



# Effect of Educational Psychology on Uncertified Pre-primary and Primary Teachers on Quality of Education in Rwanda

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**Abstract:** According to the current study, pre-primary and primary teachers who are not trained in educational psychology can benefit from training, which will enhance their ability to teach and increase student engagement and outcomes. Data were gathered from elementary school instructors, both qualified and non-certified. An open-ended questionnaire with a set of questions was given to 12 participants in order to gather information for thematic analysis. These participants were selected since they teach as uncertified teachers. The goal of the study was to determine how educational psychology training programs affect the quality of instruction provided to uncertified pre-primary and primary teachers in Rwanda. Interviews with all study participants were done in order to assess changes in teaching methods, student participation, and general educational quality following the implementation of educational psychology training. These interviews were followed by observations made in the classroom. The positive impacts of such training on teachers and students show the need of such training in tackling the educational challenges faced by uncertified instructors.

**Keywords:** Education, Psychology, Pre-primary, Teachers, Rwanda

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## 1. Introduction

A strong tool for personal growth and societal advancement, quality education is a fundamental right (Nwachi, 2021). It is the reason why primary education is the foundation of formal education in many nations, including Rwanda. However, there is still a severe need for trained teachers, especially in the pre-primary and primary (MINEDUC, 2018). Due to this gap, instruction is frequently given by untrained teachers, which may lower the standard of education.

The study of educational psychology provides important insights into human learning, development, and motivation. According to Gifford et al. (2011) the use of

educational psychology ideas in the classroom can improve teaching strategies, increase student engagement, and ultimately improve educational quality.

In addition, pre-primary and primary school teachers without certification frequently fill in the gaps in these situations by instructing young students. Although their dedication is undeniable, the provision of a high-quality education may be hampered by their lack of professional training in educational psychology, a discipline that explores the science of learning and teaching. According to Etemadi et al.,(n.d.) the cognitive, emotional, and social facets of learning, which have a considerable impact on instructional strategies and student results, are shed vital light by educational psychology.

It is in this reason that investigating the effect of Educational Psychology Training for Uncertified Pre-Primary and Primary Teachers on the Quality of Education in Rwanda is the focus of this research study. With an emphasis on its impact on teaching practices, student engagement, and it explores the possible transformation that may happen when uncertified teachers acquire training in educational psychology.

## The Problem with Unqualified Teachers

Pre-primary and primary education are frequently the first formally organized phases in a child's educational path in many parts of the world. This organisation of pre-primary and primary cannot be achieved by ignorance of competent psychologist teachers (Hamukwaya & Haser, 2021). But this degree of certification teacher shortage is a regular problem, particularly in underdeveloped areas (Beishuizen et al., 2001). Despite their dedication and enthusiasm for teaching, uncertified teachers might not have received the same rigorous pedagogical training as certified teachers (Beishuizen et al., 2001).

According to Soenens et al., (2012), educational psychology offers insights that can be instrumental in addressing this challenge. It encompasses theories and practices that can improve teaching methods, enhance classroom management, and foster positive student-teacher relationships. By equipping uncertified teachers with knowledge and skills derived from educational psychology, it may be possible to enhance the quality of education they provide (Vansteenkiste et al., 2009).

Therefore, this study examines the impact of educational psychology in teaching and learning process for pre-primary and primary teachers who are not certified in Rwanda. This study aims to shed light on the possible advantages of such training for uncertified teachers and their students by assessing changes in teaching methods, student involvement, and overall educational quality after the adoption of educational psychology training. To find relevant information a set of research questions was used to find required information. How has educational psychology training affected the teaching methods of pre-primary and primary teachers who are not certified? What are modifications in student motivation and engagement in settings where instructors have received educational psychology training?

## 2. Literature Review

This literature review reveals important definitions and ideas for this study. Furthermore, covered in detail are key terms such as pre-primary and primary education,

educational psychology, effective teaching, psychology, and uncertified teachers.

### 2.1 Psychology and Quality of Education

The transfer of behaviour defined by knowledge, skills, and attitudes from one generation to the next is referred to as quality education (Dieu et al., 2022). To learn more effectively, a student must be challenged, and the learning environment or scenario must likewise challenge the learner (Island & Education, 2022). Psychology plays a major role in this regard by serving as a guide for all behaviours, whether human and animal. Psychology, according to (Leader, n.d.), is the study of how people behave and think in relation to their surroundings. Furthermore, psychology has a significant impact on high-quality education. According to (Long et al., 2014), psychology has an impact on the quality of education by serving as a helpful subject for teachers and learners.

Additionally, according to (Kartikawati et al., 2015), educational psychology is the area of psychology that focuses on comprehending the act of teaching and learning in contexts or settings related to education. Thus, educational psychology gives teachers the ability to comprehend learning challenges in various learning environments so they can deal with them for lifetime learning to (Long et al., 2014). In addition to this, Kartikawati et al. (2015) defines educational psychology as the scientific study of learning and behaviour in learners.

Moreover, teachers in elementary and secondary education should attend this course of educational psychology. All teachers can benefit from this as well. According to Makoelle (2014) and Kartikawati et al. (2015) psychology should be studied by all teachers, regardless of level, since it influences student achievement on all fronts (Wininger et al., 2019).

Additionally, pre-primary education is a type of school or class that is meant to help young children get ready for elementary or primary school. These children are typically between the ages of three and six (Woodhead. Martin and Moss, 2007).

Furthermore, as children are like seeds in a nursery bed, the main objective of pre-primary schools is to advocate for treating them with care (Woodhead. Martin and Moss, 2007). Additionally, pre-primary educators support the cognitive, psychomotor, social, and emotional development of these young children (Ducation, n.d.). Additionally, this aids in the development of many of the abilities students need to be prepared for admission into primary school and for academic success (Woodhead. Martin and Moss, 2007).

Pre-primary education is crucial for kids, but primary education which happens in primary schools is also a

formal education (Woodhead, Martin and Moss, 2007). Therefore, elementary education is a phrase that is commonly used to refer to the foundations of learners' skills for lifetime learning in the majority of countries (Wininger et al., 2019). Although elementary education takes six years to complete, other nations (such as the US) do not regard the first seven or nine years of schooling to constitute primary education.

Furthermore, primary education is reflected in the International Standard Classification of Education as the cornerstone (Dieu et al., 2022). The programs in primary education are often designed to give core basic competencies like reading, writing, and numeracy and to lay a strong foundation for learning (Woodhead, Martin and Moss, 2007). They added that initial stage of basic education, or primary education, is classified as standard Classification of Education. It is necessary to have a competent teacher in the service of education even though instructors at this level should be qualified in education because it is difficult to locate teachers who meet the need. But professional educators ought to study psychology.

## **2.2 Uncertified Teacher and Quality Education**

A teaching credential and competency skills are necessary in order to instruct or educate students (Wininger et al., 2019). According to (Bragg, 2018), uncertified teacher is someone who lacks both qualified teacher status and teaching competence. In addition, a well-managed classroom is necessary for providing students with access to useful knowledge, skills, moral values, and attitudes (Wininger et al., 2019 and Bragg, 2018). Furthermore, teacher without a certificate does not meet learning objectives, and having teaching competences by chance does not make a teacher the best that they can be (Gunawan & Syarifuddin, 2020).

According to Wininger et al., (2019) qualified educators are key contributors in successful education through effective facilitation to learning for students. Moreover, psychology and instructional techniques should be taught to all teachers. For this reason, this study conducted to find out the effect of Educational Psychology for Uncertified pre-primary and Primary teachers on quality of education. This will inform educational stakeholders to make emphasis on training and improve the quality of education through the skills acquired from qualified teachers who can help uncertified teachers.

## **2.3 Effective Teaching and Quality of Education**

According to Gunawan & Syarifuddin, (2020), effective teaching is the behaviour, knowledge, and procedures that

students learn from their teachers in order to produce positive results. This means that instructors need to devote a greater amount of time to their craft than we may think in order to become proficient educators. Moreover, given the difficulty of the work and the unique differences that teachers encounter with students, effective teaching strategies is essential in achieving the goal (Makoelle, 2014). Teachers should also be able to apply a range of views, teaching methods, tactics, and strategies with flexibility (Moore 2014). To support an effective teaching process, a teacher must also take into account the needs, interests, and talents of each student.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study used a case study research design focusing on primary schools. In this regard, each involved school in this study was considered as a case study. According to Rashid et al., (2019) a case study is helpful to understand social learning and classroom atmosphere. The study followed a social learning theory of Bandura which states that all learning is acquired because of direct experience with subject or an idea. Interacting with environment can shape the behavior of individuals and vice versa (County, 2015). This emphasizes on immediate social context as an individual observes and implement after observation. However, semi-structured interview and classroom observations were used during data collection under the following steps

### **3.2 Population and Sampling Techniques**

Since there is a big number of primary schools in Rwanda those have uncertified teachers, the study used the primary schools from southern province and targeted two primary schools. It is in this regards the study was conducted in two primary schools located in southern province. The study targeted uncertified teachers and qualified teachers from primary schools. Southern province was selected since no other study has been done on the same research topic in this province. Furthermore, these two schools were chosen because they hired both certified and uncertified teachers as new teachers within the last three years. Moreover, there are more accessible options for successful completion of this study. Therefore, purposive sampling was employed to select 12 participants for this study.

### **3.3 Research Instrument for Data collection**

The study was conducted under classroom observation and semi-structured interview:

### 3.3.1 Classroom Observations

According to Beishuizen et al. (2001), classroom observation gives accurate information for the qualitative study. In this regard, classroom observation took place in the classroom of one uncertified teacher per selected schools. In this class the teacher taught a single period of 40 minutes. The researchers observed that the lesson was taught passively without engagement of learners due to the lack of adequate teaching methods, techniques, strategies and other resources. After the observation in a class of uncertified teacher, the researchers observed the lesson taught by a qualified teacher in education. In this class, it was observed that the students were motivated and courageous as improvised resources were used and manipulated by learners .

### 3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect information with the use of text or words (Tongco, 2007). The semi-structured interview was conducted for both qualified and uncertified teacher of primary education. This was done in order to collect qualitative information about their perceptions on educational psychology and how it affected their teaching in the classroom.

## 3.4 Analysis of Data

After data collection, thematic analysis was employed to uncover patterns, themes, and insights regarding changes in teaching strategies and student involvement from qualitative data collected through interviews and classroom observations. To keep confidentiality and anonymity, participants were given codes numbers from UTR1-UTR6 for uncertified teachers and CTR1-CTR6 for qualified teachers. It is therefore that thematic analysis was used to explore the effect of Educational Psychology for Uncertified pre-primary and Primary teachers on quality of education

## 3.5 Ethical Considerations

The primary teachers who participated in this study signed consent form in order to guarantee their privacy and confidentiality. The recorded information from interview was kept on memory card in safe place out of electronic device. Moreover, written data from observations and interviews was also kept private and secure in a secure area. codes were also created for increased anonymity.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The data collected from the field were recorded and discussed in this part, the results from respondents were highlighted based on the effect of Educational Psychology for Uncertified pre-primary and primary teachers on

quality of education. The responses were summarized for each respondent in relation with the research question as follows:

*First research question*, how does educational psychology affect the teaching methods of pre-primary and primary teachers who are not certified? This was discussed through semi-structured interview and respondents addressed their position.

I do not feel comfortable and confident during lesson delivery because my qualification was not primary teaching (Respondent UTR1, personal interview, 2023). The teacher also said that it is very complicated to make a lesson plan and avail the adequate teaching materials and resources. It is a problem to fill and assess pedagogical documents said the teacher. He concluded by saying that he failed to have control over the learner's behaviours and class management. Therefore, the academic result was not provided successfully as it was intended to be.

It was very difficult to create a good learning environment for the learners and atmosphere because the lack of qualification and teaching experience (Respondent UTR2, personal interview, 2023). The respondent added that learners couldn't successfully perform my subject (Mathematics) because I didn't have enough teaching skills and competences to take care of young children. Respondent UTR2 added that he might be able to succeed in good teaching and learning with a lot of practice, observations, and imitations.

In my teaching experience, I use to administrate the corporal punishment when the student is mistaken or get a wrong answer, I like to explain because it is very easy and time management rather than group works and presentation which takes a time replied the teacher and he conclude that it is not easy to him to have a dialogue to the learners understanding any learning difficulty and examine how to cope with (Respondent UTR3, personal interview, 2023).

Majority of uncertified teachers reported adopting improved instructional strategies after receiving educational psychology training. These strategies included active learning techniques, differentiated instruction, and the integration of socio-emotional learning elements into their teaching. It is found that classroom observations supported the self-reported improvements in classroom management while trained teachers demonstrated better classroom organization, more effective behaviours management and smoother transitions between activities.

Responses and interview data from respondents consistently highlighted that student in classrooms taught by trained teachers exhibited higher levels of motivation. This was attributed to the teachers' ability to create a positive and engaging learning environment by applying motivational theories and strategies. It is therefore clear

that classroom observations revealed a noticeable increase in student participation and engagement during lessons delivered by trained teachers. Students were more active in asking questions, collaborating with peers, and participating in classroom discussions.

***The second research question***, What are some of modifications in student motivation and engagement in settings where instructors have received educational psychology training? And the third research question, What is the general level of instruction delivered by unlicensed teachers both before and after the training? These were discussed by respondents and classroom observation conducted for 40 minutes to assess modifications in student's motivation of learning. Then, answers are summarized as follows:

The uncertified teachers cannot have a good achievement because they do not have enough teaching, methods, techniques, strategies in practice (Respondent CTR1, personal interview, 2023). The respondent added that these uncertified teachers do not have a child psychology to cope with the learner's problems related to the teaching and learning process.

The uncertified teacher cannot accommodate the learners in learning environment due to the lack of competences, the students always fail almost all subject, the student tends to dislike the teacher because of bad punishment, during a lesson delivery, the teacher uses teacher-centered pedagogy instead of learner centered pedagogy (Respondent CTR2, personal interview, 2023). This may equip the learners not good academic achievement.

It is worst to have a disqualified teacher because he doesn't know what teaching and learning is (Respondent CTR3, personal interview, 2023). This may cause problems to the learner.

The lack of teaching competences cannot facilitate the learners to perform better (Respondent CTR4, personal interview, 2023). The respondent further said that Teacher doesn't know how to handle the classroom problem, to use the appropriate teaching aids and resources. During teaching and learning, he likes to use lecturing and this is not practical in pre and primary education

It is meaningful to take the advanced level with pre or primary education in schools like TTCs because it is the

area of carrier guidance and specialization where the teachers have been trained from there, are able to teach as experts (Respondent CTR5, personal interview, 2023). To involve uncertified teacher in primary education may cause the problems like a dropout to the learners, lack of motivation, truancy or distraction. All these problems can affect teaching and learning process including students' performance.

When I'm teaching, I like to explain and illustrate during the pictures or charts. I don't like to use teaching aids because they take me a long-time and I like to cover the curriculum in short period in order to avail enough time of exercises to the students (Respondent UTR4, personal interview, 2023).

The way of teaching is to be always on time in class, to administrate the punishments to the students, always to dictate them instead of giving freedom to talk and doing whatever comes on their mind and during assessment, to be strict in marking is better because they make the learners dynamic (Respondent UTR5, personal interview, 2023).

The impact of teaching primary school without qualification is academic failure, lack of competences to the learners, the problems of class management and social adaptation and conflicts to the students (Respondent UTR6, personal interview, 2023). This may conduct to the low quality of education where the learners can become less creative in their learning.

Thereafter, qualitative data from semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and classroom observations suggested that students in these classrooms also exhibited enhanced critical thinking skills. They demonstrated the ability to apply knowledge to real-world situations and engage in deeper levels of analysis and problem-solving.

Following data collection, the information was arranged into patterns using the findings from respondents and a review of the literature. Furthermore, codes were developed based on these patterns. As a result, the two themes were developed in connection with the information gathered and the study's literature review. The pattern, codes, and themes developed for this study are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1

Patterns	Codes	Themes
Lack of confidence Lack of the use of teaching resources Lack of assessment skills Lack of teaching skills Behavioural control to the learners	Teacher's personality	Teacher's personality and teaching experience
Negative punishment Lack of teacher-learner cooperation	Teaching experience	
Lack of teaching methodology Lack of adaptation Lack of professional deontology	Teaching profession	Teaching profession

## 4.2 Discussion

The discussion of the findings of this study was based on two themes, the first theme is Teacher's personality and teaching experience while the second theme is Teaching profession. The quality of education in primary school could be effective when every teacher is trained on educational psychology that has impact on behavioural control to the learners, school punishment and confidence. As a results, most respondents argued that teacher's personality, teaching experience and teaching profession affect teaching and learning process at primary schools. Having experience as a primary teacher with educational psychology is highly relevant, as many respondents have noted. Their inability to adapt, assess, and teach effectively impacts how they teach various lessons in primary schools. According to Bimenyimana & Uworwabayeho, (2022) learning could be effective when teachers use a learner- cantered approach that has a significant impact on students' interest, motivation, and self-direction in learning.

From the results and literature review, it is found that empowering uncertified teachers' educational psychology can be helpful on Student Engagement and Ongoing Professional Development. According to Soenens et al. (2012) educational psychology control the potential inhibits upon psychological development through manipulation and exploitation of the parent-child bond (e.g., love-withdrawal and guilt induction), negative, affect-laden expressions and criticisms (e.g., disappointment and shame), and excessive personal control (e.g., possessiveness, protectiveness). This is key elements should be kept in mind as uncertified teachers.

### Empowering Uncertified Teachers

The findings affirm that educational psychology training can empower uncertified teachers by providing them with essential pedagogical knowledge and skills. This not only

benefits teachers in terms of professional growth but also positively impacts their teaching practices and classroom management.

### Impact on Student Engagement, Implications for Policy and Practice

The increased student engagement observed in classrooms taught by trained teachers underscores the importance of educational psychology in creating learner-centered environments. Engaged students are more likely to be active participants in their education, leading to improved learning outcomes. According to Uworwabayeho (2009) learner-centered increase students' active participations in their learning. Moreover, the research findings have significant implications for educational policies and practices. They suggest that investing in educational psychology training programs for uncertified teachers can be a cost-effective way to improve the quality of education, especially in regions facing teacher shortages.

### The Need for Ongoing Professional Development

While the positive effects of educational psychology training were evident, it's important to recognize that professional development is an ongoing process. To sustain these improvements, teachers should have access to continuous training and support. It's important to note that the research findings are specific to the context of pre-primary and primary schools. According to Gifford et al. (2011) the impact of educational psychology training may vary in different regions, depending on factors such as the existing level of teacher training and the socio-cultural context.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The research findings provide compelling evidence that educational psychology training can positively impact uncertified pre-primary and primary teachers, leading to improvements in teaching practices, student engagement, and student outcomes. These findings have implications for educational policies and practices, emphasizing the potential of teacher training programs to enhance the quality of education in regions facing teacher shortages. However, ongoing professional development and context-specific considerations are crucial for sustaining these positive changes in education.

As well as educational psychology training has a positive and significant impact on the teaching practices of uncertified pre-primary and primary teachers. Trained teachers reported adopting improved instructional strategies and demonstrated enhanced classroom management skills.

It is found that educational psychology training empowers uncertified teachers by providing them with essential pedagogical knowledge and skills. This not only benefits teachers professionally but also translate into improved teaching practices and, ultimately, the quality of education.

Moreover, trained teachers were able to create more engaging and motivating learning environments, leading to increased student engagement. This engagement was reflected in higher levels of student participation and active involvement in classroom activities.

Therefore, as this study intended to offer empirical proof of the effects of educational psychology on primary teachers who are not certified. The findings may help to shape educational policies related to primary level and programs that attempt to increase the skill and efficacy of uncertified teachers, thereby helping students and the entire educational system.

### 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Educational authorities and institutions should consider expanding and strengthening educational psychology training programs for uncertified teachers. These programs should be accessible and affordable, targeting regions facing teacher shortage.
2. Recognizing that professional growth is continuous, educational psychology training should be supplemented with ongoing professional development opportunities. This ensures that trained teachers

continue to improve their skills and stay up to date with the latest educational research and practices.

3. Educational authorities should establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the long-term impact of educational psychology training on teachers and students. This includes tracking changes in teaching practices, student engagement, and academic achievement over time.
4. While the research findings highlight the positive impact of educational psychology training, it's essential to recognize that training programs should be adaptable to the specific needs and cultural context of each region, considering existing teacher training practices and challenges.
5. Collaboration between educational institutions, policymakers, and teacher training organizations can foster the exchange of best practices and successful models of educational psychology training. Sharing knowledge and experiences can lead to more effective training programs.

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