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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND STUDENTS LEARNING OUTCOMES IN TWELVE YEARS BASIC EDUCATION IN RWANDA

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#### Abstract

This study's objective was to examine the socio-economic factors affecting student learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic education in Rwanda. The research question was: What are the socio-economic factors that affect students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education, in Rwanda? The researcher used descriptive survey research design. 182 respondents constituted the study's population. The researcher used census and purposive sampling techniques to find the sample of respondents. Questionnaires and documentation research techniques were used as tools for data gathering. Based on the responses from the respondents, the analysis of the findings using SPSS Version 21 showed a significant correlation with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the usual significance level of 0.05 and indicates a very strong positive association between the students' learning outcomes and the socio-economic factors of family income, parental level of education, school resources, and food security. The Karl Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ), of 0.870, provided additional evidence of this strong positive relationship.

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#### Introduction:-

The world's population is growing rapidly and so should be its economic activities. In the report by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2023), its Secretary General pointed out that the growth of the world's population to 8 billion people is a testament to improved nutrition, public health and sanitation. He goes on articulating that as our human family grows larger, it is more unequal and divided than ever (UN DESA, 2023). The SDGs targets contribute towards moving the entire community's development activities altogether. With the vision of education that underpins the concept of lifelong learning (Ted Fleming, 2020).

In this line, the world community has committed to achieving ambitious education goals by 2030, such as ensuring that all children reach a minimum level of reading and math competency and that all secondary school graduates complete their studies (UNESCO, 2024). UNESCO (2024) clarifies further that learning goes beyond the ability to read, write or perform simple arithmetic to include a range of competencies needed for different purposes and life junctures of children, youth and adults. This statement introduces us to what education in the actual sense should call us to mind, especially educators but also the stakeholders broadly. Education that aims to change people's relationships with each other and with nature to address global problems such as climate change, racism, sexism, and hatred (Miseliunaite B, Kliziene I, Cibulskas G, 2022). Much more related to the Transformative Sustainability

Education (TSE). TSE which focuses on learning that includes the complete individual and, at the same time, understands and cultivates wholeness more generally as intra-relationship with the living world. This is done through pedagogies that are connected, emotional, spiritual, imaginative, and embodied (Burns, H., 2018).

The United Nations Secretary General; in the Transform Education Summit (2023) stated his vision in transforming education as the one that is built on what communities, families, parents and children treasure most. As he goes on saying; transforming education responds to the local, nation and global needs, cultures and capacities. It supports the learners in the areas of learning to learn, learning to live together, to do and learning to be (United Nations, 2023). If this is hoped for, then, the journey for achievement necessitates considerable efforts.

Across the globe, disparities in Quality Education and Lifelong learning can be tracked among the continents. The report by UNESCO (2021) provided an account of progress of countries in Europe, North America and the Caucasus towards bridging Sustainable Development Goals 4. However, as it has been reiterated by Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation of African Union Commission (2023); despite the efforts made by African states to improve access to quality education in recent decades, progress remains to be made. It is now recognized that in situations of great fragility, the most disadvantaged populations are the most likely to be left behind. Equity is at the heart of SDG 4. It is about giving all children equal access to safe, quality, and relevant education, and thus recognizes the importance of fairness (e.g. 'ensuring that personal and social circumstances are not obstacles to achieving educational potential') (UNESCO, 2023).

Mehmet Ozcan (2021) found the school administration, management structure and managers; school environment, a teacher and education system which is in a constant change to be the factors affecting students' academic achievement, according to the teachers' opinion.

The Government of Rwanda (GOR) is putting remarkable effort in education provision development. The GOR's Education Sector Policy, which went into effect in 2003, provided six years of free, mandatory primary schooling in order to strengthen human capacities to combat poverty and, eventually, enhance Rwandan welfare (USAID, 2023). Public and Government-aided schools' education provision in Rwanda is at no cost. The Government of Rwanda is putting efforts for the quality affordable basic education.

In the year 2020, the Republic of Rwanda; in line with the efforts to bridge the possible socio-economic divide, released its aspiration towards vision 2050. The vision has the goal of promoting Economic Growth and Prosperity and High Quality of Life for Rwandans and this effort recognized the global and human development agendas: SDGs, African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, East African Community (EAC) vision 2050 and Paris agreement on climate change among other instruments. The vision 2050 has the five pillars cited as Human development, Competitiveness and integration, Agriculture for wealth creation, Urbanization and Agglomeration, accountable and capable state institution. The objective of this research was to examine the socio-economic factors affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education in Rwanda

Ming et al.; (2021) conducted research on Family Income and Student Educational and Cognitive Outcomes in China: Exploring the Material and Psychosocial Mechanisms. The survey applied a multistage sampling method with probabilities proportional to size and found robust associations of family income with school grades, cognitive ability, and study attitude, but not with homework engagement.

Parents' Socio-Economic Status as Predictor of Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria was a research conducted by Raheem (2015). It used a Descriptive research design of the survey type and purposive sampling. It was confirmed in the study that there was relationship between parents' socio-economic status and academic performance of secondary school students.

In the study by Mutabeshya and Sikubwabo (2022) on Effect of family socio-economic status on students' academic achievement in nine-year basic education (9YBE) schools, revealed that Students' academic success is significantly impacted by the socioeconomic position of their families

### **The Human Capital theory**

This concept focuses on how education contributes to the accumulation of human capital, or people's stockpile of knowledge, skills, and capacities. According to Sean Ross (2023) Intellectual and human capital are treated as

renewable sources of productivity. Organizations try to cultivate these sources, hoping for added innovation or creativity. Sometimes, a business problem requires more than just new machines or more money. The Human Capital Theory serves as the foundation for the current study since it predicts that the learning outcomes it aims to enhance will increase the amount of human capital required by the market.

### **Research Methodology:-**

According to Bhandari (2023) choosing your overall study objectives and methodology, your sampling strategy or subject selection criteria, your data collection methods, the procedures you'll follow to collect data, and your data analysis methods are all part of the process of building a research design. Making sure that your methods align with your research aims and that you apply the appropriate analysis for your data is made easier with a well-thought-out study design. A research design is a plan for employing empirical data to address your research issue. The research design of this study was a descriptive survey. The design used for the researcher collected information from a sampled size within a larger population about the Socio-economic factors and students learning outcome in Twelve Years Basic Education.

According to Michael (2023), a study, intervention, or marketing strategy's main focus is on a particular segment or subset of the general populace, which is known as the target population. It represents a more select group of individuals who meet specific criteria or possess specific qualities. The target group is determined based on the research topic or the objectives of a certain program. This study's intended audience was 14 schools, comprising 10 School General Assembly committee members each and 14 Deputy Head teachers in Charge of Studies (DOS) as well as the schools' senior six (S6) graduated students from Twelve Years Basic Education.

The study's sample size was consisting of 182 as population. The sample size was obtained from all the fourteen (14) schools having Twelve-Year Basic Education Program. The researcher worked with the School General Assembly Committee members of each school comprising 10 members, which make the total number of 140 as population. Additionally, the researcher worked with the Deputy Head teachers in charge studies in all the 14 schools; graduates from Twelve Year Basic Education schools and parents for each school; which make 28 participants.

Case selection strategy, or the procedure and procedures used to choose a subset of units from a population, is referred to as research sampling techniques. Although sampling approaches save data gathering expenses, they result in a loss of accuracy and comprehensiveness when compared to dealing with the complete population. (MINEDUC, 2019). The researcher sampled using Census for School General Assembly Committee members and Deputy Head teacher in Charge of Studies. However, he used purposive sampling for students and the parents. Data was collected using questionnaire.

### **Research Findings:-**

#### **Characteristics of the Respondents**

The participants were composed of School General Assembly committee members, Deputy Head teachers in Charge of Studies (DOS) and S6 graduated students from Twelve Years Basic Education. The School General Assembly committee members is made up of the school head teacher, 4 parent representatives, 2 students' representatives, 2 teachers representing others and the school owner and purposively two parents of graduate students from Twelve Years Basic Education were added to SGAC members.

This section presents the respondents' backgrounds according to many criteria; including age, gender, working experience, and educational attainment. All respondents in this research were 182 including 140 school general assembly committee members (14 head teachers, 56 parents, 28 students, 28 teachers' and 14 school owners), 14 Deputy Head teachers in Charge of Studies (DOS) and 28 S6 graduate students from Twelve Years Basic Education Schools.

The objective of the study was to examine the socio-economic factors affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education in Rwanda. This objective served as the basis for data collection, and the results were emphasized.

### Socio-economic factors affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education in Rwanda

The study was to examine the socio-economic factors influencing students' learning outcomes in the Twelve Years Basic Education program in Rwanda. To achieve this, the researcher designed questionnaires for various respondents, including SGAC members, deputy head teachers, and Senior Six graduate students. Respondents were asked to express their perceptions by indicating their level of agreement with given statements using the scale: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). Multiple items were included in the questionnaire with the results presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:-** School General Assembly Committee (SGAC) members' perceptions on socio-economic factors affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education in Rwanda.

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
Family income	9	6.4	15	10.7	4	2.9	36	25.7	76	54.3
Parental level of education	6	4.3	12	8.6	11	7.9	53	37.8	58	41.4
School resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	97	69.3	43	30.7
Food security	15	10.7	3	2.2	8	5.7	86	61.4	28	20.0

#### Primary data, 2024

The researcher wanted to know different socio-economic factors that affect students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education in Rwanda. The respondents were given the questionnaires to rate different socio-economic factors according to the perspectives. The SGAC members who participated in this research demonstrated the extent of socio-economic factors in affecting the learning outcomes of their children.

The majority of respondents (54.3%) of all SGAC members strongly confirmed the family income as factor that affect students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic education schools. 25.7% of all participants agreed on this factor, 2.9% of the respondents were neutral on the point that mentioned family income as factor affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic education schools. 10.7% of all SGAC members who participated in this study disagreed while 6.4% of them strongly disagreed and were against the statement that family income is a socio-economic factor affecting students' learning outcomes.

The second socio-economic factors the research needed the respondents to rate was parental level of education. The majority (41.4%) of all SGAC members strongly agreed on the statement that parental level education affects the students' learning outcomes. 37.8% of all the respondents agreed with parental level of education being a factor affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic education. 4.3% of all SGAC members strongly disagreed, while 8.6% of the participants disagreed with parental level education as socio-economic factor that can affect learning outcomes. 7.9% of the respondents neutral on this point. The research findings indicate that parental level of education is perceived as a significant socio-economic factor affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years of Basic Education.

The next point the research wanted to know about socio-economic factors was school resources as a factor influencing students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education schools. The majority of the respondents (69.3%) agreed. The deficit in resources such as teaching aids, books, laboratories equipment and lack of infrastructure were also mentioned by most of the respondents as supporting factors to school resources. 30.7% of the participants strongly agreed that school resources affect students' learning outcomes either positively or negatively, in the case of lacking school resources, learning is negatively affected. The last factor the research urged to know was food security. The majority of the respondents represented by 61.4% confirmed that when there is food security in a family or at school, the students' learning outcomes become good. 20.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that food security affects learning outcomes. 10.7% of all the respondents strongly disagreed on food security to affect learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education schools. 2.2% of the respondents in this study disagreed on this issue of food security, while 5.7% of the participants were neutral.

**Table 2:-** DOS' perception on socio-economic factors affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education in Rwanda.

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%

Family income	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	28.6	10	71.4
Parental level of education	0	0	0	0	1	7.1	8	57.2	5	35.7
School resources	0	0	3	21.4	0	0	3	21.4	8	57.2
Food security	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	35.7	9	64.3

#### Primary data, 2024

For the research to understand the socio-economic factors affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education schools, the researcher sought to know the perceptions of the school Deputy Head Teachers in charge of Studies and asked them to complete a questionnaire for rating these factors from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree depending on their effect. The majority (71.4%) of Director of Studies (DOSs) strongly agreed that family income comes as the main factor that upset students' learning outcomes and 28.6% of all participants agreed with the statement that family income affects students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education schools in Rwanda.

The research also asked Director of Studies to rate the parental level of education as socio-economic factor affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education schools. The majority of the participants (57.2%) agreed with the statement. 35.7% strongly agreed that parental level of education affects students' learning outcomes while 7.1% of the participants of this study were neutral on this point. When DOS's were asked how school resources affect students' learning outcomes, the results shown in Table 2 shows that most school directors of studies (57.2%) strongly confirmed that school resources are a socioeconomic factor that influence students' learning outcomes. 21.4% of respondents agreed that school resources have a significant impact on learning outcomes, while 21.4% of the director of studies who took part in the study disagreed.

The other factor raised by the research was food security, the majority of the respondents (64.3%) strongly confirmed food security to be one of the socio-economic factors that affect students' learning outcomes while 35.7% of the respondent DOSs agreed with the statement that food security affects students learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education schools.

The research findings highlight the significant influence of various socio-economic factors, particularly parental education, school resources, and food security, on students' learning outcomes in twelve years of basic education schools, as perceived by Directors of Studies (DOS).

**Table 3:-** Senior six graduate students' perception on socio-economic factors affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education in Rwanda.

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
Family income	2	7.2	4	14.3	3	10.7	16	57.1	3	10.7
Parental level of education	1	3.6	3	10.7	0	0	8	28.6	16	57.1
School resources	2	7.2	2	7.2	3	10.7	2	7.2	19	67.7
Food security	4	14.3	6	21.4	4	14.3	10	35.7	4	14.3

#### Primary data, 2024

The results that were revealed in table 3 show senior six graduate students' perceptions on socio-economic factors affecting students' learning outcomes in Twelve Years Basic Education in Rwanda. The Twelve Years Basic Education graduates were asked to complete the questionnaire rating the socio-economic factors that affected their learning outcomes, and the majority of the respondents (57.1%) presented that their family income affected the learning outcomes. 10.7% of all graduate student participants of this research strongly agreed that the family income is a factor that troubled their learning outcomes. 14.3% of the respondents disagreed while 7.2% strongly disagreed that family income has affected them in their learning outcomes.

The majority of graduate students (57.1%) have shown that the parental level of education strongly affects students' learning outcomes, 28.6% of the graduate students agreed that their parents' level of education has affected them in their studies as parents could not help them in academic related matters, 3.6% of the respondent strongly disagreed while 10.7% disagreed, showing that their parents' level of education had no relationship with their learning outcomes.

The researcher also asked graduate students about socio-economic factors like school resources and food security and how they affect students' learning outcomes. The majority of respondents (67.7%) strongly agreed that school resources affected their learning outcomes and 7.2% of the graduate students agreed that school resources affected their learning outcomes especially in twelve years basic education, 10.7% of the respondents were neutral, 7.2% disagreed while another 7.2% of the respondents strongly disagree on being affected by the school resources in their learning. 35.7 % of the graduate students agreed that food security has concern with their learning outcomes, 14.3% of the respondents strongly agreed on the effect of food security on their learning outcomes. On the other hand 14.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement and 21.4% of the graduate students from twelve years basic education schools disagreed with the statement that food security is a socio-economic factor that has affected their learning outcomes.

The research findings reveal that socio-economic factors such as school resources and food security significantly influence students' learning outcomes in twelve years of basic education schools. The research findings are supported by the research done by Sirin (2015) that found a significant correlation between socio-economic status (SES) and academic achievement. Higher SES was associated with better educational outcomes, including higher test scores and lower dropout rates. The study highlighted that SES influences various aspects of academic performance, such as access to resources, parental involvement, and neighborhood quality.

### **Conclusions:-**

The objective of this research centered on evaluating the effect of socio-economic factors that affect students' learning outcomes in twelve years basic education (12YBE) schools in Rwanda. To accomplish this goal, the researcher designed questionnaires for all participants, including SGAC members, school deputy Head teachers and senior six graduate students. In this context, participants were instructed to express their viewpoints by indicating their level of agreement with provided statements, using a scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree (SD), (2) Disagree (D), (3) Neutral (N), (4) Agree (A), and (5). The poll asked participants to rate their impressions of availability based on a variety of factors; the results are broken down into tables.

The researcher aimed to explore perceptions related to socio-economic factors among respondents, focusing on family income, parental education level, school resources, and food security. According to Table 1, a significant majority of SGAC members (80%) agreed that family income affects students' learning outcomes, with over half strongly agreeing. Similarly, a substantial majority (79.2%) acknowledged the influence of parental level education, and all respondents recognized the importance of school resources (69.3% agreement) and food security (81.4% agreement).

Deputy Head teachers and graduate students, as shown in Tables 2 and 3, mirrored these findings. Deputy Head teachers unanimously agreed on the impact of family income and strongly supported the role of parental education (92.9% agreement). However, perceptions regarding school resources showed some variability, with a notable proportion expressing disagreement (21.4%). Nevertheless, there was consensus on the significance of food security (100% agreement). Graduate students largely concurred with SGAC and deputy head teachers on family income (67.8% agreement), parental education (85.7% agreement), and school resources (74.9% agreement). However, opinions on food security were more divided, reflecting mixed feelings among students.

Overall, these findings underscore a widespread recognition among stakeholders of the critical influence of socio-economic factors on students' learning outcomes, despite some variations in perceptions regarding the adequacy and impact of school resources and food security.

### **Recommendations:-**

Findings of this study recommend

1. The ministry of education to develop inclusive policies that address socio-economic factors affecting educational equity and access.
2. Education stakeholders, including decision makers, public servants, charitable organizations, local and international NGOs, to have the collective responsibility to address socio-economic disparities in education and advocating for policies that prioritize equitable access to education and address funding gaps and ensuring equitable distribution of resources among schools, particularly those serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities; and that

3. Stakeholders should collaborate to leverage expertise, resources, and innovative solutions for improving educational outcomes.

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