Research Article

Pedagogical Knowledge Base of Religious and Moral Education Teachers in Assessing Students' Academic Performance

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Abstract: This study aimed to examine the pedagogical knowledge base of Religious and Moral Education teachers in assessing students' academic performance. The research design used for this study was the correlational research design. 159 basic schools were selected to participate in the study. The population of the study comprised Religious and Moral Education (RME) teachers and second-year students in basic schools in the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirem Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select basic schools, Religious and Moral Education (RME) teachers, and students for the study. In all one hundred and seventy-five (175) RME teachers and three hundred and fifty-seven (357) students were selected for the study. The main instruments employed in the study were questionnaires and observation. The data was analysed through the computation of frequencies, percentages, mean of means distributions, and the calculation of correlation coefficient. Pearson's Correlational Coefficient was used to describe the linear relationship between each of the variables. This was done with the use of computer software called Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS). The study concluded that teachers possessed adequate knowledge about the use of pedagogy or instructional methods when it comes to the teaching of RME. However, as observed, teachers use of the existential approach and the life theme approach only, and, teachers did not make use of the concept cracking approach to teaching RME probably because they lacked adequate information about how to use them. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment should organise in-service training for teachers to be abreast with some of these contemporary pedagogies for the teaching of RME in Basic Schools and also make modules available for use at the Colleges of Education to train our upcoming teachers at the Basic Schools.

Keywords: Pedagogical, Knowledge, Religious and Moral Education, Teachers, Assessment

1. Introduction

Pedagogical knowledge enhances active-learning instruction [1]. Every teacher and educationist of experience knows that even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remain dead unless quickened into life by the right methods of teaching and the right kind of teachers [2]. The study laid a firm foundation for teaching methods or approaches. He asserts that, sometimes even an unsatisfactory and unimaginative syllabus can be made interesting and significant by the gifted teacher who does not focus his mind on the subject matter to be taught or the information to be imparted but on his students - their interest and aptitudes, their reaction and response [2]. He or she judges the success of his or her lesson not by the amount of matter covered but by the understanding the appreciation and the efficiency achieved by students [3, 4]. In this work, the life theme approach, existential approach, as well as the value clarification approach to the teaching

of Religious and Moral Education have been elaborated on in addressing teachers' pedagogical knowledge in teaching RME. Teachers should possess adequate pedagogical knowledge which could be used in the classroom, and their preparation programmes should provide opportunities for potential teachers to use pedagogy effectively in their teaching [5]

One of the skills that is pertinent to a particular method is the teacher's "ability to relate content to past and future experiences of learners" [6]. The heart of the Life theme Approach or method navigates around this statement. Meanwhile, an attempt needs to be made to examine this method as it is used in teaching RME in the Junior High Schools. The following are what some scholars have to say about the meaning of the Life theme Approach or method. Confessional approach of teaching religion failed because it made false assumptions about learners' religiosity and failed to relate religion meaningfully to students' lives [7]. This is, very unfortunate because "within several of the great world religions moreover, there is wide variety of sects and schools of thought" [8]. So is it right for a teacher to try to convert his or her learners to their faith where learners come from diverse religious denominations in teaching RME through the methods they employ? A researcher made his stance clear about the Life theme Approach or method when he posited that "children need to find passages within the Bible which are *related to their own experiences and understanding of life*, as well as being within their own verbal comprehension". This is a sure way of helping the learners to learn for life and also facilitate the transfer of what has been learnt in real life situations that they face [9].

There is no way the learner cannot participate actively, and see the relevance of the content of the Bible to their lives, when the teacher is able to link what is to be learnt with the real life experiences of the learners. Life theme Approach or method as starting to teach with the real, concrete and the present situation of the learners and letting them arrive at a religious understanding of those experiences [10]. In the same way the approach emphasises the human person as receiver of Gods' self-revelation to humanity. The approach demands that God speaks to people through situations and experiences [11]. "Religious concepts 'only come alive' when we are able to relate them sometimes partially, sometimes completely to our life experience" [2]. From the foregoing definitions of the Life theme Approach or method, it is obvious that the method essentially emphasises the use of the learner's day-to-day experience as the basis of teaching Religious Issues. A study outlined steps involved in the use of the method include:

- Introduction: The teacher involves the learners in reflecting on their day to day experiences related to the subject matter. This stage arouses their interest in the content.
- Lesson Development: This stage involves four steps where learners are taken through Human experience, The Biblical experience, Explanation and Application and then Response. According to her, these are ideally the steps to go through in using the Life-Approach [12].

Some reasons why the Life -Approach or method is preferred to other methods of teaching are given in the following statements:

- The topics should be introduced and illustrated, not just from the Bible and official church but also from a variety of sources, including the minor world of teen, the small world of teens together, the outside world of ordinary people, as well as events featuring famous people [13].
- Religious beliefs cannot be taught as if they were facts; but they are by nature experiential [2].
- The pluralist and materialistic nature of the present-society cannot allow for the use of traditional methods of teaching religion. To some extent, religion has a private affair so the approach in teaching it should be one that can help the learner to make his/her own free choice [12]. She continues to say that the most important justification for the Life Approach is that Jesus

Christ, the gospel teacher, used the approach. iv. The presence of religious education in the school curriculum must be justified on educational grounds. This means a shift from the traditional faith-fostering role to a life-centred education [10].

- "Ideally, education ought to prepare students to face the challenges of life. For this, education has to be linked with different life skills to measure up to these challenges" [14].

On the whole as stated earlier, the degree of participation of the learner (learner centeredness) and how the content is related to the relevant previous knowledge of the learner makes this method a preferable one. Thus "the unique characteristic of the Life theme Approach is that it would be performance oriented, based on action and behaviour modification" [14]. A research on how to use the Life theme Approach/method in teaching Christian Religious Education in Kenyan Secondary Schools. The study found out that teachers were not adequately professionally trained to use the approach in terms of pre-service training. As a result, the teachers used the approach to a limited extent in teaching Christian Religious Education. It was also found out that the teachers encountered a number of problems in their attempts to use the Life theme Approach, namely, shortage of time, an overloaded syllabus; inadequate guidance on how to use the approach, and inadequate teaching-learning resources to support the use of the method or approach. It was suggested at the end of the study that, to improve on the use of the method, the inspectorate division of the Kenyan Education Service should intensify supervision of teachers in Secondary Schools so as to guide teachers, organise seminars and workshops on how to implement the syllabi using Life theme Approaches. Again, curriculum developers and book authors need to update the main Christian Religious Education text books to make it Life centered in approach [12].

The little problem that has to do with the use of the Life theme Approach or method is the question of how to make up for the diversity or variations in learners' individual experiences because they come from different religious and social backgrounds. What should be done in a situation where learners have contradictory experiences because, they come from different religious, economic, and social backgrounds? Here a common life experience which applies to a greater number of them will best suit them for their maximum participation. Learners should be given the opportunity to share their experiences with others and relate what is being learnt to their personal experiences. Particular attention has been given to this method/approach because undoubtedly, it is a teaching method:

- "-that builds on the foundation of knowledge already possessed by students
- -that encourages children to learn by doing
- -that ensures that learning grows out of useful experiences
- -that uses teaching aids effectively" [15].

The existential pedagogy emphasises individual responsibility, individual personality, individual existence and individual freedom of choice. All people are fully responsible for the meaning of their own existence and creating their own essence of self-definition. Knowledge, as perceived by the existentialist, originates in and is composed of what exists in an individual's consciousness and feelings as a result of one's experiences [16]. *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defined "existentialism as the modern system of belief made famous by Jean-Paul Sartre in the 1940s in which the world has no meaning and each person is alone and completely responsible for their own actions, by which they make their own character" [17]. A similar study posits that "every human being, it is claimed, must be defined as a unique individual and not as a mere representative of some

wider grouping" [9]. In this case the individual must be held responsible for his or her actions and inactions. In fact, for the existentialist,

"The highest interest of the individual must be his own existence" [18]. The question is what is the role of the teacher in using the existential approach? The teacher must not exert his/her wishes on the members of the class. Each student is an individual and has his or her own personality as reiterated in the explanations above. For a teacher to try to determine what is best for students is effectively to impose his or her wishes on the students, to dominate them. This is destructive of individuality and personality and is wrong in teaching religion. The teacher should rather act as a resource person or a facilitator in the course of teaching RME in Junior High Schools so that he or she will develop understanding of concepts by encouraging creativity and discovery learning. The learner's individual personality, forming the centre stage of RME lessons, is a sure way of preventing the teachers from implanting their own beliefs into the learners through non rational means. In the personalist and existentialist approach, religious education offers itself as a contribution to the young person's quest for meaning in life. This is the religious education which deals with ultimate problems, with mystery and awareness that which seeks to provoke an enquiry into values and commitments in living. This is another important strand in the British tradition of religious education [19].

Thus in teaching RME in the Junior High Schools, the attention of the teacher should be on trying to help the learners to find meaning in their individual lives and not the teacher's own life. We cannot draw a very sharp line between the life of the teacher and the life of the learner because there are cases where the learner's life is influenced partially by the teacher's life. Nevertheless, the RME teacher is expected to teach and not preach. In the meantime, in teaching RME, there is the need to use the pedagogy that:

> *"seeks to create in students' certain capacities to understand and think about religion as a unique mode of thought and awareness, starts with the child's own feelings, acts and experiences and helps children to build conceptual bridges between their existential experiences and the central concepts of religion" [2].*

The core of the existential approach to the teaching of Religious and Moral Education centres on these three points [2]. This approach to Religious and Moral Education is grounded in making the learner's characteristics, namely the existential experiences become the basis for forming religious concepts. Although it is as important and necessary to the RME teacher to follow the existential approach in teaching, existential approach has its own limitations in its attempt to enable learners to discover meaning and purposes in their lives, the personal/existential approach tends to become excessively individualistic [19]. Obviously this approach tends to personalise religion extremely. Though this would promote peaceful coexistence of the numerous variations in the various religions, it does not capitalise on the strong similarities and commonalities that exist in various religious denominations. After all, "All religions have theology of other religions' whether expressed or not, and today we are all under pressure to review it, relate more positively to people of other faiths and grow, in togetherness and as a community" [20]. The question which then comes to mind is: is it possible to individualize the work of the teaching process to provide specifics for each student? What happens if the existential experiences contradict? In a nutshell, "Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not possible to isolate it. A study of these religious systems is, therefore, ultimately a study of the people themselves in all the complexities of traditional and modern life" [21]. Therefore, an approach that focuses on the individual lives of the learners is a laudable one which must as a necessity, be employed in teaching RME.

The Stapleford Project was set up in 1986 by the Association of Christian Teachers in England with the purpose of producing a range of materials to support teaching about Christianity in school religious education. The methodology of the Project has become

known by the catch phrase *Concept Cracking or* Cracking Pedagogy. This has been described in detail elsewhere, but can be summarized as a two stage process.

- *Stage 1*: focuses on the importance of teachers understanding their subject matter and being clear as to exactly which concepts will be the focus of their teaching when covering any particular topic. The key tasks in this stage are, firstly, to unpack the range of concepts that are embedded in the chosen topic and might be the focus of reaching and, secondly, to select one or two of these to be the focus of attention in this particular unit of work. Selection will be on the basis of a number of criteria including the appropriateness for the students, the balance in a scheme of work and, of course, the importance of particular concepts within Christianity [22].
- *Stage 2* : entails planning teaching activities which translate the selected concept into a form that makes sense in the students' world of experience. This stage entails making links or bridges with the students' world and then designing learning activities which help the student both to understand the religious concept and its significance for the believer and to reapply the concept in a way that helps the student in their own understanding of the world. There are parallels here with the work of other projects and in particular the ideas of "bridges" and "edification" in the Warwick RE Project, and the idea of the study of a religion making "a gift to the child" in the Birmingham University Project [2, 19-13].

As a practical classroom tool, the *Concept Cracking* approach has been broken down into four specific steps, which can be remembered using the acronym USER. Steps 1 and 2 constitute stage 1and steps 3 and 4 constitute stage 2 above.

- Unpack the Concepts: Before teaching any topic it is important to be aware of the different theological concepts that underpin it and are important to understanding its meaning and significance. If teachers are not clear about the ideas being covered, the students certainly will not be. In this case, the key concepts include anger, injustice, holiness, Jesus as God's son and judgement.
- Select One or Two Concepts as the Focus for the Lesson: If a lesson is not focused on one or two key concepts that are being taught, the students will become confused. In this example the concept of righteous anger could be a suitable focus.
- Engage with the Students' World of Experience: This is perhaps the hardest and yet the most important stage in the process. The key is to find parallels in the students' world which relate to the concept of righteous anger. One possibility would be to ask students to give examples of instances when they have been angry and to divide these into occasions when they were right to be angry and occasions when they were wrong to be angry. The purpose of the activity is not so much to make a judgement on the particular instances, but to establish the idea in students' minds that there are right and wrong forms of anger and to begin the process of searching for criteria to distinguish between them. This will build the bridge between the students' world and the religious concept.
- Relate to the Religious Concept: This is the point at which to introduce the story from the New Testament. An effective way of doing this is to use the painting called *Christ driving the traders from the Temple* by El Greco, and to ask the students to comment on how Jesus' behaviour is being portrayed in the painting. In particular, they will notice there are two groups of people, those who are the object of his anger and those who are being affirmed.

A role play could then be used in which students take on the roles of members of the two groups and debate Jesus' behaviour. Finally, there will be the need for a whole class discussion in which the question of why the Gospel writer thought Jesus' anger was justified would be explored. This should draw out themes like the importance of resisting injustice and exploitation, the holiness of the Temple and Jesus' special relationship with God which made his anger uniquely justifiable as far as the Gospel writer is concerned. Then students should be encouraged to express their own views, perhaps though the medium of a diary entry from someone who was present in the Temple, as to whether or not Jesus' anger was justified. This can then lead into an activity where students reflect on justified and unjustified anger in their own lives and its management [22].

Steps one and two represent important preliminary work which must be done by teachers to clarify their own understanding of the topic. This is very important as a way of giving a lesson a clear focus. However, the actual teaching will often begin with step three in order to ensure that the lesson is relevant for the students. Many lessons will have to begin with an activity that is designed to build the bridge between the students' world and the religious topic.

Quality teaching requires developing a nuanced understanding of the concept pedagogy, and using it to develop appropriate, context-specific strategies and representations. Though teachers have adequate skills in blending technology, pedagogy and content, they seldom put to practice these skills in the classroom. The implication is that, as a nation we are not getting the best out of our teachers [24]. Despite the plethora of studies conducted in various subject areas, virtually nothing seems to have been done with respect to RME regarding teacher quality as a determinant of pupil performance in Religious and Moral Education. Teachers' conceptions and theoretical knowledge of authentic assessment and their relevant practices in the classrooms requires pedagogical reasoning [25]. Background knowledge of teachers in using techniques and strategies assessing concepts in Ghana has become necessary to build Ghanaian society better and faster growth in [26]. This implies that evaluation of students is an integral part of teaching and learning in lessons and is beneficial to both students and tutors if use formatively [27]. The purpose of this study was to examine the pedagogical knowledge base of Religious and Education teachers in assessing students' academic performance. The study was guided by this research question - What pedagogical knowledge religious and moral education teachers use in assessing students' academic performance?

2. Materials and Methods

The research design that was used for this study was the correlational research design. 159 basic schools were selected to participate in the study. The population of the study comprised Religious and Moral Education (RME) teachers and second year students in the basic schools in the Komenda Edina Eguafo Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select basic schools, Religious and Moral Education (RME) teachers and students for the study. In all one hundred and seventy-five (175) RME teachers and three hundred and fifty-seven (357) students were selected for the study. The main instruments employed in the study were questionnaire and observation. the data was analysed through the computation of frequencies, percentages, mean of means distributions, as well as the computation of correlation coefficient. Particularly, the type of correlation coefficient that was employed in the study was the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) which is by far, the most common correlation coefficient in educational research [28]. The Pearson's Correlational Coefficient was used to describe the linear relationship between each of the variables. This was done with the use of computer software called Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS).

3. Results and discussion

This section presents results and discussion on the Research question - What relationship exists between RME Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge and Students' Academic Performance in Religious and Moral Education (RME)?

The responses given by the RME teachers are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Views of RME Teachers concerning their Pedagogical Knowledge

Statement	M	SD
I teach RME with real, concrete and present situation of learners as basis.	4.24	.88
Religious concepts only come alive when they are related to life experiences.	4.21	.91
RME should help students to build conceptual bridges between existential experiences and the central concepts of religion.	4.24	.77
Assessment procedures that give students opportunity to relate Biblical stories to life are adopted during RME lessons.	4.42	.65
I am conversant with the concept cracking approach to the teaching of RME.	3.95	.81
Students who are able to relate Biblical stories to real life experiences are given rewards to serve as motivation.	3.74	1.04
The teacher-learner interaction is very minimal because I mostly use the lecture method in teaching.	2.13	1.15
Any concept could be taught to any child provided it could be appropriately interpreted.	3.06	1.42
Concrete, real and present situation of learners are considered in asking questions in class.	4.45	.89
Students' experiences are considered in grouping them in the classroom during RME lessons.	3.51	1.36
Students' real life experiences form the basis of discussions in the classroom.	3.63	1.19
I relate RME topics to the life of students to a limited extent.	3.81	1.07
I do not relate RME topics to real life experiences of learners during teaching.	1.81	.95
Through the use of role- play, students are offered the opportunity to relate RME lessons to `their own life.	4.56	.50

I am conversant with the Existential Approach to teaching RME.	3.82	.71

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Mean of means = 3.71

Mean of Standard Deviation = 0.98

Generally, a careful look at Table 1 shows that RME teachers to a large extent have pedagogical knowledge in the teaching of RME. In line with this, a mean of means of 3.71 and a mean of standard deviation of 0.98 was achieved for the items designed which clearly indicates that the RME teachers agreed to a lot of the statements which were meant to identify the pedagogical knowledge that RME teachers possess. The following instances from the individual items attest to that fact. From Table 1, a mean of 4.24 and 0.88 standard deviation was attained meaning that majority of the respondents agree that, they teach RME with real, concrete and present situation of learners as basis. This finding corresponds with the view shared by previous study that religion should be taught with real, concrete and present situation of learners and they should be helped to arrive at religious understanding of those experiences [10]. It is clearly noticeable from Table 1 that majority of the teachers support the view that religious concepts only come alive when they are related to life experiences. With this item, a mean of 4.21 and a standard deviation of .91 which indicate that the mean falls on the scale 4. The plausible conclusion that could be drawn is that a significant majority of the teachers support this view. A similar study supports the findings of the current study that "Religious concepts only come alive when we are able to relate them sometimes partially, sometimes completely to our life experiences" [2]. It is obvious from Table 1 that the RME teachers in the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirem Municipality are of the view that, RME should help students to build conceptual bridges between existential experiences and the central concepts of religion. Concerning this, 4.24 mean and standard deviation of .77 was achieved for this statement. The mean which falls on scale 4 affirms the position that majority of the teachers support this view. This affirms the claim that Religious concepts should "start with the child's own feelings, acts and experiences and help children to build conceptual bridges between their existential experiences and the central concepts of religion" [2].

In relation to the statement, "Assessment procedures that give students opportunity to relate RME lessons to life are adopted during RME lessons", majority of the teachers agreed to it. A mean of 4.42 and a standard deviation of .65 were obtained for this item. The mean when converted to the nearest whole number falls on scale 4 which represents the option agree. In line with the statement "I am conversant with the concept cracking approach to the teaching of RME", 3.95 was attained as mean and 0.81 as standard deviation. The majority of the teachers agreed to the statement since the mean falls on scale 4 (agree)

From Table 1, the majority of the teachers agreed to the statement: "students who are able to relate religious lessons to real life experiences are given rewards to serve as motivation". In connection with this, 3.74 was obtained as a mean and 1.04 as the standard deviation. It could be seen from the scale under Table 1 that the mean could be placed on the scale 4 (agree). It is worthy to note that the measure of spread as stated above is higher than the mean of the standard deviation of 0.98 depicting that not all the respondents agreed to this view as there were variations in the responses. However, bulk of the teachers agree to the assertion.

As pertaining to the statement "any concept could be taught to any child provided it could be appropriately interpreted", 3.06 was recorded as mean and 1.42 was attained as standard deviation. From the forgoing it is obvious that the teachers were uncertain about this statement since the mean falls on the scale 3 (uncertain). It is also evident that the

responses of the teachers vary to a greater extent. One of the pedagogical principles of the concept cracking approach is that, any concept could be taught to any child provided it could be appropriately interpreted [29]. Again, greater number of the respondents agreed that concrete, real and present situation of learners are considered in asking questions in class. A mean of 4.45 and standard deviation of .89 were recorded for this item justifying that the teachers agree with the statement. A mean of 3.51 and standard deviation of 1.36 was obtained for the statement: "students' experiences are considered in grouping them in the classroom during RME lessons". This means that majority of the respondents agreed to the statement. When the mean is converted to the nearest whole number, it falls on the scale 4 (agree) supporting this position.

Regarding whether students' real life experiences form the basis of discussions in the classroom, it was found out that a significant majority of the teachers agreed to the fact. A mean of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 1.19 were attained. An approximation of the mean to the nearest whole number falls on scale 4 (agree). The high standard deviation indicates variations in the responses given but it still stands that the majority of the respondents agreed to this view. Also, the majority of the teachers agreed to the statement, "I relate RME topics to the life of students to a limited extent". A mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 1.07 were attained for this item and this falls within the option "agree" looking at the scale. The high standard deviation indicates variations in the responses given but it still stands that the majority of the respondents agreed to this view. A standard deviation of .95 and a mean of 1.81 clearly indicates that teachers disagree that they do not relate RME topics to real life experiences of learners during teaching. An approximation of the mean to the nearest whole number falls on scale 2 (disagree). In connection with the statements "Through the use of role-play, students are offered the opportunity to relate RME lessons to their own lives", majority of the teachers agreed to it. The item recorded a mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of .50 which fall under the scale of 5 meaning the respondents strongly agreed to the statement. With respect to whether RME teachers were conversant with the existential approach to teaching RME, a mean of 3.82 and a standard deviation of .71 were obtained clearly showing that the respondents agree to that. Table 2 presents what the researcher observed during the classroom interactions regarding teachers' pedagogical knowledge.

Table 2. Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge for Teaching RME

Statements	Very much N (%)	Much N (%)	Somehow N (%)	Not at all N (%)
Teacher helps students to build conceptual bridges between existential experiences and the central concepts of religion.	80 (47.3)	95 (52.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Teacher relates religious concepts to life experiences of students.	96 (56.8)	79 (43.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Teacher guides students to come out with their own values	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	175 (100)
Teacher makes use of the Concept Cracking Approach to teaching RME.	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	175 (100)

From Table 2, it is clear that none of the teachers used the concept cracking approach to teaching RME. Only the existential approach and the life theme approach were used. On the whole, pedagogical knowledge or the use of instructional methods to augment teacher quality in RME was used but to a limited extent. This view contradicts the data

gathered from the teachers. Though the teachers appeared to be pedagogically knowledgeable based on the responses they gave, this is not entirely so because, they do not make use of some of the approaches probably because, they lack adequate information concerning the use of these contemporary pedagogies to teaching religious education.

With regard to relationship between teachers' pedagogical knowledge and students' academic performance, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used through SPSS Version 15. The result as shown in Table 2 gave a correlation coefficient (r) of .234 between teachers' pedagogical knowledge and students' academic performance. When this correlation coefficient (r=.234) was tested at 0.5 significant level the result revealed that it was statistically significant.

Table 3. Relationship between Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge and Students' Academic Performance in RME

Variable		Students' Academic Performance
Pedagogical Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.234
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	175

Table 3 indicates a weak positive correlation (r = .234, sig. = .003) between teachers' pedagogical knowledge and students' academic performance. This implies that as teachers' knowledge about the use of appropriate methods of instruction or pedagogy increase, students' academic performance in RME also increase. In other words, as RME teachers acquaint themselves with the use of different pedagogical approaches or various media of instruction, students' academic performance becomes higher. In addition, when this correlation coefficient (r=.234) was tested at 0.5 significant level the result revealed that it was statistically significant. This contradicts the findings on the impact of quality teachers on pupil achievement by tracking the progress of each pupil in Tennessee through a large database [30]. In his research, Sanders found that, low achieving students gain about 14 points each year on the state test when taught by the least effective teachers, but gain more than 53 points when taught by the most effective teachers with good pedagogical knowledge. If this is so then it would be plausible to accept that, poor academic performance of students might be associated with other factors such as socio- economic background of learners, teacher commitment and students' attitude to learning RME etc. During the data gathering, the researcher realized that the students had a lukewarm attitude towards RME probably due to the perception students have towards RME as an easy subject and the fact that it is non- examinable even at the Senior High School level. As indicated earlier, correlation does not necessarily mean causation and that students' poor academic performance cannot be entirely attributed to the mere fact that teachers possess adequate repertoire of pedagogical knowledge about the use of instructional methods as other factors have a role to play when it comes to this. This notwithstanding, correlation coefficient can predict with some degree of precision the direction and degree of magnitude the relationship between variables of interest [30].

It can therefore be concluded that, to a large extent, teachers possess adequate knowledge about the use of pedagogy or instructional methods when it comes to the teaching of RME. However, despite the fact that the teachers appeared to be competent and knowledgeable in the use of methods of instruction, it was realized that, there was a weak positive correlation (r = .234, sig. = .003) between teachers' pedagogical knowledge and students' academic performance which implies that, as teachers' knowledge about the use of pedagogy or instructional methods increase, students' academic performance in RME also increases. Also, pedagogical knowledge was seen as a significant factor in

influencing students' academic performance in RME since a sig. value of .003 was obtained which is considered significant in the educational field. If this is so, then it means that, perhaps other factors (eg. Teacher commitment, teacher dedication, socio- economic background of students etc.) might influence students' academic performance and a careful investigation needs to be conducted in these areas as well.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that, teachers possessed adequate knowledge about the use of pedagogy or instructional methods when it comes to the teaching of RME. However, as observed, teachers use of the existential approach and the life theme approach only, and that, teachers did not make use of the concept cracking approach to teaching RME probably because they lacked adequate information about how to use them. Since pedagogical knowledge was identified as significant in students' academic performance, the need for RME teachers to be abreast with some of these contemporary pedagogies cannot be underestimated. Since it was realized that teachers' pedagogical knowledge was significant when it comes to students' academic performance, teachers need to be abreast with the contemporary pedagogies and approaches to the teaching of RME. Although it turned out that, most of the RME teachers had good pedagogical knowledge, it appears that this was a façade as during the observation sections, teachers did not make use of contemporary pedagogies like the Concept Cracking pedagogy but made use of the Existential Approach and Life Themes Approach, although they did not know what they were called. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment should organise in-service training for teachers to be abreast with some of these contemporary pedagogies for the teaching of RME in Basic Schools and also make modules available for use at the Colleges of Education to train our upcoming teachers at the Basic Schools.

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