



# SCHOOL INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN FRENCH SUBJECT IN TTCs OF RWANDA: A CASE OF WESTERN PROVINCE

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## **Abstract:**

**Background:** This study aimed to identify the School Internal Environmental factors that influence students' academic performance in French subjects in Rwandan Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). The specific objectives of this study were to identify the School Internal Environmental factors that affect TTC language students' academic performance in French in the western province of Rwanda, analyze the level at which School Internal Environmental factors influence TTC language students' academic performance in French in the Western Province of Rwanda, and examine how School Internal Environmental factors affect TTC language students' academic performance in French in the Western Province of Rwanda.

**Materials and Methods:** The study used a mixed-methods research design on 433 language students from three TTCs located in the Western Province of Rwanda. Three key informant French teachers were chosen from three TTCS under study. Stratified random sampling and simple random sampling were used as sampling methods, and the sample size was 208. Data was collected using questionnaires and a semi-structured interview guide. The gathered data was summarized using SPSS Statistics 2017 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Content analysis was used to analyze the information collected from key informants.

**Results:** According to the findings, 67.8% of respondents confirmed that school resources such as library, French text books among others, as School Internal Environmental factors influencing TTC language students' academic performance, are favorable enough to learn and perform well French but 32.2% did not agree with the statement. The research project revealed that 72.6% of respondents believed that the support from teachers, school administration, and fellow students is enough to learn and have good skills in French language while 26.9% denied this. 69.8% of students said that school language policy and regulations do not encourage them to use French in order to have more skills in this language, while 43.3% of the respondents agreed with the statement. This indicates that poor school language policy and regulations are school internal environmental factors contributing to poor performance in French subject in Rwandan TTCs. On the level of performance, 67.8% of respondents indicated that school resources helped them perform at or above average, while 30.8% disagreed with the statement. 67.8% of respondents identified school language policy and regulations, as school internal environmental factors that cause their poor academic performance in French subject because they do not help them to perform to the average in French subject while 29.3% of the respondents agreed that school language policy and regulations, as school internal environmental factors, do not cause their poor performance in French subject.

**Conclusion:** *The researcher recommended that Rwanda's Ministry of Education set up motivating school language policy that considers both French and English, finance academic competitions based on using the French language, and equip TTC schools with the appropriate facilities. Teachers should improve their methods of teaching French in TTCs in order to motivate students by increasing their curiosity.*

**Key Words:** *School Internal Environmental, Students' Academic Performance, Western Province, French Subject In TTCs Of Rwanda*

## I. Introduction

Worldwide, 60 million people use French as their first language, including 7.3 million in Canada, 3.9 million in Belgium, 1.8 million in Switzerland, 80,000 in Italy, 100,000 in the US, and 49 million in Africa (Francophonie, 2018). French language is one of the three languages recognised officially in Rwanda; these are Kinyarwanda, English and French. It was introduced after the independence of 1962 and was put to be the medium of instruction from Grade four onwards (UNICEF, 2017). Prior to 1994, the expression of education for basic schools was Kinyarwanda (L1) and French (L2) in secondary and university. Since 1995, the government of Rwanda determined to authenticate a trilingual association, presenting English (L3) as the official and educational speech apart from Kinyarwanda and French (Kagwesage, 2013). Until 2008, both English and French were used as educational media for higher education, depending on the language skills of the instructor. At the same time, students with language problems took English or French support courses depending on the problem. However, from 2009, a new policy that came into effect immediately required students to start all departments in English, regardless of whether they studied French or English in secondary school. This change was primarily motivated by political, economic and social debates (Beth & Freedman & Sarah Warshauer, 2010).

Despite of the English language as a medium of communication and learning in many fields of Rwandan activities, French has been maintained to be a subject studied in classes, where it is taken in some academic fields like Ordinary level and scientific combinations as a selective (optional subject) and compulsory in other fields like some language combinations and Teacher training colleges (Ntawiha et al., 2021). In a particular way, students who are in teacher training colleges (TTCs) are obliged to study French subject because they will also teach it to students that they will be teaching after they will have completed their studies and go to work as teachers.

Despite, French being taught in Teacher Training Colleges as the language, which the student teachers will teach as the subject when they will be in the teaching career, it can still be observed that the majority of students in TTCs do not perform well in this subject. Maloba (2019) tried to justify the failure of students in languages by arguing that many schools lacked audio-visual and learning resources, depriving learners of a great opportunity to improve their macro listening and speaking skills. She also added that most schools do not use student self-assessment techniques that can significantly improve student abilities to have macro writing skills, among others (Maloba, 2019).

As it is highlighted, Rwanda is now a trilingual country and that the most used language in social life is Kinyarwanda. Therefore, the school environment of students remains a very significant place where students should be motivated to learn and master French language. School environment is an important factor, which should be well studied and well organised to increase students' effectiveness in learning and performing well in French language. Some of environment factors which should be taken into consideration include climatic condition of the school, education facilities (school materials), availability constant in-service training for teachers and administration staff, good supervision of students to use French at school, among others (SABA, 2018).

Physical arrangement of the school also is another school environment-motivating factor in learning French like any other subject, in which the colour, lights sound and equipment should be friendly to the sight and hearing of the learner. In addition the curriculum and quality textbooks define the quality of performance of students who use them in learning (Gilavand et al., 2016). The main objection was to identify the School Internal Environmental factors that affect students' academic performance in French subject in Rwanda. The specific objectives that guided this thorough research are:

- i. To examine how school resources contribute to students' reading and summarizing French text among TTC language students in the Western Province of Rwanda.
- ii. To evaluate how learning support affects students' public speech in French among TTC language students in the Western Province of Rwanda.
- iii. To assess how the school language policy and regulations affect students' scores in French among TTC language students in the Western Province of Rwanda.

## ii. Theoretical Literature

Various scholars have written about the School Internal Environmental aspects that influence the academic performance of students who study languages. However, before reviewing this literature about the School Internal Environmental elements, which affect students' academic performance in languages, let first look into what scholars have said about this school environment.

### **The Concept of School Environment**

The school environment refers to constraints that affect, either positively or negatively, the academic achievements of students. But, this has been less considered in the struggle to find a sustainable remedy to the repetitive outcomes for students from the instructional structure in various countries. The school environment has recently come to the attention of educationists as an important aspect that should be put into consideration and well organized to boost learners' academic success (Usman & Madudili, 2019).

Additionally, the school setting includes technology, instructional strategies, and student learning styles, all of which have an impact on social and universal learning conditions. Furthermore, it contains elements of culture, behaviour, and personality that are crucial to learning (SABA, 2018). The school environment therefore is an amalgamation of human activities and actual order which include the bionetwork, the combination of living things and physical environment (Becker et al., 2015). School environments differ from school to school, teaching space to teaching space, and situation to situation, each with particular characteristics. School environment can be described as student-centred, knowledge-centred, evaluation-centred, and municipal-centred (Becker et al., 2015). Student-focused settings are elaborated for the dynamic construction of information for and by learners (Rani & Minister, 2022).

School environment is made by various elements that affect the students' learning motivation and performance. According to Usman and Madudil (2019), Some of School Internal Environmental elements that affect students' academic performance are individuals which surround the students, instructional materials, methodological tools, learning resources, syllabus, training approaches, instructions given by teachers and physical place in which the learners is placed.

According to Mondal (2015), the significant elements that can influence the learning system include intellectual factors, learning aspects, physical factors, mental factors, and School Internal Environmental factors. Intellectual factors are the student's individual mental abilities, learning aspects that deal with unreliable methods of study, and restrictions on investigational experience that hinder the learning activities. Physical factors include well-being, bodily fitness, sustenance, visual and bodily defects, and malformation of glands. Psychological aspects include confidence, curiosity, and open-mindedness, among others, which are central in the development of personality (Mondal, 2015). In addition, there are personal aspects like predispositions and feelings as well as collective aspects such as collaboration and rivalry that are rightly linked to a composite psychology of stimulus and incentive. Lastly, the school's environmental elements, such as classrooms, textbooks, equipment, school provisions, and other teaching and learning resources, are also physical conditions needed for learners to learn well (Mondal, 2015).

For students to make good instinctual achievement, they have to feel harmless, both bodily and psychologically, and should have harmless school surrounding where they feel welcomed, assisted and protected (Waldman, 2016). In order to arrive at this end, students should have positive attitude towards their teachers, school administration and their colleagues. To develop positive attitude in learners, schools should emphasise on learners' collective and emotive learning. Fruitful education settings remain very important for learners' intellectual and societal success inschool. Fruitful learning is formed through thoughtful measures such as interrelating with students in a positive way and displaying constructive behaviours which encourage hard work in academic context (UNICEF, 2017).

### **Students' Academic Performance Indicators**

In the same way academic achievement in languages is identified by the hours spent learning it, involvement in the taught linguistic program, attitude towards that particular language, level or presence in language classes and reading for pleasure. Higher the learner consecrates his/ her time in the above, more outcomes are got from learning the language and less time given to the above factors, less is achieved from learning of the language (Vimala & Arul, 2012).

### **Some of School Internal Environmental Factors that may affect Students' Academic Performance**

The school environment is multi-layered and multidimensional. It is given the meaning of being combination of school outlook, its regulations, values and prospects (Alex, 2020). Essentially, instead of regarding organizational or the school climate setting, examination improves the psychological environment of the school, together with the peer

relations which have the effect on student's academic works and the school operations (Reyes et al., 2012). School environment is an important forecaster of the learner's responsive and interactive results. It touches students' psychosocial coping and adjustment capacity. Finally, school environment has also been found to affect learners' academic realization (Waldman, 2016).

Maloba (2019) supported Barry (2016) by indicating that specific elements, which influence students' academic performance in French subject, are teaching style, gender and teaching resources. On this point, Adetunji et al. (2017) argued that learners' behaviour and academic performance depend on the plans educators make and this imparts confidence in them. They continued stating that normally; the notions and rules of any linguistic must be precisely imparted to define the organization and subject matter as they are connected to the school context without disregarding the physical and mental age of the learner. Using out-dated approaches of instruction cannot make learners grasp more in languages (Barry, 2010).

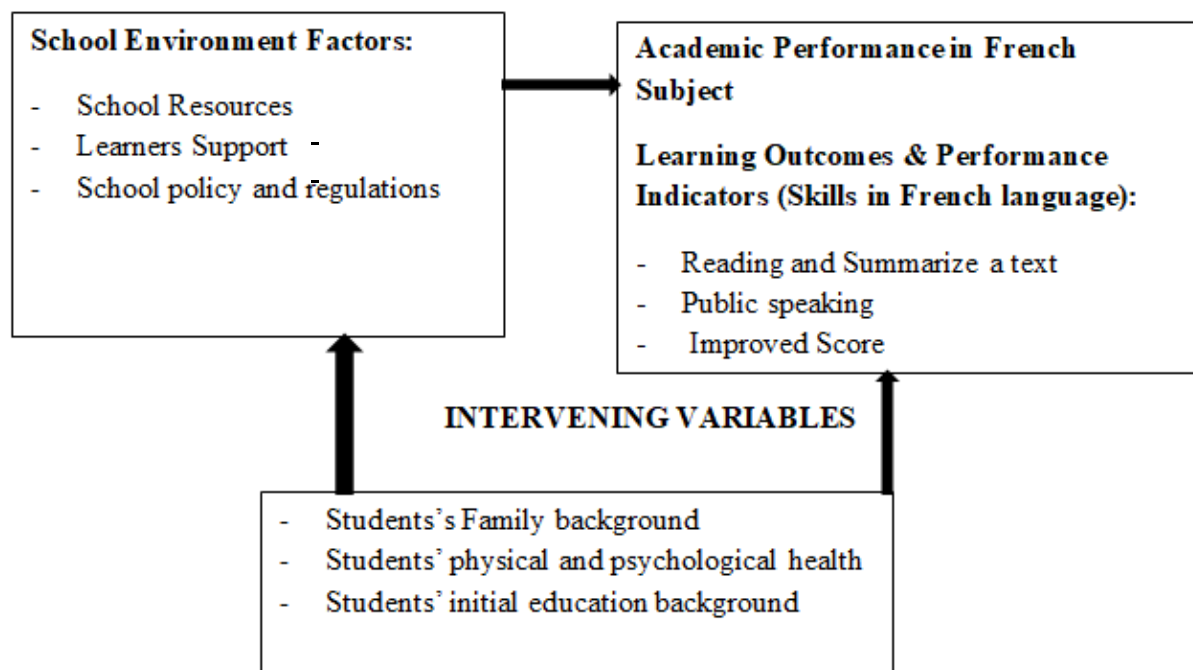
The teaching approaches that are utilized in most language situations are merely recitation of scripts where learners commonly sit quietly, follow guidelines, read given writing or narratives, fill out work sheets and take examinations (Petty, 2012). Although, Jepketer, Kombo and Kyalo (2015) argued that the teaching approaches used by teachers in teaching languages should be those, which are suitable to the theme and students' ability. Nevertheless, Grösser (2017) highlighted that the types of teaching approaches are guided by chosen strategy. This is because negative attitude to learning a given subject occurs when teaching methods are not related to the content, which is taught and leads learners not to acquire expected skills after learning. Regarding how gender affects learning, Wright et al., (2017) argued that knowledge is transferred from teacher to learners together with inclinations, stereotype and the role model descriptions.

According to Holmlund and Sund (2014), students whose sexual characteristics are similar to the ones of their teacher demonstrated to have good performance than those of opposite gender because they try to imitate their teachers in everything as their role models. Female teachers offer special support that encourages learners to have great motivation of learning. Although there has been no evidence that female teachers enhance the educational academic performance of learners (Holmlund & Sund, 2014). It has been proved that learners educated by female teachers tend to display optimistic attitude towards the lessons they study than those students who are taught by male teachers (Barry, 2010). Additionally, Kurdziolek (2011) stated that when more resources are provided for learning, outcome from learners becomes more effective.

### iii. The Conceptual Framework

**Independent Variables**

**Dependent Variables**



### **Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework**

#### **Source: Researcher (2022)**

Figure 1 is a conceptual outline that shows an interconnection between school internal environmental factors and the students' academic achievement/ performance in French subject in TTCs of Rwanda. The figure illustrates various components of school internal environmental factors, which constitute the independent variable in this study. These components include but are not limited to school resources, learner support, school language policy and regulations. The learners' support includes teachers, school administration and other students' assistance, the feedback given to students from different works they do for improvement and the guidance and counselling they get to support their balanced learning. The above mentioned school environment variables can influence the academic performance of students in French either positively, if there are more conducive to motivate and encourage students to learn this subject, or negatively when they don't give motivation that encourages learners to learn this subject.

The students' academic performance, which is illustrated by the conceptual framework as the dependent variable of the study also, has skills as indicators and these skills include reading and writing a text, holding a public speech and improved scores. All these aspects are positively achieved if the school environment is favourable for students to have a deep learning and practice of French language. On the other hand, when the school environment is not favourable to encourage students in learning and practicing French language the academic performance in all the highlighted aspects becomes very poor. Lastly, the conceptual framework contains the intervening variables namely the student's family background, physical and psychological health and the external environmental condition which may affect either negatively or positively the student's school environment and his/her academic performance in French at the same time.

#### **iv. Research Materials and Methods**

##### **Research Design**

The research employed a mixed method research design combining both quantitative and qualitative technics. This strategy is employed to look into different causes of observed discrepancies among existing groups (Maheshwari & Ph, 2018). The researcher used this research design to bring out a clear appreciation of multifaceted factors or object to spread out knowledge or add more light clarifications to the existing information from previous researches. It has been used in this study to help the researcher emphasize on detailed contextual analysis of the variable in this research.

##### **Target Population**

This is the entire collection of people, events or things of interest on which the investigation of the researcher is based (Majid, 2018). In this study, the target population is 433 language students in three TTCs located in Western Province of Rwanda. These include TTC Mururu, TTC Mwezi and TTC Rubengera.

##### **Sampling Technique**

Sampling technique is the method used to define and select the sample from the acceptable population (Nassaji, 2017). In this research project, a combination of stratified random sampling and simple random sampling has been utilised. Stratified random sampling is a sampling technique, which deals with grouping non-homogeneous population into reduced clusters identified as strata (Salkind, 2010). Strata usually have unique characteristics which make them homogeneous, in this sampling method, clusters are made considering the population is shared features and qualities. This method is also referred to proportional arbitrary selection or quota specimen (ibid).

The researcher formed strata in every selected TTC according to the levels of students and from these strata, simple random sampling has been combined with proportionate sampling to select the students who participated in the study. This stratified sampling technique has been used to ensure that there are a right proportional number of respondents from every TTC, which has been considered in the study. Additionally, a simple random selection technique is a method in which all individuals have equal chance of being selected (Taherdoost, 2017). Language students from selected TTCs have been grouped into three strata according to their levels of study. The researcher then has used simple random sampling to choose participants who have been involved in answering the question of the study.

##### **Sample Size Determination**

The number of participants who took part in the study has been calculated and distributed by strata. In this calculation of sample size, the researcher has used the adjusted Yamane's formula (1967) which is:  $n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$ , where **n** is the minimum returned proportions, **N** is sample population while **e** is the level of accuracy expressed as a proportion of 0.05. Thus  $n = \frac{433}{1+433(0.05)^2} = 208$

After calculation, the researcher found that the sample size, which has been selected from different categories of available population, is 200 and has been allocated proportionately to students' numbers in each TTC.

#### Sample Size

Population size also known as study population or accessible population is defined as the actual sampling population structure from which the sample size is selected (Davis June 2021). The sample size of this study has been 208 students who study in three TTCs of Western Province of Rwanda.

**Table 1: Sample Frame**

No	TTC Name	Number Of Students	Sample Size
1	TTC Mururu	154	74
2	TTC Mwezi	133	64
3	TTC Rubengera	146	70
<b>Total</b>		<b>433</b>	<b>208</b>

#### Source: Researcher (2022)

There have been also 3 key informants who have participated in the study and have been teachers of French subject from all the three selected TTCs. These key informants have helped in providing the supportive information to the data gathered from students in order to make better conclusion and recommendations.

#### Data Collection Methods

A research assistant has been used to meet the participants and administer data collection instruments to them on behalf of the researcher. This has been done to ensure that the targeted respondents are met and instruments are distributed and collected back in the right time.

#### Data Collection Instruments

The researcher has used questionnaires designed with closed - ended questions structure through the administration of selected TTCs, a research assistant has been used to distribute questionnaires to the selected language students. Students were given one day to complete the questionnaires and the research assistants, in collaboration with the school administration, collected them back and submitted them to the researcher for analysis. In addition to questionnaires, a semi-structured interview guide has been used to collect information from the key informants.

#### Data Analysis

Collected information from language students has been analysed using frequency and percentage analysis, while that collected from key informants has been analysed using content analysis. In the first process, the researcher has entered collected data into the Statistical Package for Social Science computer using version 28 of the program to produce quantified information in the form of percentages and frequencies. The information summarized using SPSS has been presented using tables for easy interpretation, and the qualitative technique has been employed to provide explanation to the generated numbers.

#### v. Results

#### Demographic Information

**Table 1: The Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	%
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Male	84	40.4
Female	124	59.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Fieldwork (2022)**

Table 2 indicates that the number of females who participated in the study was 59.6% while the one of males was 40.4%. These statistics show clearly that the number of girls who study French subject in TTCs is higher than the number of boys. The statistics also show the likelihood that girls like teaching career than boys. Nevertheless, it can be clearly noticed that both genders have been represented in the study, which means that all gender points of view about the matter in question have been captured in data collected.

**Table 2: Age of Respondents**

Age	Frequency	%
18-21	110	52.9
22-25	88	42.3
26 and above	10	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Fieldwork, 2022**

The data summarised in table 3 shows that 52.9% of students who participated in the study were between 18 and 21 years old and 42.3% were between 22 and 25 years old. Other 4.8% were in the age ranging from 26 years old and above and no participant was below 18 years old. These data demonstrate that 100% of participants were in the mature decision making age to autonomously give information in the study without the consent of their parents. These statistics show that students who choose to study in TTCs are those who have adult age and want to be in professional field from which they can start working.

**Table 3: Level of Studies**

Level	Frequency	%
Year One	80	38.5
Year Two	75	36.0
Year Three	53	25.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Fieldwork, 2022**

The information summarised in table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents 38.5% were from year one and 36% were from year two while those in year three were 25.5%. These figures bring out the image that the number of students who take French as the subject of specialisation in TTCs reduces at the final year. The variation in this numbers by levels shows the possibility that students change combinations or repeat the class in the middle way of completing the cycle. The researcher also used a semi- structured interview to collect data from three key informants who have been given the codes described below.

**Table 4: The Description of key Informants**

Key Informants Code	Description
KIM	Key informant from TTC Mururu
KIR	Key Informant from TTC RUBENGERA
KIMZ	Key informant from TTC Mwezi

Source: The researcher, 2022

All the key informants indicated that they have bachelor degree qualifications in languages. However, only one of them is qualified in education. The interpretation of the researcher from this information was that there is a probability that the methodology used by these teachers in teaching are among the school internal environmental factors that affect TTC language students' academic performance in French.

#### Responses answering to the Objectives of the Study

**Table 5: School internal environmental factors that affect TTC language students' academic performance in French**

Statement		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
My school resources, namely Library, the textbooks of French, among others are favorable enough to learn well French.	Count	45	96	0	51	16	208
	Row N %	21.6%	46.2%	.0%	24.5%	7.7%	
	Mean						3
	Standard Deviation						1
I have enough learning support, from my teacher, school administration and colleagues, to learn and have good skills in French language.	Count	52	99	1	45	11	208
	Row N %	25.0%	47.6%	.5%	21.6%	5.3%	
	Mean						2
	Standard Deviation						1
My school language policy and regulations encourage me to use French in order to have more skills in this language.	Count	57	89	4	33	25	208
	Row N %	27.4%	15.9%	1.9%	42.8%	27%	
	Mean						4
	Standard Deviation						1

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The information in table 6 indicates that 46.2% of respondents agreed that the school resources are favourable for learning French. Other 21.6% agreed with this statement while those who disagreed that school resources are favourable count to 32.2%. Furthermore, 47.6% of the respondents agreed that they get enough support from teachers, school administration and their colleagues to help them learn French better. This is admitted by other 25% who strongly agreed with declaration opposed to 26.9% who disagreed that they get enough support in learning French subject. About the school policies and regulations, 42.8% of the respondents who participated in the study disagreed that they have school language policy and regulations, which encourage them to use French and 17.8% strongly, disagreed with the statement. The fact that school resources contribute to students' learning of French confirms the findings of Bulfathi (2019),



which revealed that elements of the school's physical environment affect students' success in learning the English language. On the other hand, only 27.4% confirmed that their school's policies and regulations favour their better learning of French and its mastery.

The mean score of two first statements was 2 which means that majority of respondents agreed that the school resources help TTC language students learn well French. However on the third statement the mean became 4 meaning that most of the respondents denied the fact that school language policy and regulations favour TTC language students to learn French. This also confirms the findings of Wekesa (2021)'s study which revealed that it is difficult for students to perform well in languages when their school has a weak language policy. The key informants who participated in the study also presented their viewpoints about the School Internal Environmental factors, which affect TTC language students' academic performance in French subject. The following is the summary of what they responded: *“The first factor which affects the academic performance of students in French is that the school does not encourage students to use it in their daily life. Instead, they oblige them to use English only as the language of communication at school, which leads them to take French as a minor language and have little efforts to learn it (KIMZ).*

*There is lack of motivation as student speaks French only when they are in French classes with their teacher of this subject. In addition, the prerequisites of students in French is too low because most of times teachers in primary and Ordinary level do not finish the planned programs of French. However, TTCs have good resources which can be utilised to learn French; the time of three years to study many things is limited to master them all (KIM).*”The researcher interpretation of this information from the key informants was that the TTC language students may not be exploiting to the maximum the resources which the schools have for their learning of French. This is because both students and teacher key informants indicated that schools have resources, which are good for learning, but students are not motivated to learn French.

**Table 6: Effects of School Internal Environmental factors on TTC Language Students' academic Performance in French Skills**

Statement		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
The available school resources have helped me to acquire good knowledge and skills of holding a public speech, reading and summarizing a text in French as well as listening correctly to the speech delivered in French language.	Count	43	98	3	57	7	208
	Row N %	20.7%	47.1%	1.4%	27.4%	3.4%	100%
	Mean						2
	Standard Deviation						1
The support I get from teachers, school administration and colleagues increases my skills of holding a public speech, reading and summarizing a text in French as well as listening correctly to the speech delivered in French language.	Count	26	91	6	56	29	208
	Row N %	12.5%	43.8%	2.9%	26.9%	13.9%	100%
	Mean						3
	Standard Deviation						1
The school language policy and regulations shape reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of French language positively	Count	19	79	6	62	42	208
	Row N %	9.1%	20.2%	2.9%	38%	29.8%	100%
	Mean						3
	Standard Deviation						1

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The information in Table 7 is a summary of the data collected on how the School Internal Environmental factors influence the academic performance of TTC language students in terms of skills. According to these statistics, 47.1% of the respondents agreed that School Internal Environmental factors such as school resources aided them in acquiring good knowledge and skills of holding a public speech, reading and summarizing a text in French as well as listening correctly to the speech delivered in French language. Another 20.7% strongly agreed with this statement, while 30.8% indicated that the School Internal Environmental factors have no effect on their skills in French. There was also 1.4% who was indifferent, which the researcher interpreted as an indication that students do not value their School Internal Environmental factors in terms of learning.

The support of teachers, school administration, and other students was also widely acknowledged as an important component of the School Internal Environmental factor, which influenced TTC language students' academic performance in French. According to the statistics, 43.8% of the respondents agreed that this support helps them, and 12.5% strongly agreed with it. However, 40.8% of the respondents indicated that this support does not help them. Regarding how the school language policy and regulations affect French performance in terms of skill acquisition, 38% of the respondents disagreed that school language policy and regulations help them. The remaining 29.8% strongly disagreed with the statement that school language policy and regulations influence reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in French. On the other hand, 20.2% strongly agreed and 9.1% agreed that the policies help them. There are also 2.9% who were indifferent about the statement, meaning that a large number of respondents indicated that school language policy and regulations are not favorable to help students perform well in French.

Looking at the mean of the distribution for three statements, it is observed that the mean for the first statement was 2, which indicates that the majority of respondents agreed that school resources help them acquire good knowledge and skills of reading, writing, and summarizing texts in French. On the other hand, the mean was 3 on the two remaining statements, meaning that most of the respondents were not sure whether the support they are given at school and the school language policy and regulations help them to acquire good knowledge and skills in French. This revealed the likelihood of a lack of confidence in these students, which led them not to find out how the support they get from school or their school language policy and regulations affect their knowledge and skills in French. On this point, Adetunji et al. (2017) argued that learners' behaviour and academic performance depend on the plans educators make and this imparts confidence in them.

The key informants also indicated that TTC schools lack language policies which can facilitate them in following up how students use other languages which are not instructional. They explained this as follows: "Our TTC schools do not have the mechanism for following up the learning of French language because more efforts are put in English which is the instructional languages (KIR)." The researcher's point of view from this information was that it is most likely that TTC schools have no clear language policies and regulations which can motivate student to learn non-instructional language like French. The responses from the key informants also give the impression that TTCs administrators ignore the fact that they are forming future teachers who will teach French to children.

**Table 7: Effect of School Internal Environmental Factors on TTC language students' mark score in French subject**

Statement		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
The school resources I used increased my skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in French make me score 50% and above in French subject at the end of each term.	Count	43	100	1	47	16	208
	Row N %	20.8%	48.3%	.5%	22.7%	7.7%	100%
	Mean						2
	Standard Deviation						1
I score 50% and above in French subject at the end of each term because of the support I get from teacher,	Count	43	103	0	41	21	208
	Row N %	20.7%	49.5%	.0%	19.7%	10.1%	100%
	Mean						2

fellow students and school administration.	Standard Deviation						1
I score 50% and above in French subject at the end of each term because the school language policy and regulations encourage me to use French language in school.	Count	31	78	3	62	34	208
	Row N %	14.9%	16.3%	1.4%	29.8%	37.5%	100%
	Mean						4
	Standard Deviation						1

**Source: Fieldwork, 2022**

Table 8 summarises the information given by respondents on how the School Internal Environmental factors influence the academic performance of TTC language students in French. These statistics show that 48.3% of the respondents agreed that school resources they use help them to increase the skills of reading, speaking, listening and writing French to the level of scoring 50% and above in every term’s end exams. Other 20.8% also strongly agreed with this statement while those disagreed accounted to 30.4%. About the support of teachers, school administration members and fellow students, 49.5% of the respondents agreed it helps them, 20.7% strongly agreed with the statement while 29.8% disagreed with it. Concerning the school language policy and regulations, which support French, 37.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that these policies encourage them to learn and perform well in French up 50% and above and it was confirmed by 29.8% of the respondents who strongly disagreed with it. Only 31.2% of the respondents agreed with the statement that school language policy and regulations encourage them to lean and perform 50% and above in French subject.

The mean of the first and second statements was 2, indicating that the majority of respondents agreed that school resources and student support assist them in achieving a school rating of 50% or higher in French. But, the mean score on the statement of school language policy was 4, indicating that the majority of respondents disagreed that school language policy and regulations helped them pass French at 50% and above. This justified the findings of the study conducted by Kibet & English (2014) which discovered that language regulations have a significant impact on how well pupils succeed in language subject.

Nevertheless, teachers who participated in the study as the key informants indicated that the school internal environmental factors affect their students’ academic performance in French subject because majority of them perform poorly. Below is the summary of their responses: *“Generally, the performance of students in French subject is poor regardless the importance this subject has to these students as one of the subjects of their specialization. This poor performance results from students’ little prerequisites and negligence of school systems, which put more effort in the use of English than other languages including French. In addition, the failure of students in national exams come from the fact that people who prepare these examinations do not consider the level of students in this subject (KIR& KIM).* Comparing the responses given by students and teachers the researcher found that there is an inconsistency. This is because the majority of students indicate that they perform well beyond average in class but the results of national exams become always poor as indicated by teachers.

**Table 8: School Internal Environmental factors’ effect on TTC language students’ academic performance in French subject**

Statement		True	False	Total
I always get good academic performance in French test due to school internal environmental factors	Count	53	155	208
	Row N %	25.5%	74.5%	100.0%
	Mean			2

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**Source: Fieldwork, 2022**

As summarised statistics in table 9, the majority of respondents with the ratio of 150/ 200 participants, that is 74.5% denied that they always get good academic performance in French test due to school internal environmental factors. It is only 25.5% of respondents who recognised a contribution of school internal environmental factors on their performance in French. The mean of the distribution also was 2 which show that the majority of students disagreed that they get good performance in French due to school internal environmental factors. A big number of respondents in the additional comments given indicated that because of using English often in school as the instructional language and communication language, they end up not having interest in French and this affects their performance in this language. This is supported by the findings of the study conducted by Trudell (2016) assessing the effect of language policy on learning other language, the study which found that although nearly all of African region's language legislation favor mother-tongue-medium instruction in the early elementary grades, commitment to implementation is far from universal. Yet, the statistics show that language rules' implementation has at least as much impact on students' learning results as the policy itself. This was supported by the key informants who indicated that TTC schools do not have motivational environment which favours students to learn French and perform well in it.

The quote below is a summary of their responses:

*“Today TTC schools need more support and improvement in teaching languages especially French. This is because students who are admitted in this school do not have enough basics in French as people who are going to be trained on how to teach this language. These students need first to learn it before being trained as teachers who will teach this language” (KIM).*

*“TTC language students, who undertake French language option, need to be given chance to continue studying this language at the university in order to acquire more skill before they are given to go and teach it. In addition, there should be more motivated oral competition done in French to help students in its mastery” (KIR).* The interpretation of the researcher to the information given by students and teachers was that school language policy and regulations are likely to be the highest school internal environmental factor affecting the performance of TTC language students in French. This is accompanied by the syllabus which might have not been elaborated in relation to the level of student in French as respondents indicate that students do not have enough prerequisites.

## **vi. Findings**

This is the summary of the findings from the data collected using questionnaires with the questions having the general objective of identifying the school internal environmental factors which affect the performance of TTC language students in French subject in Rwanda. The study was guided by three specific objectives among which the first was to examine how school resources contribute to students' reading and summarizing French text among TTC language students in the Western Province of Rwanda.; the second was to evaluate how learning support affects students' public speech in French among TTC language students in the Western Province of Rwanda and to assess how the school language policy and regulations affect students' scores in French among TTC language students in the Western Province of Rwanda.

The summary presented in this chapter is drawn from the presentation and discussion of data in relation to the objectives. In terms of gender, it was found that TTC schools have more number of girls than boys who study in language combinations, which include French subject. This implies that girls like studying languages than boys. After gathering data, the researcher found that 100% of participants were 18 years old and above. This is the age range in which an individual is taken reasonable enough to participate in academic research without the consent of parents or guardian.

On the other hand, the study found that the number of language students in TTC schools varies according to levels but year three was found as the one, which has a small number of students in all TTCs of Western Province. The variation of numbers in TTC School indicates the likelihood that students change combination or repeat the class in middle way of their studying cycle. For the key informants, all the three key informants hold bachelor degrees in languages but only one of them has a bachelor degree in education. This may also be one factor, which affects TTC language students' academic performance because of the methodology used by teachers who never learned how to teach languages. The first objective was to examine how school resources contribute to students' reading and summarizing French text among TTC language students in the Western Province of Rwanda.

It was found that school resources in TTCs, namely library, French textbooks and other learning resources are favorable for learners to learn and perform well in French subject. It was also found that the support given by teachers, school administration and other fellow students in terms of explanation and provision of necessary materials is enough to help students learn well French and perform well in it. But the school language policy and regulations which put more emphasis on promoting English as the instructional language, and predispositions of students who have low prerequisites were found as the school internal environmental factors which hinder the TTC language students' academic performance in French. It was also found that some teachers who teach French have qualifications in this language but did not study education to learn the methodologies of teaching it. It was found that national exams are elaborated beyond the level TTC language students have in French.

These findings are in line with the statement of Maxwell (2016) who argued that learner's performance in languages is linked to the learning setting conditioned by school environment and the learner's attendance and participation level in learning situation. These findings also confirm the findings of Ntawiha et al. (2021) which had revealed that the performance of students who studied in public schools was influenced by boarding status, family size, parental education level, employment status and learners' prior-academic performance. It is likely that teachers who are not qualified with right methodology teach using wrong approaches to teach French and contribute to the failure of students.

There is need for all teachers who teach French in TTCs but did not study the methodology of teaching to have training of these methodologies. The second objective was to analyse the level at which School Internal Environmental factors influence TTC language students' academic performance in French subject in Western Province of Rwanda. It was found that the available school resources, and support from teachers, school administration and fellow students are enough to help students acquire necessary skills in French. It was found also that these resources and support assist the majority of TTC language students to perform well above the average in class tests and examinations. This confirmed the school Climate Theory which assumes that when the school environment is favourable, students learn and perform well. But when the school environment is not conducive, students learn badly and their academic achievement becomes very poor (Guffey, 2020). However, school language policy was again found to be the factor which lowers the interest of students and causes their failure in French, especially in national exams.

The findings confirmed those of Adalikwu & Iorkpilgh (2013) which indicated that learners who were taught using teaching resources had better performance than those who were taught without using teaching aids. Other finding from this research was that teaching using learning and teaching aids commonly improves learners' retention and understanding of content and led them to great academic performance and successes. The findings on resources also affirmed those from the study conducted by (Abulfathi, 2019) to assess how the school environment influences the students' achievements in language and found that the school physical environment elements affect highly the success of students in language subjects. The findings on the school language policy and regulations showed that they do not encourage TTC language students to practice French language and this lowers their performance, concurred with those from the research conducted by Suleman et al. (2014).

This evaluated the effect of teaching environment on the success in language and found that students who do more practices of what they learn performed better than those who study in theory only. The findings also justify academic performance theory which assumes that a person can perform either when engaged him/herself as individual or with a group of people in a cooperative determination (Don 2007). In line with this theory and Suleman et al. (2014)'s findings, the researcher concluded that the performance in French for TTC language students becomes poor, because they concentrated on practicing English and do not have time to practice French language.

The third objective was to examine how School Internal Environmental factors affect TTC language students' academic performance in French subject in Western Province of Rwanda. The study revealed that the available school resources namely the library, French textbooks; teachers, administration and students' support and cooperation contribute to the performance of students in French. However, the study also showed that TTC schools have weak language policies and regulations which promote English as the instructional language and put less attention on French. This therefore leads students to consider French as a minor language which is given less time. In addition, little effort invested by students to learn French meets the poor prerequisites they have in this subject and results in poor performance they get in exams, especially national examinations.

These findings approved those from the study conducted by Francis (2021) to examine the factors that influence students' academic performance of language in secondary schools. The findings here were that students who had good textbooks and other teaching materials facilitate them to master foreign languages. On the other hand, it was found very difficult for children from poor and rural families who could not access reading materials that can help them to

learn more and be fluent in foreign languages. In addition, those who only use their local languages and have little interest in using the foreign languages were found unable to perform well in these foreign languages.. This researcher also found that the school where students worked together with their peers and their teachers, students used more French and performed well in it than the bilingual school where less interest was put on French language. It also approved the assumptions of academic performance theory which stipulate that a person can perform either when engaged him/herself as individual or with a group of people in a cooperative determination (Don, 2007). It is most probable therefore that, apart from poor background of students in French, the school language policy and regulations which do not motivate students to give more importance on this language, discourage them from learning it appropriately for them to perform better in it.

#### **vii. Conclusion**

This research has been conducted to identify the School Internal Environmental factors that affect students' academic performance in French in Rwanda. The specific objectives were to identify the School Internal Environmental factors that affect TTC language students' academic performance in French in the Western Province of Rwanda, analyze the level at which School Internal Environmental factors influence TTC language students' academic performance in French in the Western Province of Rwanda, and examine how School Internal Environmental factors affect TTC language students' academic performance in French in the Western Province of Rwanda.

The study found that the major School Internal Environmental factors that affect the performance of TTC Language students are school resources, teachers, school administration, and other fellow students' support. The study also discovered that lack of school language policy and weak school language regulations are school internal environmental factors that highly affect the TTC language students' academic performance in French in a negative way because these regulations do not motivate learners to learn this language. However, the study revealed that there are external factors that contribute to the majority of students' poor performance in French, including poor prerequisites, the backgrounds of students in French, and exams set without considering the level of students' French.

#### **viii. Recommendations**

Considering the findings of the study, the researcher made the recommendations presented below. Rwanda Education Board should help TTC Schools to have Language laboratories, accompanied by comfortable classrooms and libraries equipped with appropriate textbooks and instructional materials for French. The ministry of education should set an adequate plan for the ongoing professional development of French teachers. It should also choose the platforms which can be used to rouse the interest of students who study French language in TTCs. The government, through National Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESA), should finance academic competitions based on using French language and equip TTC schools with the appropriate facilities. The Ministry of Education should enforce the teaching of French at the ordinary level to ensure that students who are sent to TTCs to be trained how to teach this language have been given strong basics that will help them get good grades in it.

Teacher training college administrations should establish motivating school language policy and regulations that give equal consideration to both French and English. They should also set up ways of following up how students practice these languages for better performance. Teachers should improve their methods of teaching French in TTCs in order to motivate students through increasing their curiosity, which will lead to more personal research for good mastery and better performance in this language. Students who take language combinations in TTCs should increase their will, interest and efforts in learning this subject in order to acquire more knowledge and skills of this language, which they will in turn transmit to their future students. They should also have positive attitude towards French language.

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