

DISTANCE LEARNING AND THE QUALITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN RWANDA: A CASE STUDY OF BYUMBA

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the contribution of Distance Learning to the Quality of Teacher Education in Rwanda. The study was conducted to establish whether the teachers, their experiences and qualifications acquired through the Distance Learning Programme adequately led to quality education. The study was guided by three objectives, namely to investigate the effect of Distance Learning on the teaching- learning process; to examine the academic relevance of resources used in Distance Learning Programme in Rwanda; and to evaluate whether the graduates from Distance Learning programme had the skills, knowledge and attitudes required for qualitative, effective and efficient education. Simple random sampling techniques were used and data was collected using questionnaires, interview and documentary review. The distance Learning Programme (second intake) which started in 2011 was chosen for study. The rationale to select this intake was that the students were still following the programme and were familiarized with it regarding the time they had already covered. Besides, the tutors who were assisting the teacher trainees in the programme, the lecturers from Kigali Institute of Education who were appointed to take part in the training and the head teachers whose teachers were following the programme were also involved. In accordance with the number of respondents, the Cochran's formula of sample size was used and the formula gave a sample size of 58 respondents. Two types of questions were used: Closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. In closed-ended questions, participants were allowed to choose from a pre-existing set of dichotomous answers, such as yes/no. A small number of leading questions that required answers like strongly agree or disagree were also used to get an opinion from the respondents in limited words. Concerning Open-ended questions, the respondents were motivated to explain their answers by reacting to the question in order to obtain the quality of their thinking and the reality of their answers. The interview also was used as a data collection instrument. The study found that Distance Learning Programme in Rwanda gave rise to effective and efficient outcomes in terms of quality education. This was reflected in the positive change in learners' performance in class and the national examinations before and after the implementation of the programme. However, the Distance Learning Programme could be improved, and the study suggests that the Ministry of Education should plan and provide in-service Distance Learning Programme to a bigger number of teachers including primary school teachers. It also suggested that Distance Training Centres should be increased in number in order to enable a greater number of beneficiaries to have access to the programme. Lastly, attempts should be made to use Information Communication Technology (ICT) to deliver the Distance Learning Programme.