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### Factors for Poor Performance in Religious Education in Secondary Schools: A Case of Secondary Schools in Tungi Ward, Morogoro Municipality

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This study was designed to establish factors for poor performance in religious education in Secondary Schools: A case of Secondary Schools in Tungi Ward, Morogoro Municipality. Specifically, the study aimed at establishing school- and student-related factors for poor performance in religious education in Secondary Schools in Tungi Ward, Morogoro Municipality. The targeted population for the study comprised heads of schools, teachers, and students from three secondary schools in the Tungi Ward, namely Tubuyu Secondary School, Charlotte Secondary School, and La Miriam Secondary School. The study used a simple random sampling technique in the selection of teachers and students and a purposive sampling technique in the selection of heads of schools, totalising 65 respondents. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The analysis was done by using content analysis and descriptive statistics, data presentation was done by using explanatory sequential. The findings revealed that school-related factors that cause poor performance in RE in secondary schools include lack of qualified religious teachers, unavailability of teaching and learning resources, teachers' pedagogical and assessment skills, teacher-student ratio, and language of instruction. Government-related factors that cause poor performance in RE in secondary schools include an over-loaded curriculum, lack of motivation toward teachers, lack of capacity-building programs, and under-qualified teachers; and student-related factors include attitudes towards learning, family background, and peer influence. The study recommends the following, school authorities devote special budgets to improving their libraries; Government needs to step up its support financially and materially to schools so as to help them improve facilities in order to ensure there is better academic performance; parents need to pay special attention to the academic performance of their children.

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious education (RE) has been an important subject in helping students to be aware of what it means to live in a multi-faith community. It has been known to help them understand and respect the beliefs and practices of others and thereby strengthen social cohesion (Eric, 1994). Its evolution as a discipline could be traced in Europe and particularly in Britain from the 19th century. The report further notes that this period had the scholarly and historical analysis of the Bible flourishing while Hindu and Buddhist texts were first being translated into European languages (Oliver, 2005). Debate on the place and purpose of Religious Education (RE) was vigorously pursued in Britain in the nineteenth century and even generated a lot of research work (Lord & Barley, 1973).

In Africa, Mbiti (1969) observes that RE in Africa could be traced long before the coming of Christian missionaries who termed Africans as heathens and uncivilised. Mbiti (1969), while analysing African religion, observed religion as the strongest element in the traditional background that exerted the greatest influence upon the living and the people concerned. As a matter of principle, religious teachings have traditionally been the vehicle by which moral standards were inculcated in Africa (Amugune, 2005). In Tanzania, RE is referred to as

Bible Knowledge at the Ordinary Level of secondary school (Form One to Form Four) and Divinity at the Advanced Level of Secondary School (Form Five to form Six). Although it is regarded as one of the academic subjects in Tanzanian Secondary Education, the subject is not considered for selection into higher education (Ngussa & Role, 2015). RE as a subject within the Tanzania curriculum has been undergoing a shift since its inception and can be traced back to the arrival of the missionaries. The first RE curriculum was Christian based and was phased out when the multi-faith one was introduced in 1995, denoted by the 1995 Education Policy. Over the years, learners' performance has been good with the Christian-based curriculum as compared to the multi-faith one. In this case, at the national examinations level, the performance declined drastically mainly due to teachers' lack of assessment skills in RE. However, teachers attribute students' poor performance to the over-loaded curriculum that, in their view contains too much content to be adequately covered during the three years period in which students will be doing their secondary schooling. Furthermore, it has to be noted that in 2008 the multi-faith curriculum that used the phenomenological approach in teaching and learning was reviewed, and both its content and approach were changed (Dinama, 2010). Despite all these changes, it is notable that students' academic performance in RE still remains unsatisfactory.

Academic performance is mainly related to the assessment of students' performance in meeting short or long-term goals in education. However, there are various factors that are considered to be hindering good performance in educational settings. Some of these factors are; language as a medium of instruction, teaching and learning resources, parental involvement, study habits, class size, and teachers' pedagogical and assessment skills (Ballard & Bates, 2008). It has been observed that since the introduction of the multi-faith curriculum in 1995 in Tanzania, RE students have been performing poorly. Student academic performance is of paramount importance in every academic institution and that is why the students' academic performance in RE remains a top priority for educators in religion. This is because when students achieve good grades, they become competitive in the world of work and may have better employment opportunities.

Despite the availability of diverse avenues of learning RE for students of this subject, many students continued to perform poorly in ACSEE and CSEE examinations in Morogoro Municipality. Factors that are responsible for the decline in poor performance have not been well understood or investigated empirically in this region. The lack of information on the factors for poor performance in RE in Secondary Schools made it difficult to put in place strategies to solve them. Thus, this study intends to find out the factors for poor performance in RE in secondary schools by using secondary schools in Tungi Ward, Morogoro Municipality.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching of Christian RE in Tanzania has undergone tremendous changes over the years. After independence, attempts were made to make education relevant to the needs of Tanzanian society. Various educational commissions were appointed to survey the existing educational resources, curriculum, and methodology and advise the government accordingly. This has led to the formation of The Education Act that emphasised the importance of teaching RE in schools (Farooq, 2011). This happens because RE is considered to be not only as just academic subject but also it is expected to affect behavioural changes among the learners (United Republic of Tanzania, 2008). With

respect to the teaching of Christian RE in schools, a joint church panel was set up in 1968 to work on a syllabus that could be more relevant to the Tanzanian situation. A committee of Catholics and Protestants from Tanzania, Malawi, Uganda, and Zambia, under the title "Rubaga Workshop", prepared the syllabus "Christian Living Today" in 1970. The special aim of the syllabus was to enable the student to grow towards responsible Christian maturity. This syllabus emphasised life-related themes. The second Christian RE Panel met in 1980 to review the syllabus developed after independence. They reviewed all the syllabi from primary and secondary schools, teacher training colleges to universities (Farooq, 2011). As noted by Farooq (2011) commenting on the aims and objectives of syllabi, the RE Panel pointed out that the aims and objectives of the Christian RE syllabi were either Biblical or Christian-centred. The aims and objectives of the syllabus pointed towards the confessional aspects of Christian RE, and the syllabi had therefore, pre-determined what the learner should come out with, leaving him/her with very little choice. In this case, religion and education play a complementary role in the lives of the learners.

The importance of RE as a subject in the secondary school curriculum cannot be downplayed in the contemporary world, where the moral, social, political, and economic life of nations and states have come under scrutiny. The teaching of RE in schools is expected to give students a proper understanding of what is meant by a truly religious approach to life since RE is specifically taught by the use of both life and thematic approaches (Juma, 2012). The secondary school curriculum in Tanzania considers RE as an area of learning that helps to reinforce personal values and beliefs and respect for others' people's religious beliefs. In addition to that, RE inculcates values like honesty, reliability, respect for the law, tolerance, fairness, caring or compassion, and non-discrimination (United Republic of Tanzania, 2007). Cross and Livingstone (1997) revealed that through studying RE, students do understand God's everlasting purpose, His means of carrying them out, and His revelation to man, understand the nature of sin and its effects on human beings, and of salvation and its consequences, understanding and aspiration for God-oriented living as evidence of appreciation for

salvation as well as appreciating the Christian's relation to creation.

These critical questions clearly indicate the importance of teaching religion in schools in order to help students to find answers to existential questions such as, whose world is this? Where do I come from? Why am I here? How do I cope with the hardships of life? Does my life have any meaning? What will happen to me when I die? RE also has the capacity to transform pupils and their environment. This is done through the educational aspect of religion. It is, therefore, very clear that the education that is provided by schools should encompass a religious aspect. In addition to that, RE plays a significant role in millions of people's lives since it permeates relationships, informs values, and changes behaviour (Matsaung 1999).

Religious beliefs also affect how individuals deal with stressful situations, suffering and life problems as it enhances acceptance and one's ability to function competently in the face of stress and adversity (Joshi et al., 2008). RE reinforces religious coping, which is the use of cognitive behavioural techniques to manage stressful situations in light of one's spirituality or religious beliefs. Koenig (2009) suggested that the aim of RE in each religion is to produce an adherent who is obedient, loyal and of good character. This can be demonstrated in African traditional religions where each member is supposed to show loyalty to religious teachings by performing all the necessary rites and following all the taboos that, if contravened, could make one liable to a curse or death. For instance, in Islam, loyalty is shown by the submission to Allah and by defending their faith, while in Christianity, it is submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and obeying God's commandments. Henze (1979) says that in every religion, spirituality is described as that dimension of an individual's being, which is related to the physical and the psychological dimensions that give people's lives meaning and call them to relationship with the Supreme Being and spiritual world. A religious spirituality encourages people to abide by moral codes, authority structures and forms of worship.

Regarding inclusion, RE has made a significant involvement principally in its centre of attention on

promoting value for everyone equally. RE has taken a front responsibility in fighting against injustice, unfairness, and pessimistic bias. By teaching or providing RE to children who just began primary school means you have just opened the doors to moral development for them. RE is a good preliminary point for them and it is a fundamental way to meet their explicit requirements as this will help to caution them all the way through until they graduate to the next level (Barnes, 2001). RE and practices contribute substantially to the development of personal morality and sound judgment, which influence decisions that shape one's life. RE strengthens the formation of moral consciousness through the internalisation of religious morality. Internalisation, the process wherein an individual adopts the values or regulations prescribed by religion as their own, can affect mental health. Religious and moral beliefs such as objections to suicide can also influence suicide rates and attitudes towards suicide (Koenig, 2009).

Juma (2012) observed that the importance of RE as a subject in the secondary school curriculum could not be downplayed in the contemporary world where the moral, social, political, and economic life of nations and states have come under scrutiny. The teaching of RE in schools is expected to give students a proper understanding of what is meant by a truly religious approach to life since RE is specifically taught by the use of both life and thematic approaches.

Lewis (2011) examined the impact of religious studies courses by measuring the change in undergraduate attitudes at Arizona State University. The findings were mixed. From the "virtues of the humanities" standpoint, select within-group changes showed a statistically significant positive shift, but when compared across groups and the control group, there were no statistically significant findings after controlling for key variables. The students' pre-course survey score was the best predictor of their post-course survey score. In response to the neo-colonial critiques, the non-findings suggest the critiques have been overstated in terms of their impact pedagogically or in the classroom.

Muir (2017) examines and discusses the attitudes presented by different players involved in the development of RE for an upper secondary school in Sweden and see if and what solutions are presented for solving these problems. This study has shown that there are many fundamental issues with RE in Sweden in such areas as different attitudes from both teachers and students towards RE, teachers' competence in RE and towards the goal and criteria in the curriculum "outlooks on life". However, the study has also proven that there have been no clear solutions presented by any of the players as to solving the issues of RE in Sweden, leaving a gap between schools, teachers and the other players involved in the development of RE in Sweden.

Omar (2020) explored RE, Islamic, and Christian in the Arab world and its role in qualifying students for university education, taking Saudi Arabia as a model. The results revealed that the three RE experiences were successful. RE was found to have many educational and behavioural effects, e.g., elimination of religious extremism, alleviation of oppression experienced by religious minorities, and acquisition of good behaviour. It also proved to furnish students with many important skills such as co-existence and respect for others. Students of religious schools in the three countries were found to achieve good results that qualified them for all branches of knowledge, applied and theoretical, in university education. They even excelled over their counterparts in general education schools.

Sullivan (2019) investigated the capacity of RE within a denominational setting to contribute to authentic inclusion. The research findings suggest that students of different belief backgrounds experience RE during the senior cycle in different ways. Further, a dichotomous understanding of the purpose, nature, and scope of RE ought to exist between the participating teachers and students. Where these different perceptions collide, it is students with minority religious and secular worldviews who are most impacted. A consensus, however, regarding the potential the subject has to provide a pluralist perspective is also evident. Finally, the research draws on the work of Jackson, Ipgrave and Cullen to provide a way forward towards an authentically inclusive experience of senior-cycle RE, which necessitates a dialogical,

reflexive, and critically engaging experience for students and teachers of all religious and secular worldviews.

Ilechukwu (2014) examined curriculum implementation in RE in Nigeria. The study found that curriculum implementation is a very important aspect of the curriculum process. If the curriculum is not implemented, all efforts expended in the planning are to no avail. The study further observed that teacher is the dominant figure in the curriculum implementation process. He is the final decision maker concerning the actual learning opportunities to be provided to his learners and how they are to be able to present, be guided and be evaluated for the particular learner involved. Also, as the ultimate implementer of the curriculum, the teacher must necessarily translate the curriculum into real classroom operation.

Sullivan (2019) investigated the capacity of RE within a denominational setting to contribute to authentic inclusion in South Africa. The research findings suggest that students of different belief backgrounds experience RE during the senior cycle in different ways. Further, a dichotomous understanding of the purpose, nature, and scope of RE ought to exist between the participating teachers and students. Where these different perceptions collide, it is students with minority religious and secular worldviews who are most impacted upon. A consensus, however, regarding the potential the subject has to provide a pluralist perspective is also evident. Finally, the research draws on the work of Jackson, Ipgrave and Cullen to provide a way forward towards an authentically inclusive experience of senior-cycle RE, which necessitates a dialogical, reflexive, and critically engaging experience for students and teachers of all religious and secular worldviews.

Matemba (2011) conducted a comparative study of RE in Scotland and Malawi with special reference to developments in the secondary school sector 1970-2010. The findings of the study suggested that despite some points of difference, there was greater similarity on salient issues that underpinned the nature of secondary school RE in the two countries, in areas such as the need for curriculum reform, micro-politics of reform, provision in schools, and status of the subject. Given the challenges the

subject faces in both Scotland and Malawi, the study concluded that without government intervention and support from other key stakeholders, RE would continue to be regarded as a marginal curriculum subject.

Dinama (2016) investigated students' academic performance in RE in three junior secondary schools in Gaborone in Botswana. The findings of the study revealed that teachers have relevant qualifications, experience, and knowledge of their subject area and as such adhere to the set standards of the RE. It surfaced that some religious jargons were a barrier to the effective teaching and learning of RE since teachers end up being biased towards Christianity to explain concepts in other religions because they are largely familiar with it. In addition, it was evident that teachers had limited skills in assessment, especially in item writing since they could not balance all domains as is the expectation and this in turn had an impact on students' academic performance. The study also revealed that learner-centred methods and techniques motivated learners as they became actively involved in the learning process and in that way enhanced their academic performance. It emerged that where there was positive, constant, and consistent parental involvement the academic performance of the school in general was usually good.

Situma (2016) examined the methods used by teachers to teach Christian RE in secondary schools in Kimilili in Bungoma County, Kenya. The findings showed that many Christian RE teachers prefer to teach using other methods such as discussion, class presentation, and library research. The audio-visual method is the least used in teaching. This is partly because audio-visual resources are not easily available. In addition, a good number of teachers find verbal communication easy in light of the short time to prepare for and deliver lessons. Because of these factors, Christian RE in secondary schools in the County is not achieving its objective of imparting moral values to students and the entire society. Based on the discussion of findings and the above conclusion, it is recommended that curriculum planners and other educational stakeholders in Kenya should establish Christian RE resource centres in every County so that resources for teaching Christian RE can easily be availed to teachers for teaching the subject. In

addition, heads of secondary schools in Kenya should encourage and support Christian RE teachers by ensuring that the requisite teaching aids are bought as a matter of priority.

Itolondo (2012) examined the role and status of Christian RE in the school curriculum in Kenya in relation to the prevailing social and moral issues in the country. The study found that the majority of the students chose to take the subject for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination mainly because it could boost their performance in KCSE. Though the majority have a positive attitude towards Christian RE, most of them were not ready to continue learning it in case they qualified for university mainly because it does not guarantee employment. Most of the Christian RE teachers were found to be demoralised because they do not receive recognition from the government like the Mathematics, Science and Language teachers. The majority of the teachers blamed the government for undermining the implementation of Christian RE again by failing to motivate the Christian RE teachers through recognition. The government was blamed for being responsible for the decline in the number of students studying Christian RE at the university because of the emphasis it puts on Mathematics and Science subjects.

Chizelu (2009) examined the teaching of RE in Zambian multi-religious secondary schools. The research reveals that the RE teachers' reluctance to respond to the Ministry's directive is a result of their different perceptions, which are mostly influenced by their religious affiliations and the syllabuses they use. For example, the majority of the RE teachers involved in the teaching of Religion Education in secondary schools are Christians; therefore, they are reluctant to teach Religion Education which also includes non-Christian religions, because they feel it would compromise their consciences and their own faiths. As a result, they prefer to teach the subject from a Christian standpoint. This approach differs from the Ministry of Education's directive to teach RE from a multi-religious perspective.

Wanjau (2019) examined the influence of Christian RE on students' ethical formation in secondary schools in Thika West Sub-County, Kenya. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that Christian RE is more practical

than other subjects. This shows that, indeed, Christian RE is more practical than any other subject since there are real-life applications of what is studied in Christian RE. The study further observed that studying Christian RE moulds the behaviour of students and that studying Christian RE reduces indiscipline in school.

Mwesigwa (2003) examined the complications raised in teaching a confessional RE in a multi-religious context pertaining to Ugandan religiously founded public schools, government, and privately founded schools. The study contends that the introduction of Islam, Anglican and Roman Catholic Christian religious traditions in Uganda not only presented alternative religious systems to the existing African traditional religion but ushered in an era of competition for converts that subsequently led to religious conflict. The study also submits the view that the missionary aim of formal education in Uganda led to the creation not only of a denominational but a divisive educational system. While the study commends the colonial government and the first independent government's efforts towards establishing a non-denominational educational system, it suggests that their failure to address the controversial questions raised by the nature of RE at the time was a missed opportunity. The study probes the current syllabuses, aims and content of Christian RE and Islamic RE for secondary and primary schools and suggests that their main intention of promoting the spiritual growth of students is inappropriate for implementation in multi-religious schools.

Juma (2012) investigated the challenges of teaching Islamic RE in the spiritual and academic formation of secondary school students in Nairobi, Kenya. The study shows that the major challenge facing the teaching of Islamic RE in secondary schools in Nairobi is shortage of trained Islamic RE teachers. Other challenges include inadequate teaching and learning resources and lack of capacity building and staff development programmes. Few students enrol for Islamic RE because of the negative attitude by both the parents and the students towards the subject. It is also shown that parents encourage their sons and daughters to pursue courses that would be useful in the labour market in terms of getting formal employment. This involves taking subjects

which are science oriented as opposed to Art based subjects such as Islamic RE.

Ngussa and role (2016) examined the paradox of RE in secondary school curriculum in Tanzania. The study established that Divinity Subject has peculiar features which are not found in other academic subjects. Failure to integrate RE is influenced by scarcity of teachers, lack of textbooks and non-availability of syllabus to guide the teaching and learning of the subject. Excluding divinity in selection for tertiary education leads students and teachers to disregard the subject regardless of its benefits. The study further revealed that, lack of bible knowledge background in ordinary level leads advanced level students to perform poorly in divinity national examinations. The study recommends that secondary schools should integrate RE by making it compulsory.

## METHODOLOGY

The targeted population for the study comprised Head of Schools, teachers, and students from three secondary schools in the Tungi Ward, namely Tubuyu Secondary School, Charlotte Secondary School, and La Miriam Secondary School. The study used simple random sampling technique in selection of 65 respondents including teachers and students, and purposive sampling technique in the selection of heads of schools. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The analysis was done by using content analysis and descriptive statistics. The findings were presented by using explanatory sequential design.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### School-Related Factors for Poor Performance in RE

This study aimed at exploring school related factors for poor performance in religious education in Morogoro Municipality. The findings are shown in *Table 1*.

#### *Lack of Qualified Religious Teachers*

The results in *Table 1* show that, 17 respondents equivalent to 26.2 % strongly agreed that lack of qualified religious teachers is one of the school-

related factors for poor performance in RE in secondary schools, 22 respondents equivalent to 33.8% agreed, 6 respondents equivalent to 9.2% were neutral, 11 respondents equivalent to 16.9% disagreed, and the remaining 9 respondents

equivalent to 13.8% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that, majority of respondents (60.0%) had agreed that lack of qualified religious teachers cause poor performance among students of RE.

**Table 1: Lack of Qualified Religious Teachers**

Detail	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	26.2%
Agree	22	33.8%
Neutral	6	9.2%
Disagree	11	16.9%
Strongly Disagree	9	13.8%
Total	65	100%

**Source:** Researcher (2022)

These results indicate that lack of qualified religious teachers tends to affect teacher’s performance since few available qualified teachers have heavy workload, and had to share the teaching load. In addition to that lack of qualified religious teachers hinders the implementation of curriculum as some topics are taught effectively while others were not taught at all. These tends to affects students’ academic performances since their schools fails to provide RE of sufficient quality. These findings were supported by the one of the interviewees, who revealed that;

*The lack of qualified religious teachers in our school seems to affects the provision of quality RE. This rises because such situations lead into increasing the workload among existing qualified religious teachers and thus affects their job performance. In this case, the government should provide enough training to existing qualified religious teachers.*

These findings concur with study by Okorie (1979) who suggested that for the effective teaching and

learning to take place, the skilful teacher needs to use many effective methods and techniques effectively because in them his success and failure depend. He further emphasised that the success in the use of methods depends on the intelligent analysis of educational purposes, pupil in the class and the curriculum content of the moment.

***Unavailability of Teaching and Learning Resources***

The results in *Table 2* show that 22 respondents equivalent to 33.8 % strongly agreed that unavailability of teaching and learning resources is one of the school-related factors for poor performance in RE in secondary schools, 18 respondents equivalent to 27.7% agreed, 5 respondents equivalent to 7.8% were neutral, 13 respondents equivalent to 20.0% disagreed, and the remaining 7 respondents equivalent to 10.8% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that, majority of respondents (61.5%) had agreed that unavailability of teaching and learning resources cause poor performance among students of RE.

**Table 2: Unavailability of Teaching and Learning Resources**

Detail	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	22	33.8%
Agree	18	27.7%
Neutral	5	7.8%
Disagree	13	20.0%
Strongly Disagree	7	10.8%
Total	65	100%

Source: Researcher (2022)

These results indicate that unavailability of teaching and learning resources of REs causes poor performance among students. In this case, unavailability of teaching and learning resource in secondary schools' results into increasing boredom, reduce interest and attention among students in respective subjects. In this case, for effective teaching and learning of Res, there is a need of schools to have adequate teaching and learning resources like religious books and bibles etc. must be available.

These findings are in agreement with the study by Gbenda (2004) stresses that student's enrolment and interest in religious studies could as well be as result of inadequate provision of teaching and learning aids, fewer professional teachers, and lack of incentives among other things. Furthermore, Njoku (2009) equally adduced that poor enrolment of student in religious studies could be attributed to

teacher's instructional delivery system and teachers' personality.

### ***Lack of Teachers' Pedagogical and Assessment Skills***

The results in *Table 3* show that 24 respondents equivalent to 36.9 % strongly agreed that, lack of teachers' pedagogical and assessment skills is one of the school-related factors for poor performance in RE in secondary schools, 16 respondents equivalent to 24.6% agreed, 7 respondents equivalent to 10.8% were neutral, 10 respondents equivalent to 15.4% disagreed, and the remaining 8 respondents equivalent to 12.3% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that majority of respondents (61.5%) had agreed that, lack of teachers' pedagogical and assessment skills cause poor performance among students of RE.

**Table 3: Lack of Teachers' Pedagogical and Assessment Skills**

Detail	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	24	36.9%
Agree	16	24.6%
Neutral	7	10.8%
Disagree	10	15.4%
Strongly Disagree	8	12.3%
Total	65	100%

Source: Researcher (2022)

These results indicate that lack of teachers' pedagogical and assessment skills affect students' performance since they fail to have a good and thorough understanding of REs. Furthermore, they fail to appreciate how the knowledge gained overtime in REs can be created, organised, and linked to other areas of knowledge.

These findings concur with study by NBPTS (1998) who found that pedagogical skills make teachers to be aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and of strategies and instructional materials that can be of assistance in addition to understanding and solving the possible difficulties likely to arise in the classroom and modify their practice accordingly.

### Teacher-Student Ratio

The results in *Table 4* show that 21 respondents equivalent to 32.3 % strongly agreed that teacher-student ratio is one of the school-related factors for poor performance in RE in secondary schools, 18 respondents equivalent to 27.7% agreed, 4

respondents equivalent to 6.2% were neutral, 11 respondents equivalent to 16.9% disagreed, and the remaining 11 respondents equivalent to 16.9% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that, majority of respondents (60.0%) had agreed that teacher-student ratio cause poor performance among students of RE.

**Table 4: Teacher-Student Ratio**

Detail	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	21	32.3%
Agree	18	27.7%
Neutral	4	6.2%
Disagree	11	16.9%
Strongly Disagree	11	16.9%
Total	65	100%

**Source:** Researcher (2022)

These findings indicate that teacher-student ratio in public schools is affected with the difficulty of achieving qualitative education alongside with the increase in population of students. High teacher-student ratio happens because all students learning RE are taught in one class. High teacher-student ratio causes congestion in classroom and gives room for a lot of social vices and thus students are not properly taught. This made them to perform very badly in their examinations. This cause most of the students to engage in examinational malpractice in order to be able to get high performances.

These findings were supported by a respondent in an interview who observed that: -

*Attitudes and student-teacher ratio affects students' and teachers' performance, since the factors that affect the student or teacher populations are not unique to either of them.*

These findings concur with study by Carolyn et al. (2006) on classroom management show that most students in secondary school do not want to learn unless they are closely monitored by the teacher even though there are differences in degree of learning ability of each student in the classroom.

### Language of Instruction

The results in *Table 5* show that 17 respondents equivalent to 26.2 % strongly agreed that language of instruction is one of the school-related factors for poor performance in RE in secondary schools, 22 respondents equivalent to 33.8% agreed, 6 respondents equivalent to 9.2% were neutral, 11 respondents equivalent to 16.9% disagreed, and the remaining 9 respondents equivalent to 13.8% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that, majority of respondents (60.0%) had agreed that language of instruction cause poor performance among students of RE.

**Table 5: Language of Instruction**

Detail	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	26.2%
Agree	22	33.8%
Neutral	6	9.2%
Disagree	11	16.9%
Strongly Disagree	9	13.8%
Total	65	100%

**Source:** Researcher (2021)

These findings indicate that the language of instruction for RE is another factor that cause poor performance among students. This happened because students lack adequate communication skills and a strong command of English which is a medium of instruction, it thus increase their performance. In RE, students are taught different languages that are not acknowledged by the educational system impede academic learning resulting in poor performance. In this perspective, language of instruction is an impediment to student academic performance because it silently excludes some from the education system.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings had identified the following school-related factors that cause poor performance in RE in secondary schools in Tungi Ward, lack of qualified religious teachers, unavailability of teaching and learning resources, teachers' pedagogical and assessment skills, teacher-student ratio, and language of instruction. These findings concur with study by Ballard and Bates (2008) who pointed that there are various factors that ensure and are considered to be hindering good performance in RE. One of such factors is; language as a medium of instruction. This study concluded that the key aspect for the educators is to educate their students effectively on RE so that they may develop morally, spiritually, and academically. This will result into quality performance in their academics. To achieve this objective, it is necessary for the educators to understand better about the factors that may contribute in the spiritually, poor performance in RE in secondary schools. In addition, the study concluded that; teachers' satisfaction, work load and qualification are critical in influencing students RE performance. Highly satisfied teachers with higher qualification and a reasonable work load play a critical role in improvement of school performance on RE.

This study recommends that there is need for school authorities to devote special budgets in improving their libraries specifically by adding instruction media of RE since these are the core areas of improving the performances among students. The schools need to encourage untrained RE teachers to go for training in RE. This will guarantee the level of competency expected of teachers within the field.

Furthermore, these teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops, and seminars as to broaden their knowledge in the subject. Schools should ensure that, teachers use a diverse instructional strategy that is learner centred such as field mp, discovery method; inquiry method, problem solving method, in the course of their teaching as these will improve pupil's performance in the subject.

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