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Teachers' Competence and Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Rwanda

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Abstract

The level of teachers' competence plays a significance role in the promotion of students' performance especially in academic perspective. The school leadership and educational practitioners have to improve the level of teachers' competence so as to improve the level of students' academic performance which is proportional too. The purpose of this study therefore, sought to establish the relationship between teachers' competence and students' academic performance in Gakenke District in Rwanda. This study used a correlation research design to investigate the relationship between teachers' competence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Gakenke District, Rwanda. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews from a sample size of 329 respondents out of a target population of 1839, and statistical analysis using SPSS software was performed, including correlation and regression analysis to determine the relationship between variables. The findings showed the overall mean of 4.19 is between Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5) which indicates that almost students agreed that their academic performance is good. On correlation between teachers' qualification and students' academic performance, the results presented that there is a statistical significance high degree of positive relationship between teachers' competence and students' academic performance with P-value = .000 which is less than 0.01 as the level of significance and Pearson coefficient of correlation $r = .848$ which is high and indicates that there is a relationship correlated to the teachers' qualifications and students' academic performance. The study concludes that the competence of teachers, expertise, teaching methods and students' participation in lessons and good instructions at schools successfully promote the students' academic performance. The recommendations from the study include regular quality checks by the Ministry of Education to ensure teachers' competence and the provision of appropriate skills to students, schools organizing effective instruction and hiring qualified teachers to improve academic performance, teachers personally developing their competence through further studies and training to enhance the quality of skills imparted to students, and students actively attending lessons and adhering to school guidelines to achieve better academic performance.

Keywords: *Competence, Teachers' competence, Academic performance, students' academic performance*

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1.0 Introduction

In order to become a certified teacher, individuals need to possess specific aptitude, relevant experience, and a comprehensive body of knowledge (Zuzovsky, 2009). These essential skills for effective teaching are typically reflected in a teacher's credentials, which encompass a range of factors. These factors include formal instruction, practical engagement, expertise in the subject area, academic research, duration of training, possession of a certificate or license, and ongoing professional development (Zuzovsky, 2009). According to Usman (2012), a qualified teacher in Pakistan is defined as an individual who possesses teaching qualifications or has obtained a teaching license issued by the state. These individuals are experts in their respective fields of specialization and hold at least a Bachelor's degree from a four-year university (Usman, 2012). Therefore, teacher certification is crucial for ensuring that educators possess the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively educate students.

Globally, Feng and Sass (2010) found that teachers' ability to increase students' levels of achievement is unaffected by their access to in-service professional development in China. The case was different in Chicago Public Schools according to studies by Aaronson et al. (2007) as teachers with diverse college majors 'variation in their performance as teachers in the United States of America (USA). Even if someone possesses a teaching credential, they are not yet qualified to teach because they lack the necessary subject-matter knowledge. Similar to this, someone who has inadequate pedagogical expertise or who has only completed a portion of the needed training years is not qualified to be a teacher, according to Darling-Hammond, Berry, and Thoreson (2001). Since numerous studies have shown this, professional work experience and development. Rice (2003) also counts toward an instructor's credentials, (Helk, 2007). One of the key elements that influences students' academic achievement is qualification (Hakielimu, 2011). The qualifications of the teacher are imported in the teaching profession (Eryilmaz&Laslan, 1999). According to Ibidapo-Obe (2007), teachers' credentials can significantly contribute to students' increased academic attainment.

Teachers' jobs depend on their ability to manage students, resources, and instruction in the classroom (Hamilton-Ekeke, 2013). Therefore, contrary to popular misconception, a person's qualifications as a teacher may not just be determined by the certificate they possess. The competence of a teacher go beyond simply possessing a credential from any institution. The following seven factors are tied to teachers' qualifications as perTIMMS-2003 data in Israel used by Zuzovsky's (2009) studies; teacher's formal education, their training in the subject they will be instructing (in-field preparation), their pedagogical studies, period of preparation, licencing and certification status, years of experience, and professional development activities preparation. These signs serve as a guideline for navigating this evaluation, making them essential to it. As a result, each of them will be thoroughly described separately to ensure that the reader fully understands what qualifications are.

The caliber of a country's instructors may be indicative of the quality of its educational system. The most crucial step in raising children' arithmetic achievement is to hire experienced, skilled instructors in every schools (Abe &Adu, 2013). Studies by Okuruwa (1999) discovered a link between policy investments in teachers' quality and improvements in students' academic achievement. There was a correlation between teacher preparation and certification and student accomplishment in the subjects of mathematics and science. Besides, teachers' academic

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qualifications and status of certification were highly significant and favorably connected with the outcomes of students' math and science education. This report agreed with the findings from Salman (2009). Adeogun's (2001) studies in Nigeria associated the quality of teacher systems to its effectiveness. Related studies indicated that teacher quality was a school-based element that determined the success of learners (Harris& Sass, 2008; Aaronson et al., 2007; Rivkin et al., 2005; Rockoff, 2004). A secondary school teacher's credentials, expertise, and teaching strategies must be assessed in order to guarantee that the students are receiving a high-quality education. SMT instructors should receive in-service training if gaps are found so they can fulfill the demands of the changing school educational programs (Murunga et al., 2013).

In Rwanda, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) wants to make the country a middle-income nation by the year 2020. The success of Rwanda's social and economic development goals depends primarily on its most priceless resource—its people. To accomplish these objectives, Rwandans must be given the chance to increase their knowledge, abilities, and attitudes so they can compete on the job market and participate in the social and political life of their nation (ESSP, 2013). Teacher competence to be able to deliver teaching lessons so as to lead the country to the desirable destination through educating the young generation, appear right at the central position of ensuring the Rwanda's vision 2020. In order to equip head teachers with necessary managerial skills, different publications designed for secondary school head teachers' training by MINEDUC outline crucial components of effective school administration (MINEDUC, training manual, 2013). The difficulty for school administrators today is to be knowledgeable about the various methods for managing secondary schools while also maintaining the necessary professionalism to effectively use the resources at their disposal (Muvunyi, 2013). Management abilities are crucial for effective school management, according to a number of studies (Kamble, 2011; Olorisade, 2011; HOQUE, 2007; Bush, 2007) on the instruction division in different nations in Africa, Asia, and Europe. For this reason, MINEDUC has created the same training programs for head teachers.

1.1 Statement of the problem

It has long been a priority for teachers, the government, parents, and society at large to make effective students' academic performance (Yusuf & Adigun, 2010). Academic performance of students is heavily influenced by the teacher's competence and capacity to effectively instruct the class. Although many factors may prevent or impede the efficient transfer of knowledge to the students' comprehension of the subject matter, these factors may include lack of trained teachers, teachers' competence, experience, and insufficient use of instructional resources, among others. The goal of the current study is to ascertain how teachers' qualifications affect secondary school students' academic performance. Teacher competence in terms of among others; teacher Preparation, teacher Instructional credentials, Content Knowledge and Professional Development practices are important factors influencing how teachers influence students' academic performance for getting the good grades in national examination (ESSP, 2013).

Article 22 of Organic Law No. 20/2003 dated March 8, 2003, which is part of the Rwandan Constitution creates a specific emphasis on teacher training and provides for in-service learning for its teachers as mechanism to enable the under qualified teacher to upgrade. For this reason many students in Rwanda join School based programme in universities such as Mount Kenya University which enables practicing teachers to attend lectures during their academic term holidays (MINEDUC, 2016). It is noteworthy to appreciate the distinctly relevant strides in improving the

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5182>

quality of education through teacher development implemented by the GoR (Mbabazi, 2013). Basing on the importance of this subject various studies in education have been conducted at both international and regional levels and in spite of the fact GoR has made a number of interventions, there is no proof of any scientifically tested study that reports the influence of teacher qualifications on pupils' academic performance in the context of Rwanda. This backdrop engendered the need for this study to close the existing knowledge gap. Hence, the need to establish the relationship between teacher competence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Gakenke district in Rwanda.

1.2 Research Objective

The objective of the study was establishing the relationship between teacher competence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Gakenke District in Rwanda.

2.0 Literature Review

The literature review is discussed in sections.

2.1 Quality education

According to UNESCO (1998), quality in the education arena is a concept with numerous dimensions that seek to cover all activities including teaching, academic programs, scholarship and research, community services, buildings and facilities within the education system, human resource and staffing of teachers and school administrators, and in totality all services related to the academic environment. Quality education provides people with the information and direction they need to appropriately develop their skills and abilities and, as a result, become contributing members of society. People can reach their potential in ways they would not be able to without a high-quality education. Udom (1996) defined quality education as an educational situation where students are learning. Schools may foster outstanding education by emphasizing the importance of students and those who serve them. By enabling each person to reach their full potential, effective education promotes equality. Opportunities for high-quality education should be available to everybody, cover fundamental knowledge while diving into more complex ideas and personal talents. The ability to graduate with learned skills or talents is the ultimate goal of a decent education.

2.2 Teacher quality

Research on teacher effectiveness has progressed through three distinct stages, reflecting advancements in data availability and empirical methodologies. Initially, studies relied on cross-sectional data collected at the school or district level, linking general measures of teacher competence to average school test scores (Hanushek, 2006). However, Hanushek (2006) revealed that direct indicators of teacher quality, such as degrees and experience, were not significantly correlated with student achievement, as these studies failed to account for students' prior academic performance across different school groups. Consequently, the expected impact of teacher credentials was overestimated, particularly when schools with better-prepared students employed instructors with superior qualifications. In recent years, researchers have adopted a longitudinal approach to examine changes in student achievement over time, providing more rigorous control for student characteristics and background. These studies have yielded evidence demonstrating the influence of teacher credentials on student achievement gains. For example, Ferguson (2001)

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5182>

found that scores on the Texas teacher licensing test, which assesses reading, writing abilities, and a limited body of professional knowledge, explained 20-25% of the variation in average student test scores across districts, even after adjusting for factors such as teachers' experience, student-teacher ratios, and the percentage of teachers with master's degrees. By incorporating more comprehensive data and sophisticated methodologies, recent research has shed light on the nuanced relationship between teacher qualifications and student outcomes.

Ferguson and Ladd (2006) found less considerable impacts utilizing ACT scores in Alabama. Ehrenberg and Brewer (2005) found that instructor test scores on a verbal inclination exam were related with more grounded propels in understudy scores, indeed in the event that comes about changed by school level and the racial/ethnic status of the understudies. Agreeing to Rowan et al. (2006), an overview degree of teachers' science information had a coordinate effect on students' math capability, proposing that instructor execution on subject-matter tests may moreover be related to understudy accomplishment. Information from the 1998 National Educational Longitudinal Study served as the basis for the study (NELS). Higher instructor scores were linked to better student test performance, according to a few research projects that examined pedagogical expertise assessments, however numerous of them were obsolete (1979 or prior). A humble but critical relationship between teachers' execution on the National Educator Examination (NTE) and area normal NTE scores was found by Strauss and Sawyer (2006) after controlling for locale estimate, riches, racial/ethnic composition, and the rate of understudies fascinated by post-secondary instruction.

Due to the lack of complete information, there may be inclinations due to surreptitiously understudy heterogeneity, surreptitiously educators' heterogeneity, and non-random student teacher pairings (Todd and Wolpin, 2003). To reduce these potential biases, two separate modeling approaches in the literature have included imperceptibly earlier year characteristics that will impact learning. Within the contemporaneous value-added show, accomplishment levels are a work of current family and school inputs, with understudy (and sometimes teachers) settled impacts compensating for prior inputs. In differentiate, the value-added picks up approach models increments in accomplishment scores as a work of current school and domestic inputs, as well as understudy (and sometimes educators) settled impacts to account for earlier inputs (Buddin&Zamarro, 2008; Rivkin, 2006).

Rivkin et al (2005) think about is among the primary and may well be the foremost significant to evaluate the impacts of instructors utilizing board information (As of now in 1998, working drafts of the ultimate report were distributed.) The consider makes utilize of longitudinal information on person understudy accomplishment scores for Texas children in grades 3 through 6.1. For understudies and schools, they utilize a value-added picks up show with settled impacts. In spite of the fact that watched teachers qualities like involvement and instruction as it were clarify a little rate of the fluctuations in educator quality, they have an impressive effect on understudy accomplishment in this consider. Additionally, they find that the bulk of teacher quality variation occurred within schools as opposed to across schools, demonstrating that teachers whose performance was high was not restricted to a small number of institutions.

Jacob and Lefgren (2008) studies how variations in quality of teachers impacted on the achievement of learners in a large school setting. There were significant differences in value-added metrics of instructor effectiveness (teacher heterogeneity), much like Rivkin et al. (2005), but

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5182>

minimal bearing on instructor experience. Evaluation of teachers from the school administrators serve as a more accurate barometer of performance than teacher credentials. Harris and Sass (2006) studied how instructor credentials and on-job training impacted achievement of learners in Florida. The value-added gains model taking into consideration the fixed effects of teachers and pupils was used. They find that the background and experience of the educator have minimal impact. They also learn that a teacher's intellectual aptitude (as measured by their SAT or ACT scores) or college major have little influence on how well they perform in the classroom.

Studies by Clotfelter et al. (2007) found that estimates of parameters for value-added models were largely similar among instructors and elementary learners in North Carolina. The findings suggested that the education level of instructors, professional background, and certification exam outcomes all have a positive bearing on their students' academic achievement. Aaronson; *et al* (2008) investigated the relationship between student achievement and teacher effectiveness in public schools in Chicago. A gains score technique was used with safeguards against the predictable impacts of students and teachers. The results show that although teachers have a big influence on students' academic achievement, conventional measures of a teacher's qualifications, like their degree, involvement, and sort of certificate, don't really matter. Koedel and Betts (2007) utilized a value-added gains strategy to analyze the scholastic execution of San Diego's basic school students. They found, similar to other studies, that instructor quality could be a key indicator of students' scholarly accomplishment, but that instructor credentials measured by experience, the caliber of the undergraduate institution, instruction level, and college major have small effect on students' academic success.

2.3 Teacher preparation and students' academic performance

Subject matter information acquired by a teacher during their training is related to preparation. Empirical evidence has established positive correlations between teachers' subject-matter preparation and students' achievement. According to Shamim, Rashid, and Rashid (2013), conventional empirical evidence has revealed the existence of positive correlations between learner achievement and knowledge of content. According to research, subject-matter competence of instructors at the secondary school level predicts learner achievement (Aliyu, 2013). Teachers with content expertise outperform teachers without it in terms of proportion of students' outcomes (Akinfe, Olofinniyi, & Fashiku, 2012). A teacher's in-depth subject expertise is positively correlated with students' academic improvement when they are enrolled in that teacher (Neild, Farley-Ripple, & Byrnes, 2009). In terms of subject-matter knowledge, Ademulegun (2001) discovered that more qualified and experienced teachers had a positive impact on students' learning outcomes compared to less qualified but experienced teachers. A subject-matter expert should also have a firm grasp of the material and an understanding of the challenges it presents to pupils (McDermott, 1990).

2.4 Teacher instructional credentials and students' academic performance

Students of certified teachers outperform those of uncertified teachers in academic performance. Teachers who have completed an official teacher education program are often certified. In order to earn a license, some of these teachers must additionally pass the National Teacher Examination Test or complete an introduction program. According to Feller (2011), pupils who were taught by licensed instructors performed better on the accomplishment test. Students taught by new,

uncertified teachers performed noticeably lower on achievement exams than pupils taught by new, certified teachers, according to Kern's (2005) study on the effectiveness of deleting students from assessments in secondary schools. According to Darling Hammond (1999), achievement and teacher education have a significant positive association. Additionally, she discovered a strong negative correlation between achievement and the proportion of inexperienced or newly certified teachers in the classroom. According to Feller (2001), instructors with emergency teaching certificates underperformed compared to those with full certification. In addition to subject-matter expertise, certified instructors typically have additional training in teaching strategies as well as in child and adolescent development. In his study, Laine (1996) shown that teachers with pedagogical training outperformed those who joined the profession unprepared.

2.5 Content knowledge and students' academic performance

The performance of the pupils is continuously well predicted by the teachers' familiarity with the material they teach. According to Hamwnd (2009), around 20% of the variation in test scores was caused by the presence of teachers who lacked qualifications in the subject matter they were teaching students' results, even if other factors showed a larger association with accomplishment. On the other hand, Gold Hard (2000) discovered that the most accurate predictor of students' accomplishment levels was teachers who had at least a major in a respective subject area. He added that higher achievement was linked to advanced degrees that were focused on the subject matter that a teacher taught. As a consequence, teachers who had graduate-level training in their subject area outperformed those who only had an undergraduate degree in it. Brewer (2000) demonstrated a link between teachers' preparedness in their subject areas and future student accomplishment. According to Rowan (1999), teachers who have majored in the student's subject are more likely to have high student accomplishment.

2.6 Professional development practices and students' academic performance

Activities that advance a teacher's professional expertise, knowledge, ability, and other qualities are referred to as professional development (OECD, 2009). To ensure the upgrading and continual improvement of teachers, it is a systematic and rigorous operation (Oluremi, 2013). Teacher's retention and development in the classroom is anchored on professional development according to the Association of American Physics Teachers (2009). An essential component of a teacher's qualifications for becoming an effective classroom teacher is professional development. Professional development strengthens and improves instructors' instructional techniques, according to Oluremi (2013). Continuous professional development for teachers is essential for raising student achievement and effectiveness as well as for strengthening teachers' commitment, sense of self, and job happiness, according to the European Commission (2013).

Numerous groups, both inside and outside of schools, while working or on sabbatical leave may engage in professional development techniques. When new curriculum are introduced, new learning and teaching theories are discovered, and the demands of the student body change, practical teachers update their subject knowledge and instructional techniques. In his research, Brown (1995) discovered a correlation between teachers' participation in curriculum-related, content-specific pedagogic activities and greater levels of student accomplishment. Also Weng (2000) discovered a positive correlation between laboratory experimental skills and higher order talents when professional development activities were tailored to the needs of special education

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students. Wenglinsky (2011), referenced by Agharuwhe (2013), suggested that professional development has a favorable impact on students' academic progress. Professional development enables working instructors to update their subject knowledge and instructional techniques in order to adapt to navel curriculum and research on instruction and learning (Agharuwhe, 2013). It is clear that qualification is more than simply a certificate and is crucial to a career as a teacher. According to Akiba (2007), a teacher's effectiveness plays a significant role in increasing students' achievement because credentials reveal a lot about their quality.

Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers all agree that the most significant school-related influence on learner academic performance is provided by effective teachers (Akiba, 2007). More than just a credential, a teacher's qualifications include a wide range of characteristics that contribute to their effectiveness. According to Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2014), teacher self-efficacy is a concept that is related to teachers' qualifications that pedagogical performance and the amount of years of experience a teacher has and their level of self-efficacy are both positively correlated. The amount of teacher self-efficacy varies greatly depending on their training (Aliyu et. al., 2013). As compared to teachers who lack the required credentials, those who possess the proper teaching certifications will likewise be more effective. Because teacher self-efficacy is essential to good teaching, having the right credentials and having a high level of self-confidence will result in effective teaching (Steele, 2010).

Given that there isn't a single, agreed definition of what makes a good teacher, it is challenging to define teacher effectiveness Grant, Ward, and Stronger (2011). Onyeachu (2010), however, asserted in Agharuwhe (2013) that teaching efficacy is a complex construct. Since it evaluates a wide range of teaching-related factors, including topic expertise, effective communication, lesson planning, content knowledge, and presentation (pedagogical skill). Because of these reasons, the effectiveness of teachers is tied to their qualifications. As was previously mentioned, measures for gauging qualifications include both pedagogical competence and subject understanding. The efficiency of Finnish instructors was validated by Postareff, Lindblom-Ylanne & Nevgi, (2004) and Kansanem (2005) due to their high levels of training.

Pedagogical training and in-depth subject knowledge have an impact on teachers' self-efficacy, according to a study, therefore Finnish instructors must have extremely high levels of self-efficacy Postareff, Nevgi, and Lindblom-Ylanne (2004). This was supported by the hypothesis that instructors' self-efficacy scores increased in direct proportion to the amount of pedagogical preparation they had. The Finnish system of teacher training differs from Nigeria's, which may have increased the efficiency of the educational system in Finland. In accordance with the Nigerian educational system, all teachers must be intellectually and qualified professionally (Hamilton & Ekeke, 2013). The National Policy on Education Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) is a requirement for beginning a career as a teacher in Nigeria (2004). In compliance with Act 31 of 1993, the Teacher's Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) was established to supervise and direct the hone of the profession (Hamilton & Ekeke, 2013). Among the recognized programs included BSc. Ed, B. Ed, M. Ed, and Doctor of Philosophy in Education. A Technical Teachers Certificate (TTC) or Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) is furthermore required for anyone with a degree or diploma that is not listed above (Akindutire & Ekundayo, 2012). Think about how you could conceptualize

teacher certification in the context of the aforementioned information to be able to understand better.

2.7 Teachers' years of experience and students' academic performance

Longer tenure as a teacher is positively connected with greater learner accomplishment, and instructors with more than five a long time of classroom involvement appear to be the foremost successful (Aban, 2001). The number of a long time of involvement is one of the markers of a teacher's accreditations that's respected to be a critical figure in students' scholastic progress. According to Boyd (2008), teachers with more experience will have students who perform better academically. According to studies, inexperienced teachers often perform worse than experienced ones (Darling-Hammond, 2000). According to Kain's (2005) opinion, pupils with more seasoned teachers demonstrated significantly greater levels of success than students with less experienced educators (1-3 years of experience). Feller (2001) found that the schools with the highest dropout rates had fifty percent more new educates than the schools with the most reduced dropout rates in a study comparing achievements in the mathematics language and rates of drip outs among high schools in California. According to studies, competent teachers have a favorable impact on students' academic progress regardless of their level of training or experience (Agharuwhe, 2013). However, due to the experience, Nigeria must exercise prudence. Without taking the time to properly develop themselves, many teachers may have been in the field for more than twenty years. The new developments in education may be too much for this group of instructors to handle. As the world changes due to technology, the subject curricula change virtually year.

2.8 Teachers qualification and students' academic performance

Certification serves as a gauge of a teacher's credentials and includes understanding of the subject, teaching, and learning. Education cannot be offered by just anyone, according to Lassa (2000) and Guga (1998). Because it is improbable that students will pass WASCE/NECO, an uncertified teacher cannot prepare students for the exams. Nevertheless, the creation of the Teachers Registration Council (TRC) by the federal government represents a substantial advancement for teacher certification. Teacher subject area certification is one of the qualities most emphatically and reliably related with improved student performance, especially in the center and tall school science (Goldheber& Brewer, 2002; Cavalluzo, 2004; Betts *et al*, 2003). Carr (2006) also demonstrates a link between superior teacher qualifications, such as complete certification and proven subject-matter expertise, and higher primary and middle school reading, science, and social studies accomplishment. After going over a few of the certification's components, Wayne (2003) documents the limitations of the majority of studies on certification. The majority of secondary schools teach disciplines that are crucial to the development of the country. But given the circumstances, some subjects are regarded as being superior to others. If the diploma you received is not regarded and admired.

3.0 Research Methodology

In this study, a correlation research design was employed to examine the relationship between teachers' competence and students' academic performance in secondary schools within Gakenke District, Rwanda. Data collection was carried out using questionnaires and an interview guide as the primary instruments. The target population consisted of 1839 respondents, and a sample size of 329 was determined using the Yamane formula. Both purposive and simple random sampling

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techniques were utilized. To determine the relationship between variables, inferential statistics, specifically correlation and regression analysis, were employed. The data analysis process was conducted using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software version 21.

4.0 Findings

This study was to establish the relationship between teachers' competence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Gakenke District in Rwanda. This study also described various variables that determine teachers' performance and students' academic performance.

4.1 Level of teacher competence and students' academic performance

This study intends to present the level of teacher competence in secondary schools in Gakenke District, Rwanda. Teachers and school administrators provided the observations on the questions asked.

Table 1: Level of teachers' competences and students' academic performance

Statements	SD		D		U		A		SA		N	Mean	Std
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%			
To prepare lesson plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	61.1	14	38.8	36	4.38	0.97
To creatively use methods that encourage all learners	0	0	3	8.3	0	0	26	72.2	7	19.4	36	4.03	1.01
Provide the marks on time	0	0	2	5.5	4	11.1	21	58.3	9	25.1	36	4.02	0.99
Concern for the academic growth	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	80.5	7	19.5	36	4.19	0.87
Knowledge of the entire curriculum	0	0	3	8.3	2	5.5	17	47.2	14	38.8	36	4.16	1.03
Suitable lesson plan	0	0	0	0	3	8.3	28	77.7	5	13.8	36	4.05	1.02
Adequate teaching aids	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	80.5	7	19.5	36	4.19	0.87
Using test or exam effectively	0	0	0	0	1	2.8	23	63.9	12	33.3	36	4.31	0.82
Encouraging learners to participate	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	38.8	22	61.2	36	4.61	0.79
Practical lessons are usually conducted	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	47.2	19	52.8	36	4.53	0.81
Teachers when necessary repeat work	0	0	0	0	4	11.1	21	58.3	11	30.5	36	4.19	0.95
Teachers give homework	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	33.3	24	66.7	36	4.66	0.76
Teachers help students	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	25.0	27	75.0	36	4.75	0.75
Overall Mean												4.31	

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Table 1 presents the results responded by teachers to the impact of level of teachers' competence on students' academic performance in Gakenke District, Rwanda. Out of 36 participated teachers, the mean of 4.38 indicated the teachers prepare lesson plan for all lessons they teach; the mean of 4.03 indicates that teachers endeavor to creatively use methods that encourage all students to participate in the lesson. Clotfelter et al. (2007) found that estimates of parameters for value-added models were largely similar among teachers and elementary students in North Carolina. The findings suggested that the education level of teachers, professional background, and certification exam outcomes all have a positive bearing on their students' academic achievement. The mean of 4.02 indicates that teachers mark and provide the marks on time in order to encourage students to perform the courses. The mean of 4.16 indicates that teachers are concerned to improve teaching methods and develop performance of students. The mean of 4.05 presents that teachers in Gakenke District have the knowledge of the entire curriculum which is an instrument used to prepare the courses and the mean of 4.19 presents that teachers improvise and use adequate teaching aids for the lessons. Teacher self-efficacy is a crucial trait that predicts success in the classroom (Gavora, 2010).

Researcher examined how the teachers use test and exam results, the mean of 4.31 indicates that teachers use test and exam results to measure their effectiveness and the mean of 4.61 presents that teachers in Gakenke District, encourage all students to participate in the lesson in order develop the students' understanding and performance. The mean of 4.53 indicates that the practical lessons are usually conducted by teachers effectively during courses. Akpofure and N'dipu (2000) observed that for effective teaching and learning, schools must maintain an acceptable carrying capacity in classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. The mean of 4.19 indicates that when necessary, teachers repeat the work in places where it is unclear. The mean of 4.66 indicates that teachers give homework, mark it, and return it in the following day in order to improve the students' academic performance and the mean of 4.75 presents that teachers help the students when they are stuck in lesson. The overall mean on the impact of level of teacher qualifications on students' academic performance in Gakenke District, Rwanda was 4.31 that is between Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5), it presents that the high number of teachers agreed that their qualifications give an impact on students' academic performance. Brown (1995) discovered a correlation between teachers' participation in curriculum-related, content-specific pedagogic activities and greater levels of student accomplishment. Also Weng (2000) discovered a positive correlation between laboratory experimental skills and higher order talents when professional development activities were personalized to the needs of special education of students.

4.2 Level of students' academic performance

This study determined the level of students' academic performance in Gakenke District in Rwanda. Students, Teachers and school administrators participated actively.

Table 2: Level of students’ academic performance

Statements	SD		D		U		A		SA		N	Mean	Std
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%			
Communicating effectively	0	0	11	4.5	6	2.4	129	52.6	99	40.5	245	4.69	0.95
Sufficient level of knowledge	0	0	8	3.3	0	0	126	51.4	111	45.3	245	4.38	0.97
Enough teaching aids	0	0	12	4.8	29	11.9	143	58.4	61	24.9	245	4.02	0.99
Are able to ask	0	0	0	0	0	0	173	70.6	72	29.4	245	4.29	0.96
Group for discussion	0	0	8	3.3	13	5.3	151	61.6	73	29.7	245	4.17	1.01
Students are given chance	0	0	0	0	0	0	194	79.2	51	20.8	245	4.21	0.98
Students in school are happy	0	0	14	5.8	7	2.8	137	55.9	87	35.5	245	4.21	0.98
Perform highly with good distinctions	0	0	21	8.5	29	11.8	128	52.3	67	27.4	245	3.98	1.04
Students pass with good grade	0	0	8	3.2	29	11.8	152	62.1	56	22.9	245	4.04	1.02
Instructional techniques used, enable students to perform well	0	0	18	7.4	25	10.2	164	66.9	38	15.5	245	3.91	1.03
Overall Mean												4.19	

Table 2 presents the results on the level of students’ academic performance; researcher collected the findings from students in Secondary schools in Gakenke District, coded and analyzed in purpose of examining how students describe their performance. Out of 245 participated students, the mean of 4.69 the students agreed that in school they have an effective communication with teacher before and after learning. With the mean of 4.38 they agreed that they have sufficient level of knowledge about the subject area taken in classroom. Gold Hard (2000) discovered that the most accurate predictor of students' accomplishment levels was teachers who had at least a major in a respective subject area. He added that higher achievement was linked to advanced degrees that were focused on the subject matter that a teacher taught. The mean of 4.02 indicates that many students agreed that in their school there are enough teaching aids and they use them for all their lessons and the mean of 4.29 presents that students agreed that at school they are able to ask for clarity either during or after the lessons. The mean of 4.17 indicates that students agreed that they are grouped for discussion in the lesson for better understanding. Aduwa’s (2004) studies linked learner’s family environment, self-esteem, cognitive abilities, study habits, self-concept, and motivation with academic performance.

Researcher examined if the students are given chance during practices of lesson, the mean of 4.21 indicates that students are given chance to freely have hands on equipment doing practical sessions interact with apparatus for practical sessions and the same mean of 4.21 presents that students in schools of Gakenke District are happy with all teachers’ facilitation. According to Aban (2001) longer tenure as a teacher is positively connected with greater student performance and teachers with more than five a long time of classroom involvement appear to be the foremost successful. The mean of 3.98 indicates that many students in schools of Gakenke District perform well with good distinctions and the mean of 4.04 presents that students pass with good grade. On the instructional techniques used by teachers, the mean of 3.91 indicates that in schools the instructional techniques used by teachers enable students to perform well. The overall mean of

4.19 is between Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5) which indicates that almost students agreed that their academic performance is good. According to Feller (2011), students who were taught by licensed teachers performed better on the success test. Teachers who have majored in the student's subject are more likely to have high student accomplishment, (Rowan, 1999).

4.3 Relationship between teacher competence and Students' academic performance

Correlation analysis was established to indicate the relationship between Teachers' competence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Gakenke district in Rwanda. However, the regression analysis was also done to indicate the extent through which Teachers' competence can affect the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools located in Gakenke District.

Table 3: Relationship between teacher competence and students' academic performance

		Teacher competence	Students' academic performance
Teacher competence	Pearson Correlation	1.00	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	36	
Students' academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.848**	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	245	245

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 presents the results related to showing the relationship between teachers' competence and students' academic performance in selected secondary schools of Gakenke District. There is a statistical significance high degree of positive relationship between teacher competence and students' academic performance thus P-value = .000 which less than 0.01 as the level of significance and Pearson coefficient of correlation $r = .848$ which is high. This also indicates that there is a relationship correlated to the impact of teacher competence and students' academic performance. The competence of teachers is a key factor of students' academic performance and the schools' administrations are required to make sure that teachers are aligned with what they are teaching and students receive quality explanations of lessons which generally lead an academic performance. A secondary school teacher's credentials, expertise, and teaching strategies must be assessed in order to guarantee that the students are receiving a high-quality education, (Murunga et al., 2013).

Table 4: Model summary of teacher competence and students' academic performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.848 ^a	.718	.715	.402

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teacher competence

Table 4 presents the results of R Square of teacher competence and students' academic performance. The findings present that R Square = .718 This means that the variables that make teacher competence are able to give an impact on students' academic performance at the level of 71.8% and the remaining 28.2% the impact can be given by other variables. The competent

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teachers have a favorable impact on students' academic progress regardless of their level of qualifications and experience (Agharuwhe, 2013).

4.4 Interview guide for the administrators on students' academic performance

This study conducted an interview guide, researcher approached the administrators of schools in Gakenke District and ask/discuss the questions of level of teachers' qualification and level of students' academic performance. Out of 25 administrators, all of them confirmed that they conduct in-person interviews with teachers to learn more about their teaching methods. They said that this method help to improve the students' academic performance. Instructor subject area certification is one of the qualities most emphatically and reliably related with improved student execution, especially in the center and tall school science (Goldheber & Brewer, 2002; Cavalluzo, 2004; Betts et al, 2003). They demonstrated a link between superior teacher competence, such as complete certification and proven subject-matter expertise, and higher primary and middle school reading, science, and social studies accomplishment. They said that the corrective action on teacher affecting instructional issues to raise standards. For ensuring supervisory input, the supervision given to each and every teacher in the school. All administrators agreed that to make supervision is an important action used to control and help teachers to improve their teaching methods and measure an experience they have. According to Boyd (2008), teachers with more experience will have students who perform better academically. Out of 25 administrators, 72% said that teachers in schools often involve students in their lessons during courses and the 28% said that even if students involve in lessons there are some students who personally with disciplinary issue refuse to involve which cause the low performance of academic and every day they combat to solve or reduce these issues. According to Oluremi (2013), encouraging teachers' ongoing professional development was necessary to effectively deal with challenges and raise educational standards.

When researcher asked the administrators on how they improve teaching, they responded that periodically schools organize refresher courses for teachers to improve their teaching skills. According to Akiba (2007), a teacher's effectiveness plays a significant role in increasing students' achievement because credentials reveal a lot about their quality. As responded the administrators, if available and qualified to them, teachers are awarded scholarships in order to pursue further studies. When administrators were asked on students' performance level in secondary schools in Gakenke District, out of 25 administrators, 48% responded that they have the qualified teachers when the students know what they want they perform well the lessons; 31% of them responded that students' performance depend on teachers, how they prepare and teaching methods in classes and how students follow and understand the lessons; The rest 21% responded that well performing of students depend on different environment factors such as school factors, location of school, family factors and students' factors. According to Boyd (2008), teachers with more experience will have students who perform better academically. When administrators responded the question of "Do teachers in schools employ effective teaching techniques?" out of 25 administrators, 100% they responded that by comparing the results of past results and now the teaching techniques improved and explain that teachers employ effectively teaching techniques and continuously improve it. According to Richard and Gema (2009), academic performance of students is significantly influenced by teacher competence, teaching techniques, and despite the fact that few single teacher characteristics have a major impact on classroom learning.

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4.5 Summary of findings

The objective of this study was to establish the relationship between Teachers' competence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Gakenke district in Rwanda. The results presented that there is a statistical significance high degree of positive relationship between teachers' competence and students' academic performance with P-value = .000 which is less than 0.01 as the level of significance and Pearson coefficient of correlation $r = .848$ which is high and indicates that there is a relationship correlated to the teachers' qualifications and students' academic performance. A secondary school teacher's competence, expertise, and teaching strategies must be measured in order to guarantee that the students are receiving a high-quality of education, (Murunga et al., 2013). According to Cavalluzo (2004) teacher subject area qualifications is one of the qualities most emphatically and reliably related with improved student performance, especially in the center and tall school science also demonstrates a link between superior teacher qualifications, such as complete certification and proven subject-matter expertise, and higher primary and middle school reading, science, and social studies accomplishment.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the relationship between teachers' competence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Gakenke District, Rwanda. The findings revealed that teachers in the district demonstrated a high level of competence in various areas. They were actively engaged in preparing lesson plans, using creative teaching methods, providing timely feedback, showing concern for students' academic growth, and possessing knowledge of the entire curriculum. The teachers also utilized suitable teaching aids, effectively used tests and exams, encouraged student participation, conducted practical lessons, repeated work when necessary, assigned homework, and provided assistance to students. These findings indicate that the teachers' qualifications and competence positively impact students' academic performance. The study further examined the level of students' academic performance in Gakenke District. The students reported having effective communication with teachers, a sufficient level of knowledge, access to teaching aids, opportunities to ask questions, group discussions, chances for hands-on practice, happiness in school, and good overall performance. The instructional techniques employed by teachers were perceived to enable students to perform well. These findings suggest that students in Gakenke District experience a favorable academic environment that contributes to their success.

Furthermore, the study established a significant positive correlation between teachers' competence and students' academic performance. The analysis showed a strong relationship between these two variables, indicating that teacher competence plays a crucial role in students' academic achievements. The study also revealed that 71.8% of the variation in students' academic performance can be attributed to teacher competence. These findings highlight the importance of competent teachers in facilitating students' academic success. The interviews conducted with school administrators supported the findings, emphasizing the significance of teachers' qualifications, teaching methods, and ongoing professional development. The administrators acknowledged the importance of supervision and corrective actions to improve teaching standards. They also recognized the role of experience in teachers' effectiveness and highlighted the challenges they face in dealing with disciplinary issues that can impact academic performance.

6.0 Recommendations

Basing on the presented findings and drawn conclusion, the following recommendations were addressed to the Ministry of education, schools, teachers and students.

1. The Ministry of Education should check regularly the quality of teachers' competence in order to make sure that teachers give the needed suitable skills to the students.
2. Schools should organize the good instructions and recruit the qualified teachers in order to make sure that they improve the students' academic performance.
3. Teachers should be personally develop their competence through studies and trainings in order to make sure that they are giving the quality skills which promote the students' academic performance.
4. Students should attend the lessons and follow school guidelines; those will help them to get an effective performance.

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