



The Impact of Lutheran Schools on Education in the Haute-Matsiatra Region, Madagascar: Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

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Abstract: *This study examines the current state of Lutheran schools in the Haute-Matsiatra region of Madagascar, recognizing education as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of societal development. Despite their important role, these schools face significant challenges, including declining enrollment, inadequate teacher compensation, and a dearth of qualified personnel. Drawing upon data collected over a three-year period (2019-2022), the research delves into the multifaceted issues impacting the quality of education within this network. A critical gap identified is the absence of established criteria for staff recruitment, which significantly hinders the institution's ability to attract and retain high-quality educators. The study's findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address these challenges. Key recommendations include investing in robust teacher training programs, implementing competitive recruitment and retention strategies, fostering strong school-community partnerships, and conducting further research to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of these issues. By implementing these recommendations, Lutheran schools can effectively overcome the identified obstacles and continue to provide a high-quality education that empowers students and contributes meaningfully to the socio-economic development of the region.*

Keywords: *Lutheran schools, Madagascar, education quality, teacher training, development*

I. Introduction

In Madagascar, the national education system bears the critical responsibility of equipping students with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for academic and professional success. Recognizing the pivotal role of education in societal advancement, governments worldwide assume the duty of providing all citizens with access to quality education. This commitment is deeply rooted in the understanding that education is not merely a privilege but an inherent human right (Lutheran Schools in the World, <https://www.lutheran.edu.au/about/lutheraneducation/>, accessed December 14, 2024). By empowering individuals with knowledge and skills, education serves as a powerful catalyst for breaking the cycle of poverty. As Nelson Mandela eloquently stated, "Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world" (Mandela, n.d.). Though known for his more radical views, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a prominent figure in the Civil Rights Movement, emphasized the importance of education for social and political change (King, 1947). He

believed that education was crucial for empowering individuals and breaking down barriers of discrimination. Similarly, former US President John F. Kennedy recognized the vital role of education in national development. He famously stated, "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education" (Kennedy, 1962, retrieved from <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/235412>). These individuals, along with many others, have all highlighted the transformative power of education in shaping individuals, societies, and the world at large.

The school's mission is to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the workforce. This aligns with the fundamental right to education enshrined in Article 23 of the Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Madagascar, which states: Every child has the right to instruction and education, with parents retaining the freedom to choose the educational path that best suits their child" (Constitution de la quatrième République, article 23, p. 14, 2010). Recognizing their crucial role in national development, Lutheran churches in Madagascar have established a network of schools dedicated to providing quality education to the nation's youth.

In Madagascar, educational institutions affiliated with religious missions are classified as private entities. Article 25 of the Malagasy Constitution explicitly recognizes and guarantees the right to private education, stipulating that such institutions must adhere to legal standards concerning hygiene, morality, and the quality of instruction (Constitution de la quatrième République, article 23, p. 14, 2010)

This constitutional provision allows for the establishment of private schools, and the Lutheran network constitutes one of six national denominational branches affiliated with the Office National de l'Enseignement Privé (ONEP). While operating within the framework of the Lutheran private education system, these schools face significant competition and necessitate a robust approach to both financial management and pedagogical practices.

A significant challenge facing Lutheran schools in Madagascar today is a decline in student enrollment, exacerbated by issues such as inadequate teacher compensation and a lack of qualified personnel at both administrative and teaching levels. These factors are crucial to the overall success of the schools. Furthermore, our research revealed a concerning degree of instability within the management structures of these institutions across all levels, particularly in the areas of pedagogy and financial oversight.

A critical gap in our understanding of Lutheran schools in Madagascar lies in the specific skills and criteria required for staff recruitment. To address this, we undertook a study focusing on 'Lutheran Schools in Madagascar: Impacts, Problems, and Proposals for Improvement,' with a specific focus on the Haute-Matsiatra region.

This study encompasses a three-year period, spanning from 2019 to 2022. Investigating this theme is of paramount importance, as it can contribute significantly to developing effective strategies for rebuilding moral values within our country. Furthermore, the findings of this research will be invaluable to religious authorities, particularly the Lutheran Church, in their efforts to enhance the quality of education within their network of schools.

Based on my professional experience as the former director of two Lutheran schools, I have observed a concerning decline in the quality of education within these institutions in recent years

II. Research Methods

To collect data, the initial methodology employed involved direct observation of school operations at the management, administrative, and pedagogical levels. As succinctly articulated by Deketele et al., "Observation is a process involving a voluntary act of intelligence directed towards an object in order to gather information about it." (De Ketele et al., 2016). Observation, in this context, is understood as a clinical method, encompassing a comprehensive analysis of human behavior within its functional context. It involves examining the dynamic interplay of an individual's personality with their environment. This approach was applied to 122 teachers across 32 Lutheran schools in the Haute-Matsiatra region, encompassing 88 primary school teachers, 28 middle school teachers, and 6 high school teachers, during their classroom instruction.

From a pedagogical perspective, our observational focus centered on assessing the following key professional skills:

- a. Planning and sequencing of teaching and learning activities.
- b. Preparation for effective classroom instruction.
- c. Facilitation and guidance of the learning process.
- d. Assessment of student learning.

The second methodological approach employed in this research involved the utilization of interviews, a well-established research method reliant upon verbal communication to gather pertinent information. This approach aligns with the principles of scientific inquiry, where the exchange of ideas and perspectives serves as a crucial means of knowledge acquisition:

- a. For our research, we adopted a semi-structured interview approach, drawing inspiration from clinical interview techniques. While the interviewer guides the conversation, flexibility is crucial, allowing for the exploration of emergent themes and the nuanced expression of individual perspectives. This method emphasizes not only the content of the interviewee's responses but also the underlying nuances of their communication, such as tone, hesitation, and non-verbal cues. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the interviewee's perspectives and to uncover underlying motivations and beliefs. "Interviews are useful for obtaining information, especially about the program's results in terms of values." (Monday, 2020 ; Hamza, 2014)
- b. The research methodology employed in this study incorporated a comprehensive survey approach. Field surveys, by their very nature, necessitate a rich exchange of information, encompassing both formal and informal discussions, as well as a series of in-depth interviews (Schultze & Avital, 2011). In this study, we utilized questionnaires as the primary investigative tool. These questionnaires incorporated a balanced approach, featuring both closed-ended questions for data quantification and open-ended questions to encourage nuanced and in-depth responses. This approach aimed to provide ample flexibility for interviewees to express their perspectives while remaining within the defined scope of the research. The ultimate goal was to gather comprehensive data necessary to achieve the research objectives.

According to the Universal Dictionary, a 'survey' can be defined as 'a study of a question, based on testimonies and information.' Furthermore, it encompasses an investigative process undertaken by authorities, including judicial, administrative, or religious bodies. (Sauer et al., 2020)

Surveys are, above all, a means of obtaining information on behavior and behavioral changes if they are carried out before and after a program. The questionnaire survey is an observational tool that makes it possible to quantify and compare information. This training is collected from a representative sample of the target population. (Monday, 2020)

The questionnaire encompassed a range of key areas, including:

- a. Teacher and Administrative Staff Competencies: This section explored the skills and qualifications of both teaching and administrative personnel.
- b. Financial Sustainability and Teacher Motivation: This area delved into the school's financial health and explored factors influencing teacher motivation and job satisfaction.
- c. Interpersonal Dynamics: This section investigated the quality of relationships within the school environment, examining interactions between management and teachers, among teachers themselves, between the school and parents, and ultimately, between teachers and their students.

III. Results and Discussion

The Lutheran school system in Madagascar is deeply intertwined with the Malagasy Lutheran Church, serving as a cornerstone of the church's educational mission, as evidenced by the global network of Lutheran schools (Lutheran Schools in the World, <https://www.lutheran.edu.au/about/lutheraneducation/>, accessed December 14, 2024; <https://lea.org/the-value-of-lutheran-schools/>, accessed December 14, 2024). To understand its structure, it is essential to examine the hierarchical organization of the Church itself.

- a. THE CHURCH: At the grassroots level, the Church is the fundamental unit, typically comprising a congregation within a specific locality or neighborhood. Led by a catechist, each Church has its own governing body known as the Church Committee.
- b. FITANDREMANA: Several Churches form a Fitandremana, a larger ecclesiastical unit headed by a pastor. This level of organization also possesses its own governing body, the Fitandremana Committee.
- c. FILEOVANA: A Fileovana, in turn, encompasses multiple Fitandremana and is led by a designated Fileovana Pastor.
- d. REGIONAL SYNOD: The Regional Synod constitutes the next level of the Church hierarchy, encompassing at least five Fileovana and led by a Regional Synod Pastor. It is governed by the Regional Synod Committee and further supported by an Executive Committee.
- e. GRAND SYNOD: The highest governing body within the Malagasy Lutheran Church is the Grand Synode, encompassing all Regional Synods. The Grand Synode convenes every four years and is governed by the Grand Synode Committee (KSL). The KMSL (Comité Exécutif du Grand Synode), which meets biannually in May and November, serves as the executive arm of the Grand Synode during the intervals between KSL meetings. While the KMSL proposes projects for consideration by the KSL, the Bureau Central de l'Eglise Luthérienne Malagasy, located in Andohalo, Antananarivo, plays a crucial role in project development and submission.

The term 'Synod' has its roots in ancient Greek, derived from the words 'SUN,' meaning 'to be together,' and 'ODOS,' meaning 'road.' Etymologically, 'Synod' therefore signifies a gathering or assembly of those who share a common path. In the context of the Church, it refers to an assembly of representatives from various churches within a particular region or denomination. The organizational structure of the Malagasy Lutheran Church reflects its

hierarchical nature. Church-related associations and business entities are categorized accordingly. At the national level, these entities are designated as 'National Branches.

The Malagasy Lutheran Church comprises a network of 25 Regional Synods, 24 of which are located within Madagascar, with one Synod operating in Europe. This study specifically focuses on the Lutheran schools within the Afovoany Regional Synod, situated in the Fianarantsoa Region. The SPAf (Synode Protestant d'Afovoany), established in 1954, serves as the governing body for this region. The headquarters of the SPAf is located at Lot 117/360602 Ivory Atsimo in Fianarantsoa. The Synod encompasses 21 Fitandremana, representing a significant geographical and administrative division within the Afovoany region.

The Direction Nationale des écoles luthériennes de Madagascar (National Directorate of Lutheran Schools) constitutes one of six branches affiliated with the Office National de l'Enseignement Privé de Madagascar (ONEP). The National Director, appointed by the President of the Fédération des Eglises Luthériennes Malagasy (FELM), is responsible for the promotion, coordination, and support of all Lutheran schools nationwide, ensuring the maintenance of high pedagogical standards and the integration of Christian values.

Lutheran schools in Madagascar are an integral part of the Malagasy Lutheran Church, operating under the auspices of the Enseignement et Education Luthériens FFL (Lutheran Education and Instruction). Guided by the biblical principle of Daniel 12:3 – "Those who are wise shall shine like the stars in the heavens" – these schools strive to provide a holistic education that nurtures both academic excellence and spiritual growth.

The National Director of FFL, headquartered in Antananarivo, serves as the chief executive officer. At the regional level, Regional Directors (DRs) are appointed to oversee Lutheran schools within each Synod. These Regional Directors represent the National Director at the regional level, liaising with the Regional Directorates of National Education (DRENs) and the Centres d'Inspection et de Supervision de l'Enseignement Catholique (CISCOs).

Regional Management plays a crucial role in the effective functioning of Lutheran schools within a given region. Its primary objective is to provide ongoing support and guidance to each school, ensuring the quality of education and the well-being of the school community. The organizational chart of the SPAf Synod's Regional Management of Lutheran Schools provides a visual representation of its hierarchical structure and delineates the responsibilities and relationships within the regional administration.

- a. Regional Director (RD): The Regional Director serves as the chief administrator for all Lutheran schools within the respective Synod. This role encompasses a broad range of responsibilities, including the oversight and coordination of educational programs and the professional development of teachers and school leaders.
- b. The Fitandremana Committee
- c. The Executive Committee:
 - 1) Hires or fires employees
 - 2) Decides or rectifies the budget
 - 3) Responsible for the smooth running of the school
- d. Director:
 - 1) Keeps the school running smoothly
 - 2) Chairs the Technical Committee
 - 3) Controls the smooth running of studies

- 4) Handles communications (state, employees, parents)
- 5) Takes care of personnel management
- 6) Decides on the school works program

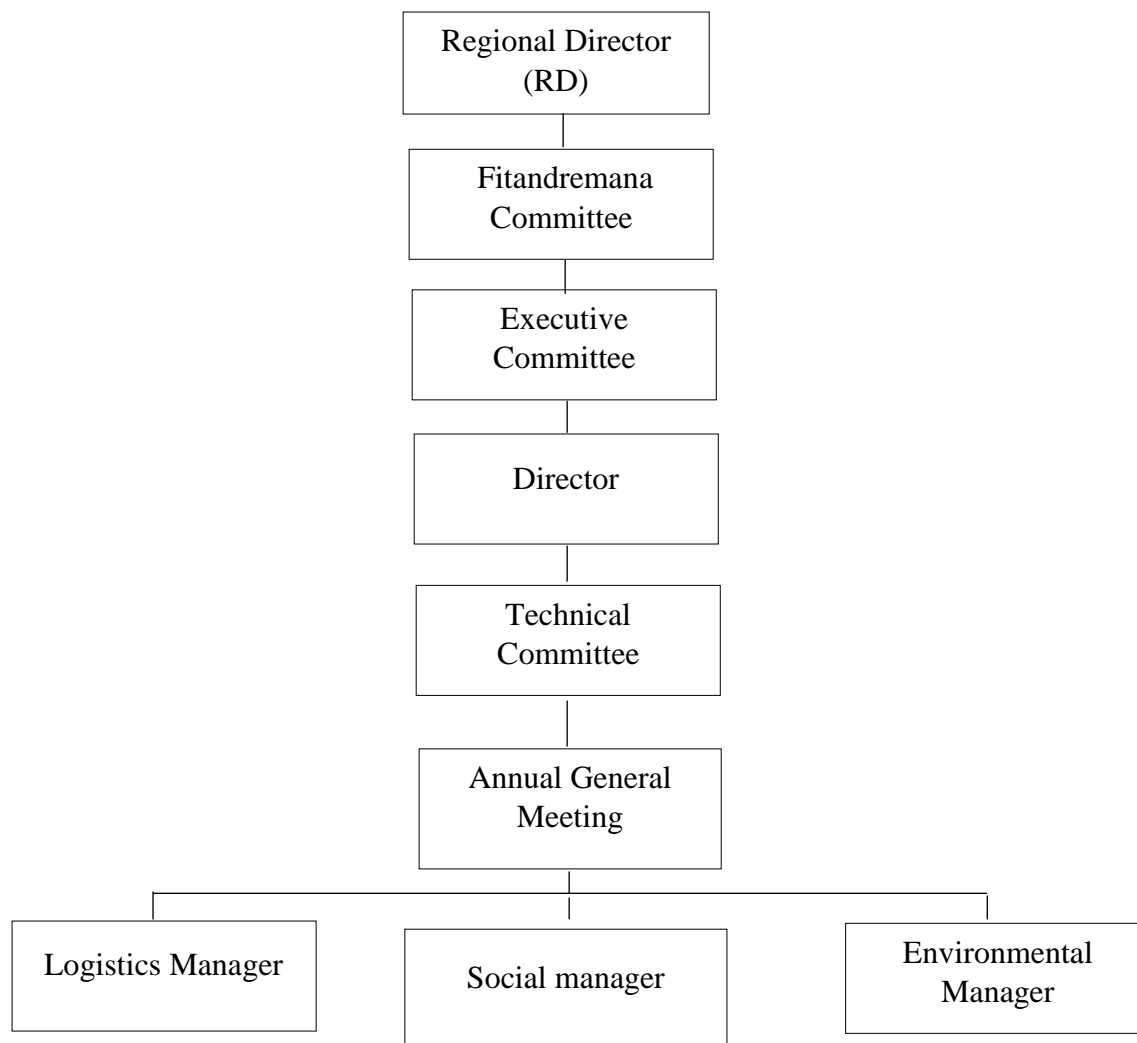


Figure 1 : SPAF Regional Management organization chart
Source : DR SPaf

- e. The Technical Committee:
 - 1) Advises the Director
 - 2) Takes care of the technical side (training, pedagogy, etc.
 - 3) Takes care of the budget
 - 4) Design office
- f. Annual General Meeting :
 - 1) Logistics Manager: Manages equipment: monitoring and control, increases, renovates
 - 2) Social manager: Promotes good relations between employees, employee social responsibility, friendship between employees.
 - 3) Environmental Manager: Keeps the school environment clean and beautiful.

3.1 Situation of Lutheran schools in the 7 CISCOS of Haute-Matsiatra

A comprehensive understanding of the experiences and backgrounds of teachers is paramount, as they serve as the cornerstone of any effective educational system. This study

delves into the professional profiles and experiences of educators within the seven CISCOS (Centres d'Inspection et de Supervision de l'Enseignement Catholique) located in the Haute-Matsiatra region of Fianarantsoa, Madagascar.

a. Status of teachers

Table 1 presents a comprehensive overview of the educational credentials and employment status of teachers within Lutheran schools across the Haute-Matsiatra region. The table provides a detailed breakdown of teachers by CISCO, distinguishing between tenured and temporary employees. Furthermore, it categorizes teachers based on their academic qualifications, including their highest degree attained, and their specific teaching diplomas.

These are the academic diplomas for teacher qualifications:

CEPE : Certificat d'Études Primaires Élémentaires (Elementary School Certificate). The CEPE was an important milestone in the school career of a Malagasy pupil, marking the end of elementary school and opening the doors to junior high school.

BEPC/CFEPCEs: Brevet d'Études du Premier Cycle de l'Enseignement du Second Cycle et Certificat de Fin d'Études du Premier Cycle de l'Enseignement du Second Cycle. Certificate of Studies in the First Cycle of Secondary Education and Certificate of Completion of Studies in the First Cycle of Secondary Education. This diploma marks the end of middle school and gives access to secondary education.

BACC: Baccalauréat. Baccalaureate. This is the diploma awarded on completion of secondary education and giving access to higher education.

BACC+2 / DTS: Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Technologiques. University Technology Diploma. This diploma is obtained at the end of two years of higher education after the baccalauréat, and generally prepares students for technical professions.

Table 1. Teacher Qualifications: An Analysis of Educational Credentials

FIANARANTSO A CISCO	STATUT			ACADEMIC DIPLOMA						TEACHING DIPLOMA							
	Owner	Temporary Employee	Volunteer	CEPE	BEP/CFEPCES	BACC	BACC+2 / DTS	BACC+3 / LICENCE	BACC+4 / MAITRISE / MASTER 1	PRESCHOOL EDUCATION	CAE-CAE/EB-CAE/EP-CAE/EP/EN	CAP-CAP/EB-CAP/EP	CEPSEM/FLM	LAPEN	MAITRE EPS(ENS)	CAPEN	MAPEN
Fianarantsoa	27	07			09	19	03	03	04	01	02	01	06	01	01		
Lalangina	49	19			23	38	01	05	01		04	01	04			01	02
Ambalavao	01	-	-	-	-	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ambohimahaso	31			-	14	15	01	01			02	-	04	-	-	-	-
Ikalamavony	03			02	02	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Isandra	14		01	01	09	04	-	-	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vohibato	02	-	-	01	-	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	127	26	01	02	57	79	05	09	06	01	08	02	14	01	01	01	02
Total	154																

Source : FPE DREN Haute-Matsiatra (2021)

BACC+3 / LICENCE: Licence. This is an undergraduate degree obtained after three years of higher education.

BACC+4 / MAITRISE / MASTER 1: Maîtrise or Master 1. This is a graduate diploma obtained after four years of higher education.

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION: This term is generally used in English to refer to early childhood teacher training.

CAE-CAE/EB-CAE/EP-CAE/EP/EN: Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique - Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique pour l'Enseignement du Bilinguisme / pour l'Enseignement Primaire / pour l'Enseignement Normal. Teaching Aptitude Certificate - Teaching Aptitude Certificate for Bilingual Education / for Primary Education / for Teacher Training . These certificates qualify teachers to work at different levels of education.

CAP-CAP/EB-CAP/EP: Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle - Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle pour l'Enseignement du Bilinguisme / pour l'Enseignement Primaire. Vocational Aptitude Certificate - Vocational Aptitude Certificate for Bilingual Education / for Primary Education . This diploma prepares students for technical and professional careers.

CEPSFM/FLM: Certificat d'Études Professionnelles Supérieures en Formation des Maîtres/Formateurs en Langues. Advanced Professional Studies Certificate in Teacher/Trainer Training for Languages . This diploma is designed to train language teachers.

LAPEN: Licence Appliquée en Pédagogie de l'Enseignement Normal. Applied Bachelor's Degree in Teacher Training. This diploma prepares students for teaching at higher levels.

MAITRE EPS(ENS): Maître d'Éducation Physique et Sportive (École Normale Supérieure). Physical Education and Sports Teacher (Higher Normal School). This diploma qualifies physical education and sports teachers.

CAPEN: Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique de l'Enseignement Normal. Physical Education and Sports Teacher (Higher Normal School). Teaching Aptitude Certificate for Teacher Training. This diploma is similar to the CAE, but more specific to normal education.

MAPEN: Maîtrise Appliquée en Pédagogie de l'Enseignement Normal. Applied Master's Degree in Teacher Training. This diploma is a higher level of study in preparation for teaching.

The teachers represented in Table 1 are those registered with the FPE of the Haute-Matsiatra DREN in 2021. Within Lutheran schools, there are two distinct employment categories for teachers: tenured and contract-based. Tenured teachers are officially recruited by the school and affiliated with the CNAPS. Their employment is permanent, secured through the school's executive committee, and their salary is based on an indefinite contract.

Contract-based teachers, or instructors, are not tenured and their recruitment does not require the approval of the school's executive committee. Instead, the school director hires them on an as-needed basis. Their compensation is determined by the number of hours worked. As Table 1 indicates, 16.88% of teachers in Lutheran schools within the Fianarantsoa CISCO are contract-based, suggesting a shortage of full-time teaching staff.

Regarding teacher qualifications, only 9 out of 154 teachers possess a teaching diploma, a credential essential for formal teaching positions. In terms of academic degrees, 20 out of 154 teachers hold qualifications higher than a baccalaureate. The overall academic level of the teaching staff is as follows: 37.01% hold a BEPC diploma, while 51.29% possess a baccalaureate degree.

Student situation

A comprehensive understanding of the current state of Lutheran schools within the Haute-Matsiatra DREN necessitates a detailed analysis of relevant educational statistics. To this end, we have undertaken a granular examination of the situation at the CISCO level.

Table 2. Student census by level (2019-2022)

School - year	CISCO	Primary level	Secondary level	High school level
2019-2020	FIANARANTSOA I	314	220	124
	LALANGINA	1 633	314	78
	AMBALAVAO	20	-	-
	AMBOHIMAHASOA	481	146	-
	IKALAMAVONY	85	-	-
	ISANDRA	495	245	-
	VOHIBATO	206	-	-
	TOTAL	3 234	925	202
2020-2021	FIANARANTSOA I	309	236	104
	LALANGINA	1 447	252	120
	AMBALAVAO	20	-	-
	AMBOHIMAHASOA	821	149	-
	IKALAMAVONY	-	-	-
	ISANDRA	530	221	-
	VOHIBATO	182	-	-
	TOTAL	3 309	858	224
2021-2022	FIANARANTSOA I	307	213	109
	LALANGINA	1 557	281	90
	AMBALAVAO	21	-	-
	AMBOHIMAHASOA	538	-	-
	IKALAMAVONY	-	-	-
	ISANDRA	441	231	-
	VOHIBATO	137	-	-
	TOTAL	3 001	725	199

Source : DBB de la DREN

The provided data on primary school enrollment in Lutheran schools within the Haute-Matsiatra region highlights significant disparities across CISCOs. Lalangina CISCO exhibited the highest enrollment, while Ikalamavony CISCO had the lowest. A concerning trend of declining enrollment has emerged, particularly in the 2021-2022 academic year. This decline is evident across all CISCOs, despite four achieving Level II status. Additionally, the limited availability of high schools, confined to Fianarantsoa and Lalangina CISCOs, further underscores the regional disparities in educational opportunities.

3.2 Results on observation of classroom practice

To investigate the alignment between theoretical pedagogical frameworks and actual classroom practices, a series of classroom observations was conducted in Lutheran schools situated in the Haute-Matsiatra region. The resulting data, presented in tabular form, provides insights into the extent to which teachers adhere to the established sequence of instructional steps within each subject discipline.

Table 3. Teaching/learning session sequence

L'enseignant		
1-Clear and correct expressions in the languages of instruction	YES	NO
Uses simple vocabulary during the session	112	10
Uses a variety of vocabulary during the session	2	120
Give clear instructions	7	115
Rephrase instructions if necessary	7	115
Pronounces words in an understandable way	119	3
Error-free writing on the blackboard	69	53
Expresses herself fluently	25	97
Fluent in the language of instruction	12	110
2- Conducting the teaching/learning session		
Use the preparation sheet	2	120
Announce session objective and title	1	121
Respects the general teaching/learning flow of the lesson	00	122
Explains the objective of the session	1	121
Involves all learners in the construction of knowledge	98	24
Exhibits a mastery of the lesson material	118	4
Differentiates instruction to accommodate the diverse learning styles and paces of the learners	121	1
Engages students in hands-on activities using a variety of teaching aids	00	122
Uses different facilitation techniques and work methods (individual, small group, collective, oral/written) during the session	85	37
3- Good organization and classroom management		
Encourages exchanges between students (encourages each student in the group to participate, encourages students to ask each other questions, encourages students to listen to each other).	75	47
Set up the room (to encourage exchanges between students, to allow easy movement, to carry out experiments)	105	17
Circulates around the room to check students' work and support learners in difficulty	50	72
Makes rational use of the blackboard	122	-
Write legibly on the blackboard	122	-
Respects the duration of each teaching-learning stage	13	109
4-Relevance and suitability of teaching materials		
Uses materials, tools or teaching aids adapted to the activities/content	5	117
Have students manipulate materials to build up their knowledge	5	117
5- Consistency of evaluation with curriculum objective(s)		
Tests students' prerequisites (diagnostic assessment) at the beginning of the session	122	-
Uses students' mistakes to help them progress throughout the session (formative assessment)	45	77
Exercises (oral or written) to assess attainment of objectives while respecting the taxonomic level (formative assessment).	122	-
Uses at least two assessment instruments (MCQs, matching, etc.) appropriate to the objective(s).	97	25
Builds on students' mistakes to help them make progress and provides consistent remedies for identified errors	25	97

A consistent observation across all teachers is a lack of adherence to standardized instructional and learning procedures within each subject area. This indicates a neglect of established pedagogical practices. Moreover, many teachers are unfamiliar with the updated procedures for maintaining class journals and lesson plans, largely due to insufficient training. Given the significant impact of pedagogical practices on student outcomes, teachers bear primary responsibility for their students' academic success. Consequently, to enhance their competencies, teachers require targeted training in both administrative and pedagogical tasks.

IV. Discussion

Lutheran schools, as denominational institutions, are rooted in a curriculum infused with religious ethics and culture (Lutheran Schools in the World, <https://www.lutheran.edu.au/about/lutheraneducation/>, accessed December 14, 2024; <https://lea.org/the-value-of-lutheran-schools/>, accessed December 14, 2024). However, our research has uncovered several challenges within these institutions. These include financial mismanagement, a lack of teacher motivation, and a dearth of professional development opportunities. These issues have had a detrimental impact on the overall effectiveness of the educational system.

Furthermore, we have identified gaps in pedagogical practices. These shortcomings have been reflected in both official examination results and daily classroom activities. Research by W. Carey, a pioneer in missions and education, highlights the significance of parental involvement in a child's education, encompassing emotional support, communication with teachers, and engagement in school-related activities. Yet, our findings suggest that many teachers in Lutheran schools are not adequately equipped to foster such parent-teacher relationships.

To enhance the efficacy of the Malagasy education system, it is imperative to invest in teacher training. Despite the challenges faced by Lutheran schools, our research serves as a foundation for future studies in this area. Education is instrumental in developing individuals' physical, intellectual, and moral capacities, as well as preparing them for societal contributions. Recognizing the pivotal role of education in national development, Lutheran churches established numerous schools. However, the decline in the quality of these institutions over recent years, characterized by decreasing enrollment, inadequate teacher compensation, and falling pass rates, necessitates urgent attention.

Effective pedagogy is essential for quality education. As Durkheim aptly stated, pedagogy is a systematic reflection on teaching practices (Husbands & Pearce, Autumn 2012). To address the challenges facing Lutheran schools, it is crucial to prioritize teacher professional development, enhance parental involvement, and implement effective pedagogical practices.

Understanding the diverse experiences and qualifications of teachers is fundamental to evaluating and enhancing the quality of education within any system. This study delves into the professional profiles of educators within the seven CISCOS (Centres d'Inspection et de Supervision de l'Enseignement Catholique) of the Haute-Matsiatra region, Madagascar, with a focus on Lutheran schools.

Teacher Profile:

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the teaching workforce in Lutheran schools across the region. The data reveals a heterogeneous workforce with varying levels of experience and qualifications. Notably, 16.88% of teachers are employed on a contract basis, suggesting

potential challenges in ensuring consistent staffing and potentially impacting the stability of the educational environment.

Furthermore, the analysis highlights a significant gap in teacher training. Only a small fraction (9 out of 154) possess a formal teaching diploma, a crucial credential for effective pedagogy. While 51.29% of teachers hold a baccalaureate degree, a significant proportion (37.01%) hold only a BEPC, indicating a potential need for professional development to enhance their pedagogical skills and knowledge.

Student Enrollment Trends:

Analysis of student enrollment data reveals significant disparities across CISCOS. Lalangina CISCO demonstrates the highest enrollment figures, while Ikalamavony CISCO exhibits the lowest, indicating a potential need for targeted interventions to address regional disparities in access to education. Moreover, a concerning trend of declining enrollment has emerged, particularly in the 2021-2022 academic year, observed across all CISCOS despite four achieving Level II status. This decline underscores the need for a comprehensive assessment of factors contributing to this trend, such as socio-economic challenges, demographic shifts, or perceived quality of education.

Pedagogical Practices:

Classroom observations revealed a lack of consistent adherence to established pedagogical practices across all schools. This suggests a need for professional development initiatives to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and knowledge. Specifically, training programs should focus on improving lesson planning, classroom management techniques, and the effective utilization of diverse teaching methodologies. Furthermore, addressing the gap in teacher training by ensuring all educators possess the necessary teaching diplomas is crucial for improving the overall quality of education within Lutheran schools in the Haute-Matsiatra region.

Classroom observations revealed inconsistencies in the implementation of established pedagogical practices across all schools. This highlights the critical need for professional development initiatives to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and knowledge. These initiatives should focus on:

- a. Improving lesson planning: Incorporating active learning strategies, utilizing diverse teaching methods, and aligning instruction with student learning objectives.
- b. Enhancing classroom management: Creating a conducive and inclusive learning environment that fosters student engagement and minimizes disruptive behavior.
- c. Effective utilization of technology: Integrating technology into the learning process to enhance student learning and engagement.

Furthermore, addressing the gap in teacher training by ensuring all educators possess the necessary teaching diplomas is crucial for improving the overall quality of education within Lutheran schools in the Haute-Matsiatra region.

This analysis underscores the need for a multi-pronged approach to address the challenges facing Lutheran schools in the region. This approach should include:

- a. Investing in comprehensive teacher training and professional development programs.
- b. Implementing strategies to improve teacher retention and recruitment.
- c. Conducting further research to identify and address the root causes of declining enrollment.

d. Strengthening school-community partnerships to enhance parental involvement and support.

By addressing these critical issues, Lutheran schools can continue to provide a high-quality education that meets the diverse needs of their students and contributes to the overall development of the region.

V. Conclusion

This study underscores the multifaceted challenges facing Lutheran schools in the Haute-Matsiatra region. While these institutions hold a significant place within the Malagasy education landscape, they face challenges such as teacher shortages, inadequate professional development, and declining enrollment. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes: investing in comprehensive teacher training, enhancing teacher recruitment and retention strategies, strengthening school-community partnerships, and conducting further research to understand the root causes of these challenges. By implementing these strategies, Lutheran schools can effectively address the identified challenges and continue to provide a high-quality education that meets the diverse needs of their students and contributes meaningfully to the overall development of the region.

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