeed than those taught by untrained teachers, according to Abe (2020). Untrained teachers can benefit from training to enhance their methods of instruction, which in turn helps pupils do better in math.

- *Teachers' Experience.*

Teachers with more experience in the teaching profession in a certain subject have a greater impact on learners' achievement scores in that subject than those who do not, but this needs to be estimated while controlling for teacher and learners' background factors (Ingersoll, 2001). In both general and grade-level experience, many teachers exhibit the greatest productivity gains after post-novice levels, after which their performance tends to level off, implying that the impact of experience is strongest during the first few years of teaching; after that, marginal returns begin to diminish (Clotfelter *et al.*, 2019). According to Betts *et al.* (2003), teachers' level of experience has a direct impact on their pupils' mathematical proficiency. Pupils perform better when they are taught by teachers with at least five years of expertise. There is a favourable correlation between teachers' years of teaching experience and pupils' academic success.

- *Teacher's Motivation.*

Teachers' motivation naturally has to do with their attitude toward work. Motivation is important in every part of a career choice. For teachers to choose a career, deliver their best in class, and have an effect on the learners' lives, they have to be motivated. According to UNESCO (2017), motivation plays an indispensable function in every part of a teacher's life, from the choice of career to classroom delivery. Teacher appreciation elicits the feelings of hope, generosity, respect, and joy and may be effective in modifying and improving the learners' conduct. Teachers' praise and appreciation increase individual levels of positive effects and, hence, will result in learners' gratitude, which in turn affects their performance positively (Nayereh, 2020). Mucella *et al.* (2020) noted that a teacher, with his teaching methods, attitudes, and behaviors, provides learners with a healthy mental and personality and helps the learners perform well in their education. This is because teachers' positive regard for their learners' results in positive performance. Edvestor (2020) notes that teacher collaboration can be said to be the best thing for a school to improve. Effective teacher collaboration can also be defined as the engagement in regular routines where teachers communicate about classroom experiences in an effort to strengthen pedagogical expertise and help colleagues try new things.

➤ *School-Based Factors Influencing Learners' Performance*

- *School Leadership Aspects.*

The major role of leadership aspects in influencing the academic outcomes of the learners is based upon the administration and management of the school. When there are proper rules, policies, and management put into practise in an appropriate manner, then there will be an improvement in the academic performance of the learners (Maina, 2020). Allen *et al.* (2018) and Day *et al.* (2021) agreed that the positive influence of successful leadership can have a positive effect on school performance and learners' learning outcomes. Moreover, the school leaders can improve learners' achievement in different ways varying from (i) both a direct and indirect impact on classroom instructions (ii) involving different stakeholders (iii) providing a proper ethos and climate (Supovitz *et al.*, 2020), which eventually impact learners' learning outcomes.

- *Classroom Environment and Discipline.*

The academic concepts are made known to the learners by the teachers in the classroom. A teacher's primary responsibility is to complete the course syllabus. Therefore, it is imperative that the classroom atmosphere be tense and orderly (Kudari, 2021). Within the classroom, it is vital for the teachers and the learners to implement the traits of morality and ethics and promote mutual understanding, amiability, and cooperation among the teachers and learners, as well as among the fellow learners. Discipline influences performance (Enamiroro, 2020; Kindiki, 2020). It is one of the yardsticks to assess the school's performance since it helps create a conducive learning environment (Robert, 2003). Discipline is an important ingredient that plays a crucial role in the school system (Azizi, 2020). School

discipline is the system of rules, punishments, and behavioural strategies appropriate to the regulation of learners and the maintenance of order in schools. Its aim is to create a safe and conducive learning environment (Robert, 2003). Very serious discipline problems such as violence, substance abuse, and weapon possession threaten the physical well-being of learners and create an unsafe educational environment (Robert, 2003). Such school indiscipline has been of late an issue of concern for educators and policymakers owing to the outbreak of secondary school strikes and the burning of schools. It is easier for pupils to learn and do well in school when everyone is on the same page and communicating clearly.

- *School-Available Resources*

The teaching of any school subject relies heavily on instructional materials, which are pedagogical inputs (Wales, 2021). School tools that can be used to help pupils enhance their academic performance are essential, and the required elements should be included in textbooks, notes, learning materials, handouts, technology, library facilities, and laboratory facilities, particularly in science disciplines (Betts *et al.*, 2003). Learners will have a better understanding of academic topics and how to conduct experiments if they are given the proper tools and equipment. Some pupils, particularly those from underprivileged, marginalized, and socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, are unable to buy the books and resources needed for learning. Wales (2021) was of the opinion that the use of instructional resources would make discovered facts stick firmly to the memory of learners. According to Akinsanya (2020), education resources are critical to the success of a school because they aid in the proper teaching and learning of pupils. Obi (2018) indicated that learners' performance is influenced by the availability of learning resources, which are critical to the operation of a system. Mugure (2020) also saw that learning is affected by resources, and resources must be made available for better learning outcomes.

- *Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Learners' Performance*

- *Role of Parents.*

The cornerstone of education and learning is sometimes referred to as "the home." It is essential for parents, children, and other family members to foster a learning environment in their homes in order to create strong academic results (Mirowsky, 2017). Parental influence on children's healthy development and growth cannot be overstated (Kudari, 2021). Parental involvement boosts the morale teachers because of the partnership that will have been established between the school and the community. Creating an environment where parents feel comfortable participating in their children's education is the most important practice for school leaders to employ in order to achieve this goal (Benner *et al.*, 2021; Mirowsky, 2017). As a result, parents provide as a source of security, encouragement, and support for their children.

- *Private Tuition.*

Private supplementary tutoring is not per se a new phenomenon, but it takes different forms in different cultures. Some aspects of private tutoring may be considered positive. Tutoring creates constructive out-of-school activities for young people and thus learners who receive private tuition are likely to perform better in school and to stay in the education system for longer durations (Benner *et al.*, 2021; Berkowitz *et al.*, 2017). A major issue is when private tutoring is used as a substitute for traditional schooling. School systems in some nations may be seen by pupils to be less capable of meeting their individual needs at certain times of the year, and hence they progressively rely on private coaching (Berkowitz *et al.*, 2017).

- *Psychological And Health Related Factors.*

Learning is a challenging endeavor for the vast majority of people. Pupils who want to do well in school need to show that they are willing to put in a lot of effort, be creative, and be considerate of the needs of their peers (Betts *et al.*, 2003; Wales, 2021). When a pupils' health is in good shape, he or she was able to participate completely in the educational process (Wales, 2021; Berkowitz *et al.*, 2017). A pupils' academic progress may be hindered by a variety of factors, including but not limited to persistent stress, anxiety, depression, or physical health problems (Berkowitz *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for pupils to view their time spent in school and the classroom positively and to do so with enjoyment. A few of the best strategies to keep your mind and body in good form are to maintain a healthy diet, take part in extracurricular activities, have a level head while studying, and make learning enjoyable (Berkowitz *et al.*, 2017).

- *Home Environment.*

The home environment should be friendly and pleasant in order to generate appropriate academic outcomes. Within the home, among family members, it is vital to initiate measures to form effective terms and relationships (Allen *et al.*, 2018). Learners should communicate with each other in an appropriate manner and minimise the occurrence of conflicts and disputes. Day *et al.* (2021) indicated that conflicts may arise among siblings in terms of the use of technology, books, or stationery. Day *et al.* (2021) added that it is essential for the parents to take responsibility for ensuring that all of their children have access to the appropriate resources to facilitate their education, and learners need to be able to concentrate on their coursework and produce the requisite level of academic achievement in order to be successful, and it is imperative that they have access to the necessary materials and that their living arrangements be comfortable.

C. *Empirical Review*

Different studies and research works were undertaken from a global, African, and Rwandan perspective to examine the factors influencing learners' performance in different settings. Globally, Behaghel *et al.* (2018) conducted a study to explore the effects of boarding schools on disadvantaged learners in France. It was found that pupils' boarding status is a key determinant of their performance in both French and

mathematics, with boarders performing better than day pupils. Wayne and Youngs (2020) conducted a meta-analysis on the effect of teacher inputs on pupils' outcomes. It was conducted in the United States of America and involved 21 studies that drew a relationship between pupils' socio-economic status, teacher characteristics, their prior scores, and their test scores. The study found that all the determinants had a positive effect on secondary mathematics scores, with a greater impact being observed on teachers with advanced degrees in mathematics.

Aydeniz and Kaya (2020) conducted research to determine the elements that influence Turkish high school pupils' attitudes toward science as well as their academic performance in science classes and discovered that pupils' lack of interest in science and desire to learn about science, among other things, had a detrimental effect on both their attitudes toward science and their academic performance in the subject of science. The vast majority of individuals who responded to the survey stated that they chose to major in science in order to get the respect and approval of both their parents and their professors, as well as to improve their own sense of direction. Etsey (2018) conducted a study on the causes of low academic performance in primary schools in the Shama Sub-Metro of Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly in Ghana, Africa, using a causal-comparative research design. Findings established that the factors responsible for poor performance include large class sizes, lack of supervision, school fees not paid promptly, low frequency of in-service training for teachers, irregular staff meetings, inadequate school infrastructure, teacher absenteeism and lateness, which resulted in the incomplete completion of the syllabus, and this affected pupils' motivation and commitment to learn.

Okemakinde *et al.* (2018) investigated teacher resource usage and academic performance in Oyo State, Nigeria, Africa. The purpose of the study was to analyse variances in the resources supplied to colleges as well as the connection between the availability and usage of resources and academic achievement in colleges. Findings indicated that there is a correlation between the availability and usage of resources and academic success in colleges and that increasing the resources available to colleges by 100 percent will increase academic performance by 28 percent. Opolot-Okurut (2018) conducted a study to determine the factors that cause poor academic performance in the Teso region of Uganda, East Africa, and findings indicated that teachers' characteristics, specifically poor teachers' knowledge of their courses and a lack of commitment, negatively affect learners' performance outcomes. Moreover, the findings showed that poor school facilities and large class sizes disproportionately affected learners' performance in the considered schools.

Onsomu *et al.* (2021) conducted a study on gender and social-economic factors affecting learning achievements in Kenya and revealed that the environment at home has a significant impact on the schooling of children. The home environment can reinforce what children learn at school. Materials and resources found at home, where a child stays during the school days, for instance, improve reading and

mathematics scores at school. Parents' education has a positive influence on mathematics scores. Parental support is crucial in providing a conducive learning environment at home. Karue (2018) examined the factors affecting performance in the KCSE in day secondary schools in Embu district and found that chronic absenteeism of pupils from school, lack of instructional materials and resources, inadequate physical facilities, and high poverty levels impacted negatively on pupils' performance.

Kamana (2020) examined the factors influencing pupils' academic performance in public primary school pupils in Muhanga District, Rwanda, and indicated that learners' performance is influenced by the expertise of the teachers, the resources they use, the time they devote to coaching, the dedication of the pupils, and the level of parental engagement. Niragire (2021) investigates the link between pupils' achievement and the improvement of teacher abilities in a sample of Rwandan faith-based schools and finds that teachers' skills in terms of knowledge, skills, and teaching experience impact the performance of the pupils at the elementary level. Sibomana *et al.* (2021) studied the factors that influence the achievement of 12 years of basic mathematics and science education for the Rwandan population, and the findings showed that teachers' level of education, families' economic background, the availability of teaching and learning materials, pupils' distance travelled from home to school, prior knowledge of pupils, and the level of education of parents are all significant contributors to low performance in science. Ntawiha *et al.* (2021) investigated the most important factors affecting pupils' achievement in Rwandan secular schools and indicated that boarding status, family size, parents' educational level, job status, and pupils' past performance were all significant factors in determining pupils' success in selected secondary schools in Rwanda.

D. Research Gap

Research on pupils' performance was undertaken in a range of settings. However, none of this research compared the performance of pupils in faith-based and non-faith-based schools. Various scholars illustrated different factors. For instance, Mtana (2020), Bennel (2020), and Barth (2019) hold that there is a direct relationship between learners studying in private and secular primary schools, teachers' classroom performance, and their learners' performance. In Rwanda, Kamana (2020) examined the factors affecting the learners' performance of secular primary school pupils in national examinations in the Muhanga district of Rwanda and found that teachers' experience, teaching and learning materials, coaching hours, teachers' commitment, pupils' commitment, parents' involvement, and class size affect the learners' performance most. Ntawiha *et al.* (2021) examined the key determinants of learners' performance in selected secular primary schools in Rwanda and found that the following determinants of learners' performance in selected secular primary schools in Rwanda are key determinants of learners' performance: boarding status, family size, parental educational level, employment status, and learners' prior performance.

Based on the above evidence, there are scanty studies on the factors that cause learners’ performance to improve in faith-based schools as compared to secular schools. It is therefore apparent that the available evidence from Rwanda has not been inconclusive in identifying specific causes that determine the difference in learners’ performance between faith-based and secular schools. Due to this gap, the study bridged the gap by examining the factors determining the

learners’ performance among faith-based and secular primary schools in Muhoza sector, Musanze district, Rwanda.

E. Conceptual Framework

The framework presents the independent variables as the factors determining learner’s performance and the dependent variable as learners’ performance.

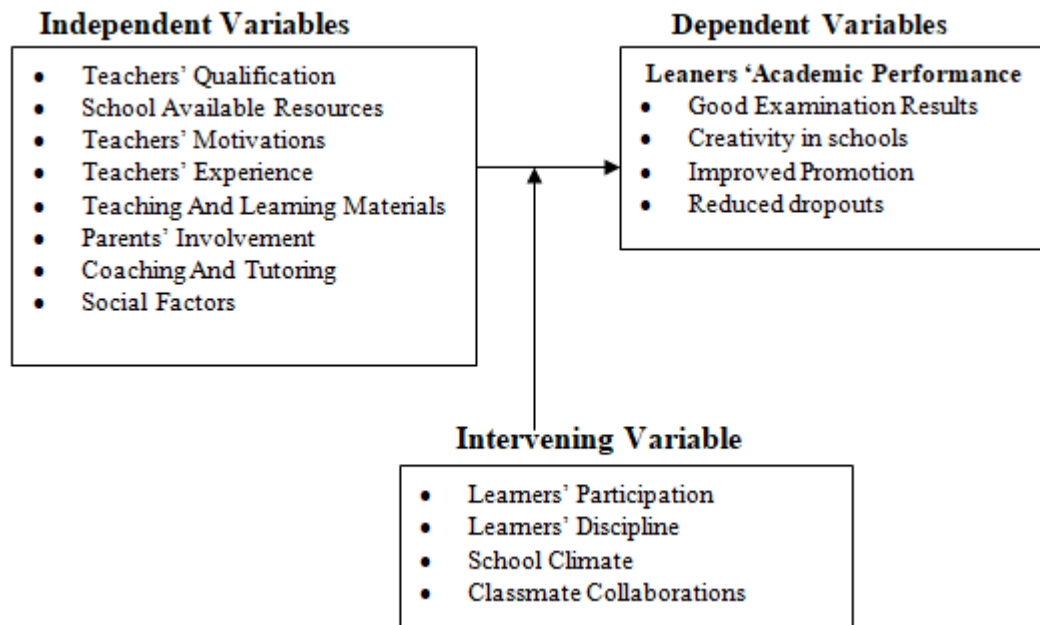


Fig 1 Conceptual Framework Model

Figure 1 demonstrates that the independent variables which are the variables determining the learners’ performance may include teachers’ qualification, school available resources, teachers’ motivation, teachers’ experience, teaching and learning materials, parents’ involvement, coaching and tutoring and other social economic factors. On the other hand, learners’ performance conceptualized as dependent variable is measured by good Examination Results, creativity in schools, improved promotion and reduced dropouts. However, the learners’ performance is also moderated by learners’ participation, learners’ discipline, school climate and classmate collaborations.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a causal-comparative descriptive research design using quantitative and qualitative methods. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) defined a population as a well-defined set of people, services, elements, and events, groups of things, or households that are being investigated. Muhoza Sector Education Inspection Report (2022) shows that Muhoza sector has 22 primary schools and that among the 22 primary schools, 2 primary schools are faith-based schools while 20 primary schools are secular schools. The target population includes teachers and learners from two selected faith-based schools. Bryman and Bell (2018) defined the sample size as a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the

whole population. The sample size was determined by Yamane’s (1976) simplified formula to calculate sample sizes at a 95% confidence level. The sample size of this study is composed of 76 teachers and 4 headteachers from all the 4 selected schools in Muhoza sector. However, the study incorporated the sector education officer as a key informant. Hence, the total sample size was 81 respondents. The sample was selected using a simple random and purposive sampling technique to select instructors from each individual school who were included in the sample.

Data were collected through key informant interviews were addressed to four headteachers, the sector education officer, and eight selected teachers (two in each of the selected schools), with the aim of gathering information on their perspectives relating to the factors that affect the learners’ performance in their respective schools. To supplement the data collected from teachers with interviews, a semi-structured questionnaire containing both open-ended questions and closed-ended ones was used to collect further information. Documentary review was done by perusing and reviewing different documents, including curriculum materials, teaching materials, and RNEC examination forms, as a way to identify the expected skills required by RNEC from the learners. Descriptive and a content-thematic analysis method were used for data analysis.

IV. FINDINGS

➤ *Differences and Similarities in Learners’ Performance in Faith-Based and Secular Schools*

The study aimed at evaluating the learners’ performance in selected faith-based and secular schools in Muhoza Sector in order to be able to identify the similarities and differences in the learners’ performance in these schools. The evaluation was based on the Rwanda National Examinations results of the selected schools during the period of 2018 to 2020.

Table 1 Learners’ Performance in Terms of Marks

Schools	n	Above average (70-100%)		Average (50-69%)		Below average (0-49%)	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Faith-Based School	217	185	85.2	21	9.7	11	5.1
Secular School	353	121	34.3	178	50.4	54	15.3

Source: Secondary data, 2022

Table 1 demonstrates the average marks of the pupils who sat for national exams during the period of study. From the results, it was demonstrated that, in the selected faith-based schools, at least 87.3% of the learners scored an average mark above average, *i.e.*, between 70 and 100% during the Primary Leaving Examinations, while 9.7% of the candidates scored on average, *i.e.*, between 50 and 69%, and 5.1% of the candidates scored below average, *i.e.*, between 0 and 49%. On the other hand, 57.1% of the pupils from secular schools recorded above-average grades, 50.4% of the pupils in secular schools recorded average grades, and only 15.3% of the pupils in secular schools recorded below-average scores in the Primary Leaving Examinations.

Table 2 Average Success Rate in Faith-Based VS Secular Schools

Schools	n	Success rate Mean	SD
Faith-Based Schools	217	94.9	1.632
Secular schools	353	74.7	5.546

Source: Secondary data, 2022

Table 2 shows that the mean success rate was 94.9 with an SD of 1.632 for faith-based schools and 74.7 with an SD of 5.546 for secular schools. This demonstrates that the mean success achievement of faith-based schools was significantly higher than that of secular schools and indicates that on average, learners in faith-based schools pass their primary leaving examinations than their counterparts in secular schools. During an interview with headteachers, one of the participants explained:

"It's true that faith-based schools perform better than secular schools in various aspects." But there is not much difference when it comes to numbers. Most of the learners score higher marks as compared to those in faith-based schools. You can confirm this by checking who is rewarded at the national level. Besides, almost all of the candidates for the PLE passed. This is different in secular schools.

Therefore, learners in faith-based school outperformed their counterparts in selected secular school students. The

findings agree with Yankurije (2011) and Nzabihimana (2010) who also revealed that there is a difference in the academic performance of pupils in catholic schools and secular primary school pupils in Gasabo district, with pupils in faith-based primary schools performing better than their counterparts. Lockheed *et al.* (2011) also demonstrate that pupils in religious schools have a greater chance of succeeding in their exams as compared to their counterparts in secular schools due to the more favourable conditions in which they live.

➤ *Factors Determining the Differences in Performance in Faith-Based and Secular Schools*

• *Teachers’ Based Factors*

Teachers’ related factors evaluated included teachers’ qualifications and teachers’ experience. Table below presents the results on the mean differences in these variables.

Table 3 Teachers’ Related Factors Influencing Learners’ Performance

Factors	Faith based schools		Secular Schools		Paired comparisons	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	p-value
Teachers' qualifications	6.58	2.13	6.07	0.051	1.245	0.011
Teachers' experience	9.28	1.63	10.25	5.546	1.214	0.002

Table 3 demonstrates that the mean teachers’ qualifications was 6.58 years (Mean=6.58, SD=2.13) and 6.07 years (Mean=6.07, SD=.051) in faith-based and secular schools respectively. The p-value was =.0203 is less than the

acceptance level (alpha=.05). Table 3 demonstrates that the average years of experience of teachers in faith-based schools is 9.28 (Mean=9.28, SD=1.632) while the average years of experience of teachers in secular schools is

10.25 (Mean=10.25, SD=5.546) and the significance value, p -value = .0321, is less than the accepted value ($\alpha = 0.05$). The findings above show that teachers in both faith-based and secular institutions have nearly identical qualifications and experience. This reveals that there are no discernible disparities in teaching experience and qualifications between teachers in faith-based and secular institutions. As a result, qualifications and experience cannot explain the disparity in learner performance in the Muhoza sector's selected faith-based and secular schools. These findings contradict Gay's (2020) assertion that experienced teachers have been shown to significantly improve and have a positive influence on

learners' academic performance, as well as Adeyemi's (2020), who demonstrated that teachers' experience and educational background were the main predictors of pupils' academic performance.

- *Learning and Instructional Factors*

Learning and instructional facilities are essential towards the learners' performance. The following table presents the data related to pupil-teacher ratio, textbooks, classrooms and other relevant items to assess how they are different in faith-based and secular schools.

Table 4 Differences in Learning and Instructional Facilities

Factors	Faith based		Secular Schools		Paired comparisons	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	p-value
Teachers' workloads	18.5	4.58	25.6	1.56	1.367	.012
Pupil-Classroom Ratio	32	3.5	45	5.75	1.274	.002
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	35	3.28	48	5.68	1.236	.004
Pupil-Textbook Ratio	4	1.26	12	3	.234	.001

Table 4 shows that the average workload for faith-based schools (Mean=18.5, SD=4.58) is slightly lower than the average workloads in selected secular schools (mean=25.6, SD=1.56). There is therefore a significant difference in the work loads of teachers in the selected faith-based and secular schools. During an interview with the head teachers, the issue of workloads was emphasized as the factor leading to dismal performance among secular school: One of the participants explained:

"Teachers in our school [secular] are overworked. They have many teaching hours in a week and give a lot of time in classrooms. They therefore get fatigued during the normal class time, and hence cannot get time to give attention to the learners requiring special attention or invest a lot of effort in individual learners. Besides, they lack enough time to mark the homework and/or exercises and give feedback to the learners. Learners cannot, therefore, know where to improve on time. Mostly, this is due to an inadequate number of teachers and therefore accounts for low performance".

Therefore, teachers in secular schools have heavier workloads on average than their counterparts in faith-based schools due to the fact that secular schools have a low staffing of teachers compared to their counterparts in faith-based schools. Differentials in workloads lead to lower learners' performance, which justifies the slightly lower and dismal performance among secular schools, as teachers in some of these schools are overworked, and this lowers their motivation and performance. These findings concur with those of Andiva *et al.* (2020), who argue that the workload affects the performance of teachers and their pupils. Andiva *et al.* (2020) also explained that if the workload is heavy, the teachers would not be able to cover the stipulated syllabus in time, set and mark examinations, and this could lead to poor performance by some pupils.

Table. 4 also shows that the average pupil-classroom ratio is higher in secular schools (Mean = 45, SD = 5.75) than in faith-based schools (Mean = 32, SD = 3.50). There is therefore a significant difference in the pupil-classroom ratio between the selected faith-based and secular schools in the Muhoza sector. During an interview with head teachers, the issue of class size and the adequacy of classrooms was emphasized specifically in secular schools. Expressing their views, one of the participants explained:

"Classrooms in my school [Secular school] are overcrowded. The size of the pupils is very large. Due to large size of learners, interactions between teachers and learners are minimal. There is a poor communication between learners and teachers. Therefore, teachers are unable to address the learning difficulties of each and individual learner. Learners cannot get regular feedback from the teachers. Marked quizzes and home works are either not returned or brought late. Most times, the class exercises are not given or even once given not marked. This creates difficulties in tracking progress of learners."

Faith-based schools have moderated class sizes, and their learners record higher performance than their peers in large class sizes. Therefore, a smaller school will lead to smaller classes and more individualized instruction. When the school is smaller, the instruction is more personal and specific to the learners. These results are consistent with Schneider (2018), who indicated that smaller class sizes frequently foster stronger teacher-student connections, which is advantageous for pupils' high performance. Finn *et al.* (2019) also claim that pupils are more engaged in smaller classes. Finn *et al.* (2019) also showed that small class sizes increase student participation in both academic and social interactions and that high social academic engagement raises academic performance.

Table 4 shows that the average pupils-teacher ratio is 35/1 (Mean=35.0, SD=3.28) and 48/1 (Mean=48.0, SD=5.68) in the selected faith based and secular schools respectively. Hence, the pupil-teacher ratio is slightly higher in secular schools than in faith-based schools and therefore difference in the pupils-teacher ratio between selected faith-based and secular schools in Muhoza sector. During an interview with the head teachers, the issue of high pupil-teacher ratio and how it affects the learners performance in their respective schools was emphasized. One of the participants explained:

“Our schools [secular] lack enough teachers to handle the large pupil’s population in class. The more pupils a teacher handles, the lower the mean grade. This happens because the teacher is overwhelmed with work, such as marking and correcting the pupils’ exercise books. Moreover, teachers are not able to effectively cater to individual differences”.

Moreover, the number of students per teacher is generally satisfactory in these classes, and lower than average in faith-based schools. One of the participants explained:

“Due to an inadequate number of teachers, in some schools [secular], teachers have to keep on moving from one class to another. We have been enrolling many pupils each year in each school. Some schools have small classrooms, and learners have to congregate in one class while learning. We have a small number of teachers at each school. Sometimes, teachers do not have enough time to make follow-ups on exercises and homework given to pupils. Teachers lack time to focus on individuals to give remedial work to slow learners as they are many in number.”

Findings therefore suggest that most secular schools experience a high pupil-teacher ratio. Teachers in these schools have to cater to a large number of pupils as compared to their counterparts in faith-based schools. Compared to faith-based schools, secular schools are faced with the challenge of inadequate teachers. Selected faith-based schools have a good pupil-teacher ratio, enabling them to have good contact with the learners and make good assessments within schedule, leading to good learner performance. These findings are supported by the findings of Salem (2021), who demonstrated that a lower pupil-to-teacher ratio enables the teachers to focus on individual learners and provide timely feedback, which enhances the performance outcomes. Findings also support the conclusions of Nichols (2010), who found that much smaller class sizes than are typical today led to significantly greater learning outcomes.

Table 4 also shows that pupils-textbook ratio is higher in secular schools (Mean=12, SD=3.0) than in faith-based schools (Mean=4, SD=1.26). There is therefore a significant difference in the Pupil-Textbook Ratio among the selected faith-based and secular schools in Muhoza sector. During the interview the head teachers, the issue of inadequate number of books in secular schools was highlighted as indicated in the following quote:

“Books in our school [secular] are scarce. Even the existing ones are old and not enough to be used by the high number of pupils we have. Most parents of our students are not able to buy books for their children. But, in most cases, children whose parents can afford to buy for them are doing well in different aspects, such as homework and quizzes. “So, I believe that the lack of an adequate number of books in our school always affects the performance of our learners in national examinations.”

The research established that learning and instructional resources influence learner’s performance among faith-based and secular schools. One of the participants expressed the following quote:

“Secular schools always get resources from government grants.” Sometimes there are some delays in the provision of these resources. In most cases, pupils in these schools have low means and are unable or not even committed to buying some materials, like textbooks. Given this inadequacy of funds and resources, secular schools do not have adequate teaching and learning materials. On the other hand, their counterparts in faith-based schools mostly come from wealthy families, where parents recognise the importance of providing some materials to their children. In most cases, these parents contribute to the development of the schools and enable them to buy enough teaching and learning materials. “These conditions always create an imbalance in the learning environment of these schools and, of course, determine the performance of their pupils in national examinations.”

By deduction from the above, it is demonstrated that there is a slight difference in the learning and instructional materials and resources between faith-based and secular schools. Faith-based schools have more resources than secular schools in terms of textbooks and other instructional materials, and there are sufficient learning and teaching resources for faith-based schools that facilitate their ability to outcompete secular schools. These tools were thought to be a key factor in keeping faith-based schools able to perform well in comparison to their counterparts and determine the difference in the performance of learners in these schools. This agrees with Orodho *et al.* (2019), who demonstrated that the availability of instructional materials and physical facilities has an impact on the quality of teacher preparation for teaching and learning. These findings are also consistent with those of Ogawa *et al.* (2019), who discovered that classrooms with textbooks in any ratio outperformed those without textbooks, and Lonsdale (2020), who indicated that the size of a library, as well as the quality of its resources, have a substantial impact on pupils' academic learning and performance.

➤ *School management-based factors*

School management factors assessed included frequency of quizzes, parent involvement in schooling activities and coaching hours per week. Table below summarize the findings.

Table 5 Differences in School Management-Based Factors

Factors	Faith Based		Secular		Paired	
	Schools		Schools		Comparisons	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	T	P-Value
Frequency of Quizzes/ Homeworks	4.89	.549	2.91	1.21	1.214	0.02
Parents' Involvement	2.32	1.2	.35	.25	1.121	0.01
Coaching Hours/Week	12.5	2.2	3.5	.25	1.022	.000

Table 5 shows that the mean number of exercises or homework given per week in faith-based schools is 4.89 (mean = 4.89, SD = .549) and 2.91 (mean = 2.91, SD = .21) in secular schools, respectively. This implies that pupils in faith-based schools are frequently assessed as compared to their counterparts in secular schools. There is therefore a significant difference in the number of quizzes and homework assignments among the selected faith-based and secular schools in the Muhoza sector. There is therefore a significant difference in the number of quizzes and homework assignments among the selected faith-based and secular schools in the Muhoza sector.

During the interviews, the differences in the frequency of quizzes and homework among the selected faith-based and secular schools were highlighted. Expressing his ideas on this, one of the participants echoed:

"We at our school [Secular] believe that every teacher gives at least two quizzes and two home assignments every week. However, this is not always the case. Teachers assign less work so that it can be graded in the allotted time. We have a large class size, so it is very difficult to mark every piece of work given to learners. "Less work or not marking the given work does not allow learners to frequently assess their progress."

During the same interview, another respondent explained:

"Teachers are unable to assess their pupils often with regular activities such as class activities, homework, and examinations since it is hard to complete all assignments on time, particularly in-class activities." "As a result, teachers must restrict the number of examinations in order to complete marking and provide feedback to pupils."

Deducing from the above, it was demonstrated that the teacher-pupil ratio and class size were cited as the primary causes for the lower number of quizzes and homework in secular schools as compared to faith-based schools. Feedback is delayed as a result of the delay in marking pupils' work, and the delay in providing feedback is counterproductive. This results in low performance since the evaluation does not encourage the pupils. This finding is corroborated by Mehmood *et al.* (2021), who indicated that learners who were frequently evaluated through constant quizzes, tests, and homework always had higher scores than pupils whose efforts were not resulting in improved academic performance.

Table 5 shows that the average number of parents' visits to schools is higher (mean = 2.32, SD = 1.2) in faith-based schools than in secular schools (mean = .35, SD = .25). Parents of pupils in faith-based schools frequently visit their children at school to discuss their behaviours and performance more than parents of pupils in secular schools. There is therefore a significant difference in the number of parents' visits to schools per term among the selected faith-based and secular schools in the Muhoza sector. One interviewed head teacher in a faith-based school stressed the value of parents' involvement. The following quote was extracted from his remarks:

"Parents' presence is essential to us as the school's leadership and for the children themselves." When a parent visits the school, we discuss not only the performance of the kids but their behaviour at school and give parents feedback on every aspect of their learning progress. We suggest where the weakness is so that parents can help the child improve. "This improves the behaviour of the children and also their performance in class."

During the interview with the headteachers, the following remark was made in terms of parent involvement: One of the participants explained:

"There is a high difference when it comes to involving parents and other communities in the school's activities. Mostly, faith-based schools make it a priority to keep parents involved in the school's activities through parent-teacher meetings, social events, and parent committees. Learners, teachers, and parents actively work together to promote the learner's performance. In these schools, every learner has a notebook for communication. Teachers give feedback on the learning process and the discipline of the learners through these notebooks. Increased parental involvement in education can also strengthen parent-child relationships. On the other hand, it is different. Secular schools mostly operate independently from parents. A learner skips classes, and parents or teachers do not care."

Based on the aforementioned, it was shown that parents of learners in faith-based schools visit their children at school more frequently to inquire about their behaviour and performance than parents of learners in secular schools. Effective parental participation affects academic success and is necessary for the school to achieve its goals. These findings agree with those of Tremblay (2021), who found that pupils whose parents are involved at school performed better than those with non-involved parents. The findings also corroborate with the findings of Izzo *et al.* (2019), who reported that an increase in the parent's school activities, such as an increase in the number of parent-teacher contacts, was

associated with worsening achievement, as increased contacts may have occurred to assist the teacher in managing the child's existing behaviour problems.

Table 5 demonstrates that the number of school coaching hours per week is higher in faith-based schools (mean = 12.5, SD = 2.2) than in secular schools (mean = 3.5, SD = .25). This implies that there is a statistically significant difference in the school coaching hour per week among the selected faith-based and secular schools in the Muhoza sector. During a discussion with head teachers, the need for extra hours for coaching was emphasised as a factor that influenced the learner's performance. One of the participants explained:

"We [secular schools] have limited time for pupil-teacher contacts. We are on the double shift system. It is hard for our teachers to provide remedial lessons because pupils who come in the morning differ from those coming in the afternoon. We sometimes organise extra time for learners preparing for national exams to intensify guided exercises and revisions. But, in most cases, pupils' attendance is very low. We can observe some improvements for those pupils who do attend the extra time. So, school coaching is essential to enhancing the learners' performance."

One of the headteachers in faith-based schools explained the importance of the extra school coaching hours they offer to learners. Expressing his ideas, the following quote was extracted:

"We [a faith-based school] have a long period of pupil-teacher contact." We start at 7:00 a.m. and finish at 5:00 p.m. For pupils in P4, P5, and P6, we offer additional coaching from 5.00 pm to 6:20 pm. Through this, our pupils are guided by the teachers through the lessons. Pupils ask questions and seek clarifications about the lessons. This enables them to be fully equipped with the necessary knowledge to perform well in exams. Not only is this beneficial, but it also helps our teachers complete their syllabuses at the right time, so no one is left behind. Learners have enough time to go over each topic completely with the help of teachers."

During an interview, different factors determining the differences in the performance of learners in faith-based schools and secular schools were highlighted.

"Extra coaching hours are paid for most of the time." Parents who send their children to faith-based schools are financially stable and can afford to pay for their children's extra coaching hours, contrary to their counterparts in secular schools. Most pupils in secular schools come from poor families who cannot afford to pay for extra coaching hours nor recognise the real value of them. Not only is this the case, but faith-based schools have flexible schedules and organise extra time specifically for learners preparing for national exams. "These tests always offer these learners an upper hand in these exams."

Deducing from the above, it was demonstrated that the fact that faith-based schools have more coaching hours than secular schools give them more contact time in order for the pupils to reach the necessary academic standards. Coaching hours provide instructors with additional time to work with slow learners as well as time to focus on literacy tasks such as reading and numeracy abilities. The findings agree with Benner *et al.* (2021) and Berkowitz *et al.* (2017), who showed that extra coaching hours yielded better academic performance among learners.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ Conclusion

The study concludes that learners in faith-based schools outperform their peers in secular schools. Faith-based schools' effectiveness is impacted by a variety of factors, including reduced workloads for their instructors, lower child-teacher ratios, lower classroom-pupil ratios, and lower to pupil ratios. Due to limited teacher staffing, teachers in secular schools face heavier workloads than their counterparts in faith-based schools on average, making it difficult for them to give their best efforts. Furthermore, selected faith-based schools have an outstanding pupil-teacher ratio, allowing them to interact with students and conduct effective evaluations on time, resulting in positive student results. Large class sizes, challenges with classroom management, insufficient pupil-teacher communication and interactions, poor learner evaluation, and a lack of feedback to students to track their development all contribute to low performance in secular schools. Faith-based schools, on the other hand, have limited class sizes and their students outperform their peers in bigger classes. Faith-based schools have more appropriate learning and instructional resources than secular schools in terms of textbooks and other instructional materials, and there are adequate learning and teaching resources for faith-based schools to outcompete secular schools.

Teacher-to-student ratio and class size were cited as the main reasons why learners in secular schools received fewer quizzes and homework assignments than those in faith-based schools, as well as why there was no quick marking of pupils' work. In these schools, there are more pupils than teachers, which results in teachers being overworked and having insufficient free time to mark the assigned exercises, which leads to poor performance. Furthermore, faith-based schools have more coaching hours than secular schools, giving them more contact time with pupils in order for them to attain the essential standards. Coaching hours provide instructors more time to work with slow learners and to focus on literacy skills such as reading and numeracy abilities. Parents of pupils at faith-based schools visit their children at school more frequently to inquire about their behaviour and performance than parents of pupils in secular schools, which influences their academic progress and is required for the school to meet its objectives.

➤ *Recommendations*

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations and suggestions were formulated for different parties.

- The Ministry of Education should provide adequate learning and instructional materials to the secular schools to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching and learning process and enable them to raise the academic standards of their pupils to improve academic performance.
- Parents should be more involved in their children's education, especially in the less-endowed areas, to encourage them to go to school regularly.
- Management of the secular schools should invest a lot of efforts in the mobilisation of resources to supply adequate physical resources like classrooms, books, other teaching and learning resources, and school buildings in their schools to try and catch up with their more endowed faith-based schools.
- Management in secular schools should create a policy that controls teacher workload so that they are not overworked as compared to their more effective counterparts.

➤ *Suggestions for Further Studies*

The current study was undertaken in the Muhoza sector and was only based on four selected schools. Similar studies should be undertaken and include more schools to achieve a large sample size in order to enhance the reliability of the current findings. Moreover, the study was undertaken only in the Muhoza sector. Similar studies should be undertaken in other sectors of Musanze district to obtain an overall picture of the factors determining the learners' performance in different types of schools. Furthermore, the current study places limited emphasis on parent involvement and family socioeconomic background in the academic performance of learners. Therefore, further studies should be undertaken to assess the impact of parents' socio-economic characteristics on the learners' performance and how it differs among faith-based and secular schools.

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