

Rwandan Teachers' Enacted Beliefs

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Abstract

Pajares (1992) states that “beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom” (p. 307). This thesis aims to bridge the gap that exists in the literature written on teachers’ enacted beliefs in Rwanda. From this research Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) looking at working in Rwanda will have a clearer idea of issues Rwandan teachers face. This research based knowledge can also influence the way NGOs set up programmes in Rwanda. It will give others interested in Rwandan education a greater depth of understanding on how these beliefs affect their everyday practice. The act of carrying out this research gives value to the teachers who work in Rwanda often under trying circumstances.

This research used a case study method to describe aspects of teachers’ enacted beliefs. Of significance to case studies is the capability to look at the cases in depth, in their natural setting and with knowledge of their context. These case studies consisted of a small group of four Rwandan teachers who teach in Kibungo, Rwanda. The study is based on data drawn from individual interviews and a focus group. The data gathered were analysed to discover similarities and differences. Although not be generalizable, this research will nevertheless be able to make a specific contribution. From this research it was evident that participants believed the only involvement the community appears to be interested in is that which keeps schools and teachers accountable. Outside of school teachers are believed to be wise and are often required to sort out issues or give advice to members of the community. Many of the participants believed that they were called to be a teacher and were shaping and moulding future leaders of the community and country

Chapter One – Introduction

Rosenfeld and Rosenfeld (2008) state that “effective teacher beliefs about students are an integral part of effective teaching” (p. 245). This research aims to describe Rwandan teachers’ enacted beliefs. The research question and my interest in Rwanda stemmed from my year of teaching English in Rwanda in 2010. The teaching of English included working with four primary schools and teaching English to adults. My key role in the four primary schools was supporting their transition from French to English as the medium of instruction. While living in Rwanda I stayed with a Rwandan family, which gave me insight into the culture and an understanding of the daily life of Rwandans.

This chapter discusses the background to Rwanda and the history of education in Rwanda, providing an understanding of the context for this research. Rwanda has a turbulent history; however education has been made a priority by the government since independence in 1962. The present Rwandan government recognises that Rwanda must become a knowledge based society because of its lack of agricultural land (Uworwabayeho, 2009). Also, the education sector has been instrumental in bringing reconciliation after the genocide (Obura, 2003).

Chapter two reviews the literature regarding teacher’s beliefs and practices. Teachers come into the classroom with many beliefs (Vartuli, 2005a) that are developed from their environments around them. Cranton and Carusetta (2004a) state that beliefs and practice do not always align. Often this alignment does not happen because there are assumptions that are not confronted. Isenberg (1990) acknowledges the importance of critical self-reflection to confront these assumptions.

Chapter three discusses the literature on teaching as a profession and vocation, teacher status, teacher education, community participation and gender. These five areas gave focus to the interview and focus group questions. Many teachers see teaching as a calling (Dawson, 2005). This belief affects teachers’ view of students and the community. However, Sumra (2005) notes that teachers in East Africa experience minimal status because of their low salary levels. This low status is reflected in how the community view teachers, in turn discouraging children from becoming teachers.

The methodology of this research project is examined and explained in chapter four. Case studies were chosen for this research because they include the participants' context, resulting in an in-depth understanding of the case (Yin, 2003). The five participants in this research were involved in individual interviews and a focus group. Interviews are able to help participants express their beliefs about their context (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

Chapter five discusses the findings from the research. This chapter considers notions of an ethical and authentic practitioner, beliefs about teachers' work, the role of teacher education in shaping teachers beliefs, gender and community. Throughout this discussion it is clear that teachers view themselves as having a low status resulting from their low salaries. Although their status is low they are asked by the community to resolve issues and give advice to others. The participants described the belief that they are called to be teachers and this is evident in their practice as they see themselves moulding future leaders of the community.

The concluding chapter restates the aims and motivation of the research, summarises its findings, considers both what worked well, and what limited the research, refers to gaps in current literature, and makes recommendations for future research.

Rwanda's Background

The following discussion will focus on the geography, customs and traditions, economy and history of Rwanda. Rwanda is a small country with a tropical climate (Chiche, 2010). Its agricultural economy is an important source of revenue, and depends on the climate. Rwanda is a Christian country, and has a vibrant culture that celebrates using song and dance (Country Overview, 2013). A dark chapter opened in 1994, when the genocide in Rwanda started. De Heusch (1995) describes "the recent history of Rwanda [as] tragic and singular, unlike any other in Africa since the end of colonization" (p. 3). Kuperman (2000) suggests that "the most obvious lesson of Rwanda's tragedy is that intervention is no substitute for prevention" (p. 117). Following the genocide many questions were asked about how this genocide happened.

(a) Geography

Rwanda is known as the land of a thousand hills (Ministry of Natural Resources, 2012). This mountainous and landlocked country is only about 26, 000 square kilometres in area (Hosier & Milukas, 1992). Compared to New Zealand, Rwanda has three times the population but only one tenth of New Zealand's land area. Rwanda is a member of the East African Community, and borders on Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The tropical climate in Rwanda has two seasons: a rainy season from March to May and a dry season from June to September (Ministry of Natural Resources, 2012), with temperatures ranging from 17 to 25 degrees Celsius (Safari, 2012).

Rwanda's main resource is its land. The volcanic soil creates fertile land for agriculture (Roose & Ndayizigiye, 1997). Jones (2000) states that "Rwanda is a patchwork of tiny family plots given over to subsistence farming" (p. 130). One of the issues that affects agriculture is erosion of the mountainous land by the heavy rainy season (Clay & Lewis, 1990).

According to Rutagarama and Martin (2006) more than 8.4% of Rwanda's land is protected. The Nyungwe National Park is Rwanda's largest protected land mass and "is one of the most biologically important montane rainforests in central Africa, with more than 260 species of trees and shrubs, 260 species of birds, 100 species of orchid and 13 species of primates" (p. 292). A large percentage of the Nyungwe National Park is part of Rwanda's main watershed. The Nyabarongo and Akanyaru river drains the Nyungwe National Park and also much of Rwanda's waters, creating the border of Burundi and Tanzania (Ministry of Natural Resources, 2012). The longest river running through Rwanda is the Nyabarongo, which creates permanent wetlands. Nabahungu and Visser (2011) comment that "in Rwanda many rural households face food insecurity and poverty, therefore wetland goods and services are an important contributing factor to people's livelihoods" (p. 5). These wetlands absorb the water in the rainy season decreasing the likelihood of floods, and in the dry season is a source of water.

(b) Customs and Traditions

Dance is an important part of Rwandan's culture. Females participate in the umushagiro (‘cow’) dance "in which arms are held out like the horns and feet are

stomping” (Lesile, 2003, p. 39). In Rwandan society, cows are sacred and are of high value. A cow is also part of the dowry system in marriage. The fathers of the bride and groom must both approve of the marriage and once they have agreed, gifts are given from the man’s family to the bride’s father. This gift is usually at least one cow. (World Trade Press, 2010). In Rwanda “marriage is a social institution that is accorded much respect and dignity” (Adekunle, 2007, p. 103). It is expected soon after the marriage that the couple will bear children, which is a sign of prosperity (World Trade Press, 2011).

An important day in the Rwandan calendar is Umuganda, a community service that every able bodied person is expected to participate in, on the last Saturday of every month. Duties included in this community service range from ploughing ground to building houses. The Rwanda Governance Board (2012) states that “the day is intended to build community involvement and strengthen cohesion between persons of different background and levels” (p. 1). Barnhart (2011) believes however that Umuganda is “unsuccessful in relation to nation-building, as it does not achieve a high degree of unified social or political mobilization within the Rwandan population that ultimately contributes to an identification with a single national identity” (p. 1). The current president (Kagame) hopes nevertheless to create a de-ethnicized country by working together in Umuganda (Barnhart, 2011) .

Christianity is a common belief “of two-thirds of Rwanda's population, though syncretic blending with indigenous beliefs pervade” (Country Overview, 2013, p. 107). The Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor (2007) states that “56.5 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, 26 percent Protestant, 11.1 percent Seventh-day Adventist, 4.6 percent Muslim, 1.7 percent claims no religious affiliation, and 0.1 percent practice traditional indigenous beliefs” (para.4). Many of the holidays the Rwandan’s observe are Christian holidays, and Christian values are widespread in Rwandan’s everyday life. “The almost universal prevalence of Christianity in Rwanda gives the clergy an enormous following, which has translated into power and influence” (World Trade Press, 2010, p. 12). Many of the churches are involved in reconciliation of the Rwandan people (Rucyahana, 2007). Briggs and Booth (2007) note that traditional religion included the belief “in a supreme being called *Imana*. While *Imana*’s actions influence the whole world, Rwanda is his home where he comes to

spend the night” (p. 25). The World Trade Press (2010) describes one of the traditions as collecting small stones that are “believed to contain the power of *Imana* and consequently bring good luck....[and] placed in a special hut called *ndaro*, which is usually located just outside the family’s compound. Offerings are brought every day to propitiate *Imana* and gain favour” (p. 13).

(c) Economy

Rwanda has very few natural resources, however subsistence agriculture employs 90% of its labour force (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012). Much of this agriculture is weather dependent (Chiche, 2010). Rwanda’s main crops are coffee, tea, bananas, beans, sorghum and potatoes (Ford, 2003), produced mainly for domestic consumption. Rwanda is land-locked, increasing the price of its exports or imports (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012). In the East African Community, Uganda is Rwanda’s biggest importing partner, while Kenya receives most of Rwanda’s exports (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012). Rwanda’s economy is therefore reliant on foreign aid (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012), Lofgren, Nielson and Ezemenari (2009) stating that “foreign aid represents close to half of its receipts” (p. 4). The Government of Rwanda, recognising Rwanda’s small land mass, has the “ambition to build human capital, attract foreign investment, expand the service sector of the economy and transform [it] into a telecommunications hub of the region” (Knutsson, 2012, p. 183). The government has increased Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the education curriculum in an effort to create the conditions required for young Rwandans to engage in the global knowledge economy (Rubagiza, Were, & Sutherland, 2011).

The Genocide in 1994 caused the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to halve in a year, land and livestock were destroyed, and the country went further into poverty (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012). Prior to the genocide, coffee was the main source of income for the Rwandan people. During the genocide, many people fled their coffee plantations. People who found these plantations abandoned for many years decided to start working these plantations again. Ford (2003) states that it has been very difficult to find out who owns the plantations which could mean “the resolution of land disputes should also encourage increased cultivation of Rwanda’s second biggest revenue earner – tea” (p. 47). Many of the issues with the Rwandan economy that existed prior to the genocide were multiplied after the genocide (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012).

(d) History and the Genocide

Rwanda has a history that has many different perspectives and the literature makes it clear that there are many opinions on the history of Rwanda. The following discussion, based on a sample of that literature, provides a personal perspective on some events in Rwanda's history.

Rwanda was first colonised by Germany in 1897 “[who] were content with a loose indirect rule” (Rucyahana, 2007, p. 9). After the German defeat in World War One, the League of Nations mandated Rwanda and Burundi to Belgium (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000). The Belgian government “recognized the authority of the 'sultan' (mwami) and delegated part of its colonial powers to members of the minority Tutsi aristocracy, the owners of large herds of cows” (De Heusch, 1995, p. 4). King (2008) acknowledges that before the European colonisers arrived in Rwanda the three ethnicities (Hutu, Tutsi and Twa) all lived peacefully alongside each other. The 1994 Genocide was to be prefigured by the events leading up to independence.

The introduction of the colonising powers changed this peaceful accord when the Belgian “colonial power, based on an ideology of racial superiority and in collaboration with some religious organisations, exploited the subtle social differences and institutionalized discrimination” (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000, p. 4). The Tutsi were the elite because of the influence the theory of eugenics had on the Europeans (Jefremovas, 1997). From this eugenics theory a larger skull meant a larger brain and therefore more intelligent person. Compared to the Hutu skull the Tutsi skull was larger, which reinforced the belief that the Tutsi were the superior race (Torpey & Caplan, 2001). To ensure the division of the two races, identity cards were issued in 1933 to every Rwandan, a system that was continued for 60 years (Thompson, 2007).

By the 1950s the Tutsi were demanding independence from Belgium. As a result of Tutsi dissatisfaction with Belgian rule, Belgium started to favour the Hutu because they were easier to control (Shalom, 1996). White (2009) comments that “the recurring episodes of repression and massacres of Tutsis [since colonialism] resulted in hundreds of thousands of Tutsis being massacred and tens of thousands becoming refugees” (p. 475).

Rwanda gained independence in 1962, and the Hutu gained legislative control. The Hutu were themselves divided between moderates and extremists (D. Newbury, 1980). Once the Hutu extremists took control, they waged a violent campaign against Tutsi's, resulting in half of the Tutsi population moving to neighbouring countries and becoming refugees (Shalom, 1996). In the six years after 1962, guerrilla attacks were conducted by Tutsi residing in Burundi and Uganda. In 1973 Juvénal Habyarimana became the second president of Rwanda. Shalom (1996) states that "under Habyarimana discrimination against Tutsis continued, but as long as they didn't try to involve themselves in politics they were generally left in peace, and there were no ethnic massacres between 1973-90" (p. 32). Tutsi refugees who resided in neighbouring countries nevertheless tried to return and take control (Kuperman, 2000).

In 1987 Tutsi refugees in Uganda created the Rwandan Patriot Front (RPF). The RPF attacked in 1990 on behalf of the many refugees who wanted to go back to Rwanda (C. Newbury, 1995). The RPF was forced back into Uganda by the Rwandan Army, and the leader of the RPF, Fred Rwigyema, was killed on October 2nd 1990 during a failed attack on north-east Rwanda. Kagame then became the RPF leader (Clapman, 1998). Although the RPF failed in its first attempt to gain control, it was "able to reorganise itself for a guerrilla campaign, and infiltrated back across the border into north-western Rwanda" in 1990 (Clapman, 1998, p. 201). The RPF invasion in 1990 was used by Habyarimana to deflect the issues of governance. Jefremovas (1997) states that:

Interclass conflicts arose out of the policies of the Habyarimana regime in this period, during which the disparity between rich and poor grew enormously throughout the country and the political and social distance between elites and the predominantly rural poor grew as well. (p. 97)

Between 1990 and 1993, Habyarimana continued to refuse Tutsi a share in the governance of the country, and during this time, thousands of Tutsi were killed. After months of negotiation, peace accords were signed in Arusha on the 4th of October 1993, concluding the war between the RPF and Rwandan Army. The accord aimed to set up a government with the RPF and other political parties (C. Newbury, 1995).

However Shalom (1996) notes the president Habyarimana “blocked progress every step of the way, sometimes publicly disavowing the government negotiators at Arusha, [Tanzania] and other times organizing additional massacres” (p. 7). Habyarimana established a radio station (RTLM-Radio Télévision des Mille Collines) in Rwanda, which was used to create hatred and denounce the peace agreements. The radio was “a particularly potent medium in a country 60% illiterate” (Shalom, 1996, p. 5). Nevertheless, Habyarimana participated in a 1994 peace summit in Tanzania when it is believed the Arusha Peace Accords were to be implemented. However, on Habyarimana’s return flight to Rwanda on April 6th 1994, two missiles hit the plane prior to landing. It is not evident who shot down the plane but it is believed that “the attack was commissioned by the extremist Hutu party that was radically against the Arusha accords” (De Heusch, 1995, p. 6). The day after the plane was shot down, violence erupted, signalling the start of the Genocide (Rucyahana, 2007). Thompson (2007) states that:

The government’s military structure that had been built since 1990 was now swiftly mobilized to execute the genocide as well as to fight civil war. It could now be seen clearly that its creators had an overall strategy that it implemented with scrupulous planning and organisation, control of the levers of government, highly motivated soldiers and militia, the means to kill vast numbers of people, the capacity to identify and kill the victims and tight control of the media to disseminate the right messages both inside and outside the country. (p. 27)

Kuperman (2000) discusses the speed with which the genocide took place: “the majority of Tutsi gathering sites were attacked and destroyed before April 21 only 14 days into the genocide ... [while] 250,000 [Tutsi people were killed] in just over two weeks” (p. 98). Thompson (2007) stated that those killed in the genocide were also Hutu who did not support the extremists. In July the RPF invaded the capital Kigali and managed to gain control of the rest of the country later in July. This RPF defeat of the Hutu-led government brought the genocide to an end in late July.

Many NGO's responded to the genocide by supplying food and shelter to those forced into refugee camps (White, 2009). Many writers ask questions of the international community and their failure to stop the genocide (Hintjens, 1999; Kuperman, 2000; Rucyahana, 2007; Shalom, 1996). Newbury (1995) questions the role of the United Nations:

What did the UN do? We are told that the UN force was not given the mandate and forces it needed. If not, why not? If the U.S., Belgium, and France did not know what was going on, why not? At the least, this bespeaks a blatant failure of intelligence. But even after the slaughter began the actions of the west seemed almost to acquiesce in—and perhaps even further—the killings: western (sic) governments sent in troops only to save whites, and then they withdrew. (p. 16)

The previous questions show the lack of protection for the Tutsi people who were in danger. The absence of a response from the international community from when the genocide started is one of the causes of the high death toll (C. Newbury, 1995).

The History of Education in Rwanda

Access to education has been an issue throughout the history of formal education caused by the remoteness of most Rwandans. Before colonisation, Rwandan education was intertwined with Rwanda's rich culture. Learning occurred in the family nucleus with the teaching of Rwandan culture (King, 2008). The education system changed however with the arrival of Germans in 1884 and then Belgians after World War I (Hintjens, 2001; Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000). Both colonial powers had an influence in creating ethnic division by favouring the Tutsi as the elite race (Hodgkin, 2006). The following discussion will give an account of education in Rwanda before and after the genocide. This section will describe the events that shaped today's education system and aims to give an understanding of what the participants in this research have experienced in their education system, providing a context to their responses in interviews and the focus group. This context includes how education has changed dramatically since the genocide. Furthermore, the subject of history has not been taught in Rwandan schools since the genocide, because an

“official” history cannot be decided (Hilker, 2011). Rwandan education is now moving forward towards the government’s ‘Vision 2020’. This vision is seen by the government as a way to change Rwanda’s social and economic status (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000). Part of Vision 2020 is creating a knowledge-led economy which has seen a development of an ICT curriculum (Hayman, 2005).

(a) Education Prior to 1994

Before the arrival of the Europeans in Rwanda, education occurred in the family home. Rwandan values, traditions and language were taught “through storytelling, singing, dancing and poetry” (King, 2008, p. 75). The first formal schooling was established in the end of the 19th century by Catholic missionaries (Hilker, 2011). According to King (2008), less than 5% of those who completed primary school had access to secondary school under colonial rule. This schooling was a “Western-style education [that] was a symbol of modernity and seemed to promise a new lifestyle, yet ... [which] ... reinforced traditional state power” (King, 2008, p. 95). After Belgium took power in 1916, the elite Tutsi were the only race able to participate in education after primary school (Hayman, 2005).

The colonial education system continued to discriminate and encourage ethnic division after the start of widespread schooling in 1920’s (Hodgkin, 2006). Hodgkin (2006) notes a story describing the ethnic divide in schooling from the view of a government minister when he was at school:

The teacher asked us [the class] to stand in two lines face to face. He asked if we looked the same. We laughed because we had the same life, travelled to the same school, wore the same clothes. The teacher told us we were not the same: he compared our heights and noses. Then our class was divided: long noses on one side, flat noses on the other. We had not been aware of our ethnic identity...but after this incident we no longer played together with banana leaf footballs. (p. 201)

In an effort to move away from colonial influences, the major educational policies of 1938 and 1948 intended education to reflect the “African life and to repudiate assimilation to European ways” (King, 2008, p. 79). In the 1950s Belgium was

challenged by the United Nations to make changes to the administrative system (Jefremovas, 1997). These changes forced Belgium to allow the Hutu people to be educated, who soon created a political party. Hutu became resentful of the Tutsi who were in power, and Belgium eventually changed its allegiance to the majority Hutu, because Hutu rule was unavoidable (Thompson, 2007). As noted above, this change in allegiance resulted in many Tutsi deaths and led to thousands fleeing to neighbouring countries as refugees (C. Newbury, 1995).

The curriculum at independence in 1962 emphasised the academic aspect of schooling and revolved around philosophy and language, as a large percentage of these schools were owned by the Protestant and Catholic churches (Hayman, 2005; Obura, 2003). Although Rwanda had gained its independence, French remained the official language (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010). At independence, the government agreed to pay teachers' salaries, but the church or managers of the school would run the school and pay for maintenance. "The 1962 constitution of the Hutu Republic declared that primary education would be free and obligatory" for all (Hilker, 2011, p. 268). However education had many indirect costs such as stationery, school uniforms, loss of labour and distance to schools, preventing many poor families from sending their children to school (Obura, 2003). The perception of Tutsi as the 'elite' race was to change and Hayman (2005) states that this change would occur through "ethnic and regional quotas for public and government-assisted schools and institutions" (p. 8). The quota of students in schools would reflect the national percentage of each race, which in 1962 was "9 per cent for Tutsi and 90 per cent for Hutu" (Hintjens, 2001, p. 34).

Education reforms for the 30 years following independence in 1962 were nevertheless designed to create "universal education and equality of opportunity [in order] to support rural and community-based development and better integrate the political elite with the population" (Hilker, 2011, p. 268). Although the reforms aimed to have equal opportunities Hayman (2005) states that "the post-independence education system deepened these divisions through ethnic and regional biases in admission policy [and] top-down teaching which promoted strict obedience to authority, and a curriculum entrenching socially constructed 'ethnic' stereotypes" (p. 10). Another defining moment in the history of education in Rwanda was the 1977/1978 education reform. Hilker (2011) identified that these reforms were in response to the problem

that students were not prepared for secondary schooling, which became prevalent through the late 1970s. The reform aimed to “ruralize, vocationalize, democratise education; stress[ing] MT [mother tongue] and local culture” (Obura, 2003, p. 39). The reason motivating these reforms was the large rural population that did not have access to schools. Vocational training was emphasised, with agriculture and crafts being taught. Although the government wanted education to reflect Rwandan’s lives, Hayman (2005) notes that “the quality of the training from these centres was very poor and uncoordinated, and by the early 1990s there were concerns about the high population of largely illiterate, poorly skilled youth trying to enter a restricted job market” (p. 9). In the 1990s the enrolment rates had increased and were at a higher level compared to other countries in Africa, however there were still many issues around the quality of the education delivered (Hayman, 2005). Hilker (2011) suggests that one of these issues was that prior to the genocide, “the history taught at both primary and secondary levels propagated a version of the past based largely on colonial stereotypes of Rwandan history, which supported the political ideology of the Hutu regimes in power during that period” (p. 271).

(b) Education Developments Subsequent the Genocide

During the 1994 genocide the education system was destroyed. Schooling had to cease because many of the facilities no longer existed, Obura (2003) noting that “of the 1,836 schools, 65 percent were damaged” (p. 47). Hayman (2005) notes that, as a consequence, “not only did the education sector have to recover physically, but popular faith in education had been dealt a serious blow” (p. 10). Rucyahana (2007) gives an example of why there was a loss of faith in education: “there were also many instances of Hutu teachers denouncing their Tutsi pupils to the militia or even killing them” (p. 80).

After the genocide, the Ministry of Education was re-established when the new government gained control on 18th July 1994. The government was faced with a demand to repair the infrastructure in schools destroyed during the genocide. Hayman (2005) describes primary education in September 1994 functioning in an “emergency fashion – high school graduates were being given crash courses to become teachers, exams were taken in any language, officials were travelling around the country delivering salaries to teachers in cash or in kind” (p. 11). The Ministry went around the

country opening schools, giving speeches and communicating by radio that schools had reopened (Obura, 2003). This campaign was not effective as parents found it hard to send their children back to school because of the atrocities that had happened in the schools and churches. Parental trust in schools was also lost because the schools were used to divide and discriminate against races. However, since the genocide “the government has put in place measures to broaden access to education: abolishing fees at primary level, improving the quality of education, and, more recently, extending free basic education from six to nine years” (Hilker, 2011, p. 272).

The education sector has played a critical role in reconciliation after the genocide. This rehabilitation and reconciliation included integrating many refugees back into schooling (Hayman, 2005). Access to education has been a priority since the genocide. Chiche (2010) describes how “only five years after the event, the number of children in primary school had already surpassed the number that would have been enrolled had the system expanded at historical rates of increase” (p. 9).

The teaching of history in schools was contested and was a factor in the 1994 genocide. A year after the 1994 genocide when “the RPF-led Government of National Unity [was in power, it] imposed a moratorium on history teaching in Rwanda’s schools, arguing that previous history lessons were biased and divisive” (Hilker, 2011, p. 276). Since 1994 no history text books have been published (Obura, 2003). Although there has been a moratorium on teaching history there are other ways in the community to learn about history, for example “the media, genocide memorials, *gacaca* courts—community-level courts used to judge crimes of genocide, and *ingando*—“re-education camps” for ex-soldiers, students and others, which combine military-style training with classes on unity and reconciliation, history, democracy, citizenship and government programmes” (Hilker, 2011, p. 278). In 1997 a Rwandan history curriculum was created, but Obura (2003) states that the curriculum “needs to be translated into a series of classroom lessons before Rwandan history can be taught in schools” (p. 104). In 2003 the National University of Rwanda, Rwandan Ministry of Education and the University of Berkeley created resources to go alongside the curriculum for secondary schools. Hilker (2011) notes that in 2008, a resource book, *The teaching of history of Rwanda: A participatory approach*, was created by the

Ministry of Education. The government regards this document as the “official” history of Rwanda. However Hodgkin (2006) states that:

The “official” truth, the creation of a single narrative and interpretation will in effect deny or repress the memories of each subgroup within Rwandan society. The negative impact this approach may have on reconciliation in Rwanda is exacerbated by the authoritarian nature of the current government. It does not absolutely welcome freedom of expression and the democratic right to diverse opinion. (p. 204)

The belief that there is only one correct view of history excludes some people’s beliefs and opinions. In the discussion that follows, the Vision 2020 that aims to create a knowledge economy will be considered. This vision sees education creating critical thinkers, but the assumption that there is one history runs counter to, and does not allow for, the development of critical thinkers.

Rwanda’s Vision 2020 “seeks to fundamentally transform Rwanda into a middle-income country by the year 2020” (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000). One of the ways that Rwanda wants to achieve Vision 2020 is through creating a knowledge-based economy (Uworwabayeho, 2009). Hayman (2005) states that:

The objective [of Vision 2020] is to transform the country into an ICT-led, service hub in Central Africa, building on Rwanda’s geographical position and linguistic advantages, and thereby addressing the problems of a lack of natural resources, high population density and limited potential for agricultural modernisation. (p. 29)

Rwandan policies can attract investors but the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2000) suggests that “infrastructural investment will [also] be required in the areas of energy, water, telecommunication and transport to reduce costs, whilst increasing their quality and reliability. Improvements in education and health standards will be crucial for providing an efficient and productive workforce” (p. 10). Other attractions for investors include cheap labour and strategic location. Through

Vision 2020 the Rwandan government has increased funding into education (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012; Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000). With free and compulsory education, enrolments have increased, although Ansoms and Rostagno (2012) state that some of the negative effects of increased enrolments have been increased student to teacher ratios and an adverse effect on the quality of education.

Since joining the Commonwealth in 2009, and taking up membership of the East African Community, the medium of instruction in schools has been changed to English. The change is seen as a way to promote economic growth that Vision 2020 is aiming to achieve. However Samuelson and Freedman (2010) argue that by changing the language of instruction, the government presumes “that English will contribute to reconciliation by promoting economic growth [which] overlooks the ways that language use is linked to identity amongst Rwanda’s elites” (p. 192).

Conclusion

Rwanda’s turbulent history has affected its education system. However the education system has been part of the reconstruction and reconciliation of the country (Hayman, 2005). Due to the lack of land, the government of Rwanda is aiming to create a knowledge-led economy that requires critical thinkers. However, given the close-minded and authoritarian history of education in Rwanda previously, the desire for an education system geared towards a knowledge-led economy will be challenging to achieve. This authoritarian tradition seems to be evident in the search for one official history, as it denies the reality of multiple perspectives on, and experience of, Rwandan history. The success of Rwandan education will depend heavily on its teachers, and the review of literature in the following chapter will focus on teacher beliefs.

Chapter Two - Beliefs and Practice

The previous chapter described the context of this research project. The history of Rwanda and its education will give a greater depth of understanding to the discussion of the results of this research. The overarching aim of this research study was to describe the enacted beliefs of a sample of Rwandan teachers. Interviews and focus groups were used in this research because teachers' beliefs and thought process are internalised and tacit, thus are difficult to observe. Larrivee (2000) states that "there is a clear distinction between what we profess to believe in and our values in action" (p. 295). This research aimed to make conscious the participants' beliefs behind their practice and to understand the relationship between beliefs and practice. This chapter will review literature on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. The theory on beliefs and practice examines questions such as what influences the formation of teachers' beliefs and how these beliefs are enacted.

There is an intricate relationship between teachers' beliefs and practise (Fang, 1996). One of the main reasons for research into teacher beliefs and practice according to Clark and Peterson (1986), is to demonstrate a link between beliefs and actions and the academic success of students. Vartuli (2005) demonstrates this linkage, and states that "excellent teachers base their actions in the classroom on a system of beliefs that help them to choose between various possible actions" (p. 76). Wilcox-Herzog (2010) suggested that "when beliefs about teaching are interwoven with other beliefs (e.g., about child development), as well as knowledge about teaching and children ... there should be greater consistency between beliefs and actions" (p. 84). Wilcox-Herzog (2010) refers to interwoven beliefs as different beliefs interlocked, for example pedagogical beliefs and personal beliefs. These pedagogical beliefs come through theoretical teacher training and beliefs that have a theoretical background are more likely to align with practice (Charlesworth, Burts, Burts, & Hernandez, 1991).

The Relationship between Beliefs and Practice

Teachers have all experienced an education system before taking on a teacher's role, and thus have already created beliefs about teaching. "Beliefs about good teachers seem to form as early as second grade and stay consistent, even throughout teacher

preparation” (Vartuli, 2005b, p. 80). Beliefs “frequently involve moods, feelings, emotions, and subjective evaluations” (Nespor, 1987, p. 323), which helps to explain why each person has their own set of unique beliefs and why it is a challenge to change beliefs.

Throughout the journey of creating beliefs, “beliefs are more often confirmed than confronted” (Rosenfeld & Rosenfeld, 2008, p. 246). Argyris (1990) described how beliefs are easily continued, noting that un-confronted beliefs will lead the individual to select only data which agrees with these beliefs. These comfortable beliefs become entrenched, and not challenging these beliefs becomes a pattern. Teachers having the best intentions may not realise that their beliefs affect the student in unintended ways. These beliefs need to be challenged and reflected on; resulting in teachers being aware of the effects these beliefs have on their practice. Vartuli (2005) states that “the steps to challenging beliefs are awareness, analysis, discussion and reconsideration” (p. 84). Senge (2000) specifies the way to challenge these beliefs and assumptions by using the following questions, which can be used by teachers in a class to ask themselves, or their students, regarding assumptions being made about those students:

- What are the observable data behind that statement?
- Does everyone agree on what the data are?
- Can you run me through your reasoning?
- How did we get from that data to these abstract examples?

(p. 70)

An important part of teaching is therefore reflecting on one’s beliefs and practice. Isenberg (1990) acknowledged that “reflective professionals know how to figure out what they need to know, where to get it, and how to help others make meaning out of it” (p. 324). Beyond just reflecting on beliefs and practice, teachers must also discuss with colleagues circumstances that are conflicting with their beliefs, and issues they are having with their practice that will influence future practice. Brookfield (1995) describes colleagues as a ‘reflective mirror’. A practitioner’s colleagues are able to reflect practice, which practitioners are sometimes unaware of. Talking to colleagues increases the feeling of unity in the profession and the realisation that many of the

problems faced by an individual teacher are the same as those of a colleague, who might have a solution that the teacher has not tried. Fullan (2007) argues that “the notion that external ideas alone will result in changes in the classroom and school are deeply flawed as a theory of action” (p. 35). Instead of valuing these external ideas, Fullan (2007) values observation of teachers by other teachers within the school, and discussion amongst colleagues. These ideas and realisations from other colleagues may seem only to be a small answer to one of many problems in a classroom, but Senge (1990) states that “small changes can produce big results — [however] the areas of the highest leverage are often the least obvious” (p. 63). Ideas from other colleagues can be part of the process of change that would not occur if there was not an openness and reflection with colleagues. Reflection on practice and beliefs often happens after a lesson.

Influences on the Formation of Teachers' Beliefs

(a) Teacher Education

Beliefs are influenced by experiences that we have. “A teacher's beliefs are shaped by many factors. Among them are the influence of discipline subculture, the quality of pre-service experience in the classroom and the opportunity for reflection on the pre-service experience” (Fang, 1996, p. 50). Pre-service education introduces student-teachers to many theories that enable them to develop their personal beliefs about teaching. With this myriad number of theories, beginning teachers may feel the need to practise all of these beliefs to be effective, rather than choosing theories best suited to them as individual teachers. When teacher educators create authentic experiences, pre-service teachers will have the opportunity to reflect on their beliefs. However, in universities, lecturers:

Often create in student teachers a sentiment of dissatisfaction with the instructional practice they see in school. Cooperating teachers, in turn, undermine the work of the teacher educators. This leaves many student teachers bewildered as to whose theory (the cooperating teacher's or the university professor's) they should embrace and be committed to application.” (Fang, 1996, p. 54)

Beginning teachers try to discover how to match these theoretical ideas with their beliefs and try to work them in to the day to day running of a classroom. Some teacher educators spend little time discussing how theories match beliefs, and how teachers' personal experiences affect these beliefs and shape their teaching. Furthermore, Joram and Gabriele (1998) discuss how "the filters created by prior beliefs can make effective communication between pre-service teachers and teacher educators problematic" (p. 176). The authors give examples of this lack of communication, describing how a lecturer's explanation of a concept will create a different understanding of the concept in a student's mind because that student has a set of different prior beliefs to what the lecturer expected.

Therefore, examination of teachers' beliefs in teacher education is crucial. Reflecting on beliefs can give answers and understandings to problems teachers are having in their practice. Varuli (2005) believes that "when beliefs and practices are consistent, teaching is less stressful, and having less stress can reduce teacher burnout" (Vartuli, 2005b, p. 83). Teaching is not completely without stress, however, and the right amount of stress can be a motivator for teachers to get things done. There will always be a friction between the beliefs and practice of a teacher while teachers are continually being refined.

(b) Systems

In the classroom, teachers' beliefs are constricted also by the limits that are put on a teacher by others in power over them. This can include the curriculum that is set out before them or other rules and regulations set by school management. Wilcox-Herzog (2012) comment that "parents, administrators, and colleagues often force teachers to internalize constraints that affect their ability to enact their personal beliefs" (p. 84). Often these beliefs are compromised to fit in with what is expected from the school. Teachers need to have a healthy discussion with colleagues about this conflict with their beliefs; however this can be difficult when the colleagues are the ones that are making the decisions that are in conflict with their beliefs (Charlesworth et al., 1991).

Enacting Beliefs

(a) The Relationship with Students

Teachers' beliefs about students are a crucial part of being an effective and motivating teacher. Isenberg (1990) acknowledges the power of teacher beliefs about students and states that "the greatest percentage of teachers' thinking concerns the learner, (sic) teachers also think about objectives, content, teaching strategies and management" (p. 324). Teachers' beliefs about their students affect the way they interact with their students. Rosenfeld and Rosenfeld (2008) describe two different teacher beliefs about students which determines how they interact with them: "teachers with interventionist beliefs about students ('I can intervene to help a learner with difficulties') show more effective practice than teachers with pathognomonic beliefs ('I blame the learner for his difficulties')" (p. 245). Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh and Teddy (2009) describe the blaming of the learner as deficit theory, which operates when teachers have low expectations of their students and blame someone or a situation that is not directly in their area of influence (Bishop et al., 2009). This in turn leads the students to the belief that they cannot change a situation they think is out of their control. Teachers are on a continuum between these two beliefs about students (Bishop et al., 2009; Rosenfeld & Rosenfeld, 2008). Throughout their career, teachers will move back and forth along the continuum. On this continuum, teachers' beliefs about students change but this does not mean that their beliefs also move to line up with their practice. Joram and Gabriele (1998) found little literature on teachers' beliefs changing through their career. Hallett (2010) went beyond these two views of students, and in his investigation of teachers suggested four main metaphors to illustrate the aims of teaching and teachers' views of teaching:

- sharing (knowledge and experience);
- opening doors/guiding;
- mining (gold & jewels); and
- cage rattling. (Hallett, 2010, p. 440)

All of the teachers Hallett (2010) interviewed gave descriptions of how their beliefs about students were demonstrated in their practice, which aligned with these metaphors. How these beliefs played out in their practice is, however, subjective.

Another person entering the classroom might view it through their personal lens and conclude that the teacher has different beliefs about their students. The classroom teacher too could be seeing in their practice what they want to see, not what is really happening in their practice (Hallett, 2010). Authentic practice occurs when teachers self-consciously match their actions and beliefs.

(b) Authenticity and Ethics

When teachers' beliefs are aligned with their practice they are authentic. Matching up these beliefs and practice is a journey of transformation which is constantly being questioned and reflected upon (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004a). Authenticity is defined by Kreber, McCune and Klampfleitner (2010) as "admitting gaps in knowledge, not deliberately hiding anything and [having] consistency between beliefs and action" (p. 388). The journey of authenticity is thus a journey of reflecting on practice to ensure that it mirrors a teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning. "Research focused on the consistency of teachers' beliefs and their practices suggests that alignment between teachers' beliefs and practices differ across domains of beliefs, content areas, and teachers' abilities" (Roehrig, Turner, Grove, Schneider, & Liu, 2009, p. 165). Teachers do not all have the same beliefs in all areas of their teaching. In some areas of teaching their beliefs and practice will be the same while in other activities teachers will have different beliefs.

Transformation describes the journey towards authenticity where beliefs and practices are matching. Transformative learning is defined as "a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs and values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated" (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004a, p. 288). When new information comes across a person's path, a decision whether to dismiss this information must be taken, or one's assumptions and beliefs must be reflected on in light of this new information. Reflection is crucial to the process of transformation. Assumptions firstly must be recognised before they can be reflected on. Palmer (2007) describes the situation where we challenge our assumptions as looking through new lenses. In the world "everything depends on the lenses through which we view the world. By putting on new lenses, we can see things that would otherwise remain invisible" (Palmer, 2007, p. 26).

Teachers' relationships with their students are a major factor in a teacher's journey towards the matching of beliefs and actions and authenticity. In teaching "no relationship can be positive and productive if the participants are not genuine, or if the intent of one is to manipulate or deceive the other" (Frego, 2006, p. 42). Authentic teachers are aware of their own beliefs. Beliefs can change however, as teachers are challenged by new information. This is not to say that every new bit of information will change a teacher's beliefs. "If we constantly change no one knows who we are or what we stand for. A person is appraised as an authentic person only if he or she is consistently perceived as being so" (Lin, 2006, p. 71). A teacher's relationship with his or her students will be more effective when students sense their teachers' authenticity. Frego (2006) believes that "the critical criterion of authenticity is that the learner perceives the caring of the educator as authentic" (p. 42). Teachers caring for student's learning can be a powerful stimulus for learning.

There is a balance in the relationship of a student and a teacher. Teachers cannot deny that this power relationship exists. "If the teacher is honest with students, she must acknowledge that she has considerable power—the power to define curricula, set evaluative criteria, and then use these criteria to decide the worth of student work" (Brookfield, 2006, p. 11).

Authenticity is different for each person. In one culture an action might seem authentic while in another culture the same action may be seen as inauthentic. These differences are because "our interpretation of authenticity is based on our values and cultural expectations" (Lin, 2006, p. 64). Within a school are many communities and contexts that a teacher is involved in. The context and community a teacher works in influences how they view their students, learning, parents and why they are teaching:

Context consists of several levels: the context of the teaching, the discipline or subject area, the physical classroom including the size of the class and the room arrangement, the psychological environment within the learning group, the department in which people work and its norms and expectations, institutional norms and policies, and finally the

general community or culture and the roles people expect faculty to maintain. (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b, p. 17)

In the literature there is little discussion on what is authentic between different contexts and cultures. “To achieve better understanding of one another across cultures, we need to step out of our culture and see other’s perspective. Once we start working cross-culturally in a global environment, these differences are unmasked” (Lin, 2006, p. 71).

Teachers’ beliefs about why they are teaching come from a horizon of significance. Kreber et al. (2007) defines a horizon of significance as “something substantial, something that deeply matters, not just for myself, but for society as a whole” (Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, & Knottenbelt, 2007, p. 35). Our horizon of significance helps define what is authentic to us in the bigger picture. In teaching practice our horizon of significance can come in the form of “teaching what we are interested in plus that which students need to know about” (Kreber et al., 2010, p. 394). Students are aware that we care when we not only teach what we are interested in, but go beyond that and think what students need to know and what will enlarge their thinking. The points above about power, caring and thoughts about the motivation for teaching raise the issue of the relationship between authenticity and ethics.

Starratt (2004) discusses the need for ethics in authenticity by asking whether Adolf Hitler was authentic. He answers that Hitler was authentic, as he was consistent with his beliefs and actions. Although Hitler was authentic he did not have an ethical aspect of his authenticity. Sockett (1993) who describes a moral teacher as having ethics, states that a moral teacher is “a person who considers the interests of others, does not make discriminations on irrelevant grounds, and has a clear set of principles or virtues in which he or she believes and on which he or she acts” (p. 105).

Teaching involves interaction with students, colleagues and therefore ethical issues are central. Starratt (2004) states that “authenticity is grounded in community and in the activity of sustaining community” (p. 69). By being in community, a person is forced to think of others and not just look at their own needs. A teacher “is not solely or even mainly concerned with imparting academic knowledge; she is also charged with forming young people in the values and attitudes necessary for a satisfying and

responsible life in the society” (Snook, 2003, p. 81). This care for others and the community is defined by Benade (2012) as altruism which is at the core of an ethical teacher. However Benade (2012) states that this care and “commitment to their students here and now can sometimes be more important than being accountable to the public, education authorities, or any commitment to students in the future” (p. 74)

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a theoretical background to teachers’ enacted beliefs. Teachers’ beliefs are shaped by circumstances in their personal life-journey and they often come to situations with assumptions. These assumptions are not easily confronted because it is easier to look at experiences and choose situations that agree with these assumptions (Rosenfeld & Rosenfeld, 2008). Reflection on practice is a way of looking at these assumptions and seeing how they affect their practice (Palmer, 2007). Teachers’ beliefs and practice do not always align, but Cranton and Carusetta (2004b) describe the alignment of beliefs and practice as authentic. However Starratt (2004) believes that ethics is another aspect of authenticity. Ethics involves looking beyond personal needs but also “points us toward a more self-responsible form of life” (Taylor, 1991, p. 74). The following chapter will discuss literature that focusses on teachers’ work, with specific reference to Rwanda and East Africa. This literature provided a background to the questions used in the interviews and focus group.

Chapter Three – Teachers’ Work

The previous chapters have given a context for this research, which aimed to discover teachers’ enacted beliefs in Rwanda. This chapter will demonstrate that a review of the literature indicates the following as issues of interest: teaching as a profession and vocation, teacher status, teacher education, community participation and gender. The literature suggested that there were problematical issues surrounding these educational topics in Africa, and in particular Eastern Africa. There was also a gap in the literature regarding these issues specifically in Rwanda. These five issues in teaching were used to develop the interview and focus group questions.

Teaching as a Profession and Vocation

Viewing teaching as a profession or vocation is underpinned by differing beliefs. In literature regarding teaching there is a view that teaching can be seen as either a profession or a vocation (Schwarz, 1999). This view alludes to there being little overlap in the qualities of what defines teaching as a profession and as a vocation. A profession is defined by Winch (2004) as having the following attributes:

- (a) a measure of self-regulation, including control of entry to and exit from the profession; (b) occupational qualifications awarded by an institution of higher education (usually at degree level), which serve as a necessary condition for practice; (c) public recognition as a profession, usually through legislation or an order in council. (p. 185)

One of the aspects of a profession is having qualifications and on-going professional development to increase practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding (Mitika & Gates, 2011). Practitioners have a sense of worth knowing their occupation is a profession that requires minimum qualifications. Winch (2004) discusses the hierarchies in professions and notes that “many are inclined to rank order professions in terms of the prestige of their professional knowledge” (p. 182). Carr (1999) extends Winch’s (2004) three aspects of professions, stating that “they have a distinct ethical dimension which calls for expression in a code of practice” (p. 34). Codes of practice or

ethics are however not confined to professions. Winch (2004) gives the example of farmers, noting that they still have a code of ethics guiding the way they treat their animals. A profession is more than the individuals practicing it, and Suzzallo (1926) discusses a profession as a whole group. One of the negative aspects of looking at a profession this way is that is when the code of ethics is broken; the reputation of the whole profession is damaged.

The term vocation has religious roots (Schwehn, 2002). Vocation is from the “Latin term *vocatio* ... a term used to describe a call away from the world of productive activity in order to dedicate one’s life to prayer and contemplation” (Dawson, 2005, p. 233). This understanding of vocation as a calling has developed in modern times to the choice of a job based on a sense of purpose and values (Teitz, 1988). Dawson (2005) discusses what a vocation *is not* and states that it is not “a view of the field framed by a narrow preoccupation with efficiency, measurable outcomes, and careerist thinking” (p. 250). Mitika and Gates (2011) comment that teachers who believe teaching is their vocation have an enduring commitment to the profession. Wineberg (2008) states “[v]ocation, then, is widely understood as being enacted precisely where the spheres of personal fulfilment and public service intersect” (p. 4). Teaching at its core is a public service. By having a sense of calling, teachers have an intense personal and self-motivation. This motivation stems from a desire to serve and have an influence on society. Teaching as a vocation is undermined in systems that focus on narrow achievement goals (such as New Zealand’s National Standards) that are not measuring all of what has been taught. Schwarz (1999) states that one of the characteristics of teaching as a vocation is “put[ing] caring at the center of teaching, because the purpose of the calling is to help others learn” (p. 24). An attitude of caring was discussed in the previous chapter as an aspect of an ethical teacher. Caring results in the development of mutual trust between the teacher and students. A teacher who is consistent, caring and has belief in her students can also be a learner (Kreber et al., 2007). Schwarz (1999) acknowledges the difference in teaching as a profession and teaching as a vocation, stating: “Vocation, unlike profession, recognizes the importance of process and product in the development of teachers, acknowledging inherent uncertainty, risk, and fallibility” (p. 24).

Teacher Status

Beliefs about a teachers' status affects their practice. The government of Rwanda has focused on increasing teachers' status by improving the quality and capability of teachers as a result of teacher education (Rutaisire & Gahima, 2009). A teacher's status, according to Bennell and Mukyanuzi (2005), is reliant on "multiple economic, social and political influences including traditional values, religious beliefs, political ideology, managerial approaches and educational philosophies and policies" (p. 12). As this section will show, the main reasons teachers in Rwanda and elsewhere in Africa have a continued low status however, is because of the perceived value of teaching as a career, and teachers' working and living conditions. The low status of teachers affects their ability to efficiently do their job. Barrett (2006) acknowledges that teachers in Tanzania "were concerned that diminished social status, a low standard of living and the necessity of looking for a second income undermined their ability to carry out difficult work in demanding conditions" (p. 11).

The following discussion of teacher status will consider specific examples in Rwanda and Tanzania that will provide a background to the beliefs of the participants of this research. Tanzania is included because it is a neighbouring country, some of the participants were originally from Tanzania, and the Rwandan and Tanzanian education system have many similarities. Throughout the literature are examples of teachers having high and low status.

Teaching in Rwanda has declined in status over recent years (Rutaisire & Gahima, 2009). The status of teachers is higher in rural areas compared to urban centres, but the profession of teaching is "not regarded as an attractive career option in Rwanda, especially among young people" (Bennell & Ntagaramba, 2008, p. 14). Often the decision to become a teacher is not their first option. The status of a teacher is "heavily influenced by attitudes of the community towards the overall value of education and the relationship between schools and the community" (Euan, 2007, p. 13).

Teachers are vulnerable to the opinions of the community because their job is very visible and has a large impact on the community. Sumra (2005) describes how "although society does not respect teachers, they still expect them to lead an

impeccable life style, and set an example for students” (p. 17). Teachers in the profession meanwhile often regard teaching as a stepping stone to another career (Aboh, 2006). Many teachers leave in search of a better quality of life because of the low pay in teaching compared to other jobs. Within the teaching profession, secondary school teachers have more status than primary teachers, as primary teachers are paid less and have lower qualifications. Furthermore, within a primary school “the least well qualified and inexperienced teachers tend to be assigned lower primary school classes” (Bennell & Ntagaramba, 2008, p. 14). Thus the belief that inexperienced teachers should teach in lower primary leads to the assumption that it is less important to have a comprehensive foundation at the beginning of schooling.

Another reason for teachers’ low status is their poor working conditions, and there are a number of factors contributing to this. Firstly, the government of Rwanda has wanted to create fee-free schooling so that all children can attend school. Increased rolls in schools has increased class sizes and therefore increased the teachers’ workload. For example in primary schools, “the overall learner ratio increased from 59 in 2002 to 66 in 2006” (Bennell & Ntagaramba, 2008, p. 27). Teachers are “in class from 0730 to 1630 everyday with usually only a one and half hour break at lunch time” (Bennell & Ntagaramba, 2008, p. 27). This is so as teachers in a typical day will often teach a double shift, teaching two separate classes during the day (World Bank, 2011). Parents are able to send their children to any school that they choose, resulting in successful schools gaining numbers, further increasing teacher workload and class sizes. Secondly, teaching and learning resources are inadequate. The lack of resources limits effective teaching, which further affects the perceived status of teachers in the community. As “the share of resources allocated to higher education [in Rwanda] is high compared with other African countries, the government will need to continue to consider ways to redistribute resources from higher education to basic education” (World Bank, 2011, p. 161).

Above all the other status issues, the main reason for teachers’ low status is their poor pay and living conditions. “All teachers, regardless of gender, location, or type of school, argued that the salary which they are getting is inadequate for them to live a decent life” (Sumra, 2005, p. 32). This low salary affects their ability to send their own children to school, their living conditions, and can also force teachers to take a second

job to be able to afford the necessities for living. Teachers' salaries are lower than that of other civil servants in Rwanda. Aboh (2006) gives an example of a child's view on teachers and their pay: "what do they care whether we succeed or not? They are here just to make their little money and that is all" (p. 616).

Teacher Education

As noted earlier, teachers come into pre-service education with many different beliefs already in place, while teacher education further shapes teachers' beliefs. This discussion focuses on the nature and content of pre-service teacher education in Rwanda, which, according to the Teacher Service Commission (2011) of Rwanda, "provides trainees with an initial education in relevant subject areas and teaching methodology; it serves as foundation for professional practice and development" (p. 1). Different teacher education is required if a teacher wants to teach in secondary or primary schools. Secondary school teachers can attain a Degree or Diploma level qualification, whereas primary teachers can only attain a certificate level qualification (2011). The secondary school phase consists of lower secondary school and upper secondary school, each of which is three years in length. (Hayman, 2005; Rutaisire & Gahima, 2009). Upper secondary schools are streamed according to examination results. The science stream is seen as the "most demanding upper secondary [stream]" (Obura, 2003, p. 161), which requires the highest examination results. Another stream is provided for those who wish to become primary teachers. Students in the primary teacher training stream may not originally choose this stream, and for many students it is not their preferred option (World Bank, 2011). Often these are students who will be forced to go into primary teacher training, because their exam results are not high enough to get into other streams.

During the genocide in 1994, many trained teachers were lost. (Obura, 2003). Since 1994 there has been an increase in the number of teachers and increase in enrolments but teacher education in Rwanda has been forgotten (Bines & Woods, 2007). Soon after the genocide the Rwandan Government tried to make the support of teachers a priority (Obura, 2003). There is little evidence however as to what the government has achieved to provide this extra teacher support. The government is aware that work on long term plans is required, rather than only implementing short courses to train teachers. The Basic Education Coalition (2010) suggests that with few well-trained

teachers “efforts should focus on building a support system for teachers to provide them guidance, mentoring, and on-going training” (p. 20). The Basic Education Coalition (2013) “works with U.S. policymakers, partner organizations, and the public to increase support and funding for quality basic education around the world” (para. 3). One of the Coalition’s aims is to help Rwanda reach its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2005 the Rwandan government published a Teacher Development and Management Policy that “puts emphasis on the quality and utility value of education which it sees as dependent on the quality and competence of the teaching staff” (Rutaisire & Gahima, 2009, p. 328). There are, however, issues with the execution of the Teacher Development and Management Policy due to the lack of support and mentoring for teachers. Rutaisire and Gahima (2009) argue:

Mentoring and supervision can have more effect on teacher performance in the classroom, and that effective supervisors can help teachers conceptualise what good teaching is, demonstrate good teaching techniques themselves, offer opportunities for teachers to practice in non-evaluative situations and offer immediate feedback in classroom practice. (p. 331)

Some writers suggest that one of the main issues surrounding teacher education in Rwanda is that the courses are too theoretical (Bines & Woods, 2007; Chiche, 2010; World Bank, 2011). Bennell and Ntagaramba (2008) note that “pre-service teacher education in Rwanda is too academic and theoretical with the bulk of lecturers having little or no direct experience of the day to day challenges of classroom teaching” (p. 32). There are gaps in teacher education on practical work inside the classroom, for example how to use a text book. In Rwanda “although most primary school teachers are qualified according to national standards, they are not equipped with the skills and competencies needed to deliver effective teaching, let alone support vulnerable children in a fragile environment” (Chiche, 2010, p. 23). Hussein (2006) describes what the aim of teacher education in Africa should be:

Developing the capacity to enquire sensitively and systematically into the nature of learning and the effects of

teaching. This is an approach to knowledge production that aims to empower with greater understanding of the complex situations rather than to control them with simplistic cookie-cutter routines. (p. 370)

Teacher training cannot be the same in each institution because of the unique contexts each area has. The World Bank (2011) states that there has been a “poor alignment of the teacher training curriculum with the school curriculum” (p. 118). The training needs to also hold practical components that a teacher will use in their everyday teaching.

Another issue with teacher training is “the quality and relevance of the teacher education system that is provided is weak” (Bennell & Ntagaramba, 2008, p. 32). Weinstein, Freedman and Hughson (2007) describe curriculum modules around peace education that are discussed in teacher education. These modules “are usually introduced from outside the local context and are not sensitive to local needs. While there is no question that the many NGOs who focus on these interventions do so with the best of intentions” (Weinstein et al., 2007, p. 44), this example of peace education modules shows the lack of relevance the curriculum has to the Rwandan classroom. Hussein (2006) describes where this lack of relevance in teacher training has come from: “the traditional myth of training that underscores merely teachers’ competence in content matter knowledge and pedagogical skills usually ignoring the socio-political and cultural constraints that affect teachers’ work” (p. 368). Many of the developing countries’ governments are aiming to increase the number of teachers and decrease costs without affecting the quality of the teachers (Bines & Woods, 2007). To help combat the lack of quality in teacher education the “Ministry of Education has arranged for intensive teacher training programmes to be carried out in each province. The training aims at upgrading the skills of non-qualified, but serving teachers and giving new recruits relevant learning opportunities” (Rutaisire & Gahima, 2009, p. 327). However, the content of this training is not described, and there is little research literature on the programme and its success.

Community Participation

The education system helped to create the conditions for the genocide in 1994 by “limiting access of Tutsi children and teaching slanted versions of history that glorified the Hutu” (Weinstein et al., 2007, p. 45). During the genocide communities and non-governmental agencies stepped in to continue schooling (Hilker, 2011). Post genocide, the role of the education system has changed and it is now involved in restoration and conflict resolution. Trust must be restored between the communities and the government structures (like education) because of the government’s role in the genocide (Rucyahana, 2007). “Whilst educational objectives may be the focus of community participation, time also needs to be devoted to reconciliation processes and the restoration of relationships to ensure that participation is inclusive, and that the community priorities are clearly identified” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 2). The priorities of the school and the community can be different, requiring discussion that allows both parties to work together.

Community participation is discussed in the literature as a way to alleviate poverty and improve the quality and relevance of education (Essuman & Akycampong, 2011; UNESCO, 2009; World Bank, 1999). The World Bank (1999) notes that “communities can be defined by characteristics that the members share, such as culture, language, tradition, law, geography, class and race” (p. 1), suggesting that communities must play active roles in schools. It sees decentralisation as a step forward and the way to give communities more power. By earlier definitions, school communities could be assumed to be homogenous and static with many common characteristics (Shaeffer, 1991). However, in Rwanda many of the children are from different geographical areas and travel a large distance to school and come from different cultural backgrounds (Obura, 2003). The varieties of students that attend schools show that a school community is heterogeneous and ever changing. One common characteristic described by Dekker (2010) is the value of education in these school communities. She later identifies views of parents and teachers that differ on the purpose and importance of education (Dekker, 2010). People have different beliefs about the aim of education but education is still an important part of the community.

The role of the community has changed since colonialism. An important reality in parts of Africa is that “communities in all but the most isolated sections of societies are not the idealised ‘traditional’ communities envisaged in educational policy documentation, but fractured and fragmented communities constructed through the various processes of for example, colonialism, post colonialism and civil unrest” (Dunne, Akyeampong, & Humphreys, 2007, p. 23). Many of the African countries have residue from colonialism in their education system, which has resulted in a discrepancy in the community’s traditional beliefs and customs (Dekker, 2010). The way that communities traditionally were involved in schools changed as a result of colonialism, suggesting that the result of colonialism is reflected in schools today.

Community participation in schools in parts of Africa is not necessarily positive and can reinforce inequalities (UNESCO, 2009). Community involvement often results in the decisions being made by people who have access to the school and who have seniority in the social hierarchy. In many schools in Africa “the overriding form of participation has been financial (either in terms of money, labour or materials) resulting in further entrenching social inequalities” (Dunne et al., 2007, p. 33). The people able to provide this support are powerful while those who are not able to contribute are not in partnership with the school.

As mentioned earlier, school communities are not homogenous, which is why the World Bank (1999) states that “it is crucial to examine and understand community contexts, including characteristics and power balance” (p. 11). By looking at these contexts and including the community in schooling, education is made relevant to the learner and so communities are empowered (Basic Education Coalition, 2010; De Grauwe et al., 2005; Dekker, 2010). Parents feel more comfortable sending their children to school when the schooling is “consistent with [their] attitudes and cultural traditions” (Basic Education Coalition, 2010, p. 20). Relevant schooling enables children to see the link between school and the community and clearly see the contribution that school has in their life and the purpose of school. In contrast the World Bank (2000) sets out a description typical of rural schools in Africa: “ the curriculum often has little relevance to rural life, community involvement is mixed and low levels of literacy in the community and traditional attitudes and practices provide little support for the learning students receive in school” (p. 4). Parents conclude that they do not

want to send their children to school because what they learn does not prepare them for jobs after school. Students in their turn question “schooling’s capacity to help them achieve their individual life goals” (Aboh, 2006, p. 614).

Communities are nevertheless a rich and valuable resource for schools. Community involvement in Rwanda is not a new idea and the community was heavily involved with early traditional schooling (King, 2008). One treasured part of a community is the elders. These elders are a source of knowledge of the history, traditions and celebration in the community. Another way communities help is to provide the physical needs of the schools, for example by building classrooms. This involvement of time and money can however be a “burden to the communities, especially the poorest” (Dunne et al., 2007, p. 30). There can be differing opinions on how this involvement happens. “Conflict can arise between the school and the surrounding community, especially regarding the use of land” (De Grauwe et al., 2005, p. 7). The conflict that can arise shows the importance for open dialogue between the school and the community, where people are able to voice their opinions. Schools can become more relevant to the community with the needs of the community met and local scarce resources used effectively.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are keen to see “the relationship between schools and the community” being “tighter and more balanced” (De Grauwe et al., 2005, p. 5). UNESCO (2009) however warns that in post-colonial Africa “people expect NGOs to do most of the things for them. Part of this problem was due to the fact that the community did not know in what ways they should participate in the education activities” (p. 3). If communities desire NGOs to do everything it shows that they do not realise what a valuable resource they are. Many of the NGOs see community participation as a way of sharing the costs of education and accountability, which results in an efficiently run school.

Accountability and community ownership are seen as the main reasons why communities need to be involved in schools. In African societies, accountability and ownership start at the top of the hierarchy, with very little at the community level (Dunne et al., 2007). The World Bank (1999) came to the conclusion that schools

become accountable to the community when “the community holds some power over them: when they either come from the same village and have social ties; [or] if their continued employment or salaries depend on community satisfaction” (p. 7). Nevertheless, as noted earlier, communities reflect inequalities, and having ownership does not mean that all members of the community have equal ownership. “Un-equal power relations between the uneducated, the old and young, the rich and poor, may marginalise the contribution of the less powerful in the decision making process” (Essuman & Akycampong, 2011, p. 516). These power relations mean the communities and school are on a continuum of community involvement. Schools and communities need ideally to be in partnership. Swift Morgan (2006) describes a situation where a community is too involved and the ownership “taxes the community beyond its ability, or even enables governments to shirk their responsibility and mandate to be the guarantors of public education” (p. 365).

Parents’ views of community participation vary. Some parents have had negative school experiences and are not interested in being involved (Aboh, 2006). There can also be “a mismatch between what parents expect in education and what the school is seen to be providing” (World Bank, 1999, p. 10). Certain parents nevertheless believe that schools are unable to sufficiently educate a child with what the government gives the school, so see it is imperative that the community help out (Swift-Morgan, 2006). Parents might hold this belief but, as earlier comments about inequality suggest, some parents are not able to help out the school financially or give their time because of the economic opportunity cost. Opportunity cost in this context means forgoing labour at home to help at the school. The literature also notes contrasting views from parents of teachers. Some parents believe that teachers are the experts and that parents therefore do not need to be involved, while other parents believe that there should be a partnership with the school and community (Dekker, 2010; Dunne et al., 2007; Swift-Morgan, 2006).

Teachers, on the other hand, can feel undermined and threatened by community participation (Dunne et al., 2007). Teachers see community involvement in their teaching and pedagogy as “undermining their professional autonomy and agency, an incursion into their professional domain by people who they felt lacked the professional credentials to monitor their work” (Essuman & Akycampong, 2011, p.

519). This fear of the undermining effects of community involvement can come from principals because they do not want to lose control. “Teachers’ attitudes [however] have a significant influence on a parent’s perceptions on whether participation is possible or worthwhile” (Swift-Morgan, 2006, p. 359). When teachers have positive attitudes parents are more likely to want to be involved in schools.

Gender

Personal experience of teaching in Rwanda in 2010 suggested that gender and education was a significant issue in the minds of teachers. These observations raised questions about teachers’ beliefs concerning gender and the following discussion reflects views in the literature to support those questions.

Gender equality “means that males and females have equal opportunities to realize their full human rights and contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political development” (USAID, 2008, p. 5). Many developing countries have strong inequalities between males and females. Heading towards gender equality is a process and US AID (2008) states that, “to ensure fairness, measures must be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent girls and boys from operating on a level playing field” (p. 6). Furthermore, “evidence from a growing number of countries in all regions of the world demonstrates that increasing investments in women’s human capital, especially education, should be a priority for countries seeking to increase both economic growth and human welfare” (Schultz, 2001, p. 2). Thus governments in developing countries are aiming at increasing girls’ access to schooling to start changing these gender inequalities. However, gender inequalities are themselves an obstacle to girls’ education. Poverty compounds the issue of gender inequalities. For example, when a family is only financially able to send one child to school, girls are often not chosen because they are required to stay at home and earn an income to help support others in the family (Basic Education Coalition, 2010).

Cultural obstacles further enforce gender inequalities. Tanye (2008) states that the “socio/traditional environment , which is rooted in culture, creates the barriers that rob females of their human identity and social rights” (p. 169). These traditions affect woman’s ability to access education and the way they are expected to act in society. In

many African countries, males are given preference to females (Huggins & Randell, 2007). The Global Campaign for Education (2003) provides an example of the socio-cultural traditions that are in evident in Ethiopia: “children’s voices are not heard nor are they allowed to give their opinion, especially if they are girls” (p. 20). Thus education often reinforces the inequalities that already exist in society. In the classroom “sociocultural expectations are transmitted through modelling of sex-appropriate behaviour, teacher responses to their pupils, academic support they give them, as well as curriculum content” (Davison & Kanyuka, 1992, p. 456). Teachers’ interactions with and expectations of students affect the way that the students view themselves, as previously noted in the discussion of deficit theorising in chapter two. If teachers have low expectations of their female students then often these students will confirm these low expectations. In many African countries, males often dominate the education system, and the influence of males continues societal beliefs about educated females. “Women teachers are themselves struggling with the burden of gender inequity which in turn, perpetuates cycles of inequitable socialisation” (Global Campaign for Education, 2003, p. 27). These gender stereotypes are also often seen in textbooks (World Bank, 1996) and parents also perpetuate these gender stereotypes. Davison and Kanyuka (1992) describe how in Southern Malawi the belief that “males are more intelligent than females ... is reflected in the opinions of both parents and their primary children” (p. 458). As a result, parents will prefer to send their sons to school.

Gender inequalities are further reinforced by the cultural economy of the family, and the opportunity cost, namely forgoing a girl’s labour at home so that the child can attend school, which will not directly help the family, especially because girls are expected to do more at home than boys (Tanye, 2008). One of the ways suggested to decrease gender inequalities in developing countries is through having zero school fees: “Eliminating fees can only help gender equity. Girls’ education is also being promoted by tying school funding to achievement goals” (Lincove, 2006, p. 354). However a zero fees policy does not take into account the opportunity cost of sending a girl to school and other costs associated with schooling such as buying textbooks, stationery and uniforms. In developing countries the fee-free government schools are not always within walking distance for all families. These traveling distances are a

“particular barrier for girls, especially in countries where a cultural premium is placed on female seclusion. For reasons of safety and security, most parents are reluctant to let their daughters walk long distances to schools” (Global Campaign for Education, 2003, p. 25).

Another suggestion for reducing gender inequalities of access to schooling is through school health programmes. For parents not wanting to send their daughters to school because of the opportunity costs, school health programmes can be seen as a way of offsetting this cost because of the expense of health services in developing countries. “Studies suggest that school health programmes may be a cost effective way of increasing school participation where many children suffer from poor health” (Herz & Sperling, 2004, p. 53). A further way to address gender inequalities experienced by girls is by providing female teachers and role models (Huggins & Randell, 2007). This also solves the problem that some mothers are not willing to put their daughters in school because of their negative experiences at school. “In some areas particularly where girls are isolated within communities, solving this problem requires hiring more women teachers” (Herz & Sperling, 2004, p. 66). Often, however, it is difficult to find these fully qualified female teachers particularly in rural areas, but the effort is helpful, as female teachers and role models can stop the cycle of cultural beliefs that prevent girls from accessing education.

Conclusion

This chapter has noted that the status of teaching in Rwanda has declined (Rutaisire & Gahima, 2009) and this has affected the view of teaching as a profession. Winch (2004) describes teacher education and qualifications as a key part of a profession. Therefore, a key strategy to ensure that teaching is regarded as a profession is by increasing the quality and relevance of teacher education. This teacher education needs to be both practical and theoretical, but Chiche (2010) criticises Rwandan teacher education for being too theoretical. Another aspect of a profession is allowing for public accountability, and in Rwanda the schools are held to account by the community, although the relationship between school and community in Rwanda is complex and uneven. Professions have a code of ethics that the profession has to abide by. Benade (2012) acknowledges that care for others is an aspect of ethics. Care for others should however not be based on gender or any other difference, but should apply equally to

everyone. This chapter has provided a context to this research and has developed a background to the questions that were asked in the research. The following chapters will discuss the method of this research.

Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter will give an understanding of the methodological approaches behind the research developed in this thesis and some of the criticisms of these approaches. It will explain specifically how this methodology was used in this research project. This methodology approaches research from a qualitative perspective, which is defined by Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006) as “a generic term for a variety of research approaches that study phenomena in their natural settings, without predetermined hypotheses” (p. 637). This methodology chapter will discuss the methodological framework, which was based on case studies, interviews and focus groups. The ethical considerations relevant to this research and the approach to data analysis will be outlined. Finally, it is important to mention approaches to epistemology and ontology underpinning this research reported in this thesis.

This research aimed to describe the enacted beliefs of a small group of Rwandan teachers and to identify similarities and differences across the group. The findings of this small-scale project will add to a limited published knowledge base of the Rwandan teaching context. Beliefs related to teacher status; gender in the classroom; community involvement in education; the value of pre-service teacher training; and teaching as a profession and vocation, were investigated through a set of five case studies in Kibungo, Rwanda. The aim was to explore how these beliefs are enacted in the teacher’s practice, through their personal voice. This interest in recent events and educational developments in Rwanda, and the desire to research aspects of Rwandan education, arose from personal previous experience of teaching English and working in a professional development programme in four Rwandan schools. Therefore, the research reported in this thesis will reflect that personal professional experience.

Methodological Framework

The research design was the result of looking at many designs to see which suited this research and its aims. Wilson (2009) states that methods of research “are not gods to be propitiated; they are merely tools we select, adapt, blend and challenge” (p. 260). At the beginning of this process I appreciated aspects of the ethnographic approach.

One of the key characteristics of ethnographic research is that “the researcher enters the social world of persons and groups being studied in an attempt to understand their shared meanings and taken-for-granted assumptions” (Wellington, 2000, p. 45). By entering this social world researchers are there only to observe. Researchers become insiders; however they will have some effect on what happens in the situation because they are observing where they are not normally present. Being an observer is however difficult in a foreign culture and country. What observers perceive is dependent on how they view the world. From this realisation of the effect that an ethnographic researcher has on participants, further research and consideration of alternative qualitative methods, including case studies, was required.

This research project was to be based on qualitative methods. Springer (2010) suggests that the “goal of [qualitative] research tends to be holistic, in the sense of attempting to provide comprehensive descriptions of people’s experiences and the meanings they construct from interactions with other people and things in their environments” (p. 20). Crucial to this research was the study of “human actions in [their] natural setting” (J. P. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005, p. 15). These settings help the researcher make sense of the data. Freire (1998) notes the importance of a setting and states that “we are neither only what we inherit nor only what we acquire but, instead, stem from the dynamic relationship between what we inherit and what we acquire” (p. 69). Into a setting the researcher brings her prior understandings, which will affect the interaction of the researcher with the setting and others in that setting.

Scott and Morrison (2006) point out that for qualitative researchers “there may be a reluctance to impose prior structures on the research investigation so as not to foreclose issues unknown at the start though this ought not to be misconstrued as a reluctance to be systematic” (p. 183). Coming into a research project without these set structures or hypothesis will open the research up to unexpected results. The researcher must be aware that qualitative research is “an intensely personal kind of research, one that freely acknowledges and admits the subjective perceptions and biases of both participants and researcher” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 449).

It is apparent that there are differing beliefs among researchers regarding how knowledge is created and what affect the researcher has on knowledge. As previously

discussed, people bring different experiences that affect the way they view situations and therefore the decisions and judgements they make. The interpretivist paradigm requires the researcher to discover the interpretations of the participants. If this discovery of their interpretations does not happen then “we impose upon the situation interpretations which are not those of the participants and thus, a fortiori, not the ones through which the situation is to be understood” (Pring, 2000, p. 96).

(a) Case Studies

A case study aims to “investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p. 23). This context is used to gain a deeper understanding of the case. Berg (2007) defines a case study as “a method involving systematically gathering of enough information about a particular person, social setting, event or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions” (p. 283). Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorenson (2006) go further and describe a case study as not only looking at how the individual operates but also “why the individual does what he or she does and how behaviour changes as the individual responds to the environment” (p. 457). A characteristic of case studies is its clear boundaries (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Simons, 2009). Yin (2003) describes how the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not easy to distinguish. In scientific tests the phenomenon is removed from the context so that only the phenomenon is studied. Case studies are purposely used so that the phenomenon is seen in its context. Punch (2009) argues that although it is difficult to differentiate between phenomenon and context “nevertheless, the researcher needs to identify and describe the boundaries of the case as clearly as possible” (p. 120). There are many arguments on the timing of making these boundaries. Simons (2009) suggests boundaries can be made first but “you need to be aware that this may change once you enter the field and gain a realistic sense of where to draw the boundary to most effectively research the topic you are exploring” (p. 29).

Another characteristic of effective case studies is that they have multiple sources of data (Ary et al., 2006; Punch, 2009; Yin, 1993b). By using multiple sources an in-depth understanding of the case can emerge. A strength of case studies is their ability to gain new insights. According to Payne and Payne (2004) “by beginning on a small scale, new

ways of understandings a specific unit can provide framework for later research” (p. 33).

Through a case study, themes can be identified which “add[s] depth to their descriptions” (M. D. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 452). Further description of the process of the case study is the “systematic approach to looking at events, collecting data, analysing information and reporting the results, with the end goal of describing the case under investigation as fully and accurately as possible” (Wilson, 2009, p. 204).

Authenticity is a crucial part of a case study. Scott and Morrison (2006) emphasise “the importance of ‘capturing’ reality by representing the case [study] authentically, [that is,] by using the participants’ own accounts of views and events” (p. 21). To achieve this authenticity in the research process, the researcher is required to look critically at the role that s/he will play in the method.

i. Criticisms of Case Studies

Some of the criticism that has been aimed at case studies includes that their results cannot be generalised and that they are too subjective. Simmons (2009) discusses the criticisms and states that:

One case may have similarities to other cases. However, the way in which we can draw implications from one case to another differs. These are not abstractions independent of place and context. They depend for their meaning on maintaining connectedness with the particulars of place and context. (p. 164)

Other groups have similar contexts so parts of the findings can nevertheless be generalised. “When case studies are properly undertaken, they should not only fit the specific individual, group, or event studied but also generally provide understanding about similar individuals, groups, and events” (Berg, 2007, p. 295). Payne and Payne (2004) suggest that case studies should be seen as a distinctive example rather than a broad sample, arguing nevertheless that “while no study can prove something, a single case can disprove a general statement” (Payne & Payne, 2004, p. 32). This suggests that it is difficult to generalise findings anyway, because one statement can easily disprove a theory. In fact, cases can be studied to find the “negative case” (Punch, 2009, p. 121) when there is a generalisation. When one case does not fit a generalisation, a case study can be used to contradict the generalisation.

An additional criticism against case studies is their subjectivity. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) state that case studies “may be selective, biased, personal and subjective” (p. 184). In a case study it is impossible to be completely objective, and “the more relevant approach to adopt in qualitative inquiry is to acknowledge its inherent subjectivity and concentrat[e] on demonstrating how your values, predispositions and feelings impact on the research. This is different from saying we can eliminate them” (Simons, 2009, p. 163). Berg (2007) states that the achievement of objectivity “rests on the ability of an investigator to articulate what the procedures are so that others can repeat the research if they choose to” (p. 295). When other researchers are able to repeat the research and yield the same results then the research will be valid.

ii. Multiple Case Studies

Multiple case studies are used to gain a deeper understanding of the broader case. Berg (2007) describes how multiple case studies “involve extensive study of several instrumental cases, intended to allow better understanding, insight, or perhaps improved ability to theorize about a broader context” (p. 292). Multiple case studies are used to show the replication of data. Yin (1993a) describes replication of data as “the development of consistent findings over multiple cases and even multiple studies, [which] can then be considered a very robust finding” (p. 34). Yin (2003) later discusses the difference between sampling and replication in case studies, stating that if sampling was used:

a case study would have to cover both the phenomenon of interest and its context yielding a large number of potentially relevant variables. In turn, this would require an impossibly large number of cases – too large to allow any statistical consideration of the relevant variables. (p. 54)

Systematic sampling is used to find the sample number of respondents from the whole population. The findings from the research reflect the whole population and therefore can be generalised. The method of replication does not allow for as many generalisations because unlike sampling, replication does not attempt systematic sampling of respondents from the whole population.

(b) Selection of Participants

The teachers who participated in these interviews and focus group are from two local primary schools, one a public school, and the other a private school, both situated in the heart of the Kibungo district, Rwanda. The private school is a full primary school, while the public school is preparing to include a secondary school also, with the first level of seniors starting in 2013, continuing to Senior Two (S2) in 2014. The public school has a large number of students and not enough teachers and classrooms, so the school operates a double shift. This requires the student roll to be split in half, with the one half attending school in the morning, and the second half in the afternoon.

The permission of the District Education Officer of Kibungo was required before approaching the schools. At a meeting with the District Education Officer, the research was outlined, researcher expectations of participants were outlined, and strategies for keeping participants' information confidential were emphasised. In Rwandan culture, social hierarchy must be respected (King, 2008). The meeting with the District Education Officer maintained this respect for the social hierarchy, without which the Head Teachers could not have been approached. Meetings with the Head Teachers followed. In this meeting, more detail was provided about the research and how it was to be carried out. An information sheet was provided so that they were aware of what was to take place, and in particular so they understood what it would mean to be a participant in the research and how the privacy and confidentiality of participants would be protected. Meetings were arranged with the teachers, who received the information sheet. This meeting emphasised what it would mean to be a participant in the research and how their privacy and confidentiality would be protected.

During this meeting, the teachers interested in participating were invited to a second meeting, where more details were provided. The principle of voluntary participation was emphasised, and the point that the Head Teacher would not know exactly who was taking part in the interviews and focus group, was especially emphasised. Mutch (2005) refers to "voluntary participation" and the "right to withdraw" as key ethical concepts in educational research (p. 78). In these meetings with the teachers, the Head Teacher was not present, which helped also to ensure that the teachers would not feel pressured to participate in the research.

The main criterion for choosing participants for the research was conversational English ability. As only four participants were required, any excess would mean that participants would be selected to reflect a balance of gender, training and background. This form of participant selection is defined by Guarte and Barrios (2007) as purposive sampling, which is “selection of sampling units within the segment of the population with the most information on the characteristic of interest” (p. 277). At a meeting for teachers at the two schools, a total of seven people expressed interest. As two of these were mentor teachers, they were excluded, leaving five classroom teachers, all of whom were selected to be part of the interviews. Unfortunately a gender balance could not be achieved, and the participants consisted of one female and four males. Although it was suggested to the participants that the interviews take place at a neutral meeting room, discussion with the participants led to the decision that interviews take place in one of the rooms at school. In this discussion an opportunity was given for questions from the participants, while the information sheets and consent forms for the individual interview and focus group were being scrutinised and signed. Voluntary participation was emphasised, as was the freedom to withdraw at any stage without disadvantage. Participants were also told that all information they would provide would be destroyed.

(c) Interviews

Interviews are very common tools that are used to gather information in qualitative research. An interview enables interviewees to “discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their point of view” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 267). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define the interview as “a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views in everyday conversations, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge” (p. 3).

Interviews were chosen for this research because of their ability to illuminate people’s views and beliefs. Wellington (2000) states that the “function [of the interview] is to give a person, or group of people, a ‘voice’. It should provide them with a ‘platform’, a chance to make their viewpoints heard and eventually read” (p. 72). Semi-structured interviews were chosen so that the direction of the interview could be managed

according to the responses of the interviewees. Semi-structured interviews will be discussed later in the chapter.

Interviewing is not as simple as just asking questions. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) state that “interviewing is complex because of the number of things that are happening simultaneously” (p. 76). One of the main skills of an interviewer is the act of listening. When the interviewee is talking, the interviewer is actively listening to hear what is said, what is not said, and the way it is said. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe how interviewers decide on their next question:

Decisions about which of the many dimensions of a subject’s answer to pursue requires that the interviewer have an ear for the interview theme and a knowledge of the interview topic, a sensitivity toward the social relationship of an interview, and knowledge of what he or she wants to ask about. (p. 139)

These decisions on what questions to ask can take the conversation in a direction that the interviewer was not expecting. This shows the importance of active listening, so that the interviewer is listening to how the participant answers and then asking appropriate follow up questions to go into further aspects. Questioning and active listening is a process that is improved with practice.

i. Interview Bias

Interviewer bias is an issue that needs to be thought about prior to undertaking an interview. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006) suggest that interview bias “occurs when the interviewer’s own feelings and attitudes or the interviewer’s gender, race, age, and other characteristics influence the way questions are asked or interpreted” (p. 410). Interviewer bias can affect the questions that are chosen, who is chosen to be in the interview, where the venue of the interview is and the attitude of the interviewer towards the participants. “Differences in values, beliefs, or purposes between the interviewer and the participant can either foster understanding or create barriers” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 126). These barriers can create bias if the interviewer lacks awareness. Bias becomes evident through leading questions that the interviewer may ask. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) define a leading question as “one which makes assumptions about interviewees or puts words into their mouths, i.e. where the questions influences the answer perhaps illegitimately” (p. 122). Leading

questions place power in the hands of the interviewer, and the answers are likely to be what the interviewer is leaning towards.

ii. Structured and Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are on a continuum from structured to unstructured. Wengraf (2001) notes that semi-structured interviews involve planning before the interview, self-restraint and ingenuity during the interview and time for inquiry and analysis after the interview. Wengraf (2001) then discusses how interview questions are decided on and states that:

semi-structured interviews are designed to have a number of interviewer questions prepared in advance but such prepared questions are designed to be sufficiently open that the subsequent questions of the interviewer cannot be planned in advance but must be improvised in a careful and theorized way.
(p. 5)

In qualitative research, semi-structured interviews are the most frequently used type of interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Establishing a relationship is important in semi-structured interviews. Payne and Payne (2004) suggest the reason for this is that “qualitative research regards the social world as too complex to be represented by fixed questions, so establishing a rapport is needed to access the informant’s ‘world’ ” (p. 131).

Semi structured interviews can mistakenly be seen as a soft option because of the perception that little time is required to prepare for the interview. However, the semi-structured interviewer must understand how to interview and how to ask secondary questions rather than simply asking pre-planned questions that are characteristic of a structured interview. When planning these questions for a semi-structured interview, Berg (2007) suggests that it is important that the questions are “formulated in words familiar to the people being interviewed (in vocabularies of the subjects)” (p. 95). For example if the people being interviewed have English as a second language, questions phrased in complex English should be avoided. Also there needs to be thought about framing questions that are culturally relevant to the participants being interviewed (Halcomb, Gholizadeh, DiGiacomo, Phillips, & Davidson, 2007; Hopkins, 2007). The questions are required to be understood from the participant’s perspective. They are prepared beforehand, and are guides to developing other probing questions used to

elicit more information. The main questions that are prepared can be shown to the participant so that they are aware of what to expect in the interview. The participants will feel a sense of ease about the interview when they are aware of the questions.

Each of the participants in this research was involved in an individual semi-structured interview of one hour, and all five participants created a focus group, which also met for an hour. Focus groups will be discussed shortly. One participant was however unable to participate in the focus group because of a sudden family situation, leaving a focus group of four. Participants were provided with a list of the main questions that would be in the interview and focus group (Appendix Three and Four). The key questions were given in advance so that participants would feel confident about the interview and focus group and could expect the topics to be covered. Participants were aware that the interviews and focus group conversations were recorded using a digital voice recorder, and that the voice data would later be transcribed by the researcher.

Probing questions dig deeper for information after the initial question. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) give a few example of probing questions: “could you say more about that? Can you give a more detailed description of what happened? Do you have further examples of this?” (p. 135). These probing questions can be prepared but often have to be thought about on the spot while the interview is taking place. The freedom of semi-structured interviews can however sometimes cause the participant to go off the topic. Williams (2003) suggests that “if the interview is felt to ‘drift’ too much, then the researcher will [have to] ‘bring back’ the respondent to the topic areas in which he or she is interested” (p. 65).

(d) Focus Groups

Interviewing in a focus group includes between four and twelve people. According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006), a focus group “typically centres on a particular issue; the trained interviewer elicits the views of the group members while noting interactions within the group” (p. 481). The individuals do not necessarily have to be known to each other but have some common aspect that includes them in the focus group. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that focus groups are “characterised by a non-directive style of interviewing, where the prime concern is to encourage a variety of viewpoints on the topics of focus” (p. 150). Not all of these viewpoints will

be the same. Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) state that focus groups not only look at viewpoints but also look at “the meanings that lie behind those views” (p. 293). Another characteristic of a focus group includes being able to yield:

Insights that might not otherwise have been available in a straightforward interview; they are economical on time, producing a large amount of data in a short period of time, but they tend to produce less data than interviews with the same number of individuals on a one-to-one basis. (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 289)

The interaction between participants is an important characteristic to a focus group that cannot be found in an individual interview. In a group “comments by other members trigger a whole range of views from others in the group” (Payne & Payne, 2004, p. 106). One of the underlying beliefs in focus groups about peoples’ views is that “an individual’s attitudes and beliefs do not form in a vacuum: people often need to listen to others’ opinions and understandings to clarify their own” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 134). Differing opinions and challenges to opinions helps to make clear their own opinions. Other opinions might also bring into light a perspective that another person was not aware of. Therefore, through this discussion in the group and hearing differing opinions, “a far larger number of ideas, issues, topics, and even solutions to a problem can be generated... than through individual conversations” (Berg, 2007, p. 146).

The participants in the focus group are chosen because they have a relationship to the researcher’s topic. The interaction within the focus group can be seen as unnatural however because the topic of conversation is not decided by the participants. This unnatural interaction can be seen as both a negative and positive. The participants’ view of the interviewer will thus affect how willing the participants are to voice their differing opinions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

One of the weaknesses of this interaction within the group is the ability of the individuals to re-enforce social and cultural norms. Kitzinger (1995) for instance notes how “the downside of such group dynamics is that the articulation of group norms may silence individual voices of dissent” (p. 300). Williams (2003) notes in addition that a common problem of focus groups is the presence of “the dominant member, usually counter posed with the shy retiring one. The moderator can intervene by directly

asking the 'quiet' person about the issue at hand" (p. 67). However, Williams here does not take into account the cultural beliefs or trust issues that explain why the shy person is not presenting their point of view. This further tests the skill of the researcher.

The role of the focus group interviewer therefore significantly influences the outcome and data collected. There are varying beliefs regarding the role the interviewer can play in the focus group. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) believe that the interviewer (or moderator) "introduces the topics for discussion and facilitates the interchange. The moderator's task is to create a permissive atmosphere for the expression of personal and conflicting viewpoints on the topic of focus" (p. 150). Creating an accommodating atmosphere can be difficult, and will depend on the view the participants have of the interviewer. Participants are more likely to speak freely when there is a sense of trust with the interviewer and the participants know that what is discussed in the focus group is confidential. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006) give the focus group interviewer the suggestion that "you must take care not to impose your own agenda or bias. You must be open to responses that are contrary to your own knowledge, beliefs or perspectives" (p. 481). As discussed earlier, bias can emerge in the questions that the interviewer asks. It is thus useful for the researcher to prepare possible questions and consider them carefully and critically before the focus group takes place to ensure that the questions are not loaded or inclined towards a certain bias.

The interview environment is crucial to the effectiveness of the focus group. The place where the focus group takes place affects what is said. "The venue should be comfortable, so that people will feel free to talk and share their experiences and opinions" (Payne & Payne, 2004, p. 105). The participants will feel comfortable when the focus group is in a neutral place. Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) note that "while a central location, such as the participants' workplace or school, may encourage attendance, the venue may affect participants' behaviour" (p. 294). Before deciding on a venue the issues of access, neutrality, timing and privacy must be considered (Hopkins, 2007). A venue where people will be walking past and overhearing confidential conversations will affect the participants' involvement in the process.

A focus group was used in this research in addition to interviews to see if there were any new opinions arising from the interaction between the participants. A focus group “avoids putting interviewers in a directive role. They ask questions to initiate discussion, but then allow participants to take major responsibility for stating their views and drawing out the views of others in the group” (M. D. Gall et al., 2007, p. 245).

Ethical Considerations

Ethics are a constant consideration throughout the research process. Burton (2009) shows the importance of ethics by stating that “ethics should be a central consideration for all education researchers. We need to be aware that research, if conducted without care and consideration, can have potentially harmful effects for those taking part” (p. 29). Wilson (2009) describes ethics as “the integrity of your research. It is about ensuring that you have enough data to draw conclusions, reporting the evidence accurately, and being open about your assumptions and the limitations of your conclusions” (p. 66). Ethics approval for this project was granted by AUTECH (Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee). What follows are some of the central issues regarding the ethics of this project, and will, for clarity and convenience, be addressed in the first person.

(a) Social and Cultural Sensitivity

As noted before, I have some familiarity with the participants’ social and cultural context, having lived and taught in the village of Kibungo, Rwanda in 2010. From this experience I became aware of many Rwandan customs, and gained the trust of the Kibungo community as my purpose for being in Kibungo became clear. The relationships that I established stood me in good stead as a researcher, as the African way is to respect a stranger, but not open up in conversation with them. Although my relationship to the community could be taken to mean that my status as researcher was non-neutral, without this relationship, the teacher-participants would not have been open to me. Hintjens (2001) agrees that Rwandans traditionally do not share information with outsiders, however signals a change: “The RPF regime, wanting to have done with old habits of secrecy and reserve, has tried to encourage openness and honesty in Rwandan public life” (p. 50). However, this effort at openness by Rwandan people has to overcome cultural beliefs that are not easily changed (2001). I was

hopeful that my long-standing relationship with people in Kibungo would mean that they trusted me enough to share their experiences and beliefs.

The lack of access to computers and Internet hindered my consultation with people in Rwanda regarding the cultural sensitivities related to this research. Therefore, prior to the collection of participant data, consultation occurred with a Rwandan person teaching in Auckland during 2012. From this discussion recommendations were made that influenced the research design, including recommendations to seek the approval of the District Education Officer. As gift-giving is part of the Rwandan culture after someone has been helpful, the ethics approval included the gifting of soccer balls to the schools.

(b) Respect for the Vulnerability of Participants

Respect for the vulnerability of participants is reflected in the research design. The participants were interviewed individually, while in the interviews questions were used to gently probe so that participants would not feel pressured or anxious. Active listening ensured that the participants understood that the researcher was there to learn from them. Because story-telling is an important part of Rwandan's culture, some visual stimulus material was used to trigger storytelling, to provide a focus for discussion, and relieve the intense face-to-face relationship with the researcher.

As English is not the first language of the participants, and as a Western researcher from a foreign culture was interviewing them, the vulnerability of the participants' may have led them to hold back sensitive information. Furthermore, the participants were aware that the Head Teachers and District Education Officer had to be asked for their permission to allow the research. Although this could be regarded as exposing participants, they would have not participated in the research otherwise. Participants were thus free to withdraw at any stage.

(c) Informed and Voluntary Consent

The participants were verbally given information about the project because many of the participants can understand English but find it difficult to read English. There was nevertheless a brief outline given to participants so that they could read the information (see Appendix Six). The participant sheet was written in simple English for ease of understanding. Participants were made aware that their participation was

voluntary and confidential and they could withdraw at any stage, which was explained in the participant information sheet.

(d) Respect for Rights of Privacy and Confidentiality

The information given by the participants was confidential. The consent form signed by the participants informed them that they would not be identified (see Appendix Two). The participants chose their own pseudonyms. Pseudonyms were used so that information that strongly identified them would not be included in its original form so that confidentiality was respected. The names chosen by the participants were Peter, John, Mark, Luke and Mary. The research project has kept the participants' identity confidential; however it would be impossible to offer anonymity of the participants because they were involved in a focus group.

The participants were told that the only people to see the transcriptions would be the researcher and supervisors. Arrangements were made for the safe storage of the transcriptions and consent forms at Auckland University of Technology, Auckland for six years, following which the sheets will be shredded.

(e) Minimisation of Risk

There was a low level of discomfort or embarrassment because most of the participants were known to each other and the interviews were run individually. At the beginning of the interviews and the focus group, the questions and process were outlined so that participants felt comfortable. The conversations during the interview and focus group were professional and the participants were not asked to share personal information. There could have been some pressure on the participants to say what they thought was required, however the positive and open participant-researcher relationship removed this pressure. Another source of pressure could have been from the Head Teacher and other teachers, but to avoid this; the Head Teacher was not informed who was involved in the interviews and focus group.

(f) Avoidance of Conflict of Interest

Conflicts of interest could have arisen because of the existing relationship between the researcher and the participants. However this relationship was an advantage because it created a sense of trust between the participants and the researcher. As a European, Western-educated female, there was the potential for the researcher to be in a

position of power. However, coercive influences or power imbalances were managed through the research design and practice that attempted to mitigate any adverse effects that could have arisen. Conflict of interest was avoided in the following ways: by maintaining the confidentiality of the interviews and focus group; reinforcing the participants' knowledge that participation was voluntary reminding participants they could withdraw at any stage; and ensuring the Head Teacher did not know who was involved in the research.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data was analysed using a thematic approach. Firstly the data was coded and then themes were identified using the NVivo programme. QSR International (2013) states that "NVivo is software that supports qualitative and mixed methods research. It lets you collect, organize and analyse content from interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, [and] audio" (para. 1). Kvale and Brinkman (2009) define coding as "attaching one or more keywords to a text segment in order to permit later identification of a statement" (p. 201). The codes were not developed prior to the interviews but rather were identified as a result of reading the data. Next the themes were individually analysed followed by comparison of the case studies to find similarities and differences, allowing deeper analysis, and for unexpected new themes to arise (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The comparison of the case studies was used to value the uniqueness of each teacher's context (Ary et al., 2006). It was also possible to see more clearly similarities and differences in beliefs about education among the participants to this research, because two schools in Kibungo had been selected in this design.

There is a continuum along which ways data is analysed are placed. On one end of the continuum is the deductive view; while on the other end is the inductive view. Punch (2009) describes induction as "moving upwards in levels of abstraction, from more specific and concrete to more general and abstract; opposite to deduction" (p. 358). This research project is closer to the inductive approach on the continuum. Wilson (2009) describes the inductive approach as having an "entirely open mind to the data and using themes which emerge from the data themselves as tools for analysis" (p. 129). On the inductive end of the continuum is the belief that from these few observations conclusions can be drawn. Therefore, although the conclusions of this

research could not be generalised to all teachers in Rwanda, the conclusions may be used to inform practice.

Analysis of this data made it apparent that it is difficult to record the views of participants from another culture and country. However Pring (2000) states that “even in entering that social world, so that world will be changed, for the stranger’s negotiation of interpretations, as he tries to understand, becomes a further element in the construction of social reality” (p. 98). The analysis of data becomes an interpretation of those interpretations.

Epistemology

The conduct of case studies, interviews and focus groups reflect the researchers view on how knowledge is acquired. Epistemology is defined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) as “the philosophy of knowledge and involves long-standing debates about what knowledge is and how it is obtained” (p. 47). The use of a focus group in research will, for example, be grounded in an epistemological belief that knowledge is socially constructed, and therefore the researcher will consider that the interaction between the participants in a focus group can create new knowledge. However, there are varying beliefs on the way that knowledge is gained. Cohen et al (2000) suggest the contrast between “whether knowledge is something that can be acquired on the one hand, or something which has to be personally experienced on the other” (p. 6). In an interview or focus group, participants are able to be part of the research method. This allows a “potential shift in the power base of who controls knowledge and recognises the importance of co-constructing perceived reality through the relationships and joint understandings we create in the field” (Simons, 2009, p. 23).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) provide a metaphor to describe these two extremes of epistemology: “These two contrasting metaphors of the interviewer—as a miner or as a traveller—illustrate the different epistemological conceptions of interviewing as a process of knowledge collection or as a process of knowledge construction” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 48). The miner is searching for fixed knowledge but is not involved in its construction, whereas the traveller has an active part to play in acquiring knowledge along the way. Silverman (2005) outlines “a constructionist model which prioritises interaction over meaning and, therefore, prefers to look at what people do

without any necessary reference to what they are thinking or feeling” (Silverman, 2005, p. 10). This social interaction is crucial to the social constructivist theory on how knowledge is gained (Adams, 2007; Hirtle, 1996) and will affect the way that an interview or focus group takes place.

Ontology

Ontology also affects the way that interviews and focus groups occur. Ontology is defined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) as “the study of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’; it is concerned with the fundamental nature of existence” (p. 326). How knowledge is viewed and what is real is at the core of ontology. Morgan and Smireieh (1980) explain the continuum of beliefs about ontology starting at “reality as a projection of human imagination” through to “reality as a concrete structure” (p. 492). On this continuum is the interpretive perspective. The interpretive perspective “tries to understand the social world as it is from the perspective of the individual experience” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 35). This belief about reality means that each individual has a different way of looking at it because they all have different experiences. Interpretivists “begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 23). Generalisations cannot be made about a group of individuals because they all have a unique set of circumstances. When researchers try to see someone else’s perspective, they are doing so through their own set of beliefs and experiences. Another feature of an interpretivist perspective is that it is “only interested in how people understand what they are doing in any social setting, and does not accept that there is a ‘macro’ level of analysis, or that the analyst knows more about society than the people he or she is studying” (Travers, 2001, p. 123). In an interview or focus group this interpretivist belief about how knowledge is viewed, puts power into the hands of the participant rather than interviewer having all the power.

Conclusion

At the heart of the qualitative approach is the process of researching participants in their natural environment (Ary et al., 2006). Case studies through interviews and focus groups are able to “to preserve the wholeness , unity and integrity of the case” (Punch, 2009, p. 120). Being aware of the role that the researcher plays in the interviews and focus groups allows the findings to be authentic to the participants and their view of the world.

This chapter has elaborated on the process of gathering data. Prior researcher experiences in Rwanda and cultural differences of the researcher and participants that may be seen to contribute to researcher bias or conflict of interest have been acknowledged. These findings of this research do not aim to be generalised to all teachers in Rwanda, but rather to provide information for others to understand what it is like to be a teacher in Kibungo. Crucial to this research was creating an authentic role for the researcher, which means knowing the role and influence of the researcher, and acting in an ethical way. In this project, the role of the researcher in the interviews and focus group was limited as much as possible so that the participants' views and opinions could be heard. The following chapters will analyse the results from this data and then draw conclusions.

Chapter Five - Findings and Discussion

Chapters two and three discussed beliefs and practice, teaching as a profession and vocation, teacher status, teacher education, community participation and gender. This chapter will now use the voices of the participants to demonstrate those ideas. This discussion is an examination of some of the beliefs that the teacher participants to this research have about themselves, and how these might be revealed in their work life.

Each of the participants, teachers from two schools in Kibungo, Rwanda, were involved in individual interviews and a focus group. The participants chose their own pseudonyms: Peter, John, Mark, Luke and Mary. They ranged in teaching experience from one year to 20 years. The perspectives gained from the interviews of these beliefs and practices are limited to the teacher participants, thus do not include the students or the community.

Notions of an Ethical and Authentic Practitioner

An important aspect of the notion of an authentic practitioner is the matching of beliefs and actions (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004a). Therefore, the interview and focus group data were considered for evidence of this matching. Kreber McCune and Klampfleitner (2010) describe care as a characteristic of the authentic teacher. This sense of care is stated by Peter who believes parents “consider women as ones who can teach P1, P2 or P3 where the learners are still younger. They consider the women as the ones that take care of the children”. Other conclusions are drawn from Peter’s statement later on, in the section on gender. Care is also shown when teachers have meetings with parents, when the teacher is seen to be looking at the well-being of the whole child. For example John states that parents “come to talk to you about the private life of the learners what is wrong with at home so that you may tell him or her how do you see the child. So you try to exchange ideas and take a conclusion together”.

In the interviews, discussion covered the roles of gender in society (gender will be considered on its own later). Mark described the traditional role of a male teacher, justifying why he thought a male teacher is better than a female teacher:

They want the man because the man has the force of teaching first. They have the organisation and the skills. For example the students, do you remember when you were in the school and the children were shouting in the classroom I take the baton to

beat him. Ok. But the women it is impossible for them to beat him. That is the reason why.

Mark has beliefs about male teachers that seem to align with his practice, if his words are to be taken as evidence of his actions. However, although Mark is being authentic, this example shows that there are ethical components to having authentic practice. According to Starratt (2004), ethics means that a person's authenticity fits with the wider society. What is ethically authentic for one society may not be for another society. Mark is the only participant interviewed that had this belief about females. All the other participants stated that society had moved away from gender inequalities. Mark's statement about females is not reflected in society according to the other participants, which Starratt (2004) suggests is not an aspect of an ethical teacher.

The point about care above can be related to being an authentic and ethical teacher as care is also an aspect of being ethical. Caring is a selfless act that is encapsulated in the concept of altruism which "refers to the principle or practice of unselfish concern and devotion to the welfare of others" (Milton, 2012). This sense of caring for the others is shown in Rwandan's monthly Umuganda, the day when community members help to clean up their local village. Teachers are often called on in other ways to do work outside of teaching hours. Peter shows his care for the welfare of other by these comments:

If for example there are some people with misunderstanding in the village. They are caught up and need to solve problems ...Then they say that the [teacher] can take care, they can solve our problems. They can help in any circumstances. They call on teachers to help. Or if there is any job that is temporary. A job for example Census they use teachers to do this.

Beliefs about Teachers' Work

The following discussion will focus on the participants' beliefs about teaching: in some cases, they believe it is a vocation, in others, a profession. Some also made comments that refer to the status of teaching. Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne and Knottenbelt (2007) refer to the 'horizon of significance' as the reason why some people become teachers—a reason which is usually bigger than the individual. This horizon of significance can be related to the concept of vocation, where there is a sense of calling. Peter described his horizon of significance:

For me my goals is to develop the knowledge of the children and that they may become the head leaders, women and men of society. When you see someone who is your learner is in society with good behaviour, who has ability in life to do something himself you see that you have done something for him which is very important and you will become very happy.

Many participant comments revealed the belief that teachers have an innate ability to teach and that teachers are called. Some writers suggest that a teacher is born with certain attributes that are required to be a teacher. Palmer (2007), for example, notes that “good teaching cannot be reduced to just technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 10). Although many of these attributes can be enhanced or learnt from training or observing colleagues, Luke states “that everyone cannot be a teacher. ... Sometimes people say that they learn to become a teacher but for me [that] is not correct”. He goes on to say that although going to TTC (Teachers’ Training College) can add to new teachers’ knowledge, they are only going to be a successful if they are born with that ability.

Luke described teaching as his vocation and stated that “my view is that you can become a very good teacher even though you did not attend the TTC because for example I personally I didn’t go to TTC”. He then described how he was born to teach and at a young age in school knew that he wanted to become a teacher because there were “teachers that I like and I want to imitate.....I like teaching children so that will grow and say that you are very important and has helped me in my life”.

Teaching as a vocation comes from a sense of calling (Dawson, 2005; Schwehn, 2002). The choice of an occupation one is called to is not random, but is rather a decision based on values and beliefs (Teitz, 1988). Palmer (2007) states that “many of us were called to teach by encountering not only a mentor but also a field of study” (p. 25). Luke, quoted above, is a young teacher who decided to become a teacher because he aspired to model himself on one of his own school teachers. This teacher is at the school where Luke now teaches. He went into more detail about his admiration for this teacher and described their relationship, in which the older teacher is now Luke’s mentor. Here Luke described why his mentor, Peter, wanted to become a teacher:

You can see [Peter] that man is a big man. Whereas me and others because he told us that he could get other posts but he like teaching because here we are like pastors. If you did it well

if you are doing your career well, if you teach well you are like preaching because even you know Jesus has tried to teach.

Believing that one is called to teaching allows a teacher to go further than just delivering the curriculum. For example, Peter stated that “when [a child] has a problem at the school the teacher becomes his mother, his father and another parent”. Peter also likened teachers to counsellors who have words of wisdom to share with students who are having problems. Luke gave another example of discussions that teachers have with parents that shows teachers go further than simply delivering the curriculum.

For example where a child coming to school without washing, their bodies, clothes. So I cannot teach that child because he cannot understand because he has to come prepared and have hygiene. You have to teach them hygiene how to clean their bodies and clothes. I have to ask the parents why do your children come, wake up early in the morning and come to school without washing, without washing their bodies without washing their uniforms. It means if I met problem like that it means that the parents are not assisting they don't do anything so that their children grow well. It means that even homework that I give the children the parents do not help their children, correcting homework. So I have to ask the parents why. Sometimes we get issues about those problems because after one week you see a child properly with hygiene.

Often this calling to teach means that the motivation is intrinsic and the results from the teachers' efforts cannot always be seen immediately. Mark shows that many of the teachers do the job not for the money but rather the effect they have on the children: “the result of teaching is not immediate. It is in the future. For example you plant the tree in this moment you receive the trees after five years”.

Barrett (2006) does however discover that “a tension also seems to exist between trainees' espoused love for, and commitment to, children (and the intrinsic rewards that are associated with such a disposition) and their grave concern about the hardships that they face due to low remuneration and other factors” (p. 4). Peter, while acknowledging that he has a calling to teaching, realises he will have to leave this vocation in the future because teaching does not pay enough for his family to live on.

The belief that teaching is a vocation therefore does not mean that teachers will necessarily stay in teaching. The teachers perceived that their parents and family

members have strong expectations of them. Mark acknowledged that his family was not happy with him being a teacher because they had paid for all of his education. “But the problem is I am a teacher but I don’t get enough money for them. It is the reason why there is conflict between me and my family. Because I don’t be able to give them the money”. African parents often pay for their children’s education so that in return the children will be able to look after them in their old age. The participants noted that parents do have a say in their education because they are the ones paying for it.

Some participant responses pointed to teaching being perceived as a profession. The belief that teaching is a profession means that a period of pre-service education must be completed to enter that profession. A profession requires qualifications to gain entry and a long term commitment to the profession (Mitika & Gates, 2011). One example of this commitment to both students and their own professional knowledge is the enthusiastic eagerness of the participants to join in professional development courses. Peter acknowledges that professional development helps teachers learn about methodology and pedagogy because “you cannot teach what you do not have”.

Professional development is provided mainly by the government, but also by aid agencies, such as Volunteer Services Abroad (VSO) Mark believed that on-going professional development “will always be important because learning is a process. You can’t say that I have finished learning. I learn by doing by trainings. If I am just doing an action and receive other trainings my work becomes better than before.” Professional development is often in the school holidays, sometimes attended by one teacher, who then passes on the knowledge to the other teachers in their school. All of the participants especially valued professional development that gave them all the opportunity to take part.

Winch (2004) defines a profession in terms of its self-regulation, qualifications to enter the occupation and the public recognising that the occupation is a profession. Benade (2012) develops this definition of a profession and its interaction with the public and states that “professional culture is evident in the relationship with the public that the professional group serves, and is often embodied in codes or ethics” (p. 32).

Participants understood that professional teachers are important not only in the school but also in the community. Peter described his role to be “a guider. If for

example there are some people with misunderstandings in the village” a teacher is called upon to help defuse the situation and come up with a solution. Peter gives another example that highlights the importance the community places on teachers through a teacher helping “to make a vegetable garden [or] to make houses. In most cases you will find them participating fully in developing the community where they live”. The community also views the teachers as important because they see that the government trusts the teachers to be the people that help administer the census. Peter also notes that when there are elections for leaders in the community “many times [people] vote for teachers because they know that they are able to complete any type of work, any job and any task”. The community sees the value of teachers, and parents send their children to school because they see the value of schooling

Participants were questioned about the importance of the level they taught. “According to where you are teaching you can’t say that this one is more important than another one”. Mary noted: “for me I see that there is no teacher that is more important than others because we complement each other”. Although these teachers see themselves as equally important, in reality they are paid at different levels. A primary teacher holding a bachelor’s degree will not be paid at that level. Those holding a master’s degree will only be teaching in college or university. To teach at primary schools only requires Senior Six (S6 – a high school qualification).

Teachers’ low salary levels dissuade many from teaching, lowering the status of teaching. Peter concluded that low salaries are “not because of being ignored by the government. The problem can be the big number of teachers”. As noted in chapter one, Rwandan student numbers are now growing at a rate greater than they were pre-genocide (Chiche, 2010). With such a large number of students and the need for so many teachers, the government cannot afford to pay the teachers well. The low salaries paid to teachers forces many teachers to take a second job. Other jobs can include private tutoring or growing vegetables and fruits to sell at the markets. Mark described how some teachers “who have a motorcycle use it to drive the passengers and they give them money”. Mark also described how teachers are sometimes not at school because they have other things that need to be done that are more important than going to teach.

The low status of teachers' affects their long term commitment to teaching. According to the participants, a large percentage of the teachers at the two schools are also studying in the evenings to attain qualifications. These qualifications can either be in education, so they can teach older children which means an increased salary, or their qualification is in another area that has a higher salary. Teacher-participants from the public school stated that an advantage of teaching at that school was its close proximity to the tertiary training facilities. This enabled teachers to teach during the day and then study in the evenings. Many of these participants thus show that an instrumental belief that teaching was a stepping-stone onto another career. Mary, who has just finished a degree, is staying in teaching only until she gets a job related to her degree.

The Role of Teacher Education in Shaping Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs are shaped through teacher education. Peter describes what he has learnt through teacher education:

They taught me how to teach and how to treat learners. For example learners can't be considered the same. For example if you are teaching P1 you can't consider your learner as the learners of P6. For example you don't read the same. Because they are different in the ages. And in their minds they are different, there thoughts are different. And then you consider them different because the way they think they cannot be the same.

Peter shows that his beliefs about students have developed through teacher education. As discussed in chapter three, traditional approaches to teacher education in African states have however reflected the belief that teachers are the sole expert, and are focussed on teaching what to do in the classroom rather than understanding the underpinning reasoning or theory. As a result, many teachers lack critical thinking skills or the ability to transfer skills to other areas. This style of teaching placed the power in the teachers' hands. This method of teaching, Peter notes, emphasises the "teacher as someone who knows everything". Hussein (2006) comments that "Africa needs teachers who have critical perspectives on what they do and on things that surround them" (p. 369) It is evident however that the way students have been taught over the years in Rwanda is changing to a more learner centred approach that gives

students the ability to participate in the lesson. This may be due to the change in the medium of instruction.

The government of Rwanda changed the medium of instruction to English in 2009 (Kagwesage, 2013). The reason for this change is that English is the only common language in East Africa. The change has had an impact on teacher education (Obura, 2003). The recent change to English as the medium of instruction (discussed in chapter one) has moved the emphasis in teacher education to shifting teacher's beliefs towards learner-centred teaching. Most schools have mentor teachers who help teachers improve their skills in speaking and teaching in English. This support can include how to make a lesson plan or correct pronunciation of words. Luke described the role of a mentor teacher:

When you have a problem about the conversation or about to understand the vocabulary you have to go to ask him to help you. When you have a problem with the preparation of the lesson you can go to ask him to help you because they have trained by the government.

Mary described what was included in training for teaching in English:

We can learn about active methods where teachers use teaching aids. A lesson without teaching aids, the objective will not be reached. If you have all the teaching aids and you have well planned your lesson and yourself you have mastered it you can go and teach.

It seems the enforced shift from teaching in French to English in Rwanda has supported the shift from teacher directed lessons towards learner centred classrooms.

Peter described the change:

They [teachers] use to expose, to preach, to come and read maybe what they have prepared and then go. But that did not include learners because it did not give the time to learners to ask for examples, to tell you their views, to comment about the lesson. But now days we just give a little and then give more time to learners to discover many things. Just to talk about what they have learnt. To discuss, to comment and to ask questions.

Peter went on to note how the opportunity given for students to ask questions sometimes causes him to think about why this particular lesson is in the curriculum

and its importance. This changed approach to teaching thus not only allows the students to question assumptions, but also is encouraging teachers to be more self-reflective. Teachers bring into their classroom many beliefs, and reflection on previously held assumptions and beliefs is a part of being a critically reflective practitioner (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b). Rutaisire and Charles (2009) note that through reflective practice “we may learn that there is no best practice, only continued practice and that we can never be best, only better” (p. 334).

Focus on Gender

As the role of gender in Rwandan society is significant, participants were asked questions to illuminate Rwandan teachers’ beliefs about the role of student gender in the classroom, teacher gender, whether gender influences teaching ability.

Deficit theorising affects teachers’ beliefs and therefore teachers’ interaction with their students. Bishop (2003) states that teachers are deficit theorising when “they blame the victims and see the locus of the problem as either lack of inherent ability, lack of cultural appropriateness or limited resources; in short, some deficiency at best, a ‘pathology’ at worst” (p. 223). Mark states that he likes “to teach the boys rather than the girls because the boys are different to the girls because the boys are [more] clever [than] the girls”. This deficit belief about female students allows the teacher to blame the girls for their lack of achievement. These negative teachers beliefs will presumably show in Mark’s show in practice, and low expectations from teachers can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy (McGee & Fraser, 2011). A self-fulfilling prophecy is defined by Merton (1957) as “in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behaviour which makes the originally false concept true” (p. 423)

The focus group reflected different beliefs about the abilities of girls and boys in their class. While most of the participants (male and female) believed that boys and girls have the same intelligence, Mark believed boys are born more intelligent than girls. Luke said that in a classroom, boys and girls balance each other out, and in a class that is “mixed they still help each other”. The only female in the focus group (Mary) commented that boys and girls have “the same capacity to get knowledge because in my classroom I see that there are some boys who comes in the first place and girls also. I cannot say that the boys are very [more] intelligent than the girls.” Mark’s beliefs about female students will be affecting his practice. Argyris (1990) discusses

how beliefs are easily established because people often choose data that only agrees with their beliefs. Luke may find examples of boys achieving higher than girls and assumes this is true for all boys.

After discussion about the intelligence of boys and girls, conversation moved onto the roles that boys and girls play at home. These beliefs about what boys and girls do at home can transfer into boys and girls roles in the classroom. Davidson and Kanyuka (1992) argue: “behavioural norms and expectations that result from gender structuring begin in the home and community and are subsequently taught and reinforced in the school setting” (p. 455). Mark observed that girls “don’t do the same one [work] because works which needs energy are done by boys and that which is simple is done by girls”. The word ‘simple’ suggest that a boy’s work is more complex and (possibly) requires more intelligence. Further questioning inquired into why girls are considered to do the simple work at home, while boys more demanding work. John stated “you can say that it is because of the culture of Rwandans. Actually in our society they consider that girls must do the jobs of home which include the cleaning at home, to cook food”. These gendered roles are reinforced by parents who assign different chores at home to girls or boys, who then grow up with the perspective that there are certain roles designated to different genders.

When answering questions about male and female teachers, participants firstly discussed the history of gender in Rwandan society. There has been a shift in how female teachers are perceived. Previously there were a large percentage of male teachers in the Rwandan school system. By increasing the number of “female teachers and role models in schools” (Huggins & Randell, 2007, p. 3), students will see the roles females can play in society. Mary claimed “40 years ago or maybe 30 years ago, the woman was considered as someone who was a slave”. Later, she noted that the traditional roles of female teachers in schools has changed but that female teachers are still the ones expected to talk about health issues and are more likely to be the teachers who nurture students. Mark’s deficit beliefs about female students extended to female teachers, and verified Mary’s position. In his opinion,

the pupils like the teacher of a man ... They have the force of teaching. But the women sometime they have children. Some time they are wife and they want to give them affection of the

children. The students in Rwanda they say this is not good to give us the teacher who is a girl, they want the man.

According to the participants, some parents still have the same mentality of people 40 or 30 years ago and therefore prefer male teachers. Peter noted in his school that parents “consider women as ones who can teach P1, P2 or P3 where the learners are still younger. They consider the women as the ones that take care of the children. If they are in low classes it will be better”. Parent’s expectations of junior teachers are that they are merely baby sitters. In the schooling system in Rwanda, younger students have the least experienced teachers, while older students have the more experienced teachers with higher qualifications. These parental beliefs are being challenged by the fact that teachers are educating their children. The participants suggested “even if they didn’t study but their students are here, [and] because they are here we hope that this is [these are] the ones that can change their parents”.

Questions were raised about the gender of head teachers. All the participants stated that head teachers were appointed because of their experience, qualities and qualifications rather than their gender. Although they believe that head teachers are only chosen on merit, Mark did make the comment that “males are most strong. They are stronger than females. They say that maybe if I recruit males all boys my school will develop and be strong”. The previous quote identifies the influence that he believes male teachers will have on male students. Mark believed that if a male head teacher is appointed, male students would achieve academically. Whereas previously in Rwanda males were preferred as head teachers, this practice has now changed. The participants in this research came from schools that had a male head teacher and female head teacher, respectively. The following comments were made about the female head teacher at one of the schools:

She is very strong and she works confidently and most of the students sometimes when they are doing this which are not really good at school on seeing her coming they quickly change. The most important thing is being confident in what you are doing and most women teachers are confident because of government policy of gender balance.

The government is aiming to reach its Millennium Development Goal three, which is to “promote gender equality and empower women” (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2007). One of the male participants, John, pointed out that he used to be the

head teacher of his school, but now with the roll extending, there is a new female head teacher. The new head teacher had more experience than he had, which is why she was hired. John went on to say that “the community have come and appreciated the work the women is doing. As you can see the community is trusting [and] is giving more trust to the leadership”. This comment shows that John’s beliefs are that community attitudes are changing, no longer seeing a difference in the head teacher being male or female.

Community

Community involvement is part of the structure of schools identified by the Rwandan Ministry of Education (East African Community, 2003). This structure shows who needs to be involved in schools and where their position is on the hierarchy. In this thesis, community “implies a network of shared interests and concerns” (Dekker, 2010, p. 6). The community includes the people who are interested in the education of the children of Kibungo in these two particular schools. The literature about community involvement in third world countries in Africa suggests “community participation in education governance has been argued as essential for improving accountability to beneficiaries of the service, especially for the poor” (Essuman & Akycampong, 2011, p. 514). Accountability through parent committees and parent meetings is the main source of community involvement according to the participants in the interviews and focus group. The interview and focus group questions aimed to discover the participants’ perceptions of community involvement in schools and how community involvement affects the way the participants think and act as teachers.

From the participants’ perspective, most of the community of Kibungo have high expectations of their teachers. Mark knows that he is successful when his “objective is achieved. [But] suppose that you have taught your lesson and then you give an assignment to the learners and they got all zero. Sometimes you become afraid”. As examinations are the only type of assessment, many parents will gauge the success of a teacher on whether their children pass exams. Teachers therefore feel the high sense of expectation of parents that students achieve high results. High examination results are the pre-requisite for attending senior school and boarding schools. Mary described her school’s success:

For example here we have national examination for P6. For example in this year, in this last year we had 27 children in P6, all of them got the place in the boarding school. All of them were in level one and they all get boarding school and they perform well. Because the parents get that information everyone wants their children to come here.

The participants described however that they teach to the test as a result of this pressure. Mark's comment above illustrates how community attitudes can negatively influence the beliefs (and self-belief) that teachers have about their work.

The positive aspect of this relationship the participants have with their community (and a key characteristic of professional work) is that the majority of the parents have a sense of trust in the teachers, which allows open discussion about their children. According to the participants, the few parents who lack this trust are often uneducated or have not had a pleasant experience with schools. Parents trust teachers and, as Peter notes, they expect teachers "to make them [their children] maybe people who do different activities in the future time". There is thus an expectation that teachers will help the students create new lives that are different from that of their parents.

The main direct role that parents play in the schools is through meetings with teachers. Most of the meetings are about student performance or behaviour. John talked about discussions concerning problems that parents were having with the child at home. He described how teachers are often asked for advice because of the importance the community places on teachers and the trust they have. Usually parents have a meeting with the head teacher and their child's teacher, although sometimes parents do not attend meetings. Peter explained that this could be due to an issue such as the child not having parents, or the parents not being able to afford the travel costs to school or the time away from their work. Luke did not have as many problems with parents not turning up to meetings, and in fact, many of the parents would initiate the meetings, because they want to know their child's academic progress. At these meetings, parents ask the teachers "where is the weakness?"

The involvement of participants from both public and private schools made it clear that there is a difference in the level of parental involvement in public schools compared to private schools. In public schools, parents know that the government pays, and "see that the government will do anything for their children and that is the

bad thinking that they have”. This attitude towards the government gives communities an excuse to be less involved in their schools. Parents with children in private schools on the other hand, are more involved because they are paying fees, so feel a sense of ownership and the need to keep the school and teachers accountable for how their money is used.

The parent committee is a vehicle for parents to become involved in the life of the school. The committee is described by Peter as:

Work[ing] hand in hand with the teachers, the head teacher, head mistress to take some decisions about how their children should be treated about how they should be treated at school. There is no decision that can be made without the participation of parents.

It appears that before the head teacher and teachers make decisions, the parent’s committee is consulted. The committee is not only involved in key decisions of the school but also the day-to-day running of the school. Peter described how “in the boarding school they decide even the food they are going to feed their children” and also if the head teacher wants to make a financial transaction, the parent’s committee has to sign to allow this to happen. Parents being able to dictate what goes on in a school on a daily basis impacts what teachers think about the value of their work. Dekker (2010) comments that “many of the programmes and policies designed to increase community participation have focussed on creating formal structures (such as school committees or Parent-Teacher Associations) through which parents can play a regularized and active role in school” (p. 9). However, by limiting community participation to these formal structures, parents are unable to have an active role in areas such as “developing relevant curriculum and learning materials” (World Bank, 1999, p. 5) which the World Bank (1999) suggests will “achieve curriculums and learning materials that reflect children’s everyday lives in society” (p. 5).

Peter described the committee’s job as improving the school. The parents’ committee consists of eight to ten school parents. Only the school parents get the chance to vote for the committee, which meets at least once a term. Here is an example from the private school about what the committee does, as described by Peter:

Last year we end with 87 Rwandan francs. Then we have talked to the committee of the parents that according to this city it is very expensive to buy anything they can add on something of our salary. Then they talk to the parents. They say this school is very nice, they know how the teachers work. They have claimed that they want to do something good on their salary. So they have added 10% on our salary. It was not done in that meeting. After getting information from the teachers, after discussing with parents they sit and take conclusion and decision was made that this was added.

Getting a bonus on top of a teacher's salary is widely used in both public and private schools. This bonus is decided on by parents depending on how well they think their child is doing academically in their classroom. Swift-Morgan (2006) states that her research shows that "credited parental monetary contributions [are] helping to build a sense of community ownership in schools" (p. 351). It could be interpreted that the control parents have over a teacher's bonus does not, however, let teachers feel valued in their work unless they meet the parents' expectations.

The structure for the involvement of parents in schools, according to the participants, has come from the Ministry of Education. Peter explained this structure:

A structure in where you will find there is Minister of Education and after Minister of Education comes to the district level, after the district level you find the District Education Officer then you come to head teachers or head mistresses and before head mistress there is the parents committee.

Participants were asked about other ways that the community could be involved in the school. This question was phrased in many different ways but all of the teachers saw the only way that parents could be involved in schools was through parent meetings, the parent committee, and doing maintenance on the school. It was hoped that these probing questions would encourage the participants to come up with new ways that parents could be involved in schools, and to discuss the positive value of parents being involved in schools. However, the teacher participants from these two schools all perceived the community as only being there to keep the teachers and schools accountable. As Peter's comment above states, the teachers cannot make decisions without the committee. This shows an absence of trust between parents and teachers, in contrast with parental trust in relation to academic results. This trust spoken about earlier may not be trust at all, but merely a sign of accountability and an expectation

that the school will ensure their children will get grades. This lack of trust will have an impact on teachers' beliefs of how the community values their work.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to discuss the beliefs of teachers and how it might affect their practice. The participants revealed emerging new beliefs about their approach to classroom pedagogy since the change to English as the medium of instruction. These new beliefs are shown in the way that the participants talked about their approach to teaching their students. It is thus suggested here that authentic teachers' beliefs align with their practice. Starratt (2004) described ethics as an essential element of authenticity, and thus the alignment of beliefs and practice. Ethics involves having a belief in the importance of duty and service to others (Benade, 2012), which Milton (2012) defined as altruism, the unselfish care for others. This care for others is shown by the participants in several ways, including helping the community outside of the school. This help outside of the school gives the community a sense of trust in teachers. There is, however, a lack of trust from the community, which is reflected in the parents' committee that has to be involved in every decision. This lack of trust through negative community involvement in school life will affect teachers' beliefs about themselves and will be apparent in their practice.

Conclusion

Aims and Motivation of the Research

This thesis has described the enacted beliefs of a small group of Rwandan teachers. The findings of the small-scale research project on which this thesis is based, will help add to a limited published base knowledge of the Rwandan teaching context. An inquiry into five case studies in Kibungo, Rwanda, focussed on the beliefs of participants related to notions of the authentic teacher, teaching as a vocation or profession, teacher status, teacher education, beliefs about students, gender and community involvement. The results make it possible to explore how these are enacted in the teacher's practice.

The motivation for this research grew from a year spent in Rwanda in 2010 when I taught English and created a professional development programme in four schools requiring help with implementing the change to English as the medium of instruction. Each of the areas that I was interested in researching came from observations that were made while I was in the village of Kibungo. The schools I was involved with were eager for more education in pedagogy. By living with a Rwandan family and being immersed in their culture, I became aware that community is a significant part of Rwandan culture. These prior experiences in Rwanda made it possible to set up a successful research project.

Summary of Findings

Cranton and Carusetta (2004a) defined an authentic teacher as one who aligns practice and beliefs. The interviews and focus group made it evident that the main reason Rwandan teachers have a low status is because of their low salary levels, compared to other professions. Although the participants have the belief that the status of teachers was low, these beliefs did not align with the reality of their status, as many parents would seek advice from teachers on issues ranging from their children to their crops. Many of the participants believed that they were called to a vocation to be a teacher. This sense of calling encourages teachers to be selfless and work towards something bigger than themselves, or what Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne and Knottenbelt (2007) refer to as their horizon of significance. Peter is an example of one who believes he is called, by stating that he is teaching so that he can shape the future leaders of this village and nation. Luke described how he was called to teaching by the inspiration of a teacher he had when he was at school. This teacher is at the school

teaches at now, and is a mentor to Luke, who often asks him questions about his practice and issues outside of school.

Other participants had the belief that teaching is a profession. One of the key aspects of entering and practicing the profession is having and maintaining qualifications (Winch, 2004). Teacher education is one of the main influences that shapes teachers' beliefs. Teacher education in Rwanda has changed its emphasis to learner-focused teaching since the introduction of English as the medium of instruction in 2009 (Kagwesage, 2013).

The participants said that though they are still having difficulty learning English, teacher professional development to address this problem is becoming more frequent. All of the participants described professional development as a way to improve their pedagogy and methodology. Mary noted that this professional development, provided by the government, allows teachers to feel valued. As a result of this professional development, there has been a shift in teachers' beliefs regarding learner-focussed teaching, which has led teachers to start reflecting on their beliefs and practice and also to allow students to become critical thinkers.

Teachers beliefs are evident in their practice (McGee & Fraser, 2011). One area where this is especially true is in deficit theorising. Mark showed that he has a deficit theory about the intelligence of girls, believing that boys are born more intelligent than girls. This will be reflected in his practice, as he does not believe that either his teaching, or any other factors, would change the intelligence of girls. These beliefs are difficult to challenge because only those events that confirm this belief are acknowledged (Argyris, 1990).

The community plays a large role in the way that the Rwandan culture functions. The participants believed that the main role of the community was to keep the school accountable through the parent committees. Questions regarding alternative ways the parents and community could be involved in schools produced only comments about parents meeting with teachers. Topics of these meetings would include their child's academic achievements and behaviour. Although the main role of parents inside school is to keep teachers accountable, the participants believed that the community values the teachers more for the role they play outside of school than inside it. Often,

teachers are asked to resolve community issues, and are involved in roles such as administrating the census.

What Worked Well in the Research

The Rwandan culture is an oral culture where stories are passed down from generation to generation (World Trade Press, 2010). This aspect of the Rwandan culture meant that the interviews and focus group were an effective method to gather data. The participants thrived on the opportunity to share their beliefs and opinions. My experience of living in Rwanda in 2010 gave me greater understanding of the Rwandan culture and traditions, which informed the research methodology. Rwandan culture discourages sharing thoughts and views with a stranger, which shows the importance of my prior visit. Being known by the participants led to a sense of trust that encouraged them to share their opinions and beliefs. Another success in the research was having a balance of new and experienced teachers. This meant that the difference between teaching as it was many years ago, and as it is now, was heard.

Another aspect that worked well in the research was giving the participants the main interview questions prior to the interview. This gave the participants a sense of ease, as they knew what to expect in the interview.

Limitations of Research

As this research was geared to writing a Master of Education thesis, it had to be completed in a short time, and this affected the collection of the data. The limited time influenced also the number of participants that could potentially be included. This study was conducted in a single village, Kibungo, thus the results cannot be generalised to all of Rwanda. However this research could be applied to areas of education research in Rwanda.

The prerequisites that participants had to be able to hold a conversation in English with the researcher, limited the number of people able to be involved in the research. As English is not the first language of the participants, this could have led also to their meanings being lost in translation. Participants would have to first translate their thoughts from their mother tongue to French, and then to English. The participants may not have had the English vocabulary required to express the beliefs they may have wanted to express.

Another limitation of this study is that this research did not inquire into the government's position and its requirements of teachers. Nor were questions asked about what the participants believe the government wants from teachers. There were also no questions asked about teacher registration.

Gaps in Current Literature on this Topic

The literature was found using the database holdings of the Auckland University of Technology library. Databases were chosen that were related to education in general and also education specific to Africa. To search for articles, relevant key words were used. These key words are the headings in chapters two and three. Firstly the key words were searched in general terms and then specific to Rwanda. There was little information specific to Rwanda resulting in the search being widened to countries near Rwanda, such as Kenya and Tanzania. Although there was information on areas such as community involvement, teacher education, and status, there were very few articles on teachers' beliefs and practice in Africa.

The purpose of this research was to help fill this gap in the current literature on teachers' enacted beliefs in Rwanda. It is expected that this research will be reported in a relevant African journal.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could include using the same format of questioning while researching another village, to find the differences and similarities. In the community section, the main purpose of community involvement in schools takes the form of accountability, and the participants did not answer questions about other ways communities could be involved in schools. Parents could be asked the same questions about communities to discover if their responses are similar or different. Future research could discover how the community could be involved in schools beyond accountability.

Other perspectives could also be researched to discover if the teachers enacted beliefs are as they intend. These other perspectives can include students, administrators and other teachers observing practice. As teacher education is starting to emphasise student-focused learning and allowing the students to ask questions, future research could focus on the development of teachers as critical thinkers who reflect on their own practice.

Conclusion

Education in Rwanda has changed dramatically since the devastating effects of the genocide in 1994. The government realises the importance of education and is placing value on education for the future of the country (Uworwabayeho, 2009). Teachers' beliefs have changed since the move to English as the medium of instruction. Teachers believe that they have a calling to teaching (Dawson, 2005) and this is reflected in their practice. Mark's metaphor illustrating his beliefs about his role as a teacher demonstrates the value that teachers have in modern Rwandan society: "you plant the tree in this moment [and] you receive the trees after five years."

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Appendices

Appendix # One – Consent Forms

Consent Form (Interview)



Project title: ***Rwandan Teachers' Enacted Beliefs***

Project Supervisor: ***Leon Benade***

Researcher: ***Rebekah Brandon***

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 03 September 2012.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews which will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in an interview.
- ☐ I understand that the information from this research may be used for a journal article and conference paper.
- ☐ I wish to have a look at my transcript before _____
(please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23 August 2012
AUTEC Reference number 12/174

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

Consent Form (Focus Group)



Project title: **Rwandan Teachers' Enacted Beliefs**

Project Supervisor: **Leon Benade**

Researcher: **Rebekah Brandon**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 03 September 2012.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group which will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that if I participate in the focus group the identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in a focus group.
- ☐ I understand that the information from this research may be used for a journal article and conference paper.
- ☐ I wish to have a look at my transcript before _____
(please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23 August 2012
AUTEC Reference number 12/174

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

Appendix # Two – Interview Questions

Teacher Status

Main question: How important is the work that teachers do?

Show a picture of a mother, farmer, doctor, shop owner and teacher ask: ‘What do you think about _____ and the work they do?’

To further explore beliefs about teachers use the following probe questions:

- What do you believe about teachers and their importance in the village?
- What do you believe about teachers and how much money they earn?
- What do you believe about teachers and how much they like their job?
- What do you believe about teachers and why they do the work?
- Why did you decide to become a teacher?
- How does your family feel about you being a teacher?
- What is the relationship between Rwandan teachers and the community they work in?
- What role does trust play in this relationship?
- How would you describe the general attitude of your community towards you as a teacher?
- How important are you to your community? How do you know?

Gender

Main question: What do Rwandans believe about a teacher being a man or a woman and how well they can teach?

- What do you believe about men or women teachers?
- How does being a man/woman affect the way you work with your students?
- How does this view affect your teaching?
- Describe a time when you think this view of you being a man/woman has affected you and your class.
- How do you think the children view you as a female/male teacher? Why do they have this belief?
- How do you think the community view you as a female/male teacher?
- How do you think the principal views you as a female/male teacher?

Community Involvement

Main question: What are your beliefs about the community’s involvement in schools?

- How is the community involved in your school? Give an example in your classroom.
- How do you think the community could be involved in your school? What particular skills can the community bring into your classroom?
- How is it decided the involvement the community can have in the school?

Teacher Education

Main question: What training is provided in Rwanda to become a teacher?

- Have you had some training? What was it?
- What did you learn from the training?
- How long was the training and where was it?
- How did your training prepare you for the classroom?
- What about teachers who do not have training, do you think it's necessary to be trained as a teacher? Why?
- What would have helped you in teaching that you did not get in your training?
- What was the most useful thing that you learnt to help you with your teaching?
- Have you done any extra training since you started teaching? What has been useful? In what would you like some extra training?

Appendix # Three – Focus Group Questions

Teacher Status

Main question: Do you see teaching as a job or a career/profession?

- What influenced you to become a teacher?
- Is teaching an attractive prospect for young people? What might attract young people away from teaching?
- What makes teaching attractive now that you are a teacher?
- What do you want to achieve as a teacher?
- What are your goals to achieve in the next five to ten years?
- What will help you to remain in teaching?

Gender

Main question: Here is a picture of a girl and a boy at school. Which do you like to teach and why?

- Who does better at school – girls or boys? Why do you think so?
- At home are boys and girls treated differently?
- Are there more job opportunities for males or females?
- Are most head teachers male or female? Why? What is the expectation of the community on head teachers and their beliefs on whether they are male or female?

Community Involvement

Main question: Here is a picture of a parent and her two children who are going to talk to the teacher. What do you think they are going to talk about with the teacher?

- How often do you speak with parents? What do you talk about with parents?
- What role does trust play between the teacher and parents?
- Why do you think parents are involved in school? What skills do parents have?
- How do you think the parents could be involved in schools that they are not already involved in?
- What expectations does the community have of teachers?

Teacher Education

Main Question: How have you been supported in the change to teaching in English?

- What programmes have the government used to help you teach English?
- What did you learn from these programmes?
- Why did the government change to teaching in English?
- What would have helped you that you did not get in your English training?
- What was the most useful thing you learnt from your English training?
- Who do you go to if you have questions about English?
- Why is it important to have these teacher training programmes?
- What role do these programmes play in keeping you happy in your jobs?

- How important is the level of education to the way you see yourself as a teacher?
- Are there hierarchies among teachers e.g. between secondary and primary teachers?

Appendix # Four – Letter to the District Education Officer



Dear _____

I am interested in doing some research about teachers in Rwanda.

The research that I am conducting aims to describe a small group of Rwandan teachers' enacted beliefs and to identify similarities and differences across the group. The findings of this project will help add to a limited published base knowledge of the Rwandan teaching context and may be of interest to NGOs or those who might be involved in education reform or aid. Through a set of four case studies in Kibungo, Rwanda I will investigate four beliefs related to teacher status, gender in the classroom, community involvement in education and the perceived value of pre-service teacher training; seeking to explore how these are enacted in the teacher's practice.

The five teachers involved in this study will commit to an individual interview and a focus group. Participation in the research will be voluntary and confidential and the participants are able to withdraw at any stage. The findings from the interviews will be used to complete my thesis for my Masters of Education. The thesis will be for examination purposes and there will be no way of identifying the teachers or their schools.

I am willing to send a copy of my work if you are interested.

Yours Sincerely,

Rebekah Brandon

Information Sheet (Interview)



Date: 03 September 2012

Project Title: Rwandan Teachers' Enacted Beliefs

An Invitation

You are invited to be part of research which is conducted by Rebekah Brandon. The research will contribute to completing a Masters of Education. The invitation is made to all teachers at two schools in Kibungo. Your participation is voluntary and the participants may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection. There will be no advantage or disadvantage to you whether or not you participate

What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to describe the beliefs of a small group of Rwandan teachers' about teaching, gender in the classroom, the involvement of the community and teacher training. The findings of a small-scale project such as this will help add to a limited published base knowledge of the Rwandan teaching context. I will be studying four teachers in Kibungo, Rwanda.

What will happen in this research?

After the initial information meeting I will select four participants who are interested in being involved in the research. Each participant will have to be able to speak with me in English. If there are more than four people who want to participate I will use systematic sampling to choose the four participants. I realise that some of you may feel disappointed that you are not chosen but due to time restraints I can only choose four people. Once the participants have given consent to be part of the research they will be involved in an individual interview. The interview may be as short as one hour or may be as long as two hours. If you do participate a pseudonym will be given to you so that you will not be able to be identified in the research.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Some of you may feel pressure from your principal to participate in this research.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

This research is confidential and voluntary; you may withdraw at any stage. You will not in any way be disadvantaged if you do not want to participate in the research. The principal is not aware of who the participants are in the research as I will be talking with more than four teachers to select those who will participate and the principal will not know who the final participants will be.

What are the benefits?

Other researchers and people interested in education in Rwanda will come to a greater understanding of what it means to be a teacher in Rwanda. Teachers reading this research can then reflect on their teaching and see how their practice is influenced by these issues.

How will my privacy be protected?

A pseudonym will be used to identify the information that you have given, so your name will not be used at any time. The information collected will be kept in a locked cabinet for six years and then destroyed.

What will the data gathered be used for?

The data will be used to write my thesis for the Masters of Education that I am completing. A journal article and conference paper may be written from this data.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

There will be an opportunity for you to have a look at the transcript before 26th September if you wish to by ticking the box on the consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Leon Benade*, leon.w.benade@aut.ac.nz.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Dr Rosemary Godbold, rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6902.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details

Rebekah Brandon, rebekahbrandon@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Leon Benade, leon.w.benade@aut.ac.nz

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **23 August 2012**
AUTEC Reference number **12/174***

Information Sheet

(Focus Group)



Date: 03 September 2012

Project Title: Rwandan Teachers' Enacted Beliefs

An Invitation

You are invited to be part of research which is conducted by Rebekah Brandon. The research will contribute to completing a Masters of Education. The invitation is made to all teachers at two schools in Kibungo. Your participation is voluntary and the participants may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection. There will be no advantage or disadvantage to you whether or not you participate

What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to describe the beliefs of a small group of Rwandan teachers' about teaching, gender in the classroom, the involvement of the community and teacher training. The findings of a small-scale project such as this will help add to a limited published base knowledge of the Rwandan teaching context. I will be studying four teachers in Kibungo, Rwanda.

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What are the discomforts and risks?

Some of you may feel pressure from your principal to participate in this research. You may feel that you do not want to share information in front of others in the focus group.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

This research is confidential and voluntary; you may withdraw at any stage. You will not in any way be disadvantaged if you do not want to participate in the research. The principal is not aware of who the participants are in the research as I will be talking with more than four teachers to select those who will participate and the principal will not know who the final participants will be. All of the participants will have signed a consent form that states “I understand that if I participate in the focus group the identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential”. You will be encouraged to share with the focus group only information that you are comfortable and willing to share.

What are the benefits?

Other researchers and people interested in education in Rwanda will come to a greater understanding of what it means to be a teacher in Rwanda. Teachers reading this research can then reflect on their teaching and see how their practice is influenced by these issues.

How will my privacy be protected?

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Researcher Contact Details

Rebekah Brandon, rebekahbrandon@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Leon Benade, leon.w.benade@aut.ac.nz

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23 August 2012
AUTECH Reference number 12/174***