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Teacher-Pupil Ratio and Teachers' Job Performance in Public Primary Schools in Mbinga District Council, Tanzania

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Abstract: This study examined teacher-pupil ratio and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council, Tanzania. The study was guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, propounded in 1959. A convergent design under a mixed-methods research approach was employed. The target population comprised 1,411 participants, including teachers, heads of schools, Ward Education Officers, and the District Academic Officer. A sample of 146 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling, simple random sampling, and purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to assess the reliability of Likert-scale questionnaire items, while triangulation was employed to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative data. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings indicated that the teacher-pupil ratio was associated with several aspects of teachers' job performance. High teacher-pupil ratios were reported to increase teachers' workload, limit individual attention to pupils, constrain effective classroom management, and make timely assessment and feedback more difficult. These conditions presented challenges to teachers in carrying out their instructional responsibilities effectively. The study concluded that teacher-pupil ratio was an important consideration in teachers' job performance, particularly regarding workload, classroom management, individual pupil support, assessment practices, and instructional effectiveness. The study recommends that the government and education authorities strengthen teacher recruitment and deployment to promote more balanced teacher-pupil ratios, improve teachers' working conditions, and support effective job performance in public primary schools.

Keywords: *Teacher-Pupils Ratio, Teachers' Job Performance, Workload, Classroom Management, Public Primary Schools.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher job performance is widely regarded as a critical determinant of educational quality, as teachers play a central role in translating curriculum objectives into effective classroom practice through instructional delivery, learner assessment, classroom management, and the provision of academic support to pupils (Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021). Although teachers' professional competence is important for effective teaching, the conditions under which they work can also influence their ability to fulfil these responsibilities (Hojo, 2021). One important working condition is the teacher-pupils ratio, which refers to the number of pupils per teacher (Hojo, 2021). A high teacher-pupil ratio can increase teachers' workload and reduce opportunities for individualised attention, effective assessment, classroom management, and feedback (Kavenuke et al., 2022).

Teacher-pupil ratios and class sizes have also been examined in developed countries, although their effects vary across contexts. In the United States, Konstantopoulos and Shen (2023) found that reductions in class size were associated with improvements in pupils' reading and mathematics achievement, suggesting that classroom size can affect teaching and learning. In Finland, Saloviita and Pakarinen (2021), using data from 4,567 primary school teachers, found that class size was associated with teacher burnout, while additional classroom support was associated with lower burnout (Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021). These findings suggest that although the effects of class size differ between educational systems, the number of pupils assigned to teachers can influence teachers' workload, well-being, and classroom practices.

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A similar situation exists in developing countries, where teacher shortages and rising enrolment can lead to high pupil-teacher ratios. In India, Datta and Kingdon (2021) found that very large class sizes were associated with negative effects on pupils' learning, indicating that excessive numbers of pupils can constrain effective classroom processes (Datta & Kingdon, 2021). In Nigeria, Okeke and Emunemu (2021) found that class size significantly contributed to teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Lagos State, demonstrating a direct relationship between classroom size and teacher performance. These findings indicate that large numbers of pupils assigned to individual teachers can create demanding working conditions that may affect teachers' effectiveness in carrying out their professional duties.

Like other developing countries, Tanzania continues to experience challenges related to teacher availability and increasing pupil enrolment, particularly in public primary schools. Evidence from across the country indicates that unfavourable teacher-pupil ratios create demanding working conditions for teachers. In Kilwa District Council, Mnyimae (2022) found that excessive teacher workload, partly associated with increasing pupil numbers relative to available teachers, affected timely syllabus coverage. Similarly, Soko (2024) in Tunduru District Council reported that high pupil-teacher ratios significantly affected teachers' workload and the effectiveness of evaluation methods in public primary schools. In Kisarawe District, Kavenuke et al. (2022) found that class size significantly predicted teachers' stress, demonstrating the implications of classroom conditions for teachers' well-being. Further evidence from Ilala Municipality showed that large class sizes created challenges in classroom management, pupil-teacher interaction, assessment, and marking of pupils' work (Senyagwa, 2021). In Igunga District, Kisaka (2024) similarly reported that large class sizes and heavy teaching loads were associated with inadequate assessment, poor lesson preparation, and limited follow-up of pupils with learning difficulties. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that high teacher-pupil ratios and large class sizes can increase teachers' workload and constrain important instructional activities.

Despite these studies, little is known about the relationship between teacher-pupil ratio and teachers' overall job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Previous studies in Tanzania have mainly examined issues such as teachers' workload, stress, syllabus coverage, assessment, and classroom management. However, less attention has been given to how teacher-pupil ratio relates to teachers' ability to carry out their daily teaching responsibilities. This leaves a gap in understanding the situation in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Therefore, this study examined teacher-pupil ratio and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council, Tanzania.

➢ *Research Objective*

To assess the extent to which the teacher-pupil ratio in the classroom relates to teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council, Tanzania.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➢ *Theoretical Framework*

- *Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory*

This study was guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, developed by Frederick Herzberg (1959). The theory assumes that employees' work experiences are influenced by two distinct categories of factors: hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors, such as salary, working conditions, job security, and organizational policies, help prevent dissatisfaction, while motivators, including achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for professional growth, promote job satisfaction and motivation (Herzberg, 1959). The theory was relevant to this study because teachers' working conditions, including the number of pupils assigned to them, may influence their ability to perform their professional responsibilities effectively. A high teacher-pupils ratio may increase workload and create challenging classroom conditions, whereas supportive working conditions and motivating factors may strengthen teachers' commitment and effectiveness. Thus, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory helped explain how working conditions could influence the job performance of public primary school teachers in Mbinga District Council, Tanzania.

➢ *Empirical Review*

This section presents a review of empirical literature on the influence of the teacher-pupils ratio on teachers' job performance in public primary schools.

Laitsch (2021) investigated the relationship between class size and teacher work dynamics using a mixed-method approach in selected primary schools in the United States. The study used survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with purposively selected classroom teachers and school administrators. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that smaller class sizes significantly enhanced teachers' morale, job satisfaction, and overall instructional effectiveness. Conversely, larger classes increased teacher stress, limited personalized instruction, and negatively affected teachers' enthusiasm toward teaching. Although this study provides important insights into how class size influences teacher well-being and instructional quality, it was conducted in a highly resourced educational context that differs from the realities of Tanzanian public primary schools; hence, its findings may not be applicable in the Tanzanian setting. Therefore, the current study addressed this gap by investigating this topic in Mbinga to generate findings applicable in Tanzania.

Kalemba and Mulauzi (2020) examined the effect of high pupil-teacher ratios on the quality of the teaching and learning process of mathematics in selected public secondary schools in Lusaka District, Zambia. The study employed a descriptive survey design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and document review, with respondents selected through random and purposive sampling procedures. The study found that

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pupil-teacher ratios were high in most public secondary schools and negatively affected the quality of teaching and learning, including teacher-pupil interaction and pupils' academic performance. The study provides useful evidence on the relationship between pupil-teacher ratio and the teaching and learning process; however, it was conducted in public secondary schools in Zambia and focused specifically on mathematics. This differs from the present study, which focuses on teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council, Tanzania. Therefore, the current study addressed the contextual and educational-level gap by examining the influence of teacher-pupils ratio on teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council.

Kyambi (2019) investigated the effect of the pupil-teacher ratio on curriculum implementation practices in public primary schools in Kenya, using a mixed-methods approach. The study sample comprised 135 respondents: 44 head teachers, 88 teachers, and 3 education officers. The head teachers and teachers were selected using simple random sampling, while the Teachers Service Commission Director, Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, and Chief Education Officer were purposively selected. The study used questionnaires and an interview schedule for data collection. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented as percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations, while Qualitative data were analyzed based on themes derived from the study objectives. The study found that the Pupil Teacher Ratio had a statistically significant effect on teaching workload, teacher lesson attendance, and performance in individual subjects. The study provided valuable insights into the influence of work performance on teachers' job performance; however, it was conducted in a country with different working conditions from Tanzania, so its findings may not be applicable in this context. Hence, the current study addressed this gap by conducting a study in Mbinga District Council to generate findings applicable in Tanzania.

Kambuga (2013) investigated the impact of the teacher-pupils ratio on the teaching-learning process in Tanzanian primary schools using a descriptive research design. The study involved 120 respondents, including head teachers, classroom teachers, and 18 district education officials, selected through purposive and stratified sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation checklists. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the significant areas of curriculum delivery. The findings revealed that high teacher-pupil ratios negatively affected lesson preparation, classroom management, individualized attention, and overall teaching quality. The study further established that overcrowded classrooms limited teachers' ability to assess learners effectively and to provide immediate feedback, thereby compromising pupils' academic performance. Although the study provided significant insights into the influence of the teacher-pupils ratio on the teaching-learning process, its reliance on quantitative data alone may have limited the quantity of data available; adding qualitative data would have strengthened the study's findings. Therefore, the current study addressed this gap by utilizing a mixed-methods research approach to collect quantitative and qualitative data, thereby strengthening the study's findings.

III. METHODOLOGY

➢ *Research Design*

This study adopted a convergent research design. The design involved the concurrent collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, followed by the integration of the findings during interpretation. The convergent design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem by combining numerical data with participants' experiences and perspectives. The quantitative data provided information on the magnitude and patterns of the relationships between working conditions and teachers' job performance, while the qualitative data offered detailed explanations and insights into the observed findings. The integration of the two data sources enhanced the validity and credibility of the study through triangulation of results. Furthermore, the design enabled the researcher to develop a more complete understanding of how working conditions influence teachers' job performance and to generate practical recommendations for improving teaching effectiveness in public primary schools.

➢ *Study Area*

This study was conducted in Mbinga District Council because it provided an appropriate setting for examining the relationship between teacher-pupil ratio and teachers' job performance in public primary schools. The district faces challenges related to teacher workload, accommodation, and school infrastructure, with implications for teachers' effectiveness in fulfilling their professional responsibilities. These conditions made the district suitable for investigating the relationship between working conditions and teachers' job performance. Furthermore, selecting Mbinga District Council enabled the researcher to obtain information from both teachers and education administrators on the factors influencing teachers' working environments and performance. The district was also considered appropriate because the study's findings could provide practical insights for educational stakeholders and support efforts to improve teachers' working conditions and enhance the quality of teaching and learning in public primary schools.

➢ *Target Population*

The target population of this study comprised 1,411 individuals from 165 public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. This population included 165 school heads, 1,050 teachers, 29 Ward Education Officers, and 2 District Academic Officers (DES, 2025). Teachers were the primary respondents because they directly experience the prevailing working conditions and were therefore best positioned to provide first-hand information on how these conditions influence their job performance. Head teachers were included in the study to provide information on school-level leadership, resource management, and administrative factors affecting teachers' work. Ward Education Officers and District

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Academic Officers were also included to provide insights on policy implementation, supervision, and government support for education at the district level. The inclusion of these categories of respondents enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of both teachers' practical experiences and the administrative and policy-related factors influencing their working environment, thereby ensuring adequate coverage of the research problem.

➢ *Sampling and Sample Size*

The study involved 129 respondents, comprising 17 heads of schools, 105 teachers, 6 Ward Education Officers (WEOs), and 1 District Academic Officer (DAO). The sample size was determined using the 10% to 30% criterion recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), whereby 10% of the populations of schools, teachers, and heads of schools, 20% of WEOs, and 30% of the DAO population were included. Simple random sampling was used to select 17 public primary schools, whereby names of all eligible schools were randomly drawn to provide equal chances of selection. Heads of schools and the DAO were selected through purposive total population sampling because of their small and clearly defined populations and their relevant administrative responsibilities (Cohen et al., 2018). Teachers were selected using proportionate stratified sampling based on gender, followed by simple random sampling within each gender category to ensure representation of male and female teachers. Similarly, the six WEOs were selected through simple random sampling from the district's list of WEOs. These sampling procedures enabled the study to obtain respondents with relevant experience and responsibilities concerning teachers' working conditions and job performance while ensuring appropriate representation of the targeted groups.

➢ *Data Collection Instruments and Procedures*

The study used questionnaires and interview guides to collect data from teachers, heads of schools, Ward Education Officers, and the District Academic Officer. A structured questionnaire was administered to teachers to obtain quantitative data on teacher-pupils ratio and teachers' job performance. Interview guides were used to collect qualitative information from heads of schools, Ward Education Officers, and the District Academic Officer to obtain detailed views on how teacher-pupils ratio relates with teachers' job performance. The researcher collected the data through face-to-face administration of questionnaires and interviews after obtaining the required research permissions and informed consent from the participants. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The completed questionnaires were collected after they had been filled in, while interviews were conducted at convenient times and places agreed upon with the participants. The collected data were checked for completeness and consistency before analysis.

➢ *Data Analysis*

The researcher analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data using appropriate analytical techniques. Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to summarize teachers' working conditions and job performance. Qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with head teachers, Ward Education Officers, and District Academic Officers were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis followed the procedures outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2023), including organizing and preparing the data, reading all transcripts, coding the data, identifying themes, developing an interpretive narrative, conducting further analysis using an analytical framework, and presenting and interpreting the findings. The interview transcripts were carefully reviewed to identify recurring codes and patterns, which were then grouped into broader themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the contextual and managerial factors influencing teachers' job performance.

➢ *Ethical Considerations*

The researcher adhered to the various ethical considerations throughout the study. Before data collection, the researcher obtained permission from the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). Thereafter, research clearance letters were secured from the Mbinga District Council Education Office and the relevant school authorities. These approvals enabled the researcher to proceed with data collection in the selected public primary schools. In addition, all participants were provided with informed consent forms outlining the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and expected benefits. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, identification codes were used instead of participants' names, and all collected data were securely stored and used strictly for academic purposes. The researcher also ensured that no physical or psychological harm was inflicted on participants during the study. Furthermore, all findings were reported accurately, objectively, and respectfully in accordance with established ethical research standards.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings and discussion of the study on the extent to which the teacher-pupils ratio in the classroom relates with teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council, Tanzania. To obtain the required data, teachers were provided with a 5-point Likert scale to rate their responses to statements concerning the influence of the teacher-pupils ratio on their job performance. Heads of schools, Ward Education Officers, and the District Academic Officer were also interviewed to obtain qualitative information that complemented the quantitative findings. Table 1 presents the findings on the extent to which the teacher-pupils ratio in the classroom influenced teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council, Tanzania.

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Table 1 Teachers' Responses on the Extent to which the Classroom Teacher-Pupils Ratio Relates with Teachers' Job Performance (n=104)

S/N Statement	VLE		LE		ME		HE		VHE		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	MEAN
The number of pupils in my classroom affects my ability to give individual attention to each student.	4	3.8	8	7.7	38	36.5	41	39.4	13	12.5	3.4
A high teacher-pupil ratio increases my teaching workload.	6	5.8	6	5.8	30	28.8	38	36.5	24	23.1	3.6
Managing large classes makes it difficult to complete the curriculum on time.	1	1	7	6.7	30	28.8	38	36.5	28	26.9	3.8
The teacher-pupil ratio affects my ability to accurately assess students' learning.	3	2.9	5	4.8	38	36.5	36	34.6	22	21.2	3.6
A high teacher-student ratio reduces my working efficiency.	3	2.9	4	3.8	22	21.2	30	28.8	45	43.3	4.1
GRAND MEAN											**3.73**

Source: Field Data, 2026

Key: 1=Very Low Extent (VLE), 2=Low Extent (LE), 3=Moderate Extent (ME), 4=High Extent (HE), 5=Very High Extent. F=frequencies, P=Percentages

Data in Table 1 indicate that the majority of teachers (51.9%) rated to a high and very high extent that the number of pupils in their classrooms affects their ability to provide individual attention to each student; meanwhile, 11.5% of teachers rated to a low and very low extent. A further 36.5% of teachers rated a moderate extent. The mean score of 3.4 further confirms that, on average, teachers experience a moderate level of influence of class size on their ability to provide individual attention to learners. This suggests that large class sizes place considerable constraints on teachers' ability to provide individualized attention to learners in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Large numbers of pupils in a single classroom limit the extent to which teachers can engage each learner, monitor individual progress, and respond to specific learning needs within the available instructional time. This situation not only reduces the quality of teacher-pupil interaction but also affects the effectiveness of instructional delivery due to time constraints and competing classroom demands. The presence of moderate and low extent responses indicates variation in teachers' experiences. This variation may be attributed to differences in classroom management skills, teaching experience, subject allocation, and class size distribution, which may enable some teachers to manage individual learner attention more effectively than others. The quantitative data from the questionnaires administered to teachers were complemented by the interviews conducted with heads of schools, the District Academic Officer, and Ward Education Officers. During face-to-face interviews, the head of school 2 reported that; *The limited number of teachers relative to the large pupil population increases workload and makes it difficult to provide individual attention to learners. For instance, one teacher at this school serves about 130 pupils, hindering effective follow-up of students' academic progress".* (HOS-2, Personal communication, May 20, 2026).

- *Furthermore, in the Interview with Ward Educational Officers, one WEO Reported*

The teacher-pupils ratio greatly affects teachers' job performance in several ways. When the number of pupils is high, particularly in lower classes, teachers experience an increased workload. As a result, it becomes difficult to manage classrooms and provide individual attention to learners effectively. Lesson completion and pupil assessment are also negatively affected… Thus, teachers become stressed and fatigued, which reduces their efficiency (WEO-1, Personal communication, May 20, 2026).

- *Moreover, the District Academic Officer Commented:*

The teacher-pupils ratio significantly influences teachers' job performance. In Mbinga District Council, many primary schools face a shortage of 1-3 teachers, resulting in overcrowded classrooms that exceed the recommended 1:40 ratio. This imbalance increases teachers' workload, makes classroom management more difficult, and limits effective lesson delivery and individual attention. It also complicates pupil assessment and marking due to large class sizes, ultimately reducing teachers' overall job performance. (DAO, Personal communication, 23, May, 2026)

The quantitative data from teachers converge with the qualitative data from HOS-2, WEO-1, and the DAO, indicating that the teacher-pupils ratio was generally perceived as an important factor influencing teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Taken together, these data show that a high teacher-pupils ratio increased teachers' workload, made classroom management more difficult, and limited their ability to provide individual attention and effectively assess pupils' learning. This implies that an unfavorable teacher-pupils ratio may reduce teachers' efficiency and effectiveness in performing their instructional responsibilities. The findings are consistent with Kalemba (2022), who found that high pupil-teacher ratios reduced teacher-pupil interaction, limited opportunities for individualized instruction, and created challenges in classroom management. The study further showed that large pupil-to-teacher ratios constrained effective teaching and learning. These findings suggest that when teachers are responsible for large numbers of pupils, they may experience greater workload demands and difficulties in managing instructional activities effectively, which may ultimately affect their overall job performance.

Also, data in Table 1 indicate that the majority of teachers (60.6%) rated the effect of a high teacher-pupils ratio on their teaching workload as high or very high; meanwhile, 11.6% rated it as low or very low. A further 28.8% of teachers rated it as moderate. The mean score of 3.6 further confirms

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that, to a large extent, teachers' teacher-pupils ratio significantly influences their teaching workload. This suggests that a high teacher-pupils ratio places considerable demands on teachers in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Large numbers of pupils increase the amount of work teachers must perform, including lesson preparation, classroom management, marking pupils' work, and providing timely feedback. This situation may make it difficult for teachers to complete their instructional responsibilities effectively within the available time. The presence of moderate and low extent responses indicates variation in teachers' experiences. This variation may be attributed to differences in teaching experience, class size, subject allocation, and classroom management practices, which may enable some teachers to cope with large numbers of pupils more effectively than others. The quantitative data from the questionnaires administered to teachers were complemented by the interviews conducted with heads of schools, the District Academic Officer, and Ward Education Officers. During face-to-face interviews, the head of school 4 reported that:

In my view, the teacher-pupils ratio influences teachers' job performance to a very great extent. At our school, only 9 teachers serve 802 pupils, resulting in overcrowded classrooms. This situation increases teachers' workload, requiring them to handle a large number of pupils and affecting their ability to manage teaching tasks effectively. Therefore, the high teacher-pupil ratio increases teachers' workload and negatively affects their job performance. (HOS-4, Personal communication, May 22, 2026).

- *Furthermore, WEO 3 Commented:*

In my view, the teacher-pupil ratio significantly influences teachers' job performance. Due to an imbalance between the number of teachers and pupils, teachers are often assigned too many sessions per week, exceeding the recommended standard of 25. This increases their workload and reduces their efficiency. In addition, managing large classes becomes very difficult, and providing individual attention to pupils is highly challenging. As a result, teachers' effectiveness is significantly affected. Therefore, the high number of pupils relative to the available teachers significantly reduces teachers' overall job performance. (WEO-3, Personal communication, May 22, 2026)

- *Moreover, the District Academic Officer (DAO) Explained:*

In my view, the teacher-pupils ratio significantly influences teachers' job performance. In Mbinga District Council, more than 103 of 165 primary schools are experiencing a shortage of 1 to 3 teachers, resulting in an imbalance between teachers and pupils. This situation increases teachers' workload beyond their capacity, requiring them to handle large numbers of learners. As a result, teachers experience heavy marking loads and increased instructional responsibilities, which reduce their efficiency in performing teaching tasks. Therefore, the high teacher-pupil ratio increases workload and negatively affects teachers' overall job performance. (DAO, Personal communication, May 23, 2026)

The quantitative data from teachers converge with the qualitative data from HOS-2, WEO-1, and the DAO, indicating that the teacher-pupils ratio was generally perceived as an important factor influencing teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Taken together, these data show that a high teacher-pupils ratio increased teachers' workload, reduced lesson effectiveness, and made classroom management more difficult. It was further revealed that large numbers of pupils limited teachers' ability to organize instruction, provide individualised attention, and adequately assess pupils' progress. This implies that an unfavourable teacher-pupils ratio may reduce teachers' efficiency and effectiveness in performing their instructional responsibilities. The findings are consistent with Kyambi (2019), who found that higher pupil-teacher ratios significantly increased teachers' workload, reduced lesson effectiveness, and negatively affected subject performance. The study further showed that an unfavourable pupil-teacher ratio hindered the effective implementation of instructional activities. These findings suggest that when teachers are responsible for large numbers of pupils, they may experience increased workload and difficulties in carrying out teaching responsibilities effectively, which may ultimately affect their overall job performance.

Furthermore, data in Table 1 indicate that the majority of teachers (63.4%) rated to a high and very high extent that managing large classes makes it difficult to complete the curriculum on time, while 8.6% rated it to a low or very low extent. A further 28.8% of teachers rated it to a moderate extent. The mean score of 3.8 further confirms that, on average, teachers experience significant difficulty completing the curriculum due to the management of large classes. This suggests that large class sizes place considerable constraints on teachers' ability to complete the curriculum within the required time in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Large numbers of pupils require teachers to spend more time managing classroom activities, explaining content, and responding to individual learning needs, thereby reducing the time available for covering the planned curriculum. This situation may affect the pace of instruction and make timely completion of the curriculum more difficult. The presence of moderate, low, and very low extent responses indicates variation in teachers' experiences. This variation may be attributed to differences in teaching experience, class size, subject allocation, and classroom management skills, which may enable some teachers to complete the curriculum more effectively than others. The quantitative data from the questionnaires administered to teachers were complemented by the interviews conducted with heads of schools, the District Academic Officer, and Ward Education Officers. During face-to-face interviews, the head of school 3 reported:

In my experience, the limited number of teachers available at the school increases workload, making it difficult for them to cover and complete the syllabus within the required timeframe. Providing individual attention to pupils, particularly in lower classes, becomes challenging. Furthermore, classroom management becomes difficult due to overcrowding, and teachers are compelled to reduce the frequency of assessments due to workload demands. Therefore, these challenges undermine teachers' effectiveness

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and overall job performance. (HOS-3, Personal communication, May 21, 2026).

➢ *Furthermore, WEO 1 had this to Say:*

Lesson completion and pupil assessment are highly negatively affected, as teachers are unable to administer adequate exercises and tests, mark them promptly, and provide timely feedback to pupils. Thus, teachers become stressed and fatigued, which reduces their efficiency. This ultimately affects pupils' academic performance, particularly their examination results. (WEO-1, Personal communication, May 22, 2026).

➢ *Moreover, the District Academic Officer (DAO) Stated:*

In my view, when the number of pupils exceeds the number of available teachers, it increases teachers' workload and makes it difficult to complete the syllabus within the expected time. This situation reduces teaching effectiveness because teachers are unable to manage all instructional tasks efficiently due to the large number of learners under their responsibility. (DAO, Personal communication, May 23, 2026)

The quantitative data from teachers converge with the qualitative data from HOS-3, WEO-1, and the DAO, indicating that a high teacher-pupils ratio significantly affects the timely completion of the curriculum in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Taken together, these data show that a high teacher-pupils ratio increased teachers' workload, slowed the pace of instruction, and made it difficult to complete the syllabus within the required time. It was further revealed that large class sizes required teachers to spend more time explaining content, managing learners, and addressing individual learning needs, thereby reducing instructional efficiency. As a result, achieving syllabus coverage within the planned instructional period becomes difficult, ultimately affecting teaching effectiveness. The findings are consistent with those of Kyambi (2019) in Kenya, who found that higher pupil-teacher ratios significantly reduced curriculum coverage and teaching effectiveness due to increased workload and limited instructional time. The study further showed that unfavourable pupil-teacher ratios constrained teachers' ability to implement curriculum activities effectively. These findings suggest that when teachers are responsible for large numbers of pupils, they may experience increased workload and limited instructional time, hinder timely curriculum completion and reducing teaching effectiveness.

Moreover, data in Table 1 indicate that the majority of teachers (58.6%) rated to a high and very high extent that the teacher-pupils ratio affects their ability to accurately assess pupils' learning, while 26% of teachers rated it to a low extent and a very low extent. A further 36.5% of teachers rated it to a moderate extent. The mean score of 3.6 further confirms that, on average, teachers experience a high level of influence of the teacher-pupils ratio on their ability to assess pupils' learning accurately. This suggests that a high teacher-pupils ratio imposes significant constraints on teachers' ability to accurately assess pupils' learning in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Large numbers of pupils require teachers to assess many learners within limited instructional time, making it difficult to administer assessments, mark pupils' work, and provide timely, effective feedback. This situation may affect the accuracy and timeliness of monitoring pupils' learning progress. The presence of moderate, low, and very low extent responses indicates variation in teachers' experiences. This variation may be attributed to differences in class size, teaching experience, and assessment practices, which may enable some teachers to manage assessment activities more effectively than others. The quantitative data from the questionnaires administered to teachers were complemented by the interviews conducted with heads of schools, the District Academic Officer, and Ward Education Officers. During face-to-face interviews, the head of school 3 reported that: *"In my experience, the large number of pupils makes it difficult for teachers to administer exercises, tests, and examinations effectively, and it also delays marking and provision of feedback to learners, which affects the accuracy of student assessment."* (HOS-3, Personal communication, May 21, 2026).

➢ *Furthermore, WEO 1 Reported:*

Pupils' assessments are highly negatively affected, as teachers are unable to administer adequate exercises and tests, mark them promptly, and provide timely feedback to pupils. Thus, teachers become stressed and fatigued, which reduces their efficiency. This ultimately affects pupils' academic performance, particularly their examination results. (WEO-1, Personal communication, May 22, 2026).

➢ *Moreover, the District Academic Officer (DAO) Stated:*

In my view, when the number of pupils exceeds the number of available teachers, it increases teachers' workload and makes it difficult to assess students' learning. This situation reduces teaching effectiveness because teachers are unable to manage all instructional tasks efficiently due to the large number of learners under their responsibility. (DAO, Personal communication, May 23, 2026)

The quantitative data from teachers converge with the qualitative data from HOS-3, WEO-1, and the DAO, indicating that the teacher-pupils ratio significantly affects teachers' ability to effectively assess pupils' learning in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Taken together, these data show that a high teacher-pupils ratio made it difficult for teachers to administer assessment activities, such as exercises, tests, and examinations, to mark pupils' work, and to provide timely feedback. It was further revealed that large class sizes limited teachers' ability to accurately monitor pupils' academic progress, given the large number of pupils under their responsibility. As a result, assessment activities became more demanding and difficult to manage effectively, ultimately affecting the quality of pupils' assessment. The findings are consistent with Kalemba (2022) in Zambia, who found that high pupil-teacher ratios reduced teacher-pupil interaction and limited effective instructional processes, including assessment activities, due to increased workload and reduced individual attention to learners. The study further showed that large numbers of pupils constrained teachers' ability to manage teaching and learning activities effectively. These findings suggest that when teachers are responsible for

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large numbers of pupils, they may experience difficulties in conducting assessment activities effectively and monitoring pupils' academic progress, which may ultimately affect the quality of assessment and teaching effectiveness.

Thereafter, the data in Table 1 indicate that the majority of teachers (71.1%) rated the extent to which a high teacher-pupils ratio reduces their working efficiency as high or very high; 21.2% rated it as moderate, and 7.6% as low or very low. The mean score of 4.1 further confirms that, on average, teachers experience a very high level of influence of the teacher-pupils ratio on their working efficiency. This suggests that a high teacher-pupils ratio imposes significant constraints on teachers' ability to fulfil their teaching responsibilities efficiently in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Large numbers of pupils require teachers to devote more time and effort to lesson delivery, classroom management, and supporting individual learners, thereby making it difficult to complete instructional tasks efficiently within the available time. This situation may reduce teachers' overall working efficiency and affect the effectiveness of instructional delivery. The presence of moderate and low extent responses indicates variation in teachers' experiences. This variation may be attributed to differences in class size, teaching experience, and classroom management skills, which may enable some teachers to manage large numbers of pupils more effectively than others. The quantitative data from the questionnaires administered to teachers were complemented by the interviews conducted with heads of schools, the District Academic Officer, and Ward Education Officers. During face-to-face interviews, the head of school 4 reported that:

In my experience, the large number of pupils in classes makes it difficult for teachers to manage their teaching tasks efficiently. Teachers spend more time handling learners and completing instructional activities, which reduces their overall working efficiency. (HOS-4, Personal communication, May 22, 2026)

- *Furthermore, WEO 1 Reported that:*

When the number of pupils is high compared to the number of teachers, teachers are required to handle many learners at the same time, which makes it difficult to complete their teaching tasks efficiently and reduces their overall working efficiency. (WEO-1, Personal communication, May 22, 2026).

- *Moreover, the District Academic Officer (DAO) Commented:*

In my view, when the number of pupils exceeds the number of available teachers, teachers are required to handle large classes, which makes it difficult to accomplish instructional tasks effectively within the available time and reduces their overall efficiency. (DAO, Personal communication, May 23, 2026)

The quantitative data from teachers converge with the qualitative data from HOS-1, WEO-1, and the DAO, indicating that the teacher-pupil ratio significantly affects teachers' working efficiency in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. Taken together, these data show that large class sizes increased the time and effort teachers needed to complete instructional tasks, such as lesson delivery, classroom management, and learner support. It was further revealed that handling large numbers of pupils simultaneously limited teachers' ability to fulfil their daily teaching responsibilities within the allocated instructional time, thereby reducing their overall working efficiency. As a result, teachers experienced difficulties in completing instructional tasks effectively, which may affect the quality and effectiveness of teaching. The findings are consistent with Laitsch (2021), who found that larger class sizes reduced instructional efficiency and increased teachers' workload, thereby limiting their effectiveness in managing classroom and instructional responsibilities. The study further showed that large class sizes created demanding working conditions that affected teachers' ability to perform instructional tasks effectively. These findings suggest that when teachers are responsible for large numbers of pupils, they may experience increased workload and time constraints, which may ultimately reduce their working efficiency and overall job performance.

Generally, the findings indicate that the teacher-pupil ratio is a central working condition that relates with teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council. The quantitative and qualitative data consistently showed that high teacher-pupils ratios increased teachers' workload, constrained individual attention to pupils, complicated classroom management, slowed curriculum completion, affected the effectiveness of assessment practices, and reduced teachers' working efficiency. These findings suggest that an unfavourable teacher-pupil ratio creates challenging working conditions that may limit teachers' ability to perform their instructional responsibilities effectively. The findings are consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which identifies working conditions as hygiene factors that influence employees' satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In the context of this study, a high teacher-pupil ratio represents an unfavourable working condition that may contribute to dissatisfaction, increased workload, and reduced teacher effectiveness. Conversely, an appropriate teacher-pupils ratio may create more favourable working conditions by enabling teachers to manage classrooms effectively, provide individualised attention, conduct assessment activities, and complete instructional tasks within the available time.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Conclusion*

The study concludes that the teacher-pupil ratio relates with teachers' job performance to a high extent in public primary schools in Mbinga District Council, Tanzania. High teacher-pupil ratios were associated with increased teachers' workload, limited individual attention to pupils, difficulties in classroom management and curriculum completion, challenges in conducting assessment activities, and reduced working efficiency. Overall, the findings establish that the teacher–pupil ratio was an important factor influencing teachers' job performance in the public primary schools studied.

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➢ *Recommendations*

It was recommended that the government should strengthen teacher recruitment and equitable deployment to public primary schools with high teacher-pupils ratios in order to reduce teachers' workload and improve individual attention to pupils. School heads should ensure equitable allocation of teaching responsibilities and strengthen classroom and assessment management practices to support teachers in completing the curriculum, assessing pupils, and providing timely feedback. Furthermore, Ward Education Officers and the District Academic Officer should regularly monitor teacher-pupils ratios and use staffing and enrolment data to guide teacher deployment and support schools experiencing staffing imbalances. These measures would help to create more manageable teaching conditions, improve teachers' working efficiency and job performance, and enhance the quality of teaching and learning in public primary schools.

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