

ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED RWANDA ADVENTIST PRIMARY SCHOOLS' EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

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Abstract

The study intends to assess if faith and learning is integrated in classrooms through the perceptions of respondents on Rwanda Adventist Primary School Standards in terms of Christian purpose of education, curriculum, behavior of teachers, teaching and learning process and school leadership and the knowledge of God. Two null hypotheses were tested: "there is no significant relationship between Rwanda Adventist Primary Schools' Educational Standards and Knowledge of God" and "there is no significant relationship between the different components of Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and Knowledge of God".

The research design is descriptive and correlational. Respondents were teachers, parents, church pastors on district levels and church leaders on field and union levels. Data were collected through questionnaire, interview and observation. In data analysis Mean, standard deviation and Spearman correlation were computed, analyzed, and interpreted. Findings shows that all standards assessed (Christian Purpose of Education, Curriculum, Teachers' behavior, Teaching and Learning Process, School Leadership and knowledge of God) are weak but there is a significant relationship between Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and the Knowledge of God and there is a significant relationship between the different components of Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and knowledge of God. The researcher has given different recommendations such as reviewing SDA Primary school contract of subsidizing schools.

Key words: Rwanda Adventist Primary Schools, Educational Standards, Knowledge of God, Christian Education

Introduction and Literature Review

Rwanda has 46 Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) primary schools. These schools have 578 total numbers of teachers and 33,166 students. These schools are located in different areas of the country.

Before 1994 Genocide all Adventist primary schools were run by Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church through church fields' leaders and district church pastors. Associations were the ones staffing their primary schools in: recruiting, selecting, placing, developing and evaluating, compensating and maintaining effective work-force relationship of teachers. During that period all primary schools students were charge school fees. After the genocide the system of management of primary schools in the SDA Church was changed. Today all SDA primary schools are subsidized and free of charge as now government primary schools are free of charge. The church has no role at

all in recruiting, selecting, placing, maintaining or rewarding teachers. Only the head-teachers/directors are selected by the government officials among the three candidates that should be presented by the SDA church associations. All expenses required to run the school are paid by the Government. These include remuneration of teachers, purchases of schools equipment, school supplies, school maintenance, etc. The government also constructs classrooms of nine years basic education in SDA primary schools. If ever a teacher or a head-teacher/director compromises any SDA church policy as a worker/teacher in Adventist primary schools, the church has nothing to do with him; no sanctions can be imposed on him/her because the latter has neither power nor authority over him/her. Today all SDA primary schools staff are government employees supervised by Ministry of Education. Majority among SDA primary schools teachers are Adventist believers.



The researcher assessed Adventist primary school standards towards the knowledge of God through teachers, parents, church pastors and church leaders on fields and union levels. The objective of this study was to know if the purpose of Adventist primary school education is still observed, if curriculum of education suggested by Ellen G. White is well integrated in Rwanda Adventist primary schools; if teachers in Adventist primary schools respect all Adventist ethical requirements of teachers, if in teaching and learning process faith is well integrated, if school leadership creates an environment that is conducive to the faith and learning; if grandaunts/school leavers from Rwanda Adventist primary schools have relevant knowledge about the love of God and finally if there is a significant relationship between Rwanda Adventist primary school standards and knowledge of God.

The researcher proposes the following questions:

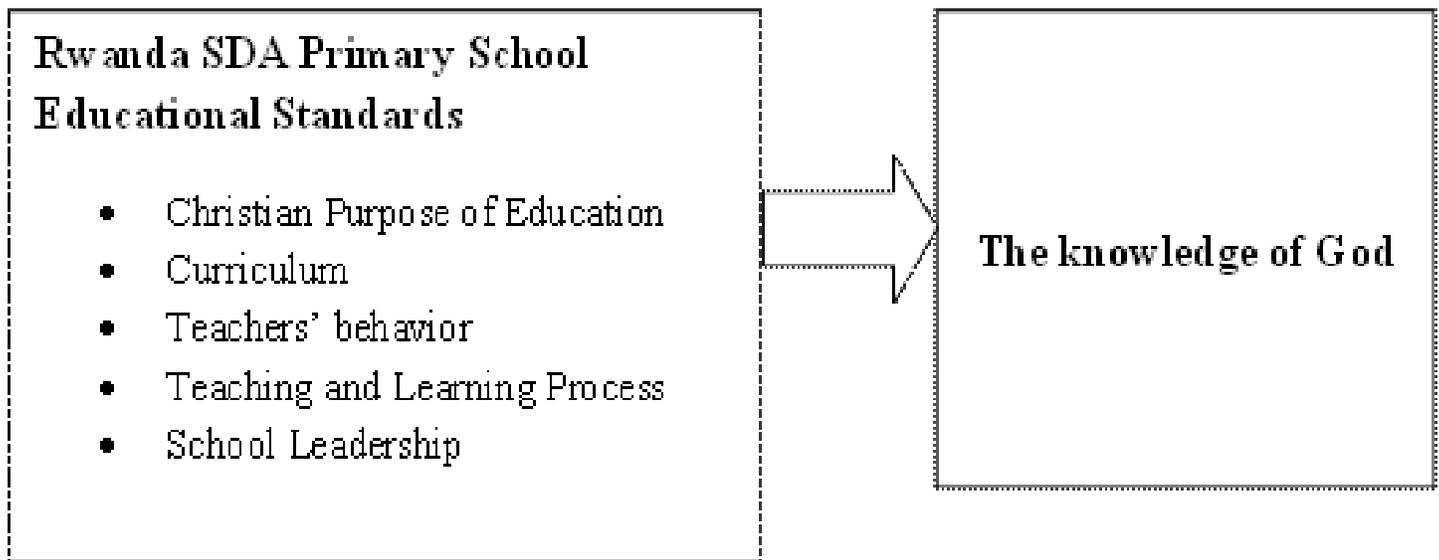
1. What is the level of perception of respon

dents on Rwanda Adventist primary school standards in terms of Christian purpose of education, curriculum, teachers' behavior, teaching and learning process, school leadership; and knowledge of God?"

2. Is there significant relationship between Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and knowledge of God?
3. Is there significant relationship between the different components of Rwanda Adventist Primary Schools' Educational Standards and the knowledge of God?

From the above mentioned research questions, the researcher formulated a hypothesis which stipulates that *"there is no significant relationship between Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and Knowledge of God"* and *"there is no significant relationship between the different components of Rwanda Adventist Primary Schools' Educational Standards and the knowledge of God"*.

Conceptual Framework



White (1977) says that the principles and habits of the teacher should be considered of greater importance than even his literary qualifications. If the teacher is a sincere Christian, he will feel the necessity of having an equal interest in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education of his scholars. In order to exert the right influence he should have perfect control over himself, and his own heart should be richly imbued with love for his pupils, which will be seen in his looks, words, and acts. He should have firmness of character; then can he mold the minds of his pupils, as well as

instruct them in the sciences. The early education of youth generally shapes their character for life. Those who deal with the young should be very careful to call out the qualities of the mind that they may better know how to direct their power and that they may be exercised to the very best account.

White (1977) says that the science of a pure, wholesome, consistent Christian life is obtained by studying the word of the Lord. This is the highest education that any earthly being can obtain. These are the lessons that the student in our schools are to

be taught, that they may come forth with pure thoughts and clean minds and hearts, prepared to ascend the ladder of progress, and to practice the Christian virtues

White (1977) says again that self-disciplined must be practiced. An ordinary mind, well disciplined, will accomplish more and higher work than will the most highly educated mind and the greatest talents without self-control. She again says that the teacher's usefulness depends not so much upon the actual amount of his acquirements as upon the standards at which he aims. According to her the true teacher is not content with dull thoughts, an indolent mind, or a loose memory. He constantly seeks higher attainments and better methods. His life is one of continual growth. In the work of such a teacher there is freshness, a quickening power that awakens and inspires his pupils.

White (1977) confirms that there is a science of Christianity to be mastered. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, and trained. The heart must be educated to become steadfast in God. Old and young are to form habits of thought that will enable them to resist temptation. She declares that the science of a pure, wholesome, consistent Christian life is obtained by studying the word of the Lord. This is the highest education that any earthly being can obtain. She states that these are the lessons that the students in our schools are to be taught, that they may come forth with pure thoughts and clean minds and hearts, prepared to ascend the ladder of progress and to practice the Christian virtues.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this article is to investigate Rwanda Adventist primary school educational standards and the knowledge of God. To attain this purpose, descriptive and correlational research designs were used. The research was carried out in 5 Rwanda Adventist primary schools (Gitisi, Ruhango, Gitwe, Rusororo, and Kanyinya) of Central Rwanda Field were considered. The population was composed by teachers, parents and church pastors who supervise those schools.

The total number of teachers was 76 and the number of district pastors was 4. There were 48 teachers and district pastors, selected randomly, who assessed primary schools' educational standards while 29 parents were selected purposely and this made a sampled of 77 respondents.

In designing the questionnaire, the researcher used closed-ended questions. Respondents gave an-

swers to items on a five-point scale ranging from 1 to 5, (from strongly Disagree up to strongly Agree). Questionnaire was set using the writings of Ellen G. White. The purpose of each question was to assess the level of effectiveness of a corresponding sub-variable, which in turn was used in assessing the level of effectiveness of the overall variables. Researcher also conducted interview to the various people such as: Rwanda Union Mission President, Director of Education in Rwanda Union Mission, Directors of Education in Central Rwanda Field; Church pastors and Director of schools. The researcher also gathered data through observation

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and it was validated by other experts in SDA primary school education and statistics. Data that were gathered through the questionnaires were analyzed statistically using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Mean and standard deviation was computed and analyzed to assess the level of effectiveness of Rwanda Adventist Primary Schools Standards. Spearman correlations were computed to assess the significant relationship between Rwanda Adventist Primary School Standards and Knowledge of God and to the significant relationship between every standard with knowledge of God.

Results and Discussion

Perception of Respondents on Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards

Assessment of Christian purpose of education; curriculum; the behavior of teachers, teaching and learning process, leadership style were used to measure the effectiveness of Rwanda Adventist primary School standards. Table 1 shows the results.



Table 1a

Perception of respondents on Rwanda Adventist Primary School Standards (N=77)

Items assessed		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Christian Purpose of Education		
This school gives Christ-based education	3.3	0.9
This school teaches self-control	3.7	0.5
Children are taught to be guided by their parents and teachers	3.7	0.8
This school helps children to understand their God given gifts and abilities so as to serve Him and the community (as it is written in 1 Peter 4:10)	2.9	0.9
This school prepares students how to glorify God and enjoy Him forever	3.3	0.9
This school prepares children how to make good choices in life	3.8	0.8
This school prepares children how to choose satisfactory work, good friends, to share, to treat others like they wish to be treated	3.7	0.7
This school prepares children how to choose wisdom from above instead of choosing ungodly and demonic wisdom (as it is written in James 3:15-17)	3.5	0.9
This school prepares children how to fear Good for having better wisdom (as it is written in Proverbs 9:10)	3.6	0.9
General Mean of Christian Purpose of Education	3.5	
Curriculum		
The Seventh-day Adventist doctrines are well integrated into the curriculum of this primary school	2.7	1.0
The Bible teaching is well integrated into the curriculum of this school	2.7	0.9
Self-control is well integrated into the curriculum of this school	3.3	1.0
Obedience is well integrated into the curriculum of this school	3.6	1.0
Working hard is well integrated into the curriculum of this school	3.5	1.0
Temperance is well integrated into the curriculum of this school	2.3	0.8
Brotherly kindness is well integrated into the curriculum of this school	4	1.0
Love to God and to one another is well integrated into the curriculum of this school	3.2	1.0
General mean of Curriculum	3.16	

Table 1b

Perceptions of Respondents on Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards (Continued)

Teachers' behavior:	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers in this primary school behave as good Christians	3.3	0.8
Teachers of this primary school care about SDA church rules	3.1	0.7
Teachers of this primary school respect SDA leaders	3.2	1.0
Teachers of this primary school participate in all SDA activities	2.6	1.0
Teachers in this primary school do not drink alcohol	3.7	0.5
There is no cigarette smoking among teachers	3.6	0.5
Teachers in our primary school do not eat impure food (like pork, rabbit etc...)	3.6	0.5
Teachers encourage pupils to attend the Sabbath and other SDA activities	3.3	0.5
General mean of Behavior of Teachers:	3.3	
Teaching and Learning Process:		
In this school nature is used to teach the love and wisdom of God	2.8	0.4
In this school Bible stories are used in teaching students to have faith in God	3.0	0.5
General mean on Teaching and Learning Process	2.9	
School leadership		
Students and teachers are used in planning, organizing and running school prayer meetings	3.3	0.8
Administrators and teachers of this school show moral excellence (as it is written in 2 Peter 1:5)	3.3	0.8
Administrators and Teachers of this school have no malice; deceit and hypocrisy and envy and slander. (as it is written in 1 Peter 2:1)	3.8	0.9
Administrators and Teachers of this school manage their household well (as it is written in 1 Timothy 3:2).	3.8	0.9
Administrators and teachers of this school are peaceful(as it is written in 1 Timothy 3:2):	3.9	0.9
Administrators and teachers of this school are husband of one wife/wife of one husband (as it is written in 1 Timothy 3:2):	3.8	0.9
This primary school is regularly visited by SDA leaders	2.6	0.7
General mean of leadership	3.45	

Source: Primary data, 2014

Christian Purpose of Education

Giving Christ-based education; children who understand God given gifts and abilities so as to serve him and others in society and preparing students how to glorify God and enjoying him forever were perceived weak (with a mean between 2.9 to 3.3), but their standard deviation shows the heterogeneity of perception (0.9).

Teaching self-control; teaching children to be guided by their parents and teachers, prepares children

how to make good choices in life, prepares children how to choose satisfying work, good friends, to share, to treat others like they wish to be treated, prepares children how to fear God for having better wisdom and were perceived with a strong Mean (between 3.5 to 3.8) and standard deviation shows the heterogeneous of perception of respondents.

The general mean of Christian purpose of education show a weakness and this is due to the following reasons:



1. Teachers in the Adventist Primary schools have different beliefs. Majority, are SDA believers but also, children are taught by teachers of other beliefs such as Catholics, Pentecostals, Anglican, Reformers etc. This affects the purpose of the schools. Faith and learning doesn't really hold since some lectures are not SDA believers.
2. Religion subject in Rwanda primary school curriculum is not a core subject; it is among the co-curricular subjects. Some teachers do not teach it. This affects the fulfillment of the mission of those schools assessed.
3. The program of religion subject is not well structured/harmonized in Adventist Primary Schools. There is no uniform program of religion that should be taught in all levels of primary schools where you may have a program of first year, second year, third year, fourth year, fifth year and sixth year.
4. Not all teachers are given orientation by the church leaders after being recruited. They are not all told about the mission of the school.
5. The church officials do not monitor sufficiently teachers because they have no opportunity. Teachers are monitored on a regular basis by directors of schools together with government officials in charge of primary school education.

Curriculum

Respondents perceive integration of SDA doctrine in the curriculum; integration of Bible teachings in the curriculum, integrating self-control in the curriculum; integrating temperance in the curriculum and integrating loving God and one another in the curriculum with a Mean of between 2.3 to 3.3 and standard deviation of between 0.8 to 1.0 which shows heterogeneity of perception of respondents.

Obedience, hard work, and brotherly kindness are well integrated in curriculum with a Mean between 3.5 to 4 and standard deviation of 1.0. These items had positive perceptions among the respondents.

The general mean on curriculum is 3.16 which shows that the curriculum that is being used does not adequately consider the principles of primary schools' education of SDA church.

Teachers' Behavior

Respondents assessed if teachers behave as good Christians, care about SDA rules, respect SDA leaders,

participate in all SDA activities and if they encourage pupils to participate in all Sabbath activities with a mean between 2.6 to 3.3 and standard deviation of between 0.7 to 1.0. Thus, this shows a weakness but there is heterogeneity in perception of respondents.

During the interview, the researcher found out that many teachers do not give tithes and offerings. Some SDA teachers participate in church activities others do not. They don't consider the church as their employer. Church officials have no clear right to supervise Adventist primary schools staff and they have no power to act as it is used to be before being subsidized. Some staff do not care about the church and church officials. Generally staff care for the government officials in charge of primary school education, as they are the one who recruited and remunerate them. The church does not keep any teachers' record.

Teaching and Learning Process

Respondents assessed if nature is used to teach the love and wisdom of God and if Bible stories are used in teaching students to have good faith with a mean 2.8 and 3, respectively and standard deviation of 0.4 and 0.5 which showed a weakness and this level of weakness is perceived by all respondents. During the interview respondents said that they are not frequently visited by the church leaders, and they are not given enough training nor seminars by the church.

School Leadership

Respondents perceived participation of students and teachers in planning, organizing and running school prayer meetings; showing moral excellence and the regular visit of SDA leaders to the primary schools are regularly visited by SDA leaders with a mean of 3.3, 3.3, and 2.6 respectively and with standard deviation of 0.8, 0.8, and 0.7, respectively, which means these three items are weak but these level of weakness is not perceived in the same way by all respondents.

The general mean also shows the weakness of school leadership (3.45). The weakness came because the church actions on primary schools and staff were dominated by Government actions. Government officials hold regularly meeting (seminars and workshops) with teachers; whenever any kind of repair/maintenance of school equipment is needed, directors of schools inquire funds from the govern-



ment not from the church. The Government pays all funds for constructing rooms and purchasing equipment for nine years basic education. The Government pays salaries and allowances of all teachers and promotes them. The church does not contribute anything to their schools.

Other items like showing moral excellence; have no malice; deceit; hypocrisy; envy and slander and managing well household; being peaceful and finally being a husband of one wife /wife of one husband

all were perceived with a mean of 3.8; 3.8 and 3.6 respectively with a standard deviation of 0.9 thus this shows that there is a strength on those items, though this strength is not perceived in the same way by all despondence.

Knowledge of God

Table 2 shows how question asked under the “knowledge of God” were answered:

Table 2
Perception of Respondents on Knowledge of God (N = 77)

Items Assessed	Mean	Std. Deviation
Knowledge of God		
Graduates of this primary schools know well stories of the Bible	3	1.01
Graduates of this primary school are able to teach other children the love of God	2.8	0.37
Graduates of this primary school understand doctrines of Seventh-day Adventist church	2.3	0.95
Students of this primary school have Christian faith that is demonstrated by their actions	3.4	0.77
General Mean	2.87	

Respondents assessed having relevant knowledge of different stories of the Bible, being able to teach other children the love of God, having good understanding of the doctrines of SDA church and having Adventist Christian faith that is demonstrated by their actions with means of 3, 2.8, 2.3, and 2.5, respectively, and standard deviations of 1.01, 0.37, 0.95, and 0.77, respectively, which means that there is a weakness and this level of weakness is perceived by many respondents. This weakness is the result of the mission which is not carried out.

Testing Hypothesis

The researcher had two hypotheses that were stated as follows: “there is no significant relationship between Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational

Standards and Knowledge of God” and “*there is no significant relationship between the different components of Rwanda Adventist Primary Schools’ Educational Standards and the knowledge of God*”.

Table 3 shows the level of relationship between Rwanda Adventist Primary School Standards and Knowledge of God in Spearman Correlation. Since Sig (.000) is less than .05, the relationship is significant and the null hypothesis is rejected and there is significant relationship between Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and Knowledge of God.

Table 4 shows the degree of relationship between the different components of Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and Knowledge of God in Spearman Correlation.



Table 3

Relationship between Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and Knowledge of God

			Knowledge of God	School Standards
Rho de Spearman	Knowledge	correlation Coefficient	1.000	.820**
		Sig. (bilateral)		.000
		N	77	77
	Standard	correlation Coefficient	.820**	1.000
		Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
		N	77	77

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 (bilateral).

Table 4

Relationship Between the Different Components of Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and Knowledge and Knowledge of God

			Christian Purpose of Education	Curriculum	Teachers' Behavior	Teaching & Learning	School Leadership
Rho de Spearman	Knowledge of God	correlation Coefficient	.582**	.943**	.278*	.495**	.648**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.000	.000	.014	.000	.000
		N	77	77	77	77	77

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 (bilateral)

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 (bilateral)

Since Sig (.000) is less than .05, the relationship is significant and the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant relationship between the different components of Rwanda Adventist Primary School Educational Standards and the Knowledge of God.

The relationship between curriculum and knowledge of God is stronger than the others (.943) while the relationship between teachers' behavior and knowledge of God is weaker than the others (.278).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The respondents' assessment of the different

components of educational standards and the knowledge of God in Adventist Primary Schools in Rwanda is between average and below average. Those who assessed the educational standards highly tend to have a higher assessment of the knowledge of God.

The researcher recommends the following:

1. There should be a review of the contract of subsidization of Adventist primary schools and SDA Church administrators discuss with the government officials about these issues of integrating faith and learning in classrooms.
2. Teachers in SDA Primary schools are SDA

church employees, thus, they deserve to be given allowances like other SDA church workers (as it is stipulated in SDA church policy).

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