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# Factors Influencing Students' Academic Performance in Community and Government Built Secondary Schools in Tanzania: A case of Mbeya Municipality

<sup>1</sup>Mlozi, M.R.S, <sup>2</sup>Kaguo, F.E., <sup>3</sup>Nyamba, S.Y

<sup>1,3</sup>Department of Agricultural Education and Extension  
Sokoine University of Agriculture,  
P.O. Box 3002, Chuo Kikuu,  
Morogoro, Tanzania

<sup>2</sup>Sumbawanga Municipal Council,Statistic and Logistic Officer  
Secondary Education Department,P.O.Box 187, Sumbawanga,  
Rukwa, Tanzania

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated factors that influence academic performance of students in the community and government built secondary schools in Mbeya Municipality Tanzania. The study, specifically assessed the adequacy of school inputs, examined the existing learning process in schools, compared students' academic performance in form II and IV national examination results in 2006 - 2008 and explored peoples' perceptions on community built secondary schools. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey method; students and teachers were selected randomly, while education administrators and community respondents were purposely selected. Descriptive statistics and multiple linear regressions were used to summarize the information obtained from respondents in the studied schools. Findings of this study showed that there were not enough teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning processes were poor especially in the community built secondary schools. Also, availability of facilities in the schools did not match with number of students. Teaching was dominated with a mixture of English with Kiswahili. The study findings showed that academic performance of community built secondary schools were poorer than government built secondary schools in Form II and IV national examinations from 2006 to 2008. This study recommends that the government should increase number of teachers; provide teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, laboratories, classrooms, provide lunch to students staying far away from schools; introduce bonus schemes for teachers serving in difficult environment so as to facilitate them work for longer hours. Other education stakeholders such as parents, NGOs and local communities in collaboration with the government should build hostels and dormitories around the community built secondary schools for retention of students. People in Tanzania society should have positive perceptions on community built secondary schools so as to eliminate some problems like decreased enrollment of pupils, thus increase access in education and reduce number of street children in the society.

**Keywords:** *Students performance community and secondary built secondary schools*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background Information

Education is the primary agent of transformation towards sustainable development since it increases people's capacities to transform their visions into reality. Education not only provides scientific and technical skills, it also provides the motivation, justification, and social support for pursuing and applying them. The international community now strongly believes that we need to foster - through education - the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future [1]. Education for sustainable development has come to be seen as a process of learning how to make decisions that consider the long-term future of the economy, ecology and equity of all communities. It is a universal truth that education

empowers individuals' cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains to deal with the multi-faced local, regional and global challenges to pursue a truly invigorating livelihood. Building the capacity for such futures-oriented thinking is a key task of education [2]. The education and training policy of the United Republic of Tanzania, defines education as the process of initiating and preparing human through training, in their environment, to play active roles in society [3]. Education provides desirable and worthwhile broad and in-depth modes of thought, skills, attitudes and understanding needed for the full development of human thinking and actions [4]. Reasons for education also can be explained from four viewpoints.

First, parents feel prestigious in having an educated child, and vice versa the child feels proud of having earned an

education. Education spurs confidence in an individual of moving higher up on the ladder of success, for example, that of being able to get a good salaried job. Second, the nation feels obliged to educate its people to fulfill policy pronouncement of inculcating positive knowledge and skills among its young generation for them to be productive and spur sustainable development. Third, the regional integration (e.g. East African Community, SADCC) require that individual countries have policies for educating their people to qualify for regional jobs and enhance integration. Fourth, the international community (e.g. UNESCO, UN) require that individual countries have programs in place for capacity building of their nationals who can thereafter use the education gained for self and national development, and for them to live happy and productive lives.

Tanzania, has since independence in 1961 engaged itself in several education endeavours to enhance its peoples' development. For example, early in the 1980s, the implementation of the Universal Primary Education created unprecedented social demand for secondary education. The increasing number of pupils in primary education has led to more demands of secondary schools in Tanzania to absorb qualified candidates from primary schools [5]. As a result, this was felt more wanting from the 1990's in different regions of Tanzania. Hence, the country introduced the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) in late 1999 to absorb the increased number of pupils enrolled in the primary schools into secondary schools, and hence reduce the standard seven schools leavers [6]. Further, from 2000, Tanzania initiated a programme of increasing secondary schools in the country through community self-reliant programs. The aim was to encourage citizens to build secondary schools in their communities that would absorb many standard seven pupils from their localities. The intentions of establishing community secondary schools are to provide good education to many Tanzanians who missed this right due to shortages of government secondary schools places and to increase enrollment of standard seven schools leavers to fight poverty, hence develop the nation. The basic challenge in the development of any nation is how to educate its own citizens. It is believed that most students become very similar with regard to the rate of learning and motivation for further learning when a favourable learning condition is provided to them [7]. According to Eiche [8], in any productive processes, the quality of the output depends upon that of inputs. Schools have got human, financial and material resources as inputs that are all directed towards the attainment of school goals [9]. This study, therefore, investigated the academic performance of the community- and government-built secondary schools' adequacy of school inputs, learning processes, their results in the national examinations, and people's perceptions towards the two types of schools (community-and government-built secondary schools).

## 1.2 Secondary Education in Tanzania: Recent Development

Secondary Education in Tanzania consists of two tiers: The first cycle is Ordinary Level [O-Level], of four years post-primary education. The cycle follows both a core or common national curriculum and specialized optional subjects at the end of which pupils sit for nationally set examinations. It has four curriculum tracks or biases, which are Technical, Agricultural, Commercial and Home Economics. The second cycle is Advanced level, [A-level] which is two years post O-level during which students follow a National curriculum and at the end of which they sit for national examinations. The cycle is divided between Science and Arts streams. It prepares students for tertiary and higher education, as well as entry into the world of work.

Secondary schools in Tanzania are classified into: Government schools consist of two categories-the traditional national schools and community built schools. The later are schools built by local communities, but operated and managed by the government. Non-government schools include schools built by communities, NGOS, individuals owned and managed and seminaries. The public non government schools are owned and operated by communities, individuals, NGOs or individuals. Seminaries form the second group of non-government schools. Religious institutions own these schools and provide both general secondary education and specific religion vocation instruction. In particular, Roman Catholic seminaries have been the super performers in terms of producing quality performers of students in the national secondary education examinations. For example, [10] found that at the national level, seminaries (especially run by Roman Catholic) had consistently performed better followed by boys' and girls' secondary schools.

Schools in Tanzania can be either for boys only, girls' only, or co-educational. The majority of government, community and private schools are co-educational. Seminaries tend to concentrate on boys only schools [66%] while the Government has almost a parity of 26 boys and 22 girls only, out of its 92 schools. The rest 44 schools are co-educational. Schools can also be operated as either day or boarding schools, depending on geographical location, catchment areas, and affordability. The majority of the schools are day schools. Similarly, a school can have both O-level and A-Level, or one of these only. A majority of the schools combine both levels. There are great variations in the number of schools between regions and districts. While all schools are open to any child, day schools have restricted catchment areas, and thus children in districts greatly endowed with schools have an advantage over others.

The current transition rate from primary to secondary education in 1998 was 19.1%. This figure was very low

compared to transition rates in neighbouring countries. In Kenya, for instance, it is 53% while in Uganda it stands at 29%. Regional comparisons of participation rate in secondary education show that Tanzania lags far behind her neighboring countries in gross enrolment rate. This means that the country lacks a capacity to enroll a great many of the children from both the relevant age cohort and those outside it. For example, according to [2], secondary gross enrolment rates (GER) (%) for Zimbabwe was 44, Zambia 28, Kenya 26, Uganda 12, and Tanzania 5. In 2005, Tanzania Government initiated the building of community secondary schools among other measures to increase the GER from 5 to 12 percent.

However, according to Knezevich [9] the head count enrolment in community schools has increased in the context of scarce resources and a dire need for school infrastructure (classrooms, desks, laboratories, and library). According to these authors enrolments appear to be influenced by two kinds of factors: demand by parents for secondary schooling for their children; and the existence of a SEDP secondary school that children can attend even if they have to travel long distances.

Getting to Form V and VI in Tanzania is the get the way to elite professions, higher education and higher probability of participation in national affairs. However, that proportion has been oscillating for the last ten years, never getting above 25 percent, suggesting a stiff competition to access advanced level studies. Currently, Kiswahili is the official language of instruction in primary schools and English in secondary schools. It is acknowledged that the limited confidence of teachers in English in schools results in repeated 'code switching' between Kiswahili and English in the classroom. As a result, both languages suffer. Yet performance for English in examination remains poor. There is thus an urgent need to improve the teaching of both languages, using specialized language teachers.

In Tanzania, community-built secondary schools are built by the help of people in their localities and later handed over to the government which then supplies the teaching staff, teaching and learning materials and overall management. On the other hand, the government-built secondary schools are schools built, owned and managed by the government. In 1981, a presidential Commission was appointed to review the existing system of education and propose necessary changes to be realized by the country towards the year 2000. One of the significant recommendations made was the expansion of secondary education through the building of community secondary schools. In Tanzania, there has been an alarming increase of these schools, and in Mbeya municipality in particularly 26 community-built secondary schools had been built by 2007 (Mbeya Regional Education Office, 2009).

*In 2005, the government of Tanzania introduced Secondary Education Development Program, which was to oversee the expansion and improvement of the community and government-built secondary schools. One of the problems facing the community-built secondary schools has been the poor performance of students because of inherent problems in the schools. Few studies have investigated reasons for the poor academic performance of these schools. For example, Omari [10] examined the widespread community-and government-built schools in Tanzania and their academic poor performance. This study, therefore, investigated factors influencing the academic performance of the community-and government- built secondary schools in Mbeya municipality.*

### 1.3 Study Theory

The Scottish physicist James C. Maxwell is credited with a saying, "There is nothing as practical as a good theory" Therefore; by the same token, what will work for our students are driven by theories. A wide spread belief persists that "teaching is a straight forward enterprise" which entails directing students what they should read and do. However, if we buy the idea from constructivism "learning theory" under exogenous perspective; environment influences learning through experiences, exposure to models, and teaching. Thus, learning is a reconstruct of the environment, so what is learned is only accurate to the extent it reflects the environment. Furthermore, constructivism theory holds that learning is social and occurs from interactions between people in the environment. The main questions to be addressed therefore are that (i) what is the nature of the learning environment in the Tanzanian community-built secondary schools? and how does it influence learning?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Description of the Study Area

This study was conducted in Mbeya Municipality, which is one of the eight districts of Mbeya region located at latitude 8°54'0.0"S, and longitude 33°27'0.0"E. Mbeya region lies between latitudes 7o and 9o South of the Equator, and between longitudes 32o and 35o East of Greenwich. It covers an area of 63,420 square kilometers and to the north borders Mbeya Rural district, to the East Rungwe district, while to the South borders Ileje district and on its West is the Mbozi district. In 2002, the municipality has a population of 266,422 people in its six wards (URT, 2002), and enjoys an altitude of 848 meters above sea level, with a rainfall averaging 1650 mm per year and mean annual temperature 16°C - 25°C. Most people in this area engage in subsistence agriculture, while few engage in petty businesses, in transport, government employees, and in manufacturing industries.

The area was selected because of having many recently community-built schools and government-built schools. In 2009, there were 210 secondary schools, of which four were government-built, and 206 were community-built secondary schools in Mbeya region (Mbeya Region Education Office (REO), 2009). Apparently, most of the government-built secondary schools are located in the 'old' urban areas, while the recently community-built secondary schools are found in the outskirts of the city and some in remote areas with poor infrastructure. Because of this, most of the community-built secondary schools have few human and physical resources such as teachers, learning and teaching materials, and laboratories than of the government-built secondary schools.

## 2.2 Research Design

The study employed survey research design. More specifically it employed cross sectional survey approach, which involved collection of data at one point in time [11]. This is a quantitative research design approach and is claimed to be relevant, effective and most appropriate when one seeks to understand the best predictors of outcomes [12]. As this study sought to comparatively understand factors that greatly influence academic performance in community and government built secondary schools, the cross sectional survey approach could suit for the study. The design is relatively feasible, economical and the data collected could easily be analyzed to determine relationships between variable.

## 2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Methods

Sampling involves procedures through which some members of a population in the study area are selected to represent the entire population [12]. The sample for this study included two purposively selected government built secondary schools and three communities built secondary schools being randomly selected from a list of 26 secondary schools. Names of the 26 community built Secondary schools were arranged alphabetically and assigned with numbers serially, whereby using systematic random sampling the three schools were selected. For the government built secondary schools, out of three schools, two were purposively selected; the criteria for selecting the schools were that, both were Ordinary level contrary to the third school which was an Advanced level one. Later, students were randomly selected from the student attendance list in their respective classes through a table of random numbers technique. The same technique used to obtain male and female teachers who were involved in the study. Administrators and community leaders were purposively selected. In total, the study used a sample size of 430 respondents, of whom 375 were students and 55 teachers. It also involved 10 education administrators and 10 community members as key informants.

## 3. STUDY RESULTS

### 3.1 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The study interviewed 430 respondents, that is, 375 students and 55 teachers. Respondents were interviewed in two government-built secondary schools of Mbeya and Iyunga, and two community-built secondary schools of Iganjo and Samora in Mbeya municipality in Mbeya District, respectively. Of the 375 students, 236 (62.9%) were male students and the remaining 139 (37.1%) were females. Of all students, 188(50.1%) were in Form II and the remaining 187 (49.1%) were in Form IV. Over half, 218 (50.9%) of the student respondents had age ranging between 15 and 20 years, while 157 (49.1%) were between 21 to 25 years. Of the 172 students from the community-built secondary schools, 101(58.2%) were males and 71(41.8%) females, while of the 203 students from government-built secondary schools, 135(66.5%) were males and 68(33.5%) females.

Of the 55 teachers of which 32(58.2%) were male teachers and 23 (41.8%) female teachers. Of the 55 teachers, 37 (67.3%) were diploma graduates and about a third (32.7%) had degree level of education. All the teachers were above 25 years of age. Community-built secondary schools had more male teachers than female teachers, while government-built secondary schools had about equal numbers of male and female teachers. Of the 24 teachers in community-built secondary schools, 16 (66.7%) were males, and eight (33.3%) were females, while of the 31 teachers from the government-built secondary schools, 16(51.6%) were males and 15(48.4%) females. The study found that community-built secondary schools had more teachers with diploma level of education and few with degrees, while in the government-built secondary schools there was a balance between the two levels of teachers' education. Probably this was due to three reasons. First, there is an endemic shortage of teachers in the country. Second, most teachers do not prefer to teach in community-built secondary schools because most lack infrastructure (e.g., housing, remote, poor roads, classes, laboratories, library). Third, there is a prestige to teach in the government-built secondary schools (Table 1).

In most third world countries, secondary school enrollment of girls has been improving so as to correct the imbalance, this is also seen in the number of male teachers in the secondary schools—there were relatively more male teachers in both schools than females. The other general anomaly in our schools is having Diploma holders than those with first degrees (bachelor degrees). This study is a testimony to this anomaly. Looking from all angles the public perceptions of community-built secondary schools is rather negative, which is reinforced by the fact that they are for children from poor families who were not selected to join the government secondary school during the first national selection. Also, it is these children who in the first place got low marks is their

Standard VII national examinations as they were unable to get into the first selection of the ‘cream’ selected to join Form I in the government-built secondary schools. This in itself led to the society to view these schools negatively. Third, low number of teachers with first degrees also negatively affects students’ academic performance in the secondary schools. Empirical evidence shows that most teachers graduating with first degrees in the universities do not prefer to teach in secondary schools. This problem is serious in the community secondary schools as most of them are located in small towns or in the rural areas. Currently, it is common to find three teachers in most of

the community secondary schools because of shortages of teachers and even the present ones do not want to teach in the rural-based community secondary schools. In the 1960s to 2000s, the government-built secondary schools were hailed for producing quality students but this is being eroded after the introduction of the community built-secondary schools. These schools have poor infrastructure (classrooms, library, offices, and staff houses) and observations show that newly recruited teachers do not want to teach in these schools. Also, teaching in the government-built schools was once a more prestigious aspect than it is now.

**Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents**

VARIABLE			Community built secondary schools n (%)	Government built secondary schools n (%)	Total n (%)
Sex	Teachers	Male	16 (66.7)	16 (51.6)	32 (58.2)
		Female	8 (33.3)	15 (48.4)	23 (41.8)
Age	Students	Male	101 (58.2)	135 (66.5)	236 (62.9)
		Female	71 (41.8)	68 (33.5)	139 (37.1)
	Teachers	15 to 20 years	108 (25.1)	110 (25.6)	218 (50.9)
		21 to 25 years	88 (20.5)	69 (16.0)	157 (36.5)
Education level	Teachers	> 25 years	24 (9.6)	31 (7.2)	55 (12.8)
		Diploma	20 (83.3)	17 (54.8)	37 (67.3)
	Students	Degree	4 (16.7)	14 (45.2)	18 (32.7)
		Form II	112 (26.0)	76 (17.7)	188 (50.1)
		Form IV	99 (23.0)	88 (20.5)	187 (49.1)

### 3.2 Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials

Responses for the availability of teaching and learning materials in the schools are shown in Table 3. The availability of teaching and learning materials in the schools were referred to as textbooks, reference books, teaching guides, supplementary books, journals, magazines and newspapers. Study results shows that in the government-built schools, an average of 54.8 percent of the student respondents mentioned that teaching and learning materials were enough as shown by 135 (66.5%), 117(57.6%), 114(56.2%), 113(55.7%) and 74(36.5%) in geography, physics, reference books, physics and laboratory equipment, and mathematics, respectively. Also, an average of 50 percent of the teacher respondents from the government-built secondary schools indicated that teaching and learning materials were enough as shown by 18(58.1%), 17(54.8%), 16 (51.6%), and 9(29.0%) reference books, in mathematics and text books, geography and laboratory equipment, and physics, respectively (Table 2). The mean differences of availability of teaching and learning materials across schools were statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

On the other hand, student and teacher respondents from community-built secondary schools indicated that the teaching and learning materials were not enough. For example, an average of two thirds (63.4%) of the student

respondents from community-built secondary schools indicated that teaching and learning materials were not enough as shown by 23(95.8), 20(83.3%), 19(79.2%), 18(75.0%), 17(70.8%) and 15(62.5%) in geography, physics, reference books, mathematics, laboratory equipment, and text books, respectively (Table 3). Similarly, most, an average of 77.8 percent of teacher respondents from community secondary schools reported that teaching and learning materials were not enough. Indications were that teacher respondents (average of 77.8%) compared to their students (average of 63.4%) was concerned mostly with the unavailability of teaching and learning materials in these schools. The lack of these materials inadvertently contributed to low students’ academic performance, especially in the community-built secondary schools. Further, data presented in Table 2 clearly shows that there were similarities in respondents’ opinions about the unavailability of teaching and learning materials in mathematics for student respondents but different for teachers. On the overall, student and teacher respondents from community secondary schools highly indicated that there was unavailability of teaching and learning materials in community-built secondary schools than their counterparts from government-built secondary schools (Table 2).

It is clear therefore, that student and teacher respondents from government secondary schools were more comfortable with the availability of teaching and learning materials than their counterparts from community-built schools. In all cases, the differences were statistically

significant at  $p < .05$  (Table 2). The differences seen could be due to the fact that government-built secondary schools are allocated funds to acquire teaching and learning materials compared to community-built secondary schools and this could be a reflection on the poor academic results seen in these schools. The above findings attests to Altbach [13] who pointed out that, there was a problem of textbooks in developing countries' schools where in many cases students either lacked textbooks or were forced to share a few available textbooks. Community-built

secondary schools seemed to suffer more compared to government-built secondary schools. Hence, the importance of textbooks and other instructional materials for teaching and learning is evident that greatly affects students' academic performance in both schools. The mean differences on views on the availability of teaching and learning materials in schools between teachers and students, except for physics, were statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$  (Table 2).

**Table 2: Availability of teaching and learning materials (N=430)**

Variable	Community-built (teachers=24, students=172)		Government-built teachers=31, students=203		X <sup>2</sup>	p-value
	Enough n (%)	Not enough n (%)	Enough n (%)	Not enough n (%)		
Mathematics						
Teachers	6(25)	18(75.0)	17 (54.8)	14 (45.2)	24.7	0.009
Students	64 (37.2)	108(62.8)	74 (36.5)	129 (63.5)	132.6	0.000
Geography						
Teachers	1 (4.2)	23 (95.8)	16 (51.6)	15 (48.4)	46.8	0.000
Students	65 (37.8)	107 (62.2)	135 (66.5)	68 (33.5)	56.7	0.004
Physics						
Teachers	4 (16.7)	20 (83.3)	9 (29.0)	22 (71.0)	38.9	0.000
Students	79 (45.9)	93 (54.1)	114 (56.2)	89 (43.8)	159.7	0.326*
Text books						
Teachers	9(37.5)	15(62.5)	17 (54.8)	13 (41.9)	28.7	0.000
Students	48 (27.9)	113 (65.7)	113 (55.7)	90 (44.3)	24.5	0.000
Reference books						
Teachers	5 (20.8)	19 (79.2)	18 (58.1)	13 (41.9)	27.6	0.000
Students	48 (27.9)	116 (67.4)	117 (57.6)	86 (42.4)	28.7	0.000
Laboratory equipment						
Teachers	7 (29.2)	17 (70.8)	16 (51.6)	14 (45.2)	26.6	0.000
Students	55 (32.0)	117 (68.0)	114 (56.2)	89 (43.8)	42.5	0.000

\*=not significant at  $p > 0.05$ .

### 3.3 Adequacy of School Facilities

Respondents were asked about the adequacy of school facilities as shown in Table 3. For this study these referred to desks, chairs, tables, classrooms, laboratories, library, dormitories, and toilets. Of the 31 teacher respondents from the government-built secondary schools, over half with an average of 57.3 percent mentioned that the schools had no adequate facilities. This was mentioned by 28(90.3%), 18(58.1%) 16(51.6%), and 14(45.2%) for dormitories, desks, tables, and classrooms, toilets, chairs, and library, respectively. Most, 90.3 percent of the teacher respondents lamented that their secondary schools lacked adequate dormitories, which affected students' academic performance. Of the 203 student respondents from government-built secondary schools, over half with an average of 56.8 percent mentioned that the schools had no adequate facilities. This was mentioned by 196(96.6%), 121(59.6%) 106(52.2%), 103(50.7%), 99(48.8%), 97(47.8%) and 95(46.7%) for dormitories, toilets,

classrooms and library, desks, laboratory, and tables, respectively (Table 3). Similar to teachers, most, 96.6 percent of the student respondents from government-built secondary schools complained that their schools lacked adequate dormitories, which affected their academic performance. A look at the community-secondary school reveals a dismal scenario. Of the 24 teacher respondents from the community-built secondary schools, over two thirds with an average of 69.8 percent said that the schools had no adequate facilities. This was mentioned by 23(95.9%), 21(87.5%) 18(75.0%), 16(66.7%), 14(58.3%), and 12 (38.0%) for dormitories, library, laboratory and toilets, classrooms, tables, desks and chairs respectively (Table 3). As observed for teachers from government-built schools, here too, most, 95.9 percent reported that the schools lacked adequate dormitories. About half of the respondents (teachers, students), 50 percent from the government-built secondary schools indicated that schools had teaching and learning materials, but these materials were in poor condition. For example, in most

government-built secondary schools in which libraries they had few old books and usually when books were bought students stole them as they lacked competent and dedicated librarians. Because of the low pay that librarians got empirical evidence shows that some stole text books and sold them to students. Most school laboratories in the government-built secondary schools have no chemicals. The situation is worse in the community-build secondary schools because there are no teaching and learning materials (textbooks, reference books, laboratory equipment, mathematic) as library nor laboratories are not built. There is serious scarcity of standard input—low textbooks to students’ ratios across schools and subject areas, but mainly in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and English [14]. Generally, all these things in totality appear to seriously affect the academic performance of students’ performance, especially those in the community-built secondary schools. For example, in the 2009/2010 National Form IV results ten seminaries (Roman Catholic mission-run

secondary schools) led in producing the higher scorers, and second were the private schools, the government-build and lastly the community-built schools. The society is searching for reasons as to why this is the case? Perhaps the answer to this is that seminary secondary schools are amply supplied with teaching and learning materials, among other things. This has been a perennial problem in public secondary schools. Mbilinyi [15] also found that secondary schools had inadequate teaching and learning materials. Empirical observations in the community secondary show that poor academic performance of students is mainly due to lack enough teachers, teaching and learning materials, and overcrowding. For example, in addition to those problems a head teacher of Jitegemeo Community Secondary School in Morogoro Municipality confessed that a classroom that was meant for 45 students had 100. This was a serious problem in terms of their academic performance, as these students were selected during the third lot.

**Table 3: Adequacy of school facilities (N=430)**

Variable	Community-built teachers=24, students=172		Government-built teachers=31, students=203		X2	p-value
	About adequate n (%)	Not adequate n (%)	About adequate n (%)	Not adequate n (%)		
Desks						
Teachers	9(37.5)	12(50.0)	12(38.0)	18(58.1)	24.8	0.000
Students	65(37.8)	107(62.2)	98(48.3)	103(50.7)	22.5	0.000
Chairs						
Teachers	9(37.5)	12(50.0)	13(41.9)	15(48.4)	26.1	0.001
Students	40(23.2)	128(74.4)	107(52.7)	95(46.7)	128.2	0.000
Tables						
Teachers	9(37.5)	14(58.3)	12(38.7)	18(58.1)	28.2	0.000
Students	15(8.7)	152(88.3)	105(51.7)	97(47.8)	130.8	0.002
Classrooms						
Teachers	8(33.3)	16(66.7)	13(41.9)	18(58.1)	24.6	0.000
Students	38(22.1)	132(76.7)	96(47.3)	106(52.2)	108.2	0.000
Laboratory						
Teachers	6(25.0)	18(75.0)	16(51.6)	15(48.4)	22.5	0.000
Students	37(21.5)	126(78.5)	104(51.2)	99(48.8)	155.0	0.000
Library						
Teachers	3(12.5)	21(87.5)	16(51.6)	14(45.2)	23.5	0.000
Students	26(15.1)	145(84.3)	95(46.8)	106(52.2)	188.0	0.000
Dormitory						
Teachers	1(4.1)	23(95.9)	2(6.5)	28(90.3)	17.5	0.009
Students	17(9.9)	150(87.2)	5(2.5)	196(96.6)	23.7	0.000
Toilets						
Teachers	6(25.0)	18(75.0)	14(45.2)	16(51.6)	22.5	0.000
Students	5(2.9)	166(96.5)	80(39.4)	121(59.6)	169.4	0.023

Of the 172 student respondents from community-built secondary schools, over two thirds with an average of 71.1 percent mentioned that the schools had no adequate facilities. Specifically, this was mentioned by 166(96.5%), 150(87.2%) 152(88.3%), 145(84.3%), 132(76.7%), 128(74.4%), 126(78.5%), and 107 (62.2%)

for toilets, tables, dormitories, library, classrooms, chairs, laboratory, and desks, respectively (Table 3). Unlike teachers, student respondents from community secondary schools reported that the most serious problem was inadequacy of toilets, which was mentioned by 96.5 percent, which implicitly affected their academic

performance. The mean differences on opinions on the adequacy of school facilities in schools between teachers and students were statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

Further, data presented in Table 3 clearly shows that most student and teacher respondents from community and government-built secondary schools indicated that dormitories were grossly inadequate in their schools. For example, an average of 92 percent of all student respondents reported that dormitories were inadequate. This implied that students were overcrowded in the dormitories, which appeared to affect their academic performance. On the same vein, an average of 93 percent of teacher respondents reported dormitories as inadequate. Observations in the study schools revealed that school like desks, chairs, tables, classrooms, laboratories, library, dormitories and toilets were few to match with either the number of students and requirements for the subjects. For example, of the 375 student respondents, 166 (96.5%) from the community-built secondary schools and 121(59.6%) from government-built secondary schools indicated that toilets were not adequate. This worsening situation was partly contributed by the increased enrollment of students in the schools that did not match with the facilities available. In many cases schools are supposed to have enough classes. But here the situation was different, as of all 375 student respondents, 238 (63.5%) indicated that classrooms were not adequate, with the pinch being serious in community-built secondary schools. Recruiting many students with an intention of training more students at secondary education level, might have forced many schools to have inadequate classrooms. Pedagogically this meant that learning among students was grossly impeded, which was reflected in their poor academic performance.

### 3.4 Number of Exercises Provided for Different Subjects

Respondent's opinions on the number of exercises that teachers gave to students on different subjects are shown in Table 4. Of the 31 teacher respondents in the government-built secondary schools, an average of 52 percent indicated that they did not give enough exercises to students. Specifically, 17(54.8%), 16(51.6%), and 15(48.4%) were reported for mathematics, geography, and biology, respectively. Also, of the 203 student respondents in the government-built secondary schools, an average of 45 percent reported that teachers did not give enough exercises in mathematics, geography and biology. Specifically, 95(46.8%), 94(46.3%), and 84(41.4%) were reported for biology, geography and mathematics, respectively (Table 4).

Teacher respondents' opinions from community-built secondary schools on the number of exercises that they provided to students were shocking. Of the 24 teacher respondents, an average of 82 percent mentioned that they did not give enough exercises to students in the three subjects. Specifically, 20 (83.3%) and 19(79.26%) were reported for mathematics and geography, and biology, respectively. It was surprising to note that student respondents were more positive on this aspect than their teachers. For example, of 172 student respondents from community secondary schools, an average of 59 percent said that their teachers did not give them enough exercises in the three subjects. Specifically, 107(62.2%), 98(57.0%), and 97(56.4%) were reported for biology, mathematics, and geography, respectively (Table 4). The low percent of students' responses compared to that of teachers was perhaps the lack of understanding of the syllabi coverage in the three subjects. Discussions with teachers in the study secondary schools revealed that they were overloaded with many subjects to teach. Hence, could not give enough exercises to students. Also, enrolment had been expanded with the existing number of teachers. It was observed that this was more severe in community secondary schools because few teachers preferred to teach in these most of which were remote or far away from town or city center. Observations revealed that most of the community-built secondary schools could not be easily reached, had poor infrastructure, and teachers lacked means of transport. The non-reporting of officially posted teachers to these schools exacerbated the problem, hence causing deleterious effects on students' academic performance. Mean differences in opinions between students and teachers in all schools were statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

When compared between schools, the study shows that student respondents in government-built secondary schools indicated to having enough (58.1%) mathematics exercises compared to 43.0 percent in community-built secondary schools. This scenario was found to be similar for geography: reported enough in government-built (53.7%), while it was low (43.6%) in community-built schools (Table 5). Also, same trend was observed for biology, in which student respondents in government-built reported enough by 53.2 percent, while their counterparts in community-built reported lowly by 37.8 percent. This situation is similar to that of teacher respondents. The overall study findings revealed that there was not enough class exercises provided to students in community-built secondary schools, a situation that influenced to poor students' academic performance. The differences observed might due to little funds allocated by community-built secondary schools on acquiring facilities for science subjects.

**Table 4: Inadequacy of subject exercises provided to students in the schools (N=430)**

Subject and respondent	Community built teachers=24,students=172		Government built teachers=31, students=203		$\chi^2$	p-value
	Enough n (%)	Not enough n (%)	Enoughn (%)	Not enough n (%)		
Mathematics						
Teachers	4(16.7)	20(83.3)	14(45.2)	17(54.8)	36.4	0.000
Students	74(43.0)	98(57.0)	118(58.1)	84(41.4)	32.3	0.000
Geography						
Teachers	4(16.7)	20(83.7)	15(48.4)	16(51.6)	11.5	0.021
Students	75(43.6)	97(56.4)	109(53.7)	94(46.3)	33.0	0.000
Biology						
Teachers	5(20.8)	19(79.2)	16(51.6)	15(48.4)	11.5	0.021
Students	65(37.8)	107(62.2)	108(53.2)	95(46.8)	34.0	0.000
Average (%)						
Teachers	18.1	82.1	48.4	51.6		
Students	41.5	58.5	55.0	44.8		

Discussions with teachers in the study secondary schools revealed that they were overloaded with many subjects to teach. Hence, could not give enough exercises to students. Also, enrolment had been expanded with the existing number of teachers. It was observed that this was more severe in community secondary schools because few teachers preferred to teach in these most of which were remote or far away from town or city center. Observations revealed that most of the community-built secondary schools could not be easily reached, had poor infrastructure, and teachers lacked means of transport. The non-reporting of officially posted teachers to these schools exacerbated the problem, hence causing deleterious effects on students’ academic performance. Mean differences in opinions between students and teachers in all schools were statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

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### 3.5 Language Used For Instruction in Secondary Schools

Views on type of language that teachers used for instruction in the schools are shown in Table 5. One of the serious problems in Tanzanian secondary schools is the media used for instruction. This problem is further compounded because of comprehension inadequacies of media of instruction by both the instructor and the students being taught. Observations show that most teachers in secondary school have low comprehension of the English language—a language that MoEVT insists as a compulsory medium of instruction in secondary schools.

Respondents were asked to give their opinions about teachers using the English language as a medium of instruction in the classrooms. Of the 31 teacher respondents from government-built secondary schools, 18(58.1) agreed that teachers used English as medium of instruction in the classrooms. But of the 24 teacher respondents from community-built secondary schools, 18(75.0%) disagreed that teachers used English as medium of instruction in the classrooms. Further, of the 203 students respondents from government secondary schools, 112(55.2%) disagreed that teachers used English as a medium of instruction in the classrooms. Further, of the 172 student respondents from community-built secondary schools, 101(58.7%) disagreed that teachers used English when teaching in the classrooms (Table 5). All these have been found to negatively influence students’ academic performance in schools. These study results contradicts grossly with directives of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training which say that the medium of instruction for secondary education shall continue to be English except for teaching of other approved languages [5]. According to the Tanzania

secondary education curriculum, the medium of instruction in secondary schools is English and

examinations are written in English with exception of Kiswahili [5].

**Table 5: Medium of instruction in the schools (N=430)**

Medium of instruction	Community-built teachers=24, students=172		Government-built teachers=31, students=203		X <sup>2</sup>	p-value
	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	Yes n (%)	No n (%)		
English						
Teachers	6(25.0)	18(75.0)	18(58.1)	13(41.9)	2.5	0.630ns
Students	66(38.3)	101(58.7)	91 (44.8)	112(55.2)	39.5	0.000
English & swahili						
Teachers						
Students	18(75.0)	6(25.0)	13(41.9)	18(58.1)	28.2	0.000
	101(58.7)	66(38.3)	112(55.2)	91 (44.8)	61.2	0.000

ns =not significant at p>0.05.

In Tanzania, there still exists a confusion of the language of instruction to use in secondary schools. Two schools of thought discern on this. First, are those who think that the medium of instruction in secondary schools should be english. These contend that who speak and write good English are truly educated. This view has empirically seen many of the educated elites in the country sending their children to English medium schools, and even sending their children to overseas colleges and universities. This view is in part espoused by the government so as to produce individuals who can get employed in the regional (EAC, SADC) and international organizations (WHO, UN, FAO, other countries). Second, are those who think that the medium of instruction in secondary schools should mainly be Kiswahili with a little combination of english. These argue that students taught in Kiswahili will have a good grasp of Tanzanian values and attitudes of the country through learning in Kiswahili. They also see it as a unifying language that should not be left out in the curriculum, and strongly argue that countries such as China and Japan have advanced technologically because they use their own national languages. Results from this study will shade light on some of these controversial issues.

Respondents were asked to give their opinions about teachers mixing English and Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in the classrooms. Of the 31 teacher respondents from government-built secondary schools, 18(58.1) disagreed that teachers mixed English and Kiswahili as media of instruction in the classrooms. But of the 24 teacher respondents from community-built secondary schools, 18(75.0%) agreed that teachers mixed English and Kiswahili when teaching in the classrooms, hence *KiswaEng*, that is, mixing English and Kiswahili when explaining a concept. Results of student

respondents reveal the malpractice. For example, of the 203 students respondents from government secondary schools, 112(55.2%) agreed that teachers mixed English and Kiswahili when teaching in the classrooms (Table 6). Further, of the 172 student respondents from community-built secondary schools, 101(58.7%) agreed that teachers mixed English and Kiswahili when teaching in the classrooms. For example, Lwaitama and Galabawa [unpublished] assert that both learners and teachers in these ward based secondary schools have serious deficiencies in their mastery of the language of teaching and learning which is English. It is therefore, because of these malpractices that we see low students’ academic performances of students in these schools, which will continue of steps, are not taken to rectify.

### 3.6 Syllabi Coverage and its Effects on Students’ Academic Performance

Of the 430 respondents, there were varying agreements in whether the school syllabi were adequately covered. Table 6 clearly show that an average of 50 percent of all the teacher respondents reported that the school syllabi were covered on time. However, the disagreement was slightly high (54.2%) for teachers from community secondary schools than from government schools (45.2%). Amazingly, student respondents appeared comfortable with syllabi coverage. For example, 71.9 percent of the student respondents from government secondary schools agreed that syllabi were covered on time, while 56.4 percent of the student respondents from the community schools said so. This meant that syllabi coverage influenced students’ academic performance in government schools than in community schools.

Table 6: Syllabi coverage in the secondary schools (N=430)

Variable	Community-built teachers=24, students=172		Government-built teachers=31, students=203		X <sup>2</sup>	p-value
	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	Yes n (%)	No n (%)		
Covered syllabi on time						
Teachers	11(45.8)	13(54.2)	17(54.8)	14(45.2)	111.2	0.025
Students	97(56.4)	75(43.6)	146(71.9)	57(28.1)	88.6	0.000
Not covering syllabus on time affect students' academic performance						
Teachers	5(20.8)	19(79.2)	0(0.0)	31(100.0)	44.9	0.000
Students	40(23.3)	132(76.7)	144(70.9)	59(29.1)	160.6	0.000

Another follow-up question was whether they thought that syllabi coverage on time did affect student academic performances positively. Of the 24 teacher respondents from community secondary schools, most, 19 (79.2) reported that syllabi coverage on time did not affect students' academic performance positively. However, all teacher respondents from the government secondary schools disagreed that syllabi coverage on time affected students' academic performance positively. However, there was mixed responses from student respondents. Of the 203 student respondents from that government secondary schools, over two thirds, 144(70.9%) agreed that syllabi coverage on time did affect students' academic performance positively (Table 7). Also, of the 172 student respondents from community secondary schools, most, 132(76.7%) disagreed that syllabi coverage on time affected students' academic performance adversely.

Amazingly, student respondents appeared comfortable with syllabi coverage. For example, 71.9 percent of the student respondents from government secondary schools agreed that syllabi were covered on time, while 56.4 percent of the student respondents from the community schools said so. One of the overriding questions is whether students in secondary schools knew the extent to which the syllabi are supposed to be covered in the respective subjects. It appears that most students, especially in government-built secondary schools are aware the extent to which syllabi coverage is supposed to be covered. This is seen when students demand for extra tuition of the uncovered topic from private tutors, here referred to as 'tuition' for the topics not covered in the regular school sessions. Although, tuition has been a fashion for most students to attend, especially those in urban areas and those from well off individuals in the society, leading to commercializing of secondary education.

Head count enrolment has increased in the context of scarce resources and a dire need for school infrastructure (classrooms, desks, laboratories, and library). Enrolments appear to be influenced by two kinds of factors: demand by parents for secondary schooling for their children; and the existence or supply of a SEDP secondary school that children can attend even if they have to travel long distances.

Systematic inefficiencies at school level were also observed that seemed to result from lack of effective teacher management and supervision. These inefficiencies translate in wicked teacher deployment, dropouts and repetitions among students. There is serious scarcity of standard input—low textbooks to students' ratios across schools and subject areas, but mainly in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and English. The ward based community secondary schools are severely starved of operational financial resources when compared to the situation applying in private/non government schools in the same locality. The schools are operating with a quality-quantity financing strategy.

Both learners and teachers in these ward based secondary schools have serious deficiencies in their mastery of the language of teaching and learning which is English. This tended to result in adopting pedagogical approaches which were not learner-centered, participatory and optimally interactive.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study is concluding that, community secondary schools have a long journey to travel before achieving quality community secondary education. The following are conclusions based on the specific objectives of the study and findings;

In the studied schools, the number of students did not match with the existing teaching and learning facilities in

both community and government-built secondary schools. The school learning environment in both community and government-built secondary schools were not conducive due to lack of adequate or completely absence of laboratories, libraries, toilets, dormitories and teachers' houses. Also there were no enough classrooms and qualified teachers which together appeared to greatly the academic performance of students.

The study also found that, syllabi coverage and English language were also problems to students' academic performance. Most community built secondary schools were located far from town centers, as such both students and teachers failed to acquire learning materials from learning centers like libraries and internet services. Equally, few students failed to attend all periods on time.

Furthermore, the study revealed that, there was poor students' academic performance in community built secondary schools as compared to those in government built secondary schools in the form II and IV national examinations. However, few individuals from community built secondary schools had somehow good performance probably due nature and personal efforts.

Generally, most respondents had a negative insight about the community built secondary schools teaching and learning environment, they pointed it to adversely affect students' academic performance.

This study recommends that the government should increase number of teachers; provide teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, laboratories, classrooms, provide lunch to students staying far away from schools; introduce bonus schemes for teachers serving in difficult environment so as to facilitate them work for longer hours. Other education stakeholders such as parents, NGOs and local communities in collaboration with the government should build hostels and dormitories around the community built secondary schools for retention of students.

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