

This book concerns the development of good learning climate in university classrooms. It describes different indicators of classroom learning environment. It shows how lecturers understand and develop classroom environment that enable students to learn smoothly in the Rwandan context. It also describes different challenges which may hinder the process of developing a conducive learning climate.

This book will be helpful education practitioners including university teachers and academic decision makers to advance the quality of learning in higher education. Those people constitute a key personnel for academic institutions and have to develop an appropriate environment enabling the students to learn effectively with enthusiasm. The book will enable them to understand the role of developing a good learning climate in educational quality improvement at university level, and the way it is developed within a classroom. It will also inform different challenges which may hinder the process of developing that a conducive learning climate.



Edouard NTAKIRUTIMANA is a graduate of the International Master's of Educational Quality in developing countries at the University of Bamberg, Germany. He is a lecturer and coordinator of the Karongi campus at Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS) in Rwanda.



Ntakirutimana, E.

Good Learning Climate in Higher Education



Brot
für die Welt

New Perspectives on Quality Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Edited by Christine Nyiramana, Susanne Ress, Tharcisse Gatwa,
Susanne Krogull, Annette Scheunflug and Penine Uwimbabazi

Good Learning Climate in Higher Education: The Case of Rwanda

Edouard Ntakirutimana

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Good Learning Climate in Higher Education

New Perspectives on Quality Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Over recent decades, national and international policy actors together with teachers, parents, community leaders, and faith-based organizations have made great progress in providing access to education. Today around the world, more children are in school than ever before. Yet being in school is not enough. These exceptional improvements in expansion of access to schooling require a sustained effort to ensure the quality of education provided in schools. This series presents new findings on dimensions of quality education in the context of Sub-Sahara Africa. The authors in this series have conducted their research in the context of the *International Master Program of Educational Quality in Developing Countries* (IMPEQ) at the University of Bamberg in partnership with the Protestant University of Rwanda, the Free University of the Big Lakes Region in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Evangelical University of Cameroon. The research has been made possible through funding from Bread for the World – the Development and Relief Agency of the Protestant Churches in Germany. The monographs in this series highlight the importance of continuous teacher education and, most importantly, the centrality of efficient leadership for fostering educational policies and practices that meet the needs of all students.

*This book is dedicated to
all developing countries' children,
who need to receive higher education of good quality.*

Good Learning Climate in Higher Education: The Case of Rwanda

Edouard Ntakirutimana



Brot
für die Welt



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Butare-Huye

Email: fathebu@yahoo.fr

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAHE:	American Association for Health Education
ASCD:	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
CAT:	Continuous Assessment Tests
CSE:	Centre for Strategic Education
HEC:	Higher Education Council
IMHE:	Institute of Management in Higher Education
IMPEQ:	International Master Program of Educational Quality
OECD:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD/CERI:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Center for Educational Research and Innovation
PAP:	Participative and active pedagogy
SRHE:	Society for Research into Higher Education
UNESCO:	United Nations educational, scientific, and Cultural Organization
US:	United States

SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

Beyond the fact that the completion of compulsory education has substantially improved over the past twenty years, achieving educational quality for all continues to be a major challenge in Sub-Saharan Africa where many children do not reach basic skills in reading and numeracy by the end of primary school (UNESCO, 2014). A focus on quality education is thus paramount to improve the overall performance of educational systems and to support students' academic achievement.

High quality education requires high quality research that combines sophisticated knowledge of educational theories, adequate research methods, and contextualizing sensibilities for local realities as they intersect with global political, economic, social, and historical forces. Every educational dimension imaginable – school access, didactics and pedagogical approaches, academic content and competences – if approached with such a notion of high quality research presents itself as a challenge that poses many questions and few certain answers. To nonetheless forge pathways towards much needed answers requires a sturdy intellect, diligence, creativity, and a supportive community of scholars engaged in critical feedback.

Monographs in this series carefully investigate educational concepts and theories as they pertain to quality education in Sub-Saharan Africa. They cover many topics ranging from leadership skills, competence-based and learner-centered pedagogies, cognitive activation, critical thinking skills, and socially responsive and inclusive approaches to teaching. The monographs go beyond theory in that they reflect on the practical implications of the research

findings. The authors provide in-depth analyses grounded in a deep knowledge of and experiences in the context in which the research was conducted. They articulate recommendations that touch on the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of schooling. In this way, the series provides a collective space for emerging African scholars to discuss their research on education to impart lessons for mastering 21st century challenges in education everywhere.

Good learning climate in Higher Education – The case of Rwanda by Edouard Ntakirutimana is a study on how teachers in higher education in Rwanda implement good learning climate in their teaching. According to the author it is to be understood as a reaction to the prevalent practice of education, which does not provide a good learning environment in higher education classroom.

The book addresses the following questions: How is learning climate conceptualized in higher education? What are the indicators of good learning climate? How is good learning climate implemented in higher education? What are the perceptions of university teachers on developing quality education through ensuring good learning climate in classroom? To what extent the intervention brings change to Rwandan lecturers regarding good learning climate conceptualization and implementation?

Thereby Mr. Ntakirutimana shows theoretically the training of the teachers as intervention on how to create a setting and atmosphere which motivates and pushes the students to learn with enthusiasm. Further the author collected data on how the teachers perceive the learning climate in their teaching, the methods they use and the difficulties they met when ensuring adequate learning climate in their teaching.

Using content analysis and interpretation based on the theoretical framework of good learning climate as a measure for quality education, the results of this study demonstrate the criteria for teaching quality and therewith the need for the improvement of students' competences. Teachers need to accomplish a conceptual change towards competency-based teaching, which apparently is not easy to be done. The findings reveal that the lecturers implemented a good learning climate at the low level.

By using an illustrative example, Mr. Ntakiutimana refers to lecturers' misconception of good learning by confusing it as the quietness of students during their teaching. Indeed some teachers, who tried to develop good learning climate were hindered by the fact of overcrowded classrooms, the low level of instruction language proficiency for the students and by the misunderstanding of the modular system for lecturers.

In this volume, Mr. Ntakirutimana states clearly that in order to improve teaching quality and therewith students' competences teachers need to accomplish a conceptual change towards competency-based teaching.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication is a result of study conducted in 2017 in Rwanda to investigate how teachers in higher education in Rwanda implement the good learning climate in teaching. It is a reworked version of my Master thesis done as partial fulfillment of the completion of my studies in International Master Program of Educational Quality in developing countries (IMPEQ) at University of Bamberg in Germany.

From the beginning of 21st century, with the millennium goals, education was oriented to education for all, where countries especially developing countries have put emphasis on providing free and compulsory primary education. The access to secondary and tertiary education also has been enormously increased. Unfortunately, at all levels there is a mismatch between a large number of enrolment and quality education implications. In Rwanda, since 1994, the access at all levels has been widened. Basic education including primary and secondary education was made free and compulsory. For higher education, many universities were authorized to operate in Rwanda and thousands graduates are put on the labor market but they do not have the competences required by the market (Mbabazi, 2013).

As shown by different studies, to provide competences required to the labor force market, schools and universities have to provide quality teaching to their students (Martin, 2018, Mbabazi, 2013). By providing teaching with quality, the teacher is required to create optimal conditions for the learning climate in classroom to be possible. In the context of Rwandan higher education, the learning climate is a problematic concern and it is new in both practice

and science. Therefore, I made a controlled intervention by training the lecturers of the one Rwandan university to raise their awareness and make them able to develop quality education through ensuring good learning climate in their respective teaching classrooms. This intervention was followed by a qualitative study investigating the perceptions of lecturers on the development of quality teaching through good learning climate and the challenges they meet during its implementation.

In this publication, readers will discover how good learning climate is important in educational quality improvement at Higher education levels. It provides answers to different questions namely: How is learning climate conceptualized in higher education? What are the indicators of good learning climate? How is good learning climate implemented in higher education? What are the challenges faced by lecturers in developing good learning climate in the classroom?

Many people contributed to the completion of this work and are herewith recognized. I would like to recognize the contribution of my supervisor and first corrector Dr Susanne Krogull for her accompaniment during the research journey. Her constructive and guiding advice made me successful in conducting the research and making this study. Many thanks also to Dr. Martin Nugel for accepting to be the second corrector of my thesis. I present my sincere gratitude to all academic staff of Bamberg University who intervened in my master studies led by Prof. Dr. Annette Scheunpflug for their contribution to building knowledge and skills which helped me to complete this academic achievement. My special thanks go to Mrs.

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Edouard NTAKIRUTIMANA

1.

INTRODUCTION

This research was done on “Good learning climate in higher education: Case of Rwanda”. This title has a close relationship with overall theme of quality education since the establishment of a good learning climate is one of the criteria of quality teaching (Coe, et al., 2014; Hattie, 2012). Quality teaching matters in the context of Rwanda where employers claim that some graduates end their studies without the competences needed at the labor market (Mbabazi, 2013:15). In addition, it is a context where there are students who are motivated to get degrees, but not motivated to put much effort into their learning (HEC, 2015). To cope with this critical issue which is not only a national problem but also an international problem specifically in Sub-Saharan Africa (Filmer & Fox, 2014), UNESCO has oriented its overall goal for sustainable development to quality education (UNESCO, 2016, 2017). It is in this perspective that I oriented this study on quality teaching development, specifically, on the indicator of good learning climate. To raise awareness on how quality teaching can be improved, I made an intervention by training higher education teachers of one Rwandan higher learning institution on good learning climate development. This intervention was followed by a research aimed at investigating the implementation and related challenges of a good learning climate in higher education in Rwanda.

1.1. Context and problem

The context is the higher educational system of Rwanda. Higher education in Rwanda started in 1963 with the creation for the National University of Rwanda (UNR: Université Nationale du Rwanda). It was later during the last decade of the century that private and other public higher learning institutions were created (Word Bank, 2003). From 1964 to 1994, finding admission at university was not easy because the university admitted a very limited number of people. In addition, this admission was mainly based on ethnics and regional segregations under the umbrella of “quota system”. Those who started studying at university were not guaranteed to finish. Students were sometimes chased away because of their academic failure or simply because of their ethnic belonging.

During the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, formal education halted completely. Like many other institutions in the country, the genocide against the Tutsi affected dramatically the National University of Rwanda. Many students, academic, teaching and administrative staff were killed; while on the other hand staff and students participated in the killings of their colleagues and neighbours. In addition the properties and infrastructures of the university were destroyed or looted (Walker-Keleher, 2006).

After the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the existing higher learning institutions reopened and several new ones, both private and public, have opened their doors. Therefore, a large number of people get the opportunity to continue their studies without any discrimination (Word Bank, 2003). The government has worked to improve the quality

of education by instituting the Higher Education Council (HEC). Within each single higher learning institution, the regulations of High Education require to put in place an office in charge of quality assurance. The teaching system which was historically based on teacher-centered approach was also addressed to become student-centered education. In 2008, the government has started to make a reform aiming to improve the quality teaching in higher education. It introduced in higher learning institutions the Bologna modular system in teaching and learning practices (Mugisha, 2010:28). This reform emphasized the improvement of quality of students' learning by shifting from teacher-centered methods to student-centered methods. The student-centered approach has increased opportunities for students to be involved in their own learning (Mbabazi, Dahlgren & Fejes, 2012).

Despite all the efforts done to revise the system, the traditional teaching methods continue to dominate the teaching in Rwandan universities (Hilker, 2011; Weinstein, Freedman & Hughson, 2007). These methods of teachings do not provide to the learners the freedom of discovery, but rather encourage rote memorization (Hilker, 2011; Weinstein, Freedman & Hughson, 2007). In addition, the traditional methods give teachers all the power to decide what and how the students will learn (Mbabazi, Dahlgren & Fejes, 2012: 9; Mugisha, 2010). As the result, the students are often afraid of their teachers and consider them as the only source of learning (Mbabazi, Dahlgren & Fejes, 2012: 10). Inside the classroom, the students may face an unsafe space. Often, they are not actively engaged in the collaboration with each other, but instead, they are inculcated the culture of submission to authoritarianism (Walker-Keleher, 2006).

In 2009 the language of instruction was changed from French to English in Rwandan Higher Learning Institutions. This shifting from French to English as language of instruction led to some adaptation and communication difficulties for both teachers and students. For the students, this situation reduced their active participation in classroom learning activities (Kagwesage, 2013). The language barrier combined with the historical background mentioned above and the culture of students' submission to the authority of the teacher affected negatively the learning climate inside the Rwandan classrooms. By the way, good learning climate is considered as a key for conducive environment, which allows learners to learn successfully what they are taught (Hattie, 2012:69; DeMulder, Ndura-Ouedraogo & Stribling, 2009; OECD, 2009: 90). Therefore, the critical status of classroom learning climate in Rwandan institutions as described above, and having in mind the role the good learning climate should play in students learning success, motivated me to work on the issue of good learning climate in higher education for my master thesis.

This topic "good learning climate" is embedded in the discourse of quality education because good learning climate is one of the quality teaching criteria necessary for a better learning of students to reach the higher level of competences (Hattie, 2012; Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010; Chalmers, 2008). A good learning climate provides a safe environment which favors the learning. A classroom environment stimulates the students to learn when there is the justice, enthusiasm and mutual respect. Good learning climate reduces tension and stress; and allows the students to collaborate successfully among themselves and with

their teacher (OECD, 2012:29; Steele, 1998). Research has shown that this psychological environment pushes the students to make achievements in their studies and perform their best (Lucardie, 2014; Wittek & Habib, 2013; Cohen, 2006; Mayya & Roff, 2004). Considering the role of good learning climate in quality teaching and the critical situation in Rwandan higher education, as mentioned above, I made an intervention by training university lecturers of one institution on developing quality teaching by ensuring good learning climate in the classroom. Later, I conducted this research to assess the change made by this intervention in teaching practice. My goal was to determine the perception of lecturers regarding good learning climate development, identify the mechanisms they use to develop good learning climate, identify the different challenges they meet in implementing good learning climate in their respective classrooms and how they can overcome them.

1.2. Research questions

This study is based on the research question: How do teachers in higher education in Rwanda implement a good learning climate in teaching?" This main question is subdivided into the following three questions: 1) How do teachers of higher education understand a good learning climate? 2) What are mechanisms (practices) do they use to develop good learning climate in their teaching classrooms? 3) What are the challenges faced by teachers in developing a good learning climate?

1.3. Structure of the book

This research aimed to explain the perceptions of lecturers concerning the development of a good learning climate in

higher education classrooms. This document is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the book, explains the Rwandan context in regards to education in general, and states the problem that motivated the researcher to work on good learning climate. The second chapter concerns the state of research on good learning climate and quality education in higher education. This chapter details what the discourse says about the link between quality teaching and good learning climate. It provides the development of good learning climate in the classroom and the challenges met by the higher education practitioners when they implement it in their teaching and learning practices. The third chapter concerns the methodology used in writing this study. It explains intervention process as well as the research. Concerning the intervention, the researcher describes the methods used for organizing and delivering a training workshop on good learning climate. On the side of research, the researcher describes the research approach used and the methods used for sampling, data collection, presentation and analysis. Chapter four concerns the intervention done by the researcher on developing a good learning climate in higher education.

It details how the training was done and how it contributed to quality education. Chapter five describes the findings detailing the perception of lecturers about good learning climate, how they implemented good learning climate in classrooms and different challenges they meet. Chapter seven concerns the discussion of results in regards to literature. The final chapter concerns the research conclusion and further perspectives.

2.

GOOD LEARNING CLIMATE AND TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Through this chapter, I explore the state of research on the good learning climate and teaching quality in higher education. I describe in detail the learning climate in teaching practices, how good learning climate impacts the quality of teaching activities in higher education, the theory for good learning climate development, different challenges the teachers meet in developing good learning climate and how they cope with them.

2.1. Quality teaching in higher education

Teaching should not just be transferring knowledge, but being open to new idea, open questions, as well as open to the student's curiosities and their inhibitions (Freire, 2000:10; 1988). From this perspective we developed a summary defining the concept of teaching quality and showing different aspects of teaching quality developed by the researchers.

The word quality may refer to the fitness for the purpose. Quality teaching in higher learning education refers to the judgment based on indicators showing the fitness of teaching and learning process or its outputs (Materu, 2007; Green, 1994). The teaching with quality is defined as the teaching which is designed using the pedagogical

techniques for producing the positive learning outcomes for the learners. It involves a rich learning environment, an environment that supports the students learning through the curriculum and content designed effectively the learning contexts diversified, as well as the assessments of outcomes provided effectively and with the feedback provided to the students on time (Henard & Roseveare, 2012). The use of student-focused approach is one of the methods of good teaching as it is more associated with the high-quality learning outcome; it brings concept of change in the students (Trigwell, Prosser & Waterhouse, 1997). This is supported by the idea that, in higher education, the student-centered and learning-oriented teachings are the ones which brings conceptual changes and intellectual development in students (Richardson, 2005).

In the same framework, among the learning theories, Biggs proposed that the university teaching should be guided by constructivism learning theory, a theory that emphasizes on learners' spontaneous activities helping them to find out solutions to their life problems (Biggs, 1996). Within this teaching, the teacher must be alert to learners' reactions in order to create the teaching moments or the change events that create springboards to meaningful leaning on the side of students (Parpala & Lindbloom-Ylänne, 2007). The teaching with quality appears when the teacher has the updated knowledge about the subject, is excited with the lessons, understand how the students learn, when s/he is attracted by the students and has in mind their high expectations, and then uses a variety of teaching methods depending on the situation and what to teach (Melia, 1994).

According to Coe, quality teaching leads to the improved students' achievement considering the outcomes which matter the future success in their life (Coe et al., 2014). It involves the students in the use of cognitive processes needed to achieve the expected outcomes that the students use spontaneously (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The good quality teaching requires a combination of different elements such as the pedagogical content of knowledge which should be deep and clear; the high quality of instruction including the practices of effective review of the previous learning, providing adequate time for practice to impart skills, scaffolding new learning and use of assessment; and the classroom climate which covers high interaction between teachers and students, teachers' expectations and recognizing the students' self-esteem. This combination also includes the classroom management with efficient use of the time and resources, students' behavior management with clear rules; the teachers' beliefs which include different practices, objectives and their theories about learning; and the professional behaviors of the teachers like reflecting on their practice, supporting colleagues, and have a good communication with parents (Coe et al., 2014). Among all these aspects of teaching quality, my concern is the classroom learning climate in Higher Education.

2.2. Learning climate in higher education teaching

Learning climate is described as an environment which allows learners to concentrate their time on the tasks without disruptive behaviors, and their relationship with teachers involves different social skills, empathy and the mutual respect (OECD, 2012:29; OECD, 2009:104). It is the psychological environment where students and teacher

are characterized by mutual respect and orderliness in their activities (Scherens, 2004). It refers also to an atmosphere where learning is cool with active engagement of both teacher and learners (Hattie, 2012). In classroom, good learning climate is characterized by the relationship between all the people who are inside the room including teacher and students, the order of different activities, the work attitudes and the satisfaction they have of being in such class (Scherens, 2004). Basing on the above definitions, within this study, good learning climate refers to a conducive psychological environment which allows the learners to be engaged in the learning. This climate is reflected below through the relationship between teachers and students or students and students, the responsibilities assumed by teachers and students, the justice which reign inside classrooms and the standards of assessment.

2.2.1. Relationships inside the classroom

In educational institution, each attitude a teacher may take in the classroom has an influence on the students learning. When teachers ensure justice and peace inside classroom, and when they care and respect their students, they contribute to good environment, which promote student's learning, but when they dictate and oppress the students, they may contribute to the gangs' formation (Serrano, 1999). The relations inside the classroom are the key for quality teaching. Within this subtopic, the teacher-student and student-student relationships are reflected in the way it develops good learning climate. Within a classroom, the relationship teacher-students is called positive when the students are warmed, feel encouraged, knowing that the teacher understands them and have high expectations about their performance (Hattie, 2012).

The teacher constructs good relationship with students by caring for them as people and learners, having high expectations for them and helping them to meet those expectations (Dean et al., 2012). Researches show that the expectations that teachers have for their students as well as the assumptions they make about their potentialities influence either positively or negatively the students' achievement (Orpinas & Horne, 2010; Voss, Gruben & Szmigin, 2007; Rubie-Davies, Hattie & Hamilton, 2006; Lumsden, 1997). The students normally trust their teachers and internalize the beliefs the teachers have about their ability (Rubie-Davies, Hattie & Hamilton, 2006). When the teachers have high expectations for their students, those students make extra-efforts to fulfill this strange positive prophecy (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The students are encouraged so that they feel that they have all potentialities for success. The relationship of teachers and their students conveying the high expectations develops in students the self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy and optimism (Barnard, 1995). Those expectations are highly consistent when the teachers use learner-centred methods of teaching with which teachers act as facilitators (Lane, Wehby & Cooley, 2006).

At higher education level, classroom learning environment that promotes experience of students, where they feel positively attracted, interested and members of the community respected by the teachers and colleagues is essential to successful learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2006). The students are attracted when the teachers create a good environment characterized by working with relax, fun, laugh, and enjoyment. The teachers create the opportunities of laughing by involving the humor in

classroom or organizing the learning activities in fun way. The humor is an effective tool for learning climate as it builds the positive rapport between the teacher and students, reduces tension and stress, and enhances learning by providing motivation to learners (Steele, 1998). The humor makes the teaching and learning more vivid as it makes the learning more enthusiastic and encourages learners to talk to their teachers without fear and enhances debates in classroom (Aboudan, 2009). In other words, fun and enjoyment constitute mechanisms that impact on a university students learning by motivating them and encouraging them to attend class and learn with concentration, then get knowledge and skills (Lucardie, 2014). This warm and positive classroom environment helps the students to be confident about their efforts and abilities in their learning trip (Walters & Frei, 2007).

Good learning climate provides the psychological interventions like the high expectation, praise, enthusiasm and trust. These interventions affect positively the students' achievement as they construct strong relationship with their peers and teacher. This close cooperation leads them to invest all their effort in work which finally results to the high academic performance (Yeager & Walton, 2011). These psychological interventions, when they consider the context, they have more effect and deal with the different educational problems like classroom students' differences and the low students' achievement (Yeager & Walton, 2011). For this, the teacher should create in classroom a humanizing environment since the discourse shows that the class with ill teacher-student relations, apprehension, distrust, and disrespect influences negatively the learning and academic performance of students, and also hinders

the development of their strong human relationships (DeMulder, Ndura-Ouedraogo & Stribling, 2009). The mistrust between students and teachers as well as mistrust between themselves create the fears to exposes their mistakes because their peers laugh at them or consider them as unable to learn (Hattie, 2012). In other words, when the learners experience fear and anxiety in classroom, they do not feel well confident and they are not satisfied with their academic environment and consequently the learning is blocked (Kolb & Kolb, 2006).

However, research shows that the learners with such poor learning environment experience underachievement while the ones satisfied with their academic educational environments experience the best performance (Wittek & Habib, 2013; Mayya&Roff, 2004). Good classroom climate reduces the rate of individuals' aggressive behaviors (Allodi, 2010) and generates an environment of trust which welcomes the learners' mistakes as the essence for learning (Hattie, 2012). The teachers respect the students as learners but also as people, and then show them that they are all able to achieve good performance (Hattie, 2012).

In fact, when the teachers feel anger and lack the sympathy towards students, they tend to react with punitive response (Reyna & Weiner, 2001). The teachers confuse the authority of knowledge by setting this professional authority to the opposition of freedom of learners. The more the students lose the trust in their teachers, the more they don't develop the spirit of critical consciousness which would help them to transform the world. The more they are imposed roles and accept them, the more they accept passively the

world as it is, they don't think how to change and develop it (Freire, 1996). To reply on this, it is advised to react to the students' behavior with a positive reinforcement such as giving the student make-up work or encouraging with praise (Reyna & Weiner, 2001). An academic classroom environment of tolerance must be created in classroom. This environment does not allow the disciplinary policies harming the students and enables them to realize their fullest potential and then become lifelong learners who are active participants in the society (Cohen, 2006). In this classroom, as the errors are welcomed, the student questioning is on the highest level, all learners construct the habit of engaging themselves in their learning and finally their achievements are at the high level (Hattie, 2012).

In short, the students in higher education want their lecturers to be knowledgeable, enthusiastic, approachable, and friendly (Voss, Gruben & Szmigin, 2007). When the relationships inside the classroom both student-teacher relations and student-student relations are well maintained, a psychological climate is shaped in the way that it enables successful learning.

2.2.2. Ensuring responsibilities

In higher learning classroom, the teacher and students share the purpose and each one acts as responsible of the activity of learning. According to Chickering and Gamson, the teacher must ensure that s/he is assuming her/his responsibility of creating an environment which promotes learning and ensures that the students are responsible for their own learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

Within the process of teaching and learning, a teacher must encourage the students to take responsibility in the management of their daily learning activities. S/He facilitates them to give a high value to the self-reliance of both their academic activities and their social situations (Lane, Wehby & Cooley, 2006). This created environment must be supportive enough intellectually and emotionally, in the way that students are pushed to participate actively in their learning. In this situation, the classroom climate itself encourages students to take risks in their learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The students are responsible when the teacher organizes the teaching in the way that student-centered approach is used. The student is responsible for her/his learning when s/he is in control of her/his own learning (Lea, Stephenson & Troy, 2003). When they know properly their responsibilities, they act as responsible in their activities whether individual or group activities. In the groups, the students share roles, interact and provide mutual feedback to the progress of what they are working on (Brandenburg & Wilson, 2013). This learning is based on experience, interactive and argumentative discussion where the students participate voluntarily in the class discussion and they evaluate each other (Sierra, 2010).

This classroom climate is strengthened by constructing the self-esteem to the students. The teachers support the students in identifying their personal strengths and weaknesses, encourage them and help them to make their own goals. The teacher tries to acknowledge each student as special but without the natural tendency of comparing him with others (Walters & Frei, 2007). Another thing which helps the learners to build responsibility for their

own learning is the classroom assessment because if it is prepared and done in good way, it builds the confidence in the students (Clark, 2008). The more details about assessment especially standards for assessment are given.

2.2.3. Justice and transparent standards for assessment

A good learning climate is also characterized by the insurance of justice, transparency in assessment and constructive feedback given to the students in the classroom. Those elements are developed in this subtopic. The justice is experienced when the teacher is fair in the activities and affairs of the students including assessment processes. The classroom justice refers to the perception of fairness regarding outcomes or teaching and learning process (Tomul, Celik & Tas, 2012; Chory, 2007).

It is perceived in three types including distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. The distributive justice deals with assigning notes, grades or marks fairly comparing to the standards without favoring one or another student. The students evaluate the distributive justice by comparing their marks to the peers' marks or to what they feel they deserved. The procedural one concerns the ways of distributing assignment and different policies for student behaviors.

The students evaluate it by assessing how the decisions concerning classroom resources are made. The interactional justice deals with the interpersonal treatment the students receive when the policies and procedures are implemented. This means that in a classroom where there

is justice, the students trust their teacher for assigning them fair grades, following fair classroom procedures and treating them fairly (Chory, 2007). All those three types of classroom justice shape the perception of credibility and the student perceptions of fair grades, processes, and communication. While creating justice in educational institution, some schools use the punishment and rewards for maintaining the norms of the classrooms. Justice provides teachers with the frameworks for their decisions applied in different situations for maintaining fairness and reducing bias in the way they treat their students. The justice in classroom helps the students to comprehend easily what is expected from and to anticipate the consequences for their activities. It makes a sense of control to the students and makes the classroom climate more comfortable (Reyna & Weiner, 2001). When the fair decisions are used for dealing with the students' discipline problems, the teachers use both punishments and rewards in the appropriate time.

During the teaching and learning process, the unfair distributive justice of the teachers during marking or attributing grades to the students, increases cheating behaviors on the side of students in classroom (Lemons & Seaton, 2011). In order to fight against injustice in classroom, the teacher should avoid any form of discrimination, then determine the standards of assessment and discuss them with the students before this assessment takes place (Tomul, Celik&Tas, 2012). The standards of assessment determined must be common for the regular verification of students' learning progress (Vieluf et al., 2012). They make the learning progress more transparent and the students do not need to guess what they need to do for

performing well. Consequently, a fair assessment effects positively the student's intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, academic self-concept and learning (OECD/CERI, 2008).

In addition, every assessment should be followed by constructive feedback from the teacher especially after marking. The feedback clarifies the criteria regarding expectations for the student performance, put transparency in learning progress and regulates the learning skills for the students (OECD/CERI, 2008). Providing clear and constructive feedback to the students clarifies how the students meet the assessment standards and provide justice to them. This feedback involves the learners in their own learning and helps them to understand how they can improve their learning (Clark, 2008). Feedback should accompany all types of assessment: formative and summative exams. It is more important in formative than in summative because it helps the students to improve. Within the learning processes, it actualizes and reinforces self-regulated learning strategies among the students. Therefore, it improves outcomes and develops the lifelong learning (Clark, 2012).

In short, to ensure a peaceful environment in classrooms, the teachers should examine their practices in order to stop the creation of injustice among the students (Serrano, 1999). The classroom should be a safe area where the learners desire to be for constructing their knowledge and skills, characterized by the good relationship between peers and teacher, and where the errors and mistakes are not considered as the characteristics of inability but starting point for learning.

2.3. Development of good learning climate

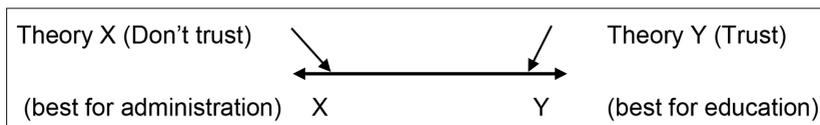
Learning climate development is linked to the theory X and Y for motivation developed McGregor in 1960s (Biggs, 2001). From that time those theories were used for the human resource management but later were used in the quality teaching especially for developing learning climate in the classroom. Thus, those theories were adapted and became theory X and Y climate (Biggs & Tang, 2011). In this study, theory X and Y were considered as model for climate development in classrooms. For theory X, the administration and teachers for their smooth working without public criticism, they assume that the students are not to be trusted. With this theory, the teachers take the position that the students are lazy people and they do not like work (Hoyle, English & Steffy, 1985). Consequently, the students are dictated what to learn and pushed to learn it using the negative reinforcement. The teachers motivate the students by being nervous and blaming them for their behaviors. They don't consider the students' perspectives and they don't give them the time to reflect. They are annoyed by the students feeling and they use the harsh sanctions to punish them (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

An alternative theory which is theory Y embraces the notion that people naturally like the work and they enjoy it like a play. They do it autonomously, creatively and goal oriented (Hoyle, English & Steffy, 1985). The theory Y climate assumes that students must be trusted (Biggs, 2001). It puts the high expectations in students. The classroom is organized in the way that the goals are set clearly and feedback is provided regularly on the progress. This theory intensifies the expectations of success and the students

are free to admire errors as instruments for learning. They feel free to explore all possibilities for learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Theory X climate is based on the assumption that students cannot be trusted while a theory Y climate on the assumption that they can. The theory x climate with sanctions for non-compliance results in anxiety and cynicism, and both leads to surface learning. A theory Y climate allows students freedom to make their own learning-related choice, which is important because it make them deep learner and independent lifelong learners (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Biggs, 2001).

Figure 1: Theory X climate and Y climate



Source: Adopted from Biggs & Tang (2011)

Theories X and Y, as it is shown here, form a continuum where the best teachers who are more innovative are oriented towards theory Y and administrators more towards theory X (Biggs, 2001). A good climate which fosters quality education is more influenced by the theory Y which brings trust between teacher and students.

2.4. Challenges met in developing good learning climate

For developing good learning climate in classroom, as it was discussed above, it requires the change of understanding and the ways teaching practices are done especially on the side of teachers. In this valuable change,

different obstacles may be barriers to develop a favorable climate which develop the learning. The teachers need to change their way of teaching by shifting from traditional lecturing methods to active and participative methods. The active methods reflect transformational teaching and learning which involves the alternative models for learning in classroom. In this situation, the teachers become equal participants in the group and therefore some teachers feel uncomfortable and vulnerable in giving their power. On the side of students, the students may lack the maturity to be self-directed learners or lack the ability for creativity. Then, they become embarrassed and lack motivation for learning (Moore, 2005).

In addition, in some societies, education is based on beliefs and practice of the negative side, the expectation of our students' ability is too low, narrowly interpreted, bound on time and speed and differentiated by social status factors which are not relevant to the learning potential. The teachers underestimate the learners' intellectual development and fail to provide adequate tools for learning (Weinstein, 2002). They may do it unwillingly as Marzano said, the teachers may not be aware that they have low expectations for some students, but even though later they become aware, they experience difficulties in changing their expectations as their believes and biases were developed over years (2010, p. 82).

Another challenge regards the management of large classes. The teachers tend to use lecturing method because they lack the class control and it requires much time for designing and implementing active teaching methods (Devlin & Samarawikrema, 2010; Mulryan-

Kyne, 2010). As the class sizes increase, the interactions and exchanges between teachers and students reduce and this results in students' passivity. The students may be engaged poorly in the content; the commitment and motivation may decrease. Those classes also may experience inadequacy of classroom facilities, lack of structure in lectures, absenteeism and lack of opportunities for the students' discussion (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010). In short, while developing learning climate, different challenges are experienced. The students may have difficulties in becoming responsible of their learning especially management of the freedom given and acting as critical thinkers. The teachers experience the difficulties of losing their power and fail to become equal or colleagues to the students. They fail to provide high expectation to some students they consider as weak, and fail also to provide a sufficient learning climate for the large classes. The text under the subtitle which follows explains how those challenges can be faced.

2.5 Mitigation measures face the above challenges

The lack of excellence in teaching is a matter to be addressed in education (Orpinas & Horne, 2010). In this regard, the teachers should create the positive climate which promotes learning. Different strategies may be used for mitigating different challenges mentioned above. The first important strategy to face the learning climate's problems is the use of active and participatory teaching methods, the methods which involve the students in their learning (Day, 1999). Through those methods different learning methods such as cooperative, collaborative and transformative learning are used and the teachers must

support the students. The role of teacher is participating in the collaborative and cooperative learning as co-learner (Moore, 2005). He acts as adviser and facilitator of the learning. Another strategy should be the use of positive approaches to discipline problems. The teachers should create a positive climate by preventing conflict inside the classroom. They must care for the students and make justice in classroom (Chory, 2007; Cohen, 2006). They tolerate diversity by promoting the understanding and appreciation for different cultural groups (Orpinas & Horne, 2010). For the challenge of low expectation of the teachers to students, the teachers must welcome the growing diversity of students coming in their institutions by embracing and supporting pedagogically a vision of possibility regarding the educational achievement of all their students (Weinstein, 2002). In order to develop high expectation of lower expectation students, the teacher may first identify students for whom to have low expectations, secondly identify the similarities in students, thirdly identify differential treatment of low expectancy students, and finally treat low expectancy and high expectancy students the same (Marzano, 2010).

As a strategy to cope with the teaching problems related to large classes, the teachers need to shift from traditional lectures to different active forms of teaching and learning and use electronic technology. There is a need to deal with the challenges related to interactions and feedback especially by making careful planning and commitment (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010), introduce the blended learning and the experimentation with students peer review (Godlewska, et al. 2019). The use of some electronic student interactions platforms like groups on social Medias

provides also opportunities for the students to engage with one another (Moodley, 2015). In short, all the above literature shows that good learning climate is necessary for developing quality teaching in higher education. Creating a safe, caring and responsive learning climate provides a platform upon which the teacher teaches and students learn. The school climate affects the students' self-esteem and self-concept (Cohen, 2006).

3.

METHODOLOGY

The third chapter concerns the description of different methods used for collecting data responding the research questions raised in the chapter one. The problem addressed was the inadequacy of classroom climate in higher education. To address this problem the different methods which were used are described such as intervention methods (3.1) and research methods (3.2).

3.1. Intervention: A training workshop on good learning climate

Intervention refers to a specific treatment or method that intends to modify one or more dependent variables (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 1993). In this research, an intervention was made by training higher education teachers on how to create a good learning climate especially how to develop it in their classrooms. In subsequent sections of this study, its link was described in relation to the research questions, as well as to quality education and how it acts as a research method.

3.1.1. Intervention and research questions

As it is mentioned before in 1.1, the learning climate in Rwanda is not good enough to provide quality education in higher education institutions of Rwanda. Consequently, the training was initiated on good learning climate to make

aware its role in quality teaching and on how to develop it in higher education classrooms. This intervention has a clear link with my research questions “How do teachers of higher education understand a good learning climate? What are the mechanisms (practices) they use to develop good learning climate in their teaching classrooms? and What are the challenges faced by teachers in developing a good learning climate?”. The intervention provided to teachers the knowledge and skills on good learning climate development in higher education classrooms. The research questions assessed the implementation of what was learned in the training and the challenges met. Regarding the first question, the intervention explained the meaning of the concept of good learning climate. For the second one, the intervention provided knowledge and reflection on how to implement good learning climate in classroom. To ensure the success of this intervention, firstly a written plan was drafted to outline all activities that were intended to be done. Then, the training materials were prepared, including a Power Point presentation and working activities for the trainees. After that, a negotiation was done with the leaders of the university from which the trainees were selected, and an agreement was made in regard to the date of the training, the timetable of activities, and the invitation of participants.

3.1.2. Relationship between this intervention and quality education

With this intervention, the teachers were trained on good learning climate as a reaction to the above-mentioned problem (see 1.1) about the absence of a good learning climate in Rwandan university classrooms. It has been

suggested that the teachers are not fully available for the students' active participation; they appear as authorities instead of being facilitators of students learning (Kagwesage, 2013; Mbabazi, Dahlgren & Fejes, 2012; Mugisha, 2010). This situation in Rwandan higher education needs to be improved and one of the correction measures to be is in-service training. It has been proven that the professional development is among the key policies that provide the capacity and skills the teachers need to improve their daily teaching activities (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The teacher training changes and improves different aspects of teachers' teaching, and as result the students improve significantly their learning (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004).

It was also found that no matter what systems are put in place to improve quality education, without good teachers to implement it, the education system will never succeed to help the students learn to their fullest potential. That is why the teacher is considered as the common denominator for students' improvement and success (Stronge, Ward & Grant, 2011). Then in-service training is the key aspect that helps to make the teachers good teachers.

Basing on the role of in-service teacher training shown by the literature above (Stronge, Ward & Grant, 2011, Gibbs & Coffey, 2004, Darling-Hammond, 2000), I planned my intervention by training the teachers of one higher learning institution in Rwanda. This training intended to help the teachers start implementing a good classroom learning climate in their activities. As, the research has proven that good learning climate is key for an environment which allows the learners to successfully learn the material they are taught (Hattie, 2012; Yeager & Walton, 2011; Mayya

& Roff, 2004), the implementation is expected to improve the quality of the trained teachers activities especially the teaching.

In short good learning climate elevates the quality of teaching. The training done, as an intervention, provided the skills and competences to the teachers on how to ensure quality teaching by creating good learning climate in their classrooms.

3.1.3. *Intervention as method*

The intervention was used in this research as a research method to control the applicability and effectiveness (Van den Akker, 1999) of good learning climate implementation in higher education. In education and social sciences, intervention links both the practical and scientific contributions. To find out innovative solutions for educational problems, interaction with practitioners is more essential in education and social sciences (Van den Akker, 1999). This innovative interaction with practitioners was used to clarify the problem related to the development of good learning climate in higher education and the potential solutions.

3.1.4. *Principles decisions*

For intervention to be successfully developed and implemented, it must follow three principles. The first principle concerns the determination of the purpose of the intervention. There must be a function for its implementation as a reaction to the real existing problem. The second is the substantial emphasis. Different characteristics of that intervention are discovered, as well as the content. Then, the last principle is procedural emphasis. The procedure, including different steps to make the intervention, is developed (Van den Akker, 1999).

Therefore, using my experience as a lecturer and a leader at one Rwandan university, and using the principles developed by Van den Akker (1999), I analyzed the problem faced by Rwandan universities (see 1.1). I worked together with a colleague while preparing and implementing this training which took two days. Our training combined two aspects: “good learning climate” and “high cognitive activation by tasks”. We defined the objectives and planned the training together, but we each focused on our own topics. As I focused on good learning climate, my training aimed to provide knowledge and skills to lecturers. The training enhanced the quality of their teaching, helping them develop a good learning climate in their respective classrooms. I developed the didactical planning which included the content on good learning climate as well as the teaching methods used in the training.

The training was done on 22 and 23 February 2017. The participants were the lecturers who are directly involved in teaching. In short, this training project provided the lectures with the knowledge and skills needed to implement a good learning climate in their classrooms. It served as a tool for controlling to what extent the teacher can develop quality through developing good learning climate. Chapter four provides more details about objectives, didactical planning and development of this training workshop.

3.2. Methods of research

This subchapter focuses on describing the qualitative approach as an approach I used in my research on “Good learning climate in higher education: case of Rwanda”. It also describes the methods used for in this research such as focus group discussion as method for data collection and content analysis as method for data analysis.

3.2.1. Description of qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is a research approach which aims to provide the significance of the texts and to understand the meaning of phenomena. It provides the holistic view on social phenomena since it does not split the social realities into measurable and isolated elements. It focuses on the subjective understanding of the reality and interprets rather than measures (Gatti & André, 2010). It focuses on the lived experiences of individual people, and the data are presented in ideas, thoughts, attitudes, feelings and perceptions. In other words, it deals with understanding and exploring of human's social lives (Öhmar, 2005).

The qualitative research approach generates the theoretical and methodological approaches to the social reality (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Krüger, 2010). Qualitative research doesn't test the cause and effect, but rather it helps the researcher to learn about, describe and explain the individuals from their perceptions as it deals with the social world. It helps the researcher to understand people and their circumstances. Finally, the research considers how people see the world and make meaning out of it. Qualitative research wants to deepen truth; it studies things in their natural setting in order to provide understanding about phenomena in a real-world setting (Golafshani, 2003; Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997). The qualitative research approach is based on a philosophical perspective called constructivism, the theory that reality is created. In constructivism, knowledge and truth are considered as the gathering of human-made constructions (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). My research which is designed basing on the qualitative approach provides a deep understanding

on how Rwandan university teachers implement good learning climate in their teaching, the challenges they meet, and different measures they take to mitigate the challenges. This approach involves different methods for data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. In my study, I used group discussion for data collection and content analysis for data analysis. The more details are found in the following subchapters.

3.2.2. Focus group discussion – a method for data collection

Focus group discussion is a way of data collection for qualitative research which requires engaging a small number of persons in a discussion on a particular topic or issues (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). It is a form of interview which is based on the interaction between participants. It promotes the self-disclosure among the group members by using explicitly the group dynamics in discussion (Freeman, 2006). It helps to understand the group consensus rather than simply looking at the interpretation of individual.

The uniqueness of focus group is to generate the data based on the synergy of group interaction. This method of data collection permits the researcher to develop knowledge about how the group of people think and act in a particular area (Öhmar, 2005). In other words, it is used to discover the people's meaning and ways of understanding things, as it allows the participants to discuss the issues abstractly from the perspective of their social identity (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996). The main benefit of a focus group is to provide opportunity of rich and detailed information from the group members' interaction on a particular set of experiences and attitudes (Morgan & Spanish, 1984).

The focus group discussion is facilitated in four stages, as mentioned by Finch and Lewis (2003). The first stage is the scene setting and ground rules. This involves welcoming the participants warmly and putting them at ease through friendly conversation. After this initial greeting, the researcher provides a brief introduction, including participants expected roles, and then offers the participants reassurance. The second stage is individual introduction. Participants have the opportunity to share their names and background information. The third stage is the opening topic, which is generally centered on easy to talk, as the aim is simply to encourage the discussion. The fourth stage is the discussion itself. People engage freely in the discussion and the researcher records it. It is important for the facilitator to keep an open mind the discussion. The last stage is ending the discussion. The discussion should finish on a positive and complete note, concluding with an opportunity for individual interviews or suggestions. Finally, the ends the discussion and thanks the group for their participation (Finch & Lewis, 2003).

In my research, I decided to use the focus group discussion for collecting data from the field because I found it as a relevant method fitting in qualitative research. The focus group discussion facilitated the interaction of the group participants and this interaction helped me to understand how people perceived things. It helped me to observe the discussion among the lecturers on how the learning climate is created and maintained in their classrooms. When collecting data using the focus group I followed the steps developed above by Finch and Lewis (2003). First, I put the participants together in the prepared room, we greeted each other and shared different news. After

sitting comfortably, I introduced myself and I presented the objective of this gathering and the guidelines for the discussions, then we started the discussions. At the end of the discussions every one gave his/her view and suggestions, then I expressed my thankful thoughts and we closed the discussions.

3.2.3. The sample

A sample may be defined as a portion, a piece or a segment which is comes from a whole, and sampling, as a word coming from a sample, refers to a process or technique of selecting appropriate sample (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). In this study, I used the purposeful sampling technique to get the sample for the data collection.

I mentioned in 3.2.1 that I used a qualitative research approach during my research and found that, in 3.2.2., the focus group was the appropriate methods for my research data collection. The appropriate sampling method was also purposeful sampling technique because it is the most common used sampling technique in qualitative studies (Sandelowski, 2000). This sampling technique helps to collect the richest information for the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2012). The participants are selected from the target population to participate in the group basing on that they have something to say about a given topic. It is not necessary for the sample to be representative (Rabiee, 2004).

This sampling method does not put much emphasis on a large sample size representing the population because the qualitative research approach is not interested in generalizing findings beyond the people studied

(Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). The design of the purposive sample allows flexibility as well as changing sampling strategies throughout the research process. This sample is not statistically a representative sample of the study population but it must be theoretically representative (Öhmar, 2005). This means that the participants must be the ones known to be able to provide information rich enough for the research purpose. In sampling the focus group, the size of each group should be between 4 and 10 participants (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). When the participants are specialized or have experience, 3 or 4 participants are enough to make a discussion group (Onwuegbuzie, et al., 2009).

In this research, I used two focus group discussions. The first group consisted of 4 lecturers and the second 3 lecturers. The groups included both the lecturers who have academic administrative responsibilities and the lecturers without administrative responsibilities. This means that I had two sessions of group discussion, one session for each group. This is enough in qualitative research because it is accepted that the sessions can vary from 1 to 10 participants depending on the nature of the studies (Powel & Single, 1996).

My research is unique because limited research has been done regarding the relationship of good learning climate and teaching quality, especially in my specific context. Therefore, the following criteria were based on to choose the participants. The data were collected from the lecturers willing to participate, who were trained on how to develop and ensure good learning climate in their classrooms, and who have already started the implementation of knowledge

and skills gotten from the intervention's workshop in their respective teaching classrooms. In conclusion, I used purposeful sampling as a technique which helped me to get the sample deemed to provide reach information for the study. Two focus groups were used to collect a broad range of information about classroom learning climate at Rwandan universities.

3.2.4. Data preparation and analysis

Qualitative data analysis is an ongoing process involving the breaking down of data into meaningful parts to examine them (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). It refers to a systematic search for meaning from the collected data. In this subsection, I talk about "qualitative content analysis" as one of qualitative data analysis methods and especially as the one used for analyzing the data from my research field.

To analyze data, I used the content analysis because it is a method that fits in the qualitative data analysis (Sandelowski, 2000; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This method refers to a process of examining the content which analyses the frequency and patterns of use of terms or phrases (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). It analyses data within specific contexts in regard to the meaning a particular group or culture attributes to them (Krippendorff, 1989).

Before proceeding to analysis I prepared the data first by transcribing the audio recordings from the focus groups. Secondly, I proceeded to the verbatim transcription. This transcript contains other aspects, apart from the words, they used to provide data, these may include the speaking

tone, pace, timing between words, or pauses (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The verbatim transcript helped me to interpret the emphasis the speaker has put on the message provided. Thirdly, I cut the text into meaningful segments and then opened the data coding. Open coding refers to the activity of writing and heading in the text while reading it (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The codes used in the qualitative approach are the symbols used to represent and label themes. A code is a meaningful name which provides a hidden idea contained in the data segments (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Afterward, I followed the steps for data analysis developed by Savin-Baden & Major (2013) for analyzing the data using content analysis. First, I examined the text and determined its properties. Second, I examined its overt and latent emphases, and finally determined the rules for categorizing (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The categorization rules helped me group the data into categories to facilitate my interpretation. The creation of categories is a key element in qualitative content analysis because a category refers to a group of content sharing commonality (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The categories involved the descriptive level of content and were used to visualize the content of text.

After data analysis, I proceeded to the data interpretation. The interpretation refers to meanings and implication of the data (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). During the interpretation of data, I combined the noticing meaning signals and the framing interpretations as strategies for data interpretations. By using noticing the signal of meaning, the

researcher looks at different aspects that can help him to interpret such as organizing principles, oppositional talks, subtext, metonymy and metaphor. The researcher also created frameworks by using prior theories and literature as perimeters for interpretation (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This strategy helped to interpret the way people express their views, their antagonist views, their consent views, and their ways of using metaphors during the discussion. The second strategy which regards the working within a research approach provides to the researcher a guideline that helps the meaning-making process (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). It enabled the interpretation of data based on the literature and existing theories about good classroom learning climate at higher education.

By conclusion, in my research, I used a qualitative data approach by which the data were collected using focus group interviews. I analyzed the data using qualitative content analysis, and I interpreted it through a theoretical framework based on existing literature and theories.

4.

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON GOOD LEARNING CLIMATE

As I mentioned in chapter three, I decided to organize and conduct a training workshop on good learning climate, as an intervention for the university lecturers. The workshop took place from 21st to 22nd February 2017. The university lecturers and some academic leaders participated in the training. More details are found in the subchapters which follow including the objectives of the training, the didactical planning as well as the development of the training workshop.

4.1. Objectives of the training

The training workshop was entitled “In-service teacher training on quality teaching for university academic staff”. It was done jointly by I with my colleague Emmanuel Niyibizi. It focused on two indicators of quality teaching namely high activation by complex tasks done by Emmanuel Niyibizi and good learning climate and quality teaching enhancement for academic staff done by me. In this study, I focus on my training part regarding good learning climate in higher education. This topic has a clear link with chapter II because the main part of the content which was delivered in the training is described in that chapter.

This training workshop trained academic staff, both fulltime and part-time lecturers of one of Rwandan universities, on good learning climate to enhance the teaching quality. It aimed to provide to the teachers a clear understanding of the concept of good learning climate and its role in quality teaching development, and equip them with the skills to develop and maintain a good psychological environment for learning at university classrooms. Those objectives respond to the problem described in chapter 1 (1.1.). The trained teachers have already started applying the acquired skills for developing quality teaching. In relation to the problem where the teachers use the traditional methods which do not allow the learners to be free and engaged in learning activities (Mbabazi, Dahlgren & Fejes, 2012; Mugisha, 2010), the training was done in the way it was an example to learn from on how the teacher should engage students in their learning, and promote their freedom. In regards to the rote memorization and authoritarianism submission (Weinstein, Freedman & Hughson, 2007; Walker-Keleher, 2006), the training used the learner-centered methods and provided the skills to develop a climate which is healthy for the learning. They were trained on how to ensure justice, high expectation, laughing, and empathy from teacher to student, transparent standards of assessment and mutual respect between teacher and student in the classroom. In short, the training aimed to provide to the teachers the knowledge and skills they needed for developing and ensuring good learning climate in classroom.

4.2. The didactical planning

Every project to be successful requires a plan before it is being implemented. It is in this regard, I made a didactical

planning as a detailed plan of all the training activities. The didactical planning included all activities done in the training, how they were done, the materials used, the responsible for each activity as well as their respective assigned time. In the detail, explain this didactical planning used and the problem met in implementing it.

The training introduced to the trainees the overview of quality education and its aspects such as context, input, process, output and outcome. It introduced also the meaning of quality teaching and its different indicators including efficient classroom management, clarity in subject knowledge, high cognitive activation, and effective forms of repetition, good learning climate and Individual support. Then among those indicators high cognitive activation and good learning climate were focused on during the training. The trainees developed their skills on how they will develop quality in their everyday teaching by using complex tasks to develop the needed competences for their students. They learned how to elaborate those complex tasks and how to use them for activating the cognition of their students.

Secondly, they developed their own competences on developing good learning climate and how to maintain it in their classroom. They experimented how to ensure different indicators of good learning climate in classroom such respect, responsibility, justice, high expectations, laughing, and transparent standards of assessment. Lastly as the good learning climate has a close relationship with communication and how feedback is provided, the content of the training also included how to ensure good communication by means of constructive feedback to the learners. This training was delivered using the

participative and active pedagogy (PAP) methods. The methods used were brainstorming, silent reflection, pair discussion, reflection in groups about different topics, plenary presentation from groups, group presentation by posters, individual work by reflecting on different issues, role playing, making the mind map and sometimes input presentation from the trainer. Those methods are the methods, which foster the good learning climate in classroom but also which activate the cognition of the students (Krogull, Scheunpflug & Rwambonera, 2014).

4.3. The development of the training workshop

Before the training, the teachers lacked the skills to develop a classroom environment which support the learning as it was mentioned in chapter 1.1. During the training, different situations were created where they learned how to use participative methods to create a good learning environment which help the students to interact with the teachers with respect, justice and without fear and submission. They learned how to involve the students in the interaction where they can learn from each other.

The trainees were eager to know and get skills. This was shown by different questions they raised and different debates they made during the training sessions. When they were introduced to quality education in higher education, they discovered themselves that they don't focus their teaching on the students' outcomes rather they focus on the outputs. In other words, they focus on providing knowledge instead of providing skills which are required for the work market. To cover this gap, the trainees got the skills on developing the students' competence using complex tasks to activate their knowledge as well as the

skills on creating enthusiastic climate which makes easy the learning.

As a trainer and organizer of this training workshop, I learned many things including how to bring quality, and how cooperation and working with other is so helpful. Working in collaboration with my colleague Emmanuel for planning and implement the training together made it successful because we shared responsibilities, we advised and supported each other. I learned also that the plan should have different alternatives for remaining strong in the implementation. In teaching or in the training, someone may rely on the power point presentation, other materials like printed documents way be also available to be used in the case of the power cut or computer functioning problems.

5.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD LEARNING CLIMATE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This study focused on the implementation of good learning climate in higher education. It targeted the lecturers of one higher learning institution in Rwanda. Among them 7 lecturers participated in group discussions. Under this chapter, the data collected from group discussions are presented and analyzed using content analysis. The data described concern the lecturers' understanding of the issues of good learning climate in classroom, what they do to develop that environment and the challenges they meet.

5.1. Data description

The information described was obtained from the discussion of two different groups of lecturers from one university in Rwanda. Group A was made by four lecturers and group B by three lecturers. In this subchapter, I describe the understanding of lecturers about good learning climate, the how different aspects of learning climate are being developed and different challenges they are experiencing during the implementation.

5.1.1. University teachers' understanding of good learning climate

The data shows that lecturers have different perceptions about good learning climate. The lecturers of group B understand learning climate as a kind of relationship between the teacher and students in which the teacher teaches and students learn. One lecturer from group B said “[...] the climate is good when there is no insecurity, there is no noise”. The group members said that there is no quarrel among students themselves or between the students and teacher. The group B concluded that good learning climate is characterized by security in classroom. In group A, the lecturers perceive good learning climate as a classroom environment where the student has the right to provide his/her ideas freely. A lecturer from this group said that “[...] it is an environment where the teacher can make a follow up of each individual student. [...] if the relationship between teachers and students has no problem, the climate is good. [...] the climate is good if everyone is cared for.” The lecturers said that when there is good learning climate, the students are active and no one can sleep in the classroom. They are attentive. In this kind of environment, they said that the teacher can follow up the progress of each single individual student. The students have freedom and even have the right to tell the teacher what happened even in their families as barrier to their studies.

Considering the two groups, even though some lecturers limit their understanding of good learning climate to a silent classroom environment, where learners must learn and teachers teach, the learning climate is commonly

understood as a peaceful environment which facilitates learning within a classroom for Rwandan university teachers.

5.1.2. Learning climate in Rwandan higher education

In this subsection, I describe the data collected which are related to the implementation of good learning climate. In this study, the group discussions showed that lecturers are trying to move from the traditional teaching methods, which are passive in nature, to active methods.

In the discussion of group A, the lecturers said that they put the student into groups and then distribute the tasks to work on. The teachers themselves form the students' groups in order to make sure that everyone is included. During classroom activities, the teacher moves around the classroom to help the students who face some obstacles. One of them said that "It is different to the past days where students could only hear what the teacher says. Today they do research and get knowledge, they present what they have found and then the teacher comments and complements them". The lecturers also mentioned that this kind of teaching is a good way to foster friendship among the students.

While in the discussion of group B, the lecturers said that they provide the presentation of the content in the classroom and then they provide group or individual work at the end to deepen what the lecturer presented. One of them said that he provides handouts before he starts the teaching and he said "[...] the student can read in advance the content of the course and during the presentation, the teacher provokes the students' participation by asking

questions. [...] a number of students try to answer but others do not really want to participate actively". The group concluded that they use presentation because their courses are rather theoretical than practical and for those who have practical courses, they subdivide the class into groups.

Concerning the relationship in general, the lecturers from the two groups appreciate their relationship with students and the relationship between students. They said that their relationship with students is a friendly relationship.

The students are allowed to call the teachers using phones or chat with them through emails or other social media like WhatsApp about their studies. They added also that they don't observe any bad relationship among the students. The students do not fight or make noise. The teachers put them randomly in different working groups and work together peacefully and they concluded that this method is effective. One of the lecturers appreciated the methods by saying that "[...] it is a good way of teaching because it makes friendship among all students and not among some groups". They concluded saying that the relationship of either teacher with students or among students is good. But in discussion of lecturers from group B, the collaboration among students was questioned. The lecturers said that "... you deliver important information reserved to all students, but some keep it for themselves and do not share it with others. That is the kind of their relationship. They don't share information".

Good learning climate is observed through different aspects such as respect between students and teachers, students' responsibilities in learning, teachers' high expectation

towards the students, laughing, standards of assessment, communication in the classroom, and the feedback the teachers provide to students. The data concerning all those indicators are detailed in this study.

Teacher and student mutual respect

Concerning respect, the discussion from group A concluded that university students are mature people who must be respected. The teachers respect the students and vice versa. The students are taken as the people who are responsible for their activities. Both groups involved in the discussion agreed that the students are allowed to come to class with their phones, and to go out without disturbance when they want to take calls. Some students use this opportunity to go out and do whatever they want. The lecturers involved in discussion considered this as students' lack of respect towards the teacher. The respondents agreed that the teacher is and must be a manager of the classroom. For more emphasis, they said that the teacher must teach and the students must learn.

Students' responsibilities in their learning

The data show how students are assigned responsibilities in their studies. The lecturers in group A agreed that the teacher must engage the students in their learning. To engage the students in their learning, the teacher provides questions for reflection to be done by the students either individually or in group. This kind of learning is based on the students. They do research, analyze things and then prepare the presentation in order to share what they have done with the teacher and other students. After each presentation, the teacher completes where s/he finds the

gap on the side of students. The data show that how the teacher involves the students in their learning depending on the subject to be taught because the subject may dictate which teaching methods to use. The teaching methods also may differ depending on the teachers' background, training done or on experience with the students in the lesson. The teacher may change the methods to adjust to the difficulties of his/her students. The lecturers from group B said that "[...] there is a problem in teaching at different universities, especially at universities with evening and weekend programs. The time spent with teachers is very limited; it does not allow the teachers to continue monitoring the students' works". The lecturers said that the time they have in weekend or evening program is very limited. They mentioned that they fail to organize all needed activities which can involve the students' responsibilities such as students group works, students' presentations and then to provide feedback for each students' group presentation.

The lecturers from group B, in their discussion agreed that the teachers try to assign responsibilities to the students by giving them assignments whether individually or in groups but they claimed that the students are not really responsible. They mentioned that only few students are responsible, and they estimated between 20% and 30% of all students. The respondents proved this with some testimonies.

They said that when you end the chapter and you give the students the elements of the chapter which follows and tell them to read literature about it and come next time with a brief summary of something read, some students do it but others may come back with nothing. The group agreed

upon that the students don't like reading. They don't like to work hard.

The same group said that, when the students are given the work in groups, some of them immediately go away and do not participate in the work. Only one student or few students participate in the assignment given to the group, others are recorded as group member without participating. They don't take enough time to concentrate on the work, and many of them do it only to get a paper to submit to the teacher. They do not do it to acquire knowledge and skills; they just do it because they want marks. One lecturer also mentioned that he spares extra time for students in the lecturers' office reserved to handle students' problems in the subjects taught but no one comes. Therefore, some lecturers have opted for individual assignments rather than group assignments. They said that this leads the students to be more responsible for their work. But still, there are some students who do not take time to seriously do their assignments; they rather copy and paste from their colleagues or from the books. One lecturer in group B said that "[...] there are so many cheatings in assignments of students, you can give individual work, everyone works on his own but you find so many same sentences. There are so many cases like that. They are not able to work on their own but copy and paste from others".

The teachers who continue to use the group works, form the student groups themselves and supervise them until they finish the works. They said that they register the students' attendance in each group, and during presentations, they try to evaluate the participation of each individual student. Those teachers monitor attendance and those attendances

are later used to identify the one who did not participate in the group, and this one is punished. The students who skipped the group works are not given marks. This practice pushes irresponsible students to change their behavior. Those teachers tried to locate the cause of students' irresponsibility in their background. One of them said that "[...] I think even all responsibilities start in lower levels of education. They are normally acquired as habit of working hard. [...] they receive this habit in primary and secondary. Those ones are more responsible than the students who do not have this habit to work hard".

In short, the findings from group A show that the lecturers consider students as responsible and they try to engage them actively in their learning activities. While group B consider the students as the irresponsible people and they use punishments for making them responsible.

Lecturers' high expectations towards the students

The lecturers who participated in this study have two different expectations for their students. Some consider their students as people who have the potentiality to achieve a lot in their learning, while others considered them as people who are not prepared for university studies. During the discussion, group A agreed that the students are able to learn, know many things and that even the teacher can learn new knowledge from their students. In the discussion, one lecturer said that "they know many things, we have to explore them. As teachers, we learn also from them". Another lecturer from the same group said that when he starts the lessons, he expects his students who attended to get theoretical knowledge which will help them to explain things. He also expects them to

get skills to do things by themselves and to change their attitudes.

The discussion of group B concluded that the students are not responsible for their learning and not prepared for the university studies. They have the lower level of knowledge. One lecturer said that “They are not totally prepared for higher learning methods. [...] There is a problem of background [...] the challenge is the students background and reading culture”. This implies, as they said, the way the teachers organize the teaching and learning activities. The teachers use presentation in their teaching to provide enough explanations and provide regular continuous assessment to help them get knowledge. The teacher considers the students as unable to do research and develop their knowledge. When they are working individually, they copy and paste from internet or from their colleagues. And when they are put in groups, only few people do the assignments, for others the strong students do the assignment.

Fun and laughing opportunities in classroom

The data from the discussions indicated that the lecturers who try to introduce some funny stories, they are faced with the language barrier. One lecturer said that “When I want to tell them a funny story, I tell them in Kinyarwanda”. When they tell the stories in English, the students do not laugh because they don’t understand what the teacher says. When the stories are put, or translated in Kinyarwanda which is their mother tongue, they understand. At this level, it becomes a fun and relaxing material which can create laugh.

In general, fun and laughing opportunities organized by teachers were not really addressed in the discussions.

Standards of assessment

University teachers organize different assessments. There are progressive assessments and final assessments. For the progressive assessments, the lecturers who participated in the discussions said that every time when teachers are teaching, they ask questions to the students to assess their level of understanding, and detect where the students have weaknesses. They provide individual, pair and group assignments as well as quizzes, and mid-term examinations. All those assessments help them to follow the progress of each student. Those lecturers mentioned that some of those assessments are marked and combined with the final examinations results. The success or failure of students is based on the above combined results.

For every assessment, the teachers provide the instructions which guide the students in answering the questions. Those instructions are mentioned on the assessment questionnaires or given to all students together before they start the assignments or examinations. When the teachers set examinations, they also provide the marking scheme which serves as a standard for marking to ensure the fairness of the teacher. Each question on the marking scheme has appropriate marks, and each element the teacher wants in that question is awarded marks. One lecturer said that “we stick on standards. We have to set the marking scheme; each question must have appropriate marks. [...] if a question has 5 marks it has 5 elements we are looking for”. The marking scheme helps the teacher to avoid bias in assigning marks to the works done by the students.

The lecturers also mentioned that they deal with cheating cases. In group discussion, they said that for the assignments, some students copy and paste from books or from their colleagues and they think that the teachers will not discover it. The teachers do not tolerate this kind of cheating, they provide the mark “zero” to the students with this behavior. For the students who cheat from each other, the teachers punish both the one who cheated and the one he/she cheated from. One lecturer said: “[...] we show them [...] please, you don’t have marks because we do not know who cheated from one another”. This is done because, if the work was done outside class time, it is not easy to detect the one who copied from the other. It is also a way of making students responsible for security of their works.

Ensuring justice in classroom

As mentioned above (in the subtitle of standards for assessment), the lecturers ensure justice in providing and marking the students works with fairness, and then provide feedback to every student. The group discussions concluded that the fairness in marking reduces students’ claims after getting the feedback on their work. In the feedback, as the lecturers said in discussion, the teacher shows the students why they answered successfully some questions and failed others. The problem which is common to lecturers, as they mentioned, is the delay of the feedback given to the students after doing their continuous assessment tests (CATs), mid-terms and final exams. The marks for CATs and mid-term exam should be provided progressively before the students sit for the final examinations. This must be done to help the students work on their weaknesses and get ready for final examination.

Therefore, the lecturers understand justice as ensuring fairness in dealing with the students' works, CATs and examinations.

Communication and providing feedback

The data described the status of communication between teachers and students, as well as the communication among students themselves within the university concerned by the study. They show also how the teachers provide feedback to their students. The lecturers in the discussion mentioned that the communication among the students is effective because they are using diversified communication medias. They create their own brogues to interact and chat about their studies. They use the social media to share information and support each other. For the communication between lecturers and students, the lecturers in the discussion mentioned that their relationship with students is a friendly relationship today than in the past because of communication technology. The students are allowed to phone or chart with them about their studies.

What the lecturers who participated in the discussion considered as a big challenge in their communication with students is the interaction within the classroom using English as medium of instruction. It is not easy for the students to interact with teachers, or even among themselves. It requires most of the teachers to translate what they are teaching in Kinyarwanda. One lecturer said that "The interaction you are saying in English is not possible, let us say that it is not possible if you don't translate in Kinyarwanda". Some students do not participate when only English is used in class but when they are allowed to speak in any language they want, they actively participate in class activities.

Concerning feedback, the lecturers in the discussion said that after each evaluation, being a written assignment or oral presentation, the teachers appreciate the work done by the students. They show them their strengths and where they have weaknesses, and they show them how to improve. This is done normally for small classes. For big classes, the teachers provide only general feedback to the students when the assignments are done in classroom. The students work and show what they are able to do, then the teacher checks what the students did and then propose answer together on the board. “[...] in practice, the teacher cannot find the possibility of providing feedback to each student. The teachers lack the time to contact and chart with them considering the big number of students she/he has to meet”. The group discussions concluded that the individual feedback is not possible for large classes.

5.1.3. Challenges faced by the teacher in developing good learning climate

The data collected showed that there are different challenges related to the development of good learning climate. The first challenges are related to the use of teaching hours in the modular system and the needed resources. Some lecturers in group discussions claimed that teaching hours are very few and it is not possible for to assign responsibilities to students through different assignments. In addition, there is a problem of access to resources which can help the students to work on their own. As an example, one lecturer said that “you may tell the students to go and read. [...] you may say that the students will use e-resources but even they universities which claim to have internet, when all students are using it,

it becomes not effective, not enough and when they return in countryside, there is no electricity, no computer”. The students don’t have the resources which can help them to read or don’t find the appropriate books in the library, mainly because they have the problem of internet connection to access them. The second challenge is related to mastery of the language used in class. The language of instruction at university in Rwanda is English. Given that this language has recently been made the medium of instruction, the students who come to university do not master it because they were taught by the teachers also who do not master it. Some students, especially the mature students who finished their secondary school five years ago, do not have a strong foundation in English. A lecturer in the discussion mentioned “[...] using English when we are teaching, really it is not easy, every word you say you have to put it in Kinyarwanda [...], if it is a statement, you put it in Kinyarwanda, they don’t know English.” This language problem constitutes a barrier to the classroom interaction between the teacher and students. The students do not understand what the teachers say. It is also a barrier to the students’ reading proficiency. It is not easy for the students to read and understand what they are reading. Due to this language problem, the students tend to memorize without understanding what they are learning.

Another challenge is related to the management of large classes. The teacher may expect the students to perform well in the subject that is going to be taught but he/she fails to support each student individually to enable them to achieve learning. One of the lecturers said “[...] the teacher check what the students did and then answer together on the board but the individual feedback in our context is not

possible. It is not possible because of teaching big classes like 300 students in the same class". If you have 200 or 300 students in the same class, it is not easy for a teacher to check each individual work and provide individual feedback in the context where the university does not even assign the workload that takes into consideration the size of the classes to be taught. Furthermore, some lecturers said that when marking the examination copies for large class, the lecturers fail to stick to the standards because of the pressure to submit the marks. The marking time and concentration they attribute to the first copies marked and to the last may be different. The last copies are marked without concentration because of tiredness. As they said, this can lead to bias, and the attribution of marks which are not proportional to the students' answers. In short, the lecturers identified the main challenges hindering the implementation of good learning climate including insufficient resources facilitating learning, inadequate language mastery and large classes' management.

5.2. Summary of the findings

In this subheading, I provide a summary of the results on how lecturers implement good learning climate in a university. Basing on the data, the lecturers from Group A understand the concept of good learning climate. The elements mentioned in their discussion like engaging actively the students in their own learning and when their teachers ensure that they give them the opportunity to express their ideas and provide them with individual feedback to their activities. The climate is good when the students have enough confidence in their teachers to tell them the problem they encounter in their learning.

This means that the lecturers understand a classroom environment as where students are active and have confidence in their teachers. It is an environment where the teachers interact with every single student to ease his/her learning progression. This perception includes the element of good learning climate like making the students responsible, high expectation, trust in teachers, equity, and freedom of speech. While for the lecturers from group B, the data show that they don't really understand the concept of good learning climate. They limit their understanding of good learning climate to students' silence in the classroom when they are teaching. They believe that the students should keep quiet in the classroom in order to learn. This lecturers' perception does not help the students' learning because it leads to the use of lecturing methods for teaching, which does not allow the learners to actively participate in their learning. Combining the findings from the two groups, the lecturers' understanding about good learning climate is still problematic.

Concerning the implementation of good learning climate in classroom, the data show that some elements of good learning climate are being developed but others are not being developed. This shows that there is a weakness in its implementation.

Basing on the findings from group A, the lecturers have started to implement good climate which fosters learning. They have high expectation of achievement towards their students. They have in mind that the students can learn and get knowledge and skills. They have a background to base on and even the teachers learn many things from them. The teachers who have this mindset organize their

teaching in a way that makes their students responsible. They engage the students in their own learning. Instead of using lecturing, the students read, reflect and share experiences on different topics planned to be taught. In this situation, the teacher is in the classroom to provide learning materials, facilitate, guide and moderate the learning session. This means that some elements of good learning climate are being implemented such as high expectation, responsibility and standards for assessment.

Even though the university is trying to encourage the use of active methods in teaching, the findings show that the practice of teaching based on traditional methods in which the students are not involved in the learning/teaching process still exists and dominates. The data provide different elements to prove this. As examples, some lecturers stick to lecturing instead of facilitating the learning. The teacher is considered as a chief in class and ensures discipline by walking around the classroom. The teachers tend to provide unplanned quizzes and attribute marks to the attendance to keep the students in the classroom. For ensuring again discipline and attendance in classroom, the teacher use to punish the irregular students. As the teachers use different punishment to maintain their students in classroom, it shows that the level of mutual respect between teacher and students is low.

Basing on the data from group B, the lecturers have low expectation for their students. This is shown by mistrust they have towards their students' background and their ability to successfully handle the university studies. They accuse them of being lazy in their learning. They affirm that very few students have the ability to assume their

responsibility of learning. This shows that the lecturers perceive negatively the students. Consequently, this misconception slows the way the teachers could encourage and support the students in their learning especially for slow learners. Basing also on those findings, I may say that the lack of student's responsibility is not located at the level of student but at the level of the teachers. The students become responsible depending on how the lesson was organized by the teacher. For making the students responsible, the teacher must organize his/her teaching in the way that the students are attracted and engaged in learning. As data shows, the lecturers push the students to attend their teaching, and even use the punishment for maintaining them in class. This shows that the lecturers do not put emphasis on creating a fun and enthusiastic classroom environment where the students laugh and learn in a relaxed environment.

Basing on the data, the lecturers limit their understanding and practice of justice on the fairness during evaluations. This is not sufficient because justice extends to different activities and services the teachers offer to the students including equal encouragement to the students, avoid different forms of favoritism and providing responsibilities. Concerning the relationship in general, even though communication is being fostered and there were no violence and conflicts observed among the students themselves or between the teachers and students, one group discussion concluded that the students do not share the information. Some students get the information and keep it for themselves and don't share it with others. This means that the students learning community is not facilitated. The students do not easily learn from each other.

Concerning the challenges, the lecturers and students confuse contact hours (40% hours) with the total hours reserved for teaching and learning a module. They use only contact hours and don't use the remaining hours for students' independent learning activities. The teachers do not complete the hundred hours of the modules. They plan for only 40% of hours used in face-to-face sessions. This confusion limits the lecturers to engage the students in their learning. Therefore, it becomes a barrier to the time the students should use for developing their responsibilities.

The barriers to the interaction between the students and teachers include the size of classes taught and the mastery of the language of instruction. The students are not able to communicate with teachers and among themselves in English which is their language of instruction. The interaction is not strong when the translation in the mother tongue is not done. The interaction is also strongly weakened when the size of class is big. The teacher is not able to provide the individual support to the students. The feedback after the students' assignments and exams delays, and when it is done, it is not personalized, but general. This does not help the students to make good progression. Those findings imply the weakness of communication and interaction between lecturers and students. When the interaction is not good in class, learning is paralyzed.

In short, the lecturers have a limited understanding about good learning climate. The implementation of good learning climate is at the low level. The elements like justice, high expectation, responsibility, laughing are the less understood and implemented. In addition, the major challenges which are experienced include large classes'

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management, low level of proficiency in the language of instruction, and misconception of modular system handicap the implementation of good learning climate.

6.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to analyze the implementation of good learning climate in Rwandan higher education. In reaction to the problem of ensuring good learning climate in Rwandan universities (chapter 1.2), a controlled intervention followed by research was implemented. The purpose of the intervention was to introduce the concept of good learning climate in Rwandan higher education by training teaching staff. Three months later, research was carried out to investigate how trained teachers implement good learning climate in their teaching. In the following reflection, I confront the results of my intervention and research to the stated research problem and I discuss them in relation to the scientific discourse on learning climate and quality teaching.

The intervention consisted of training lecturers on how to create and maintain good learning climate in a teaching classroom. During the training, I tried to serve as an example by applying the indicators of good learning climate in the training room. Additionally, I used participative and active pedagogy methods. Those methods as mentioned in 2.1, they foster the development of quality teaching. In my didactical planning of the training, I emphasized on detailing contents and the methods used to deliver it. In the training delivery, different aspects of quality teaching

as they were introduced in 2.1 were shared and practiced. Combining the results of intervention and the results of research, two major findings are discussed. It was found that the lecturers have a limited understanding about good learning climate. The level of implementation of good learning climate is at a very low level.

6.1. Conceptual understanding about good learning climate

The findings from my study show that the lecturers understand good learning climate as a peaceful environment which helps the students to learn in a good way. It is an environment where students trust their teachers until they tell them all the problems which disturb their learning. This perception is positive as it is meeting the theory Y climate which is preferred in learning climate implementation. This is really an understanding which corroborates with the definitions provided by the scientists in teaching. A good learning climate is a psychological environment without disruptive behaviors towards learning (OECD, 2009). It is a learning atmosphere which favors the student - teacher relationship and the student's satisfaction of being part of the class (Hattie, 2012; Scherens, 2004). But from research finding, that understanding was contrasted by a group of lecturers when they confused the peaceful environment for good learning climate as the silence of students in classroom while teachers are teaching. This misunderstood perception lies in the theory X climate which is not preferred in quality teaching. Therefore, the lecturers in general have a limited understanding on good learning climate.

That limited understanding of the lecturers about learning climate may be explained by what Lipowsky (2015) said criticizing the short professional development. Lipowsky mentioned that the in-service training done once and with short time is not sufficient to bring change. The intervention specifically on good learning climate was done in one day. That time was not sufficient to make change in the conceptual understanding. The literature affirms that the conceptual understanding to be changed requires gradually trainings and it requires time, follow up and support (Halliday & Soden, 1998; Guskey, 1986). Yet the training was once and the time which was allocated was short. The lecturers did not find enough time to reflect deeply on the concept and aspects of good learning climate within their daily practice. Professional development to be successful depends on to what extent lecturers have found the opportunities to be actively engaged in analysis of their teaching and learning process (US department of Education, 2006). In addition, the time between the training and the research data collection was also too short, only three month. The time was not enough to make follow-up and support those who were struggling. Therefore, the duration allocated to in-service teacher training necessitates reflections in higher education.

6.2. Implementation of good learning climate

The findings of my research show that lecturers limitedly implement good learning climate in their teaching. High expectation, justice, responsibilities and standards for assessment were reported to be implemented by teachers who participated in the study. On the other hand, they continue to use the traditional teaching methods which do

not help to establish a good learning climate. My research findings show that they failed to trust their students' ability, to make their students responsible, and to organize their teaching in a way it brings relax to the students. It means that they are not developing theory Y climate which is appropriate for quality teaching. The theory Y climate trusts the students' ability to work autonomously, collectively and creatively with the guide of the teacher (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Biggs, 2001; Hoyle, English & Steffy, 1985).

This limited implementation of good learning climate may be explained in different ways. First developing good learning climate is more linked to the constructed personality of lecturers. Considering the theory of professional development, it is linked to beliefs and habits the teachers acquire long time ago in their social and professional life (Lipowsky, 2015). Therefore, implementing good learning climate implies the change of those habits and beliefs. According to Guskey (2002), for the teachers to change their belief and attitudes it may take time because they have to experience first the result of the change from impact on their students. When initiating the change through professional development, the lecturers need support and feedback from the colleagues it means they need the professional learning community (Fullan, 2006; Lipowsky, 2015).

In short, to bring about change in higher education, context, content, duration and characteristics of trainees are to be reflected deeply.

7.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research on Rwandan higher education shows that the students experience inadequate learning climate in Rwandan higher education (Mbabazi, Dahlgren & Fejes, 2012; Hilker, 2011; Mugisha, 2010; Walker-Keleher, 2006). As a contribution to that problem, a controlled intervention followed by research was implemented. The intervention was done in a form of in-service teacher training on good learning climate for lecturers in one Rwandan higher learning institution. The intervention was organized to raise the lecturers' awareness about its meaning and implementation. The research aimed to analyze the implementation of good learning climate in higher education. I wanted to find out how lecturers understand good learning climate, the mechanisms they use to implement it in their teaching classrooms and the challenges they face during its implementation. As research methodology, the data were collected using two focus group discussions and were analyzed using content analysis.

Results of the study show that the lecturers have a limited understanding of good learning climate. They confuse it with quietness of students in classroom and absence of disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Additionally, the limited trust of students' ability, domination of lecturing

methods with less attracting and engagement of students, as well as marking attendance as means to maintain students in the class show that lecturers who participated in the study at hand poorly implement good learning climate in their teaching. Basing on the above findings from my research, the following suggestions are drawn for the praxis and sciences in the field of higher education.

The results from the research show that the lecturers resisted to the change in regards to the conceptual understanding and implementation of good learning climate. The literature says that to reduce the resistance a strong professional development must be planned and executed especially the learning by network where colleagues from pair institutions learn from each other (Driel, Beijaard & Verloop, 2001; Ho, Watkins & Kelly, 2001). Therefore, the university leaders are recommended to plan different kinds of academic staff development including learning by network, in-service teacher training workshops and seminars, and public lectures especially on how to develop quality Teaching.

The management of large classes was reported as a challenge when developing good learning climate. With hundreds of students in classroom, it becomes complicated for the teacher to treat each one considering his/her needs, to provide individual feedback, or assigning each one's responsibilities. This challenge also is not particular to a Rwandan university, it was found by different scholars. The large size of a class reduces the interaction of students with their teacher and leads to the use of lecturing methods of teaching (Devlin & Samarawikrema, 2010; Mulryan-Kyne, 2010). Considering this challenges, a further research is recommended to

find out the alternative teaching methods, which can be used to ensure individual support when teaching large classes is concerned in the context of Rwanda. Another challenge found is the mastery of language of instruction. It was found that the interaction in the classroom is weak when English is used. This challenge is linked to Rwandan context because English is newly introduced in education as a medium for instruction (Kagwesage, 2013). Basing on system theory (Chen & Stroup, 1993), and consider higher education as system which can interact with other systems, the problem of language cannot be solved at university only. English can be focused on in primary and secondary schools in order to prepare the students to learn and succeed the university studies. Therefore, the ministry of education and the churches education departments are recommended to put emphasis on English teaching in primary and secondary education for preparing the pupils to use English in their university studies. The universities in Rwanda are recommended also to carry out a research in order to reflect about the alternative mechanisms which can be used to raise the level of English for university students.

Appendix I. Didactical planning for the training

Topic: In-service teachers training on Good Learning Climate for Quality Teaching. Case of university teaching staff.

Place: IMPEQ classroom

Date: 21-22 February 2017

Time: 8h00-4h00

What	How	Material	Who	How long	Total time	Moderator
Arrival of participants & Registration Welcome Opening speech			Jacqueline DVCA VC	 5 10	8.00 8.40 8.45	DQA
Objectives and overview of the training	<p>Expectations: participants write down their expectations individually.</p> <p>Flashlight: participants give their expectations to be written on the whiteboard.</p> <p>Objectives of the training: presentation of objectives and related content using problem-objective analysis as well as timetable.</p>	Notebooks (part.)	Emmanuel	5 5	8.50 8.55	
		PPP	Edouard	10	9.05	
Session one: Educational Quality: What it is and aspects						
Educational quality- Meaning and aspects	<p>Card query method: Ask trainees to write their ideas about quality education on cards and post them on the wall.</p> <p>Basing on the ideas of participants, I will explain the aspects of quality education (input, process, context, output, and outcome).</p> <p>After explaining the major aspects of educational quality, participants will be given empty sheet with only aspects of educational quality. They will work in 4 groups to complete by putting indicators (each group for one aspect).</p> <p>After completing sheets, they will be given the sheets with aspects and indicators (UNESCO, 2004) to compare with what they would have written. In the plenary, I will guide the discussion on what each indicator means. I will insist on the difference between outputs and outcomes.</p>	Cards PPP Working sheet	Christine Participants Christine	10 5 10 10	9.15 9.20 9.30 9.40	

What	How	Material	Who	How long	Total time	Moderator	
Session two: Competence-based teaching and criteria of quality teaching							
Competence-based teaching	<p>Justification of competence-based teaching: Referring to findings of studies conducted in Rwanda (HEC, 2015; Mbabazi, 2013) shows gaps identified among university graduates.</p> <p>Group work: <i>What do you understand by competence in the context of education? What teaching methods used to enhance students' competences?</i> Participants will be asked to answer the questions in groups of 4 members.</p> <p>Group presentation: Each group will present what they discussed on one aspect: Meaning of competence, competence-based teaching methods.</p> <p>Input presentation: Completing what participants would have said on meaning of competence. Introducing levels of competences through some models such PISA (Reading), Muller's pyramid of competences and National Qualification Framework guiding module description in Higher education of Rwanda.</p> <p>For competence-based teaching, reflection will be on learning outcomes, content, teaching methods, and assessment.</p> <p>Individual reflection on levels of competences: participants reflect on the levels of competences within modules they teach.</p> <p>Through flashlight, I will collect some participants expressing their reflection about levels of competences.</p> <p>For quality teaching, I will introduce by showing that there are evidence-based criteria and indicators which can serve as framework of assessing and developing quality teaching.</p> <p>Input presentation (six criteria and indicators of Quality teaching). Before going to break, I will tell participants that the training will focus on two criteria: High cognitive activation by tasks (Emmanuel) and good learning climate (Edouard).</p>	PPP	Emmanuel-RW	5	9.45		
				Emmanuel-RW	15		10.00
				Participants	15		10.15
				Emmanuel	13		10.28
			Manilla paper & Flipcharts				
				Participants & Emmanuel	12		10.40
Quality teaching- Criteria and indicators-Overview				Emmanuel	10		10.50
			PPP	Edouard			

Good Learning Climate in Higher Education

What	How	Material	Who	How long	Total time	Moderator
Health break (10.50 min – 11.10)						
Session three: High cognitive activation by complex tasks						
Meaning of high cognitive activation	Pair work: Asking participants what they understand by cognitive activation. By flashlight, I will collect ideas and explain what cognitive activation means and its relation to educational quality.		Participants & Emmanuel	10	11.20	
	Individual reflection: Participants will be asked to show teaching methods that can cognitively stimulate students in the process of teaching and learning. I will explain that research shows that students learn when they are cognitively challenged by being given complex tasks.	Papers	Emmanuel	10	11.10	
Complex tasks- Characteristics	<p>Input presentation- complex tasks as cognitive activating technique in teaching. I will explain the meaning of task and what characterize complex task.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given for students to learn • Related to real life of students (professional or day-to-day) • Address different levels of competences and • Students work responsibly. • They may need some material or help. • They may produce a product. <p>In green, they are the most important characteristics.</p> <p>I will also differentiate simple and complicated from complex task as well as the importance of complex tasks.</p>	Posters	Emmanuel	Pres 15	11.30	
Analysis of complex tasks	<p>Group work: Participants will be given complex tasks to analyze in light of characteristics of complex tasks presented above. I will develop complex tasks related to clusters of specialization at PIASS: languages, Theology, Education sciences, development studies, economic s and business). Four complex tasks will be given.</p> <p>Presentation: Each group will present the results of the analysis by</p>	Ws	Emmanuel & Participants	15	11.40	
			Emmanuel Participants	15	12.00	

What	How	Material	Who	How long	Total time	Moderator
	showing characteristics of complex tasks present in each task. Reflection: Participants will individually tell lessons learnt from the above analysis.			10	12.05	
Complex tasks: Elaboration I	I will ask participants to elaborate of complex tasks in their respective groups (four clusters: Languages, education sciences, Theology and Development sciences). After elaboration, two groups will present and receive comments from participants and the trainer.	Papers and flipcharts	Emmanuel Participants	E 40 15	12.45 1.00	
Lunch (1.00-2pm)						
Session four: Invention and reflection on the use of complex tasks						
Complex tasks: Elaboration II	Elaboration of complex tasks: Each participant will be asked to develop one complex task drawn from taught courses. Mutual feedback: Each participant will be asked to find a partner for mutual feedback. Plenary: One participant from each stratum will present by showing the task developed and characteristics of complex tasks within the same task.	Papers	Participants Participants and Emmanuel	40 10 20	2.40 2.50 3.10	
Use of complex tasks: When & strategies	Group work: Reflection on when and some strategies of using complex tasks in teaching and learning process. Ideas are collected through flashlight. Reflection: Participants will be given sample of final examination papers and analyze them (two per group). During the analysis, they will see if there are complex tasks and what can be improved.	Ws	Participants & Emmanuel	15 10	3.25 3.35	
Homework	Homework: participants will be given a homework of elaborating one complex tasks from modules he / she teaches	-	Emmanuel Participants	5	3.40	
Closing: Announcement & prayer	I will thank participants, give the announcement for the next day and closing with prayer.	-	Moderator	5	3.45	
Evaluation of the day	Ask participants to put the sign x for his or her appreciation about the training on the flipchart: Content, methods, relevance, applicability (smiles). This will be done after	Flipchart	Emmanuel & Participants	5	3.50	

What	How	Material	Who	How long	Total time	Moderator
	groups have done on different indicators. Input presentation: In order to complete what the groups have mentioned, I will present the role of and strategies to ensure good learning climate.	PPP				
Health break (10.50 min – 11.10)						
Session six: Exercise on developing good classroom learning climate for quality teaching						
Exercise on developing good learning climate in classroom	Individual work: Each participant will choose two indicators of good learning climate which appears to be the least developed in his/her teaching experience and develop different strategies he/she will use to develop it in his/her teaching classroom. After the trainer will organize a game where they will stand up and make a circle in front singing and dancing, after a particular time give a signal to make the groups depending on the number he wants and within the groups they share different strategies they have elaborated for developing good learning climate in their classroom.	Working Papers	Participants Edouard	30	11h40	
			Edouard & participants	30	12h10	
Session seven: Development of good learning climate through communication						
Develop good learning climate by making good communication in the classroom	A role play: The trainer summarizing the previous content and reacting on two students' disturbances in the classroom by blaming the first and using "I message" for the second. Reflection: ask participants to analyze the two ways of reacting on students' disturbances [in pairs and plenary]. Input presentation: Why good communication, the use of "I message" to ensure good learning climate in class.	PPP	Edouard Participants Edouard	5 15 10	12.15 12.30 12.40	
Exercise on I message	Individual working and Mutual feedback: Each participant will construct an 'I message' reacting on one of the following situations: charting on whatsapp in the classroom, student who did not do assignment, student who was absent during the last session, then shows it to his/her partner. At the end some examples made will be shared in plenary.	Papers	Participant Edouard	20	13.00	

Good Learning Climate in Higher Education

What	How	Material	Who	How long	Total time	Moderator
Lunch (1.00-2pm)						
Session eight: Development of good learning climate by providing constructive feedback						
Constructive Feedback and good learning climate	<p>Group sharing: The participant will share what they understand by feedback and how they provide it to students.</p> <p>Input presentation on meaning and strategies of providing constructive feedback to students as well as how it enhances good learning climate.</p> <p>Role play: Within pair groups, each one will play a role of providing feedback to his/her partner (one will be a teacher and another student and vice versa) on the exercise done on I message.</p>	PPP	Christine	15	14.15	
			Christine	20	14.35	
			Participants	20	15.55	
Take home message	Participants will be given cards where they will write their take home message from the training. The cards will be posted on manila paper.	Cards	Participants Emmanuel Edouard	20	15.15	
Evaluation and Recommendations	Evaluation will be done in two steps. First of all, each group will be given a questionnaire to fill. And plenary sessions where the whole group will share what was appreciated and areas for improvement for future teacher training. We will end by thanking participants.		Participants	25	15.40	
Closing remarks Prayer			VC	10	15.50	

Appendix II. Focus group discussion guide

Introduction text

Good morning and welcome to this group sharing about teaching experience. I want to learn from your teaching experience in higher education. I let you now that I am recording the discussion because I don't want to miss any information. I may insure you that the information you provide will be kept confidentially and used only for research purpose. Well come once again to the discussion

Discussion guiding questions

1. You are all lecturers and you have different experiences in teaching at higher education institutions. Can you share one another about how you do teaching?
2. How do you organise the teaching?
3. Can you share about the interactions of teacher and students within the classroom?
4. In the process of teaching and learning, different assessments such as progressive and final assessments are organized and done. Can we share how you prepare and manage them?
5. Can you talk a little a bit about your relationship with students?
6. When doing your teaching activities, you may meet with different challenges related to good learning climate development. Can you discuss on different challenges you face and how you cope with them?
7. In the process of teaching and learning, different

assessments such as progressive and final assessments are organized and one. Can you share one another how you prepare and manage them?

Probing questions

8. How do you assign responsibilities to the students?
9. How do you ensure the order in your respective classroom?
10. How is the relationship between students themselves?
11. How are the students responsible in their learning?
12. How are the students motivated for learning?
13. How do you manage the student's activities?
14. Can you discuss a little a bit about learning climate in your respective classrooms?
15. Is there anything left for sharing about your teaching?

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Abstract

The study topic “Good learning climate in Higher Education: Case of Rwanda” was taken as a reaction to the practice of education which does not ensure the good learning environment in higher education classroom. This book provides the answers to the question on how teachers in higher education in Rwanda implement good learning climate in teaching. It describes the training done as intervention to equip teachers with competences on how to develop the climate which pushes the students to learn with enthusiasm. After the training, during the implementation, the author collected the data on how the teachers perceive the learning climate in their teaching activities, the mechanisms they use and the challenges they met when ensuring adequate learning climate in their teaching.

The data collected were analysed using content analysis and interpreted basing on the theoretical framework. The major results found include the misconception of some lecturers in regard to good learning climate, where they confuse it with the quietness of students in their teaching. The findings show that the lecturers implemented the good learning climate development at the low level as some did not understand it clearly while others resisted to the change of their old practices. And those who tried to develop good learning climate, were hindered by the overpopulation of the classrooms, the low level of instruction language proficiency for the students and the misunderstanding of the modular system for lecturers.

Résumé

Le thème «Le bon climat d'apprentissage dans l'enseignement supérieur : Cas du Rwanda » a été pris pour faire une réaction sur la pratique d'enseignement qui ne considère pas le bon climat d'apprentissage dans les classes universitaires au Rwanda. Ce livre répond à la question sur comment les enseignants universitaires mettent en pratique le bon climat d'apprentissage dans l'enseignement. On a décrit la formation faite comme intervention pour entraîner les enseignants sur comment développer un bon climat d'apprentissage qui pousse les étudiant à apprendre avec enthousiasme. Après l'intervention de formation, pendant la mise en pratique des connaissances et compétences acquises, l'auteur a collecté les données sur l'attitude des enseignants, les mécanismes qu'ils utilisent et les défis rencontrés dans la pratique du bon climat d'apprentissage.

Les données collectées sont analysées à l'aide de la méthode d'analyse de contenu et interprétées en se servant du cadre théorique. Les résultats trouvés incluent la fausse image de quelques enseignants sur le bon climat d'apprentissage qui ne le distingue pas du silence des étudiants dans la classe. La mise en pratique du bon climat d'apprentissage est à bas niveau, quelques enseignants n'ont pas bien compris le concept du bon climat d'apprentissage, tandis que les autres ne veulent pas changer leurs pratiques quotidiennes. Ceux qui ont mis en pratique le bon climat d'apprentissage ont été empêchés par la surpopulation des classes, le bas niveau d'expression des étudiants et le mauvais entendement du système modulaire par les enseignants.

Edouard NTAKIRUTIMANA is a graduate from International Master of Educational Quality in developing countries countries, University of Bamberg, Germany. He is a lecturer at Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS) and Coordinator of a campus located at Karongi in Rwanda.