**Original Research Articles**

**Transmission of Religious Practice: A Review of Catechesis Books for Selected Secondary Schools in the Catholic Diocese of Morogoro, Tanzania**

**Abstract**

*This study examines the content of Catechesis teaching materials used in secondary schools under the Catholic Church. It focuses on teaching Christianity in high school. The research design used in this study will be a convergent mixing method. Through questionnaires and interviews, data was collected from six principals (HoS), 30 Catechesis teachers, and 50 students. These findings reveal that the teaching materials for Christianity, referred to as biblical knowledge, incorporate the teachings of the catechism, which also include specific religious practices. In addition, the study identified that some high schools continued to use the old syllabus from 2011, approved by the TEC, which still contains this religious practice. As a result, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Tanzanian Bishops' Conference (TEC), consolidate the content of the two syllabuses into a single syllabus integrating catechesis and religious practice.*

**Keywords**: Catechesis, Religious Practice, Faith, School

1. **Introduction**

Education as systematic instruction can be carried out through various fields. Religious education is a directed engagement with the transcendent aspects of life, promoting a conscious connection with the primary basis of existence (Thomas 1980). Generally understood, religion represents humanity's search for the transcendent, in which individuals become aware and express their relationship to this supreme reality. This is reflected in the ministry of God's Word, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:4-7: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. Keep the words I command you today in your hearts. Read to your children and talk about them when you are at home, when you are away, when you lie down and when you wake up." From the beginning, the Church has developed its teachings based on the instructions given by the Lord Himself. This forms the basic character of religious education in schools, especially in relation to the transmission of the faith to children and adolescents, which requires special consideration. The relationship between religious teaching and catechesis is one of difference and complementarity (*From the Congregation for the Pastor, General Directory to Catechesis 1971*).

Examining catechesis from a Catholic perspective, the term comes from the Greek verb "katēchein," which means "to echo," "to echo," or "to bequeath (Thomas 1980). This etymology suggests a form of oral instruction. In the New Testament, catechesis refers to basic oral teaching that goes beyond cherhygma, similar to providing milk to young children (see Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3). The emphasis is on delivering the message accurately, as shown in Acts 18:25. This understanding of catechesis as a "verbal re-echo" persisted in the early Church, where it was a verbal encouragement to live a moral life (Thomas 1980). As a result, the Catholic Church has historically recognized the value of maintaining the term catechesis with its consistent historical meaning. Thus, the transmission of faith remains an activity of retelling the story of the Christian faith that has been passed down from generation to generation. It is positioned as a special educational activity in the context of the broader Christian religious education (Thomas 1980).

It is very important to clearly distinguish between religious teaching and catechesis (*Congregation for Priests, General Directory for Catechesis 1971*) because the transmission of the faith must be carried out by certain people who believe and practice this faith while religious instruction can be carried out by anyone who participates in religious practice. In the context of secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, the content of religious education textbooks used tends to transmit the content of faith or focus on religious practices. Religious education in schools provides students with knowledge of Christian identity and the practice of Christian life, which includes religious observance.

Catechesis, which is rooted in the Greek meaning of "echoing doctrine," represents an interactive progression in which God's Word resonates between the preacher or individual receiving the message, and the Holy Spirit. A great commission has been entrusted to men and women who are called by God to preach the Good News. The formation and service of faith transmission is traditionally referred to as catechesis. While the teaching of religion in schools is developed in diverse educational contexts, it retains its basic purpose while allowing for a distinct emphasis. This work aims to determine whether textbooks used to teach catechesis in secondary schools focus on the transmission of faith or emphasize religious practice (*Congregation for Pastors, General Directory for Catechesis 1971*). Catechesis is essentially about the transmission of the Gospel as it has been received, understood, celebrated, lived, and communicated by the Christian community in various ways (*Congregation for Pastors, General Directory for Catechesis, 1971*).

Furthermore, this study will try to explain the content of religious textbooks used to teach catechesis in secondary schools. Although Christian religious education has its limitations, it also offers significant advantages. Don (1982) notes that, "Christian religious education is a political activity with pilgrims in time who are deliberately and deliberately involved with them in God's activities in the present, the story of the Christian faith community, and the vision of the Kingdom of God, the seeds of which are already among us."

1. **Problem Statement**

In high school, the subject of Christianity is taught with the same level of discipline as other subjects, following a prescribed curriculum. Students have the right to learn about the religion they are in with truth and certainty. In the Catholic Church, this right is particularly concerned with knowing Christ and the message of salvation that He proclaims, which must not be ignored (*Congregation for the Clergy, General Directory for Catechesis 1971*) The nature of the recognition of the confession of religious teaching in schools, which are represented differently by the Church in different countries, serves as an important guarantee for families and students who choose this form of education. In this study, we aimed to evaluate the content of religious books used to teach Christianity in secondary schools.

1. **Research questions**

Is Christianity the subject of Catechesis or Religious Practice teaching?

1. **Theoretical Framework**

This research is based on the theory of moral development by Kohlberg (1958) which assumes that moral development can be placed in three levels: preconventional, conventional, and post-conventional levels. This theory outlines the development that individuals undergo as they move through the various stages of moral reasoning with maturity. This suggests that moral reasoning becomes more sophisticated as individuals age and develop cognitively. In the context of teaching religious subjects in public and private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Kohlberg's theory highlights the importance of structured moral education. Religious teachings not only deepen students' faith but also increase their ethical awareness.

One of the advantages of moral development theory is its structured framework for understanding how moral reasoning is applied. This framework provides a clear perspective on assessing the effectiveness of teaching religious subjects in encouraging moral development among secondary school students. This theory will assist researchers in determining whether the teaching of religious subjects facilitates the transmission of faith and contributes to the moral development of students.

1. **Review of Empirical Studies**

The teaching of religious subjects is very common in many developed countries, as evidenced by various studies. For example, in the UK, Maryamal (2024) highlights that "integrating ethnography that means daily activities and anthropological methods increases the relevance of religious education in multicultural settings". Similarly, Erduran et al. (2022) in the UK found that instructors view the teaching of religious subjects as significant because they employ a variety of pedagogical strategies used in instilling religious values and transmitting faith to their respective religions.

Turning to the East African context, research has shown that the teaching of religious subjects in schools plays an important role in transmitting faith and developing moral and ethical behaviors in students. For example, Buore (2023) looks at the influence of Christian education on religious teaching and discipline in Catholic-sponsored schools in Kenya, revealing a strong correlation between religious teaching and discipline.

In Tanzania, Mwenisongole together with Ntawigaya (2021), examined the contribution of religious education to the development of ethics, finding it useful in the context of broader disciplinary education. On the other hand, Ignatio together with Hongoli (2022), found factors that contribute to poor performance in religious education with the Municipality of Morogoro. Therefore, this study points to examining the content of religious education textbooks used in secondary schools to determine whether they include catechesis or only focus on religious practice.

Overall, previous research has made significant contributions to understanding the relationship between religious subjects and discipline among high school students. It is crucial to understand the outcomes of religious education in an academic context, as previous research has shown. However, my studies present a different perspective by investigating the specific content of these educational materials and whether they teach catechesis or are primarily centered on religious practice.

1. **Methodology**

This study will use a mixed method approach that combines qualitative and quantitative data collection. Data will be collected directly from respondents, followed by analysis and interpretation. The research design for this study is the design of a convergent mixed method, which integrates qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. According to Bennett and Watson (2019), the approach to be used has a high ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of complex educational phenomena by providing numerical data and detailed information from personal experience. The study will be conducted in secondary schools controlled by the Catholic Diocese of Morogoro, with a focus on selected schools in Morogoro Municipality.

1. **Findings and Discussion**

This study aims to assess the content of religious education materials used in secondary schools controlled by the Catholic Diocese of Morogoro in Morogoro Municipality. Specifically, he investigated whether its content was based on catechesis or religious practice. This study used self-administered questionnaires for teachers, principals, and students. Table 1 proposes a response from the Principal.

**Table 1: Principal's Response to the Explanation of the Content of the Catechesis Textbook in Secondary School (n=6)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Statement** | **Responses in f (%)** | **Mean** |
| **SD** | **D** | **Deep** | **A** | **NEW** |
| 1 | The principal actively supports the development of the and improvement of the religious studies curriculum.  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 1(16.7) | 5(83.3) | 4.83 |
| 2 | The Principal provides adequate professional development opportunities for teachers of religious subjects. | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 5(83.3) | 1(16.7) | 4.17 |
| 3 | The principal allocates sufficient resources (e.g., books, other materials) for the teaching of religious subjects. | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 3(50.0) | 3(50.0) | 4.5 |
| 4 | The Principal promotes an inclusive environment that respects and respects diverse religious beliefs among students. | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00) | 6(100) | 5 |
| 5 | The principal encourages extracurricular activities related to religious education, such as clubs or community service. | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 2(33.3) | 4(66.7) | 4.67 |
| 6. | The Principal effectively communicates the importance of religious subjects within the framework of school education as a whole. | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 1(16.7) | 5(83.3) | 4.83 |

***Keys:*** *SD= Strongly disagree, D= disagree, U= undecided, A= agree, SA= strongly agree, F= frequency, %= percentage.*

**Source**: Field Data (2025)

Data from Table 1 shows that 16.7% of respondents agree while 83.3% immediately strongly agree with the statement that school principals actively support the development of a religious studies curriculum. This shows that religious subjects receive strong support from principals in secondary education. As a result, students are taught religious subjects in accordance with the guidelines set by the curriculum. This is in line with a study by Hughes et al. (2009), which emphasized the importance of principals as leaders who must have a critical understanding of their situation and influence team members to achieve desired goals.

In addition, the curriculum for teaching and learning religious subjects is supervised by the principal of a school in the municipality of Morogoro. This is corroborated by information from the Secretariat of the Diocesan of Education in Morogoro (DSEP), who indicated in a face-to-face interview that: "*I am aware that the principal supports the learning process of religious subjects based on the guidelines recommended by the curriculum. It fosters an environment conducive for students to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to their studies*" (DSEP J). This statement emphasizes that students benefit from a principal who creates an environment conducive to learning religious subjects. Therefore, knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes regarding religious content are gained by students due to the support of their principals.

Furthermore, the data in Table 1, which shows that 83.3% of participants agree and 16.7% strongly agree, continues the average score of 4.17. This shows that the principal is making significant efforts to provide adequate professional development opportunities for religious subject teachers. These findings highlight that principals are actively creating a positive learning environment by allowing teachers to attend various seminars on religious teachings to enhance their knowledge. These results imply that principals understand their responsibilities to their teachers, increasing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. In addition, the principal is responsible for establishing the conditions of the school and the classroom that directly impact student learning (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). This is supported by a statement from HoS J, which describes how teachers are more collaborative in teaching religious subjects and are positively influenced by how their principals communicate with them, especially regarding teaching materials.

In addition, Table 1 reveals that 50% of participants agree and 50% strongly agree that the principal allocates sufficient resources (e.g., books, materials) to the teaching of religious subjects. An interview with a principal on May 7, 2025, emphasized: "*I do my best to gather as many resources as possible, such as books, video clips, magazines, and other materials rich in religious teaching to support these subjects as they play an important role in students' moral discipline*." This underscores the principal's understanding of the importance of religious education in shaping morality, which begins in the family and is strengthened in schools. This information is in line with the findings by Mwenisongole and Ntawigaya (2021), who note that religious education contributes significantly to the development of ethics in the context of disciplined education.

In addition, responses from participants in Table 1 showed that 100% strongly agreed, with an average score of 5.00, that the principal promotes an inclusive environment that respects and values diverse religious beliefs among students. This shows that the principal actively acknowledges their commitment to respecting the religious beliefs of students and teachers. The behavior of the principal has a major impact on the teaching and learning process and can positively influence students' perspectives on the subject. These findings are supported by Mulinge (2024), who recommends that classroom visits by school principals improve student morale in the learning process.

Finally, other data points showed that 33.3% of participants agreed and 66.7% strongly agreed, with an average score of 4.67, that school principals encourage extracurricular activities related to religious education, such as clubs and community service. These findings are also supported by information gathered from school principals, which shows that they effectively demonstrate their concern for students by providing opportunities for various clubs and other extracurricular activities that support practical religious discourse. The findings from the quantitative data are further supported by statements made by the principal during the interview. In this discussion, one of the principals acknowledged the contribution of religious subjects, particularly catechesis and religious practice, to nurturing empathy among students. This is evident in the words of the principal P who said:

*"Religious subjects, especially Bible Knowledge, play an important role in fostering empathy among our students. Therefore, whenever an opportunity arises to support the development of this subject, we willingly accept it. Religious practices emphasize loving each other, caring for those in need, and relating to each other in a friendly way, these are some of the positive behaviors demonstrated by our students. In addition, an important aspect of teaching in religious subjects is humility and the ability to forgive those who have wronged us. All these elements are emphasized in this subject.".*

Furthermore, the data showed that 16.7% and 83.3% of participants responded with an average score of 4.83, agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Principal effectively communicated the importance of religious subjects within the overall school education framework. This information is reinforced by personal communication with Principal M, who states:

*"Effective communication skills between teachers and principals are essential to improve the learning and teaching process. Teachers are responsible for knowing the main material for their subjects, and in the case of religious subjects, catechesis teachers share what is needed to meet the requirements of the syllabus." (HoS M).*

This study strongly suggests that catechism teachers in secondary schools need to establish a good relationship with their Principal to ensure access to the teaching materials necessary for religious subjects. They cannot rely solely on one material source. Various sources of teaching, especially for Bible Knowledge, must come from various places. To address this need, catechesis teachers are encouraged to communicate boldly with their Principals for support, thus helping to achieve the goals of catechesis in secondary schools. This study is supported by Bullough (1978) who says that "media resources, including real objects, provide learners with perceptual bit input from which logical patterns can be constructed. The combination of various audiovisual media materials makes it easier for students to follow, understand, respond and maintain the content of the lesson by adding concretity to all types of learning situations. Furthermore, Kemp (1980) says that: "audiovisual materials make education more individualized through the provision of many alternative paths with various resources so that learning can take place according to the learning preferences of the learners.

**Table 2: Teachers' Responses to the Application of Catechesis in the Teaching of Religious Subjects in Secondary School** (n=30)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S / N** | **Statement** | **Responses in f (%)** | **Mean** |
| **SD** | **D** | **In the** | **Sebuah** | **NEW** |
| 1 | Catechesis aims to deepen students' understanding of their faith, and its purpose is to empower students to become active members of the Church and live out their faith in service to others | 1(3.3) | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 12(40.0)  | 17(56.7) | 4.47  |
| 2 | Catechesis helps students develop a personal relationship with God. | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 10(33.3)  | 20(66.7)  | 4.67  |
| 3 | It involves systematic teaching of the beliefs, practices, and values of the Catholic Church, often guided by the Catechism | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 2(6.7) | 11(36.7)  | 17(56.7)  | 4.50  |
| 4 | Catechesis is not just about knowledge; It also emphasizes the importance of living one's faith in daily life | 1(3.3)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 9(30.0)  | 20(66.7)  | 4.57  |
| 5 | Catechesis addresses adolescents' developmental needs, giving them the tools to navigate moral and ethical questions | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 2(6.7)  | 14(46.7) | 14(46.7)  | 4.40  |
| 6. | Involvement in the catechesis program fosters a sense of community and belonging among students, encouraging mutual support in their spiritual journeys | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 8(26.7)  | 22(73.3)  | 4.73  |
| 7. | The sacrament, like the Confirmation, plays an important role in catechesis, serving as a milestone in a young person's journey of faith | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 1(3.3)  | 8(26.7)  | 21(70.0) | 4.67  |
| 8. | Combining modern technology and social media can make catechesis more relevant and appealing to today's youth | 1(3.3)  | 0(00)  | 2(6.7)  | 9(30.0)  | 18(60.0)  | 4.43  |
| 9. | Catechesis encourages critical thinking and discussion, allowing students to explore their beliefs and ask questions about their faith | 1(3.3)  | 1(3.3)  | 0(00)  | 11(36.7)  | 17(56.7)  | 4.40  |
| 10. | Catechesis serves as mentors and role models, guiding students in their spiritual development and helping them articulate their beliefs. | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 7(23.3)  | 23(76.7)  | 4.77  |

***Keys:*** *SD= Strongly disagree, D= disagree, U= undecided, A= agree, SA= strongly agree, F= frequency, %= percentage.*

**Source**: Field Data (2025)

**Catechesis aims to deepen students' understanding of their faith, empowering them to become active members of the Church and to live out their beliefs through service to others.** According to the findings presented in Table 2, the study revealed that 3.3% of participants strongly disagreed with the idea that faith transmission aims to deepen students' understanding and empower them for active Church membership and service. However, 40% agreed, and 56.7% strongly agreed with this statement, resulting in an average score of 4.47. This shows that catechesis in secondary school religious education contributes positively to the overall moral and disciplinary development of students.

This study is in line with Buore (2023) finding a strong correlation between religious teaching and student discipline. This point of view is further supported by the Principal at Secondary X who emphasizes that: "The contribution of religious subjects in schools has significantly influenced the discipline of students, as they practice these teachings through their actions towards each other" (personal communication, May 6, 2025).

**Catechesis plays an important role in helping students develop a personal relationship with God.** According to the data presented in Table 2, respectively 33.3% and 66.7% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that the transmission of beliefs in the religious curriculum taught in secondary school helps students in forming these relationships. The average score is 4.67. This shows that education is not just about skills and work but is part of the search for truth. This can relate to Storkey's (1993) thought that "what competes with the open search for knowledge is not a committed perspective of belief, but a closed mind of boredom." Therefore, it is the responsibility of catechesis teachers to effectively communicate the reality of faith transmission in schools, guiding students to deepen their relationship with God through a better understanding of their faith.

**The text focuses on systematic instruction regarding the beliefs, practices, and values of the Catholic Church, often guided by the Catechism.** According to the data in Table 2, the participants' responses revealed that 6.7% were hesitant while 36.7% of respondents agreed, and 56.7% strongly agreed with the statement that catechesis involves the systematic teaching of the beliefs, practices, and values of the Catholic Church. The average score is 4.50. This response demonstrates an understanding of the importance of religious education in secondary schools and highlights the need for trained teachers to effectively convey the true teachings of the Catholic Church's faith, practices, and values. In a personal communication on May 6, 2025, a religion teacher from High School X emphasized the need for thorough preparation for the catechesis of the 10 teachers responsible for transmitting the faith to students at the secondary level. This research conveys a message to those involved in the development of syllabus and textbooks for the teaching of these subjects in secondary schools.

**Catechesis is not simply about acquiring knowledge; it emphasizes the importance of living one's faith in daily life.** As we continue to implement the findings of the Study on the Content of Teaching of Religious Subjects in High School, we see that these courses address catechesis and religious practice. The data shows that 3.3% of respondents strongly disagree, while 30% agree, and 66.7% strongly agree that catechesis is not just about gaining knowledge; It also highlights the importance of embodying one's faith in daily life. It suggests that a person's daily behavior reflects whether their faith is vibrant or dormant. Catechesis contributes to building the Kingdom of God, where justice, peace, and love form the central teachings of Jesus. This perspective is supported by Lierop (2020), who argues that education relied on Christianity not only fosters the development of Christian character but also provides knowledge. In addition, it has been suggested that because individuals are influenced by moral and spiritual trends, education becomes ineffective without spiritual growth.

**Catechesis addresses the developmental needs of adolescents by giving them the tools to navigate moral and ethical questions.** The findings showed that 6.7% of participants were hesitant in their responses, while 46.7% agreed, and another 46.7% strongly agreed with the statement that catechesis effectively meets these developmental needs. This is supported by the content contained in the approved syllabus for Bible Knowledge (2023) which emphasizes the teachings of Creation and God's commands from the book of Genesis. These teachings encourage students to take responsibility and care for life. The data highlights the importance of catechesis in helping students navigate moral and ethical dilemmas. In addition, a study by Mwenisongole and Ntawigaya (2021) supports the idea that religious education significantly contributes to the development of ethics in the context of broader disciplinary education.

**Participation in the catechesis program fosters a sense of community and belonging among students, encouraging mutual support in their spiritual journeys.** According to the results of the study, 26.7% of respondents agreed, and 73.3% strongly agreed, indicating that involvement in these programs does promote a sense of community. This is reflected in the content of the old syllabus for religious subjects in secondary schools, which was approved by the Tanzanian Bishops' Conference (TEC) in 2011. The syllabus emphasizes that students are expected to recognize and apply the fundamentals of Catholic revelation and faith in their daily lives. In addition, they are encouraged to reflect on and appreciate the origins of the various prayers in the Catholic Church, developing habits and attitudes of loving these prayers.

In addition, first-year students are expected to build their capacity to participate as Christians in various aspects of community life, appreciating and living the Catholic faith while demonstrating growth in virtue. Supporting data from Gichanga & Kerre (2004) show that: "religious practices serve as effective regulators of children's behavior and a means of conveying the moral demands of society". Therefore, Christian religious education is a powerful tool for instilling discipline among students.

**The sacraments, like the Confirmation, play an important role in catechesis and serve as a milestone in young people's journey of faith.** The findings showed that 3.3% of participants were hesitant in their responses, while 26.7% agreed and 70% of respondents strongly agreed that sacraments such as Confirmation are essential in catechesis. This is in line with the old syllabus of religious subjects in secondary schools, as approved by the Tanzanian Bishops' Conference (TEC) in 2011. The syllabus incorporates content from books such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), which emphasizes the importance of the Sacraments.

**Combining modern technology and social media can make catechesis more relevant and appealing to today's youth.** The data presented in Table 2 show the participants' responses: 3.3% strongly disagreed that modern technology and social media increase the relevance and engagement of catechesis for young people, while 6.7% were hesitant. Meanwhile, 30% agreed, and 60% strongly agreed, resulting in an average score of 4.43. This shows that the majority of participants believe that technology and social media are significantly contributing to catechesis for young people today. Studies supported by Ordu (2021) support this perspective, emphasizing the value of using images, video clips, objects, and internet resources to help students visualize and understand the context of what is being taught. This approach reinforces learning: What we hear, we forget; what we see, we remember; And what we do, we understand.

**Catechesis aids critical thinking and discussion, allowing students to explore their beliefs and ask questions about their faith.** According to the data, 3.3% of participants disagreed and another 3.3% strongly disagreed with the idea that catechesis fosters critical thinking and discussion. In contrast, 36.7% agreed and 56.7% strongly agreed, resulting in an average score of 4.40. This shows that many participants feel positively about catechesis as a means to encourage critical thinking and allow students to learn about their beliefs. This response is in line with the content outlined in the new syllabus for Bible Knowledge (2023), which has been approved by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology of the United Republic of Tanzania for Ordinary Secondary Education for Forms I-IV. Therefore, it can be concluded that catechesis is very beneficial for these high school students, enriching their faith and deepening their understanding of it.

**Catechesis serves as mentors and role models, guiding students in their spiritual development and helping them articulate their beliefs.** The data showed that 23.3% of participants agreed and 76.7% strongly agreed, resulting in an average score of 4.77, that catechesis plays an important role in guiding students' spiritual growth and in articulating their beliefs. It shows that the teaching of catechesis is a key model for facilitating students' spiritual development and the expression of their beliefs. The study also enhances our understanding of the 2011 syllabus approved by the Catechesis Department of the Tanzanian Episcopal Conference (TEC), which insists on teaching spiritual religious practices to high school students to strengthen their faith development. This was further supported by a personal communication on May 7, 2025, with the Catechesis Teacher of Secondary School X (CSS, X), who stated, "Catechesis in secondary school really helps shape students in their spiritual development, reviving their faith. For some, their faith is dormant, but through catechesis, their faith becomes stronger than ever."

*The teaching of faith transmission, especially through religious practice, has helped students strengthen their faith and encouraged them to live out their beliefs in their daily lives. In the school environment, students interact peacefully and support each other, sharing with those in need regardless of their differences (CSS, X).*

In conclusion, the insights gathered from catechesis teachers in high schools highlight their awareness of the importance of teaching catechesis. These findings are in line with Kohlberg's (1958) Theory of Moral Development, which emphasizes that individuals progress through various stages of moral reasoning as they mature. This theory underscores the importance of structured moral education, which, according to the findings, helps students deepen their faith and develop ethical awareness. Furthermore, it is established that catechesis in high school is essential for strengthening and developing students' faith. Through the religious curriculum, catechesis serves as a basic teaching to deepen the Catholic faith. The responses to the data shown in Table 3 reflect the participants' understanding of the content in the religious subject and its purpose.

**Table 3: Student Responses on how beneficial it is to study religious subjects in high school** (n=50)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S / N** | **Statement** | **Responses in f (%)** | **Mean** |
| **SD** | **D** | **In the** | **Sebuah** | **NEW** |
| 1 | I found the topics covered in my religious studies class interesting and interesting. | 3(6.0)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 21(42.0)  | 26(52.0)  | 4.34  |
| 2 | The teachings of my religious studies class are relevant to my daily life and personal beliefs. | 2(4.0)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 17(34.0)  | 31(62.0)  | 4.54  |
| 3 | My teachers create a supportive and open environment to discuss religious topics. | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 5(10)  |  17(34.0) | 28(56.0)  | 4.46  |
| 4 | My religious studies class encouraged me to think critically about religious beliefs and practices.  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 1(2.0) | 19(38.0)  | 30(60.0)  | 4.58  |
| 5 | Studying religious subjects has had a positive impact on my values and ethical decision-making.  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 0(00)  | 3(6.0) | 47(94.0)  | 4.94  |

***Keys:*** *SD= Strongly disagree, D= disagree, U= undecided, A= agree, SA= strongly agree, F= frequency, %= percentage.*

**Source**: Field Data (2025)

**The topics covered in religious studies classes are interesting and interesting.** According to data from Table 3, 6% of participants strongly disagreed that topics covered in religious studies seemed interesting and interesting. This suggests that some participants find the subjects in religious studies boring and uninteresting. In contrast, 42% agreed, and 52% strongly agreed, with an average score of 4.34, that the topics discussed in class were interesting and interesting. This suggests that while some participants appreciated the teachings found in religious studies, others did not.

In addition, interviews with Third Grade Students from Secondary School X (SSS, X) support this research. The student commented,

*"The religion subject was very interesting because it provided answers about my Catholic faith and strengthened my faith. It also offers the opportunity to take a break through its pedagogical approach compared to other subjects. In this subject, we learn prayers that were previously unknown or unfamiliar to us, which help us communicate with our Creator." (SSS, X)*

Overall, the participants in the study affirmed that the content found in the textbooks for studying religious studies in high school provided the teachings of the kateke, making the subject fun and interesting. This is beneficial to their faith. The data is also in line with the objectives set by religious educators involved in the formulation of the curriculum for these subjects, as outlined in the approved syllabus for Biblical Knowledge (2023) by the United Republic of Tanzania, under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, for Ordinary Secondary Education for Forms I-IV (tie.go.tz). Along with this (Gichanga et al, 2003), this study supports that topics in the study of Christianity help learners to integrate other subjects from the school curriculum into a more mature view of themselves, their relationship with the environment, fellow human beings and God. In addition, the subject provides a strong motivation for correct behavior by blending spiritual, moral and social values that aid in character development.

**The teachings of the religious studies class are relevant to daily life and personal beliefs.** According to the data in Table 3, 4% of participants strongly disagreed that teachings from religious subjects are relevant to daily life and personal beliefs. In contrast, 34% agreed, and 62% strongly agreed, resulting in an average score of 4.54, suggesting that the majority affirmed the relevance of these teachings.

The study supports the content found in the 2011 syllabus for religious instruction in secondary schools, which primarily emphasizes religious practices in its implementation. In addition, personal communication on May 7, 2025, from Second Grade students at Secondary X reinforces the positive impact of religious subjects on daily life. The student stated, "*The teachings of catechesis are a guide for our lives because they show us the right path to follow to be a good person and help sow the seeds of one's faith through action."*

Overall, this study shows that the old syllabus places a significant emphasis on religious subjects, effectively contributing to the transmission of faith in everyday life. In addition, research.

**Teachers create a supportive and open environment to discuss religious topics.** As we continue to analyze the data presented in Table 3, it is clear that 6% of respondents agree, while 94% of respondents strongly agree, with an average score of 4.46, regarding the ability of teachers to create a supportive and open environment to discuss religious topics. This shows that students in the secondary school run by the Catholic Diocese of Morogoro, highly appreciate the efforts of the catechesis teachers, who nurture the students' thirst for knowledge of their faith through cooperation. In addition, the study was supported by personal communication from May 5, 2025, with Grade Four students from Secondary X commenting positively, "*The religious subject teacher is excellent. During the learning sessions, they make us feel loved and gently guide us, which encourages many of us to love the subject and actively engage with the teacher*." Overall, these findings show that the participants understood the study well and acknowledged that catechesis teachers were very supportive, allowing students to openly discuss religious topics during class.

**Religion classes encourage students to think critically about religious beliefs and practices.** According to the data shown in Table 3, 2% of participants indicated that they were unsure of their responses and therefore remained hesitant. In contrast, 38% agreed and 60% strongly agreed, resulting in an average score of 4.58, suggesting that religion classes promote critical thinking about religious beliefs and practices. This perspective is in line with the topics outlined in the 2011 syllabus of TEC, which emphasizes that students must recognize and apply the fundamentals of revelation in their daily lives, cherish the Sacraments of the Church, engage in the various prayers of the Catholic Church, appreciate and reflect on the history of redemption, and embrace the concept of holiness. Furthermore, one of the students from High School X (SSS, X) expressed this sentiment during a private communication, stating:

*During religion classes, the subject encourages us to think critically and encourages us to ask questions about our religious issues and practices. The importance of prayer and virtuous living in our daily lives helps us become better people and good citizens." (SSS, X)*

**Studying religious subjects has had a positive impact on values and ethical decision-making.** The data presented in Table 3 showed that 6% of participants agreed and 94% strongly agreed, resulting in an average score of 4.94, that studying religious subjects had a positive effect on one's values and ethical decision-making. It demonstrates a strong consensus on the role of religious education in secondary schools, highlighting its ability to enhance students' values and support ethical decision-making in their lives and communities.

In addition, the study revealed that participants recognized the contribution of religious practices to their decision-making process, which was influenced by their ethical training in religious subjects. This perspective was echoed by participants from Secondary X who stated:

*"I am proud of what I have learned from the subject of Bible Knowledge in my life. I became different in collaborating with my friends at school and even during my vacations at home. This subject has changed the way I live; the advice I offer to my friends is now more positive and morally grounded, promoting respect for the dignity of each individual, because each of us deserves respect in one way or another"* (SSS, X).

This study reveals that catechesis and religious practices are taught in high schools using two different syllabus. The Biblical Knowledge syllabus is based solely on catechesis, while the syllabus developed by the TEC Catechesis Department in 2011 focuses on the teaching of religious practices. Nevertheless, the main purpose of the Bible Knowledge subject is to provide catechesis at the secondary school level while incorporating religious practice as an integral part of catechesis teaching. Furthermore, this study identifies the need for an integrated syllabus that combines catechesis content and religious practice. This will help achieve the goal of catechesis for young people in secondary schools, especially those administered by the Catholic Diocese of Morogoro. Principals, catechesis teachers, and students recognize the importance of catechesis and religious practice in strengthening their faith and contributing to the development of moral discipline in schools and society at large.

1. **Summary of Findings**

The findings of this study show that catechesis in secondary schools run by the Catholic Diocese of Morogoro is taught effectively through the Biblical Knowledge syllabus. However, it is noted that religious practices are not included in this syllabus; instead, they are covered in a separate syllabus of the Episcopal Conference of Tanzania (TEC) Catechesis Department. Further, the study found that there is a need for the Catechesis Department to integrate religious practices into the Biblical Knowledge syllabus. In doing so, the teaching materials for Biblical Knowledge will also include religious practices, thus enhancing the overall teaching of catechesis. It is very important to discuss catechesis in relation to religious practice because the two are closely related. In addition, the study reveals that some catechism teachers recognize the importance of incorporating religious practices in their teaching. They suggested creating an integrated syllabus that combines catechesis and religious practice, as these teachings are interrelated and important for high school students.

1. **Research Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study revealed that the content found in religious textbooks used in Catholic high schools followed two different syllabus. Therefore, it is recommended that catechesis and religious practices be integrated into one cohesive syllabus for implementation in secondary schools. In addition, the teaching of catechesis requires well-prepared and dedicated teachers. It is recommended that catechesis teachers deepen their understanding of the pillars of the Catholic faith so that they can confidently and knowledgeably answer questions related to Catholicism. In addition, it is recommended that catechesis teachers have at least a degree in catechetics to respond effectively to questions about the Catholic faith. Qualifications are essential for teaching, and religion classes in secondary schools are just as important as any other subject. As a result, catechesis teachers must hold a Diploma of Education with a focus on religious studies or higher qualifications, rather than relying on individuals with only a standard seven education to teach Biblical Knowledge in secondary school.

**10. DENIAL (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)**

I/Us (The author hereby declares that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

**ASSENT**

As per international standards or university standards, the Participant's written consent has been collected and stored by the author.

**Competing interests**

The author has stated that there are no competing interests.

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