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**The Challenges Facing Effective Teaching, Learning and  
Assessment in Community-Based Secondary Schools in  
Tabora Region.**

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## **The Challenges Facing Effective Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Community-Based Secondary Schools in Tabora Region.**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** This study focused on the challenges facing effective teaching, learning and assessment in community-based secondary schools in the Tabora region.

**Methodology:** This study employed a mixed method approach in line with a sequential explanatory research design. The study employed simple random sampling procedures to enlisted 219 people from various educational backgrounds. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to gather information.

**Results:** The study findings revealed that, poor teaching and learning environments, a problem with the medium of instructions, poor parental engagement in children's education, teacher shortages, poor managerial skills among school leaders and lack of in-service training among teachers are the main factors that hinder effective teaching, learning and assessment in community-based secondary schools in Tabora region in Tanzania.

**Unique contribution to practice, theory and strategy:** This study contributes to a better understanding of the challenges to effective teaching, learning and assessment in Tanzania's Tabora region's community-based secondary schools. The findings are comparable with "Curriculum theory," which emphasised that an effective curriculum implementation cannot take place in a setting where there is a lack of a supportive environment, where significant school stakeholders do not collaborate in planning for teaching and assessment, where there is a fairly poor teaching and learning environment, where there are not enough human resources, and where the language of instruction is inappropriate.

**Recommendation:** The local authority that oversees schools should hire more teachers, upgrade the facilities for teaching and learning, fully involve parents in decision-making, improve in-service teacher training, and require school administrators to regularly attend training on pedagogical leadership in order to implement effective teaching, learning and assessment in schools.

**Keywords:** Effective teaching, learning and assessment, community-based secondary schools.

## Introduction

Effective teaching, learning and assessment have been a concern worldwide. Especially now, where nations are struggling to achieve quality education as proposed by Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). This situation compels nations to revolutionize the formal education system by engaging the community more closely than before, Tanzania included. The reason for this is that society is continuing to educationalize the welfare state, and the state is increasingly relying on schools to help alleviate the ravages of concentrated poverty and racial discrimination, putting less pressure on the state to develop social policies that directly address inequalities (Kantor and Lowe, 2016). As a result, community schools can begin to close gaps in opportunity by bringing community members into the classroom, creating learning spaces outside of the classroom and aligning school and community resources. To achieve this goal, effective teaching, learning and assessment are crucial and unavoidable (Biag & Castrechini, 2016; Fehrer & Leos-Urbel, 2016; Sanders, 2018).

According to James (2009), teaching is a process in which one person instructs or teaches another person. Teaching, according to John (2003), is an act of giving instructions to students in a classroom setting. Thompson (2013) also defined teaching as the process of paying attention to people's needs, experiences and feelings and intervening so that they learn certain skills and go beyond what is expected of them. On the other hand, according to Macelo (2017), teaching is the practice of providing students with guidance, direction and encouragement. It is a cooperative activity and the teacher should involve students in a variety of classroom activities, including organization, management, discussion, recitation and results evaluation. Based on these definitions from varied scholars it can be concluded that teaching is the involvement with learners to enable their learning and application of knowledge, concepts and processes.

Learning according to Lewis (2000) is the activity or process of obtaining information or ability through study, practice, instruction or experience. Learning, according to Johannem (2003), is the process of acquiring new knowledge, behaviours, abilities, values, attitudes and preferences. Learning, according to Tordoff (1998), is the relatively permanent change in a person's knowledge or behaviour as a result of experience. Based on those definitions, it can be concluded that learning is the acquisition and mastery of what is already known about something, the extension and clarification of meaning of one's experience, or a structured, intentional process of testing ideas applicable to problems based on those definitions.

Assessment on the other had has been defined by Tordoff (1998) as the act of measuring the amount of learning that occurred as a result of learning and instruction. Johannem (2003), on the other hand defined assessment is the act of gathering evidence of students' work in order to measure and make judgments about whether or not they have met certain requirements. While Lewis (2000), defined assessment as the systematic process of capturing and analysing empirical data on knowledge, skill, attitudes and beliefs in order to improve student learning and adjust programs. In general, assessment can be defined as actions aimed to quantify learner achievement as a result of teaching and learning in a given program, depending on these standpoints tests, oral questions, written inquiries and projects are just a few kinds of activities used to assess student learning. Additionally, classroom exercises, project tests and other data are used to determine how effective the teacher, teaching and learning resources and the curriculum program are.

In accordance with Farrant's (1980) views, teaching is a process that facilitates in learning. The teacher has a significant role to play in this process since he or she works as a catalyst

and actively encourages learning. In normal speech, we usually say that children are taught by teachers, but they learn from books. This distinction between teaching and learning is a subtle one, but recognises the fact that teachers are able to respond in appropriate ways to the differing learning needs of individuals and the varying circumstances of particular situations.

In Tanzania just like other countries in the world, schools are established primarily for the aim of ensuring effective teaching, learning and assessment. With the understanding of the importance of education among the people, the Tanzanian government established the so called community-based secondary schools. The establishment of community-based secondary schools was one of the major educational reform in a secondary education during the 1980s and 1990s. The 1995 educational and training act No 10 defined a community secondary school as a school owned by local community or owned by an institution on behalf of a community (United Republic of Tanzania 1995). In this case, community-based secondary schools in Tanzania were basically established by the government with the assistance of local communities at the ward, division or district levels to improve access to secondary education and therefore, easing the supply of teaching and learning materials, teaching staff and administrators (Machumu, 2011).

Furthermore, in Tanzania, community-based secondary schools are organized and administered by the local communities and have served as a low-cost option for communities, ensuring access to education for children who would not otherwise be able to attend school elsewhere in the country (Machumu, 2011). By 2006, Tanzanian government decided to politically revitalise the 2004 Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) by constructing a community-based secondary school at every administrative ward in Tanzania mainland. This decision sparked a massive movement of rapid expansion of basic secondary education. According to Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (2019) the number of secondary schools increased by fourfold between 2004 and 2017, from around 2003 to roughly 5,670, while the number of pupils enrolled in ordinary level increased by 425 percent. Lower secondary education enrolment improved dramatically from 16.4 percent in 2006 to 71.2 percent in 2017. However, from the standpoint of education, this movement had negative consequences. The failure rate in the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination increased from 9.7% to 66.2 percent between 2007 and 2018, sparking heated controversy in the media and in the Tanzanian parliament. However, these schools operated with a great shortage of teacher and other basic resources, putting a doubt of the quality of education which was offered in these schools (HakiElimu, (2017).

Tanzania just like other many third world countries “pen and paper” examination is the main method of assessing learner’s educational achievement thus; the results of examinations also are regarded as a tool to examine student competencies. Examinations also are used to verify that the learner is ready to move on to the next stage. However, many people believe that the role of examinations should be reconsidered. Various studies conducted in Tanzania (Mjungu, 2016; Edgar, 2011; HakiElimu, 2017; Mtui, 2009) shown that as the community-based secondary school’s increases, enrolment also increases while the performance in Form Four National Examinations also continued to decline tremendously.

In Tabora region in Tanzania, a study by George (2017) and John (2019) found that, despite the government's efforts to hire teachers and improve school infrastructures, student performance in Form Four National Examinations in most of community-based secondary schools deteriorated year after year. As a result of this situation, the teaching, learning and assessment processes in community-based secondary schools seems to be problematic, thus

this study looked into the challenges facing effective teaching, learning and assessment. To accomplish this purpose, the study wanted to find out an answer to the question, “What are the challenges facing teaching, learning and assessment in community-based secondary schools in Tanzania?”

### **Literature Review**

Academic excellence is a fundamental goal of any educational institution, and teachers and parents should engage in successful teaching, learning and assessment procedures. Barnaba (2013) found that a school with good teaching and learning leads in children performing well academically. When teachers, students and parents work together effectively in the classroom, successful teaching and learning occurs. Children with involved parents are more likely to attend school on a regular basis than children with uninvolved parents. This could happen for a variety of reasons. For one thing, parents who are interested in their children's education place a high value on school and urge regular attendance. Second, children who get parental assistance are more likely to feel intellectually capable, and hence are less inclined to avoid going to school. Finally, parental participation increases children's views toward school, making it more appealing to go (Sheldon, 2009). Overall, when parents become active in their children's academics, they profit not only in the classroom but also outside of it.

The main duties of teachers as per Cosmas et al., (2011), is to provide classroom instruction that helps students learn. Teachers should design successful lessons, grade student work and provide feedback, manage classroom materials, navigate the curriculum effectively and communicate with other staff to accomplish this. However, becoming a teacher entails much more than just following lesson plans. According to Ethan (2019), a teacher shortage is the most significant obstacle that could obstruct effective teaching and learning in schools, resulting in poor academic achievement as indicated by a high rate of failure on major exams. Furthermore, Christina (2014) revealed that teachers should conduct effective assessments on what students have already learned on a constant basis in order to intervene and solve all problem areas that may result in widespread failure among students in national based examinations. Innocent (2015) instead assert that teachers should undertake ongoing assessments on the cause of teaching and learning and provide feedback to students' parents. While teachers are undoubtedly on the front lines when it comes to talking with students about testing, we must not overlook the vital role that parents play in assessments, (Boniface, 2014). Talking with parents about assessment results is a vital step in assisting parents in understanding their child's development, collaborating on goal-setting and generally including them in their child's learning. A study conducted by Bosco (2013), revealed that a school with excellent teaching and learning has a strong relationship between the school's principal, teachers, students and parents. Strong collaboration among these important education stakeholders has a significant impact on a school's academic success. If the school wants to succeed in implementing the intended curriculum, parents should be involved in teaching, learning and assessment.

Furthermore, Evod (2016) stress that a positive school environment improves student attendance, which is a component that helps relieve many school problems. It also aids in the reduction of stress in both teachers and pupils, as well as the promotion of a more positive mind-set among all parties concerned. Consequently, the study concluded that the school environment is an important factor in student accomplishment and teacher retention, as well as effective teaching and learning. A favourable and good learning environment, conversely,



is vital for student performance since it enhances academic results (James, 2001). Positive learning, on the other hand, cannot happen by itself; it must be fostered in schools. Many factors must be considered in schools in order to provide a healthy learning environment for children. The foundation of an excellent school will be laid in the classroom. Teachers should establish a safer and more favourable learning environment in the classroom. A good classroom environment should be developed, which aids in the promotion of students' social and emotional well-being. Effective academic achievement will be aided by a better learning environment (Jonathan, 2017).

On the issue of language, of instructions in schools found to have a significant impact on school teaching and learning by different studies (Karumba, 2020); KNUT, 2019; Mandukwini, 2016; Michael, 2016) revealed that students who are taught in a language with which they are unfamiliar are unable to learn well. Unfortunately, overwhelming evidence that students learn to read best in a language they speak and comprehend, approximately 45% of children worldwide attend schools in a language they do not speak or understand. When students are forced to learn to read in a language they don't comprehend, poor learning outcomes in the early grades are unavoidable, leading to extensive grade repetition, high dropout rates and massive failure in major exams.

On the question of the teacher-student ratio and effective teaching and learning, it was discovered that it plays a significant role (Mkpa, 1987). In a school, the student-teacher ratio refers to the number of students for each teacher. Although the two figures are frequently linked, this number refers to more than just class size (Mackean & Onyango, 2019). Marco claims that (2020) the student-teacher ratio represents the workload of the teacher and their availability to provide services and care for their students. The lower the number, many students and teachers believe, the better the educational process and learning will be. One of the strongest indicators of student achievement and engagement has been determined to be the student-teacher ratio. It's not difficult to see why. The fewer students, a teacher has, the better able they are to adapt their teaching to individual learning styles (Mihan, 2000).

Moreover, it was found that the teaching, learning and assessment that take place in schools have a relationship with the decision-making strategies used in such settings. The study by Nandi (2018) found that the school with less democratic leadership style basically makes most of decisions in a non-participatory means hence the school failure in teaching and learning process. In addition to that, Wango (2009) found that democratic schools ensure democratic classrooms in which students enjoy learning and teachers enjoy teaching, and they create enhanced teacher-student interactions. Students demonstrate higher on-task behaviour, improved mood, and focus when they are encouraged to take control of their classroom and learning.

However, different researchers have identified the issue of in-service training for teachers as an important aspect that can influence whether or not teaching and learning in schools is successful. Wambua and Waweru (2019); Wanjiku (2019) and Waziri and Paulina (2020) findings showed that in-service training has significant effects on effective teaching and learning in schools, therefore recommended that in-service training should be regularly organized for teachers in secondary schools in order to improve curriculum implementation practices. Furthermore, Idonije (2005) believes that in order to achieve efficiency, training and retraining are required. Teachers who receive in-service training gain new and improved abilities as well as knowledge that will help them work better and increase their productivity.

Teachers' training and retraining can so improve their effectiveness while also helping them to deal with the ever-increasing demands of educating the country's children.

In general, it has been shown in the surveyed literature that the teaching, learning and assessment processes are interconnected in practice, and their effectiveness is what leads to effective learning and excellent academic performance in key examinations among students. Also based on the reviewed research, the following are identified as important factors that could influence teaching and learning processes, as well as academic success, in one way or another: the school-parental relationship, class size, language of instruction, decision-making strategies, availability of teaching and learning materials and teacher in-service training.

### **Theory Implication in the Study**

The "curriculum theory" served as an informant in this study. The curriculum theory places a lot of emphasis on the institution where classroom instruction and learning take place. The implementation of the intended curriculum falls squarely on the shoulders of the school. The curriculum should be reviewed by the school, and decisions made about what is important, how to teach, and what should be learnt, as well as what materials are needed and how learning will be assessed (Smith, 2000). The theory suggests that in environments without a collaborative environment where stakeholders can decide together how to teach and assess learning, what appropriate instructional language to use, what resources are needed, and what kind of environment is appropriate for teaching and learning, these processes cannot be successful Goodlad, (1979). The main objective of this study was to identify the challenges secondary community-based schools in the Tabora region have when it comes to teaching, learning and assessment. The results were assessed using the claims made by curriculum theory.

### **Methodology**

This study employed pragmatic research philosophy, with a mixed method approach in line with sequential explanatory research design. Mixed-methods research approach has been used in pragmatic philosophy with the notion that integrating several data gathering methods leads to a deeper and more in-depth understanding of the subject under study (Lopez & Molina, 2011; Morgan, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). As per the sequential explanatory research design, this study went through two phases of data collection. In the first phase the researcher has collected quantitative data, then collects qualitative data in the second phase. This study also employed both quantitative and qualitative sampling methodologies, as part of a mixed-method approach. Simple random sampling procedures were also used in which each unit of the sample was picked completely by chance to recruit individuals for filling out the questionnaires (Bryman, 2012). The study included 219 participants, 7 district education officials (DEO), 36 heads of secondary schools, 80 teachers, 60 members of the student council, and 36 members of the school board. Simple random selection procedures were utilized in this study to eliminate bias by ensuring that all respondents from various schools had an equal probability of being chosen and participating in the study. Also, 36 secondary school heads, 7 District Education Officers (DEO), 5 members of the student's council, 36 academic deans, and 3 members of the school board from 36 secondary schools were among the respondents who were purposely selected for interview in this study. Purposive sampling methods were used to obtain a sample that could reasonably be considered to represent the population with a sufficient knowledge of the challenges that impede effective secondary school curriculum implementation. Data were collected using closed-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interview schedules. In data

analysis procedures the descriptive statistics were employed for quantitative data, and thematic data analysis was performed for qualitative data.

## Results

Several concerns were raised from study areas in which respondents expressed their opinions by filling out questionnaires, while others expressed their opinions orally during interviews. The following is a summary of the respondent's views on the problems that hinder effective teaching, learning and assessment in community-based secondary schools in Tabora region.

### Poor teaching and learning environment in schools

This section summarizes the respondents' views on how poor teaching and learning environments impede successful teaching, learning and assessment. The table below gives a general overview of what the respondents had to express.

**Table 1: Poor teaching and learning environment in schools**

Opinions	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Disagree	11	5
Strongly disagree	13	6
Agree	71	32.4
Strongly agree	121	55.2
Undecided	3	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field data, 2021

According to the results shown in table 1, the majority of the respondents (55.2%) agree strongly that poor teaching and learning environments impede effective teaching, learning and assessment in schools. Apart from that, respondents in the interviews provided a great deal of information regarding how poor teaching and learning settings obstruct effective teaching, learning and assessment. The following are the testimony of many respondents. ".....in a classroom with more than seventy pupils, a teacher can't assist each student individually during the teaching process. Furthermore, it is hard to assess each student while teaching, therefore the majority of students will lag behind, while only fast learners will be able to follow the teacher's instructions." (Interview with a head of a school, 2021).

Another respondent added: "..... overcrowding, in my opinion and that of my colleagues in the classroom, is one of the most serious problems that impedes our classroom operations. A large number of students in the classroom make it difficult to apply recommended interactive teaching methods. .... (Interview with a teacher, 2021)." Additional another respondent who was a student said this: "..... as a student, I am dissatisfied with my school; classrooms are so crowded that contact between students and even students and teachers has become difficult." (Interview with a student, 2021). In general, it appears that most educational stakeholders believe that the lack of a quality environment for teaching and learning in schools is one of the central concerns that impedes successful teaching and learning in schools, based on the findings presented above.



### A problem with medium of instructions

This section covers the respondents' views on how instruction language in secondary schools affects teaching, learning and evaluation in schools. The table below provides a detailed description of the opinions expressed by the respondents.

**Table 2: A problem of medium of instructions**

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Frequency (N)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Disagree	14	6.1
Strongly disagree	10	4.6
Agree	58	26.5
Strongly agree	131	60
Undecided	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field data, 2021*

The majority of respondents (60 percent) strongly agree that the language of instruction utilized in secondary schools hinders effective teaching and learning, according to the results provided in Table 2. On the other hand, the interviews explain why secondary school instruction language is a problem. This is what one of the respondents had to say: “..... our children are taught and learn in Swahili from elementary school onwards, except for English, but when they enter secondary school, the language of interactions with most subjects, except for Kiswahili, abrupt changes, and thus, in my opinion, is a critical challenge.” (Interview with a parent, 2021). Another respondent added: “.....students at our secondary school are not familiar with the English language, making it impossible for them to learn well while struggling to comprehend a language that they do not use in their everyday lives.” (Interview with a teacher, 2021).

According to the above-mentioned data, the majority of respondents thought that the medium of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools is one of the major problems that contribute to ineffective teaching and learning in secondary schools.

### Poor parental engagement in children's education

This section presents the responses from the respondents on to what extent parents are involved in their children's education. The table below has further information about what they said.

**Table 3: Poor parental engagement in children's education**

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Frequency (N)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Disagree	9	4.1
Strongly disagree	12	5.5
Agree	61	28.7
Strongly agree	135	61.6
Undecided	2	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field data, 2021*

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents (61.6%) strongly agreed that secondary heads of schools do not highly involve parents in the planning and supervision of their children's learning. In addition, some of the interviewees explain how less parental involvement in their children's education affects teaching and learning in schools. This is what one of the respondents had to say: “..... Parents in our school are not greatly involved in planning for student teaching and learning, which, in my opinion, is an issue because parents have a minor role in motivating children to study at school and home.”(Interview with a teacher, 2021). Another respondent added this “..... the greater the involvement of parents in their child's schooling, the higher the motivation, attitude and grades in the entire class. Encouragement of parental involvement is more than a matter of respect. It's one of the most successful strategies to establish a happy learning environment for all students, but in our environment, most school leaders ignore the significance of parents in children's education.” (Interview with a District Education Officer 2021). Based on the findings above, indicates that the majority of respondents believe that parents are not yet fully active in their children's education. As a result, students in secondary schools have less interest in learning.

### **The problem of teacher shortage**

This section summarizes the respondents' views on to what extent teacher shortage affects effective teaching, learning and assessment in schools. More information on what respondents said is seen in the table below.

**Table 4: The problem of shortage of teachers**

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Frequency (N)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Disagree	4	1.8
Strongly disagree	17	7.7
Agree	41	18.7
Strongly agree	151	68.9
Undecided	6	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field data, 2021*

According to the findings in Table 4, many respondents (68.9) strongly agreed that a teacher shortage hinders effective teaching, learning and assessment in schools. On the other hand, most respondents admitted that a teacher shortage has a negative effect on how teaching, learning and assessment are conducted in schools. For example, one participant explained that there are major consequences to the teacher shortage. The ability of students to learn is endangered by a shortage of teachers. Consequently, a teacher shortage has a negative impact on student success as well as teacher effectiveness and quality (Interview with a teacher, 2021). In addition to that another interviewee said that the success of a school in terms of teaching and learning is determined by the number of the teachers present. For example, most of our newly community-based secondary schools have a very low number of teachers in comparison to the number of students, which implies that effective teaching and learning cannot be realized (Interview with a head of a school 2021).

According to the findings reported above, the majority of respondents recognized that a teacher shortage is one of the key factors impeding effective teaching and learning in most community-based secondary schools.

### Poor managerial skills among school leaders

This section summarizes the findings on the extent to which poor managerial skills among school leaders hinder effective teaching, learning and assessment in schools. The detailed information about the respondent's opinions is contained in the table below.

**Table 5: Poor managerial skills among school leaders**

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Frequency (N)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Disagree	6	2.7
Strongly disagree	19	8.6
Agree	31	14.6
Strongly agree	154	70.3
Undecided	9	4.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field data, 2021*

According to table 5, the majority of those who filled out the questionnaires (70.3 percent) believed that a lack of proper managerial skills among secondary school heads has an impact on successful teaching, learning and assessment in schools. However, data from interviews revealed that the majority of respondents cited poor managerial skills among school leaders as one of the reasons affecting teaching and learning, as one respondent said "...our present school leaders are not democratic or cooperative in the least, and they completely neglect, parents and the school community when it comes to planning for children's education. Furthermore, students are rarely involved in selecting what to do with classroom teaching and learning." (Interview with a teacher, 2021). Moreover, this is what another interviewee had to said "... according to my knowledge, most heads of school in our community-based schools are incompetent at managing education instruction because they frequently make significant curricular decisions without consulting students and parents, resulting in ineffective teaching and learning." (Interview with a parent, 2021). According to the findings, the majority of respondents saw poor managerial skills among heads of schools as a factor that contributes to inefficient teaching and learning since they frequently neglect significant stakeholders in the decision-making process.

### The lack of in-service training among teachers

This section summarizes the results of the effect of teachers' lack of in-service training on effective teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom. The table below displays the respondent's opinions in further depth.

**Table 6: The lack of in-service training among teachers**

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Frequency (N)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Disagree	12	5.4
Strongly disagree	31	14.1
Agree	43	19.6
Strongly agree	129	58.9
Undecided	4	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field data, 2021

According to Table 6, the majority of respondents (58.9%) strongly agreed that teachers' lack of in-service training is another factor that impedes effective teaching, learning and assessment in schools. Furthermore, the results of the interviews suggest that the majority of respondents consider a lack of in-service training for teachers to be a significant barrier impeding teaching and learning in schools, as one interviewee said that in-service training must be effective for teachers to utilize what they've learned to improve their daily teaching and learning practices. On a contrary, if it isn't there, the curriculum's implementation must be problematic, as it is in our community-based secondary schools (Interview with a District Education Officer, 2021). Another respondent added that for the past ten years, I have not received any in-service training in teaching pedagogy, and as a result, I continue to employ older teaching and learning methods that are in some way incompatible with today's teaching and learning environment (Interview with a teacher, 2021). As per the findings, the majority of respondents believed that a lack of frequent in-service training for teachers is one of the major factors impeding effective teaching and assessment in schools.

## **Discussion**

The main factors that impede effective teaching, learning and assessment in most community-based secondary schools in Tanzania, according to this study, are poor teaching and learning environments in schools, a problem with the medium of instruction, poor parental engagement in children's education, a teacher shortage, poor managerial skills among school leaders, and a lack of in-service training among teachers.

In this study inefficient teaching and learning in schools have been linked to a poor teaching and learning environment because most classrooms are so congested that teacher-student interaction is impossible. Teachers are also unable to use the most commonly recommended interactive teaching techniques. According to research by Cosmas et al., (2011), a lot of public schools lack libraries and textbooks are in limited supply to the point that one book can be shared by 25 students. This leaves the teacher the sole source of information. This might result in producing students of limited scope. Also, the finding of this study corroborates with Komba and Mwandanji (2015) who found that lacking teaching and learning equipment and having classrooms with overcrowded students impede effective teaching, learning and assessment in most the wards secondary schools in the Tabora region.

According to this study, the difficulty with a medium of instruction is a factor that impedes teaching, learning and assessment in schools. According to Thompson (2021), the abrupt change in the medium of instruction from Kiswahili in primary schools to English in secondary schools has a significant impact on students' performance. They struggle with English as a language while also struggling with differing subject content in secondary schools. As Galabawa et al., (2000) points out, language has the potential to be both a highly versatile medium of information communication and a constraint on mental processes. As a result, incompetence in the English language among secondary students has been identified as a barrier to successful teaching, learning and evaluation in secondary schools.

This study also found one of the factors that impede successful teaching and learning in schools is a lack of parental involvement in their children's education. Most school leaders were found to be inadequate in abilities and approaches for involving parents in their children's education. According to a study by Boniface (2014), children's literacy improves when their parents are interested in their children's education, thus, promoting greater

parental involvement in their children's education led in more effective teaching and learning in schools, as well as excellent student achievement on major exams. In addition, Patrick and Omulando (2012) found that one of the factors contributing to inadequate teaching and learning in Kenyan public secondary schools is a lack of effective parental involvement in school activities.

The other factor shown to obstruct effective teaching, learning and assessment in schools is a teacher shortage. This confirms what Renucci (2009) observed. In most secondary schools in Tanzania, the number of teachers per subject is alarmingly low, making proper teaching impossible. Science, mathematics, geography and business subjects have an extreme scarcity of teachers. Furthermore, because the government does not have the funds to employ enough new teachers, most teachers have been relocated to new schools. As a result, most community-based secondary schools have only one or two teachers to supervise 45-80 students. According to Cosmas and Venearanda (2011), one of the strongest determinants of student achievement and engagement is the student-teacher ratio. The fewer students, a teacher has, the better able they are to adapt their teaching to individual learners. They can also form strong one-on-one mentoring relationships with students and provide advice and assistance in ways that would be impossible in a bigger classroom. Moreover, a lower ratio will reduce teacher's burden, allowing them to focus on the quality of their teaching and grading rather than the quantity.

Another factor that hindered effective teaching and learning in secondary schools was found to be poor managerial skills among school leaders. This finding supports the findings of Malabo and Immaculate (2018), who revealed that school leadership is not democratic in the sense that it is unable to collaborate with key stakeholders such as teachers, students and parents in planning for teaching and learning frequently fails to implement the intended curriculum. Additionally, according to Mihan (2000), school leadership that is unable to build strong cooperation and solidarity with parents and the local community is unable to obtain sufficient material and financial support from various school stakeholders for the benefit of the school, resulting in less effective teaching and learning. This finding supports the findings of Pendo (2017), who found that a lack of good leadership, vision contributes to poor teaching and learning in schools. Thus the study recommended that newly appointed heads of schools should receive intensive leadership training and professional development in all aspects of school management to ensure effective teaching, learning, and assessment.

A further element that affects successful teaching and learning in schools, according to this study, is a lack of in-service training among teachers. This finding is consistent with the findings of Ozigi (2018), who reported that a lack of in-service training among teachers demotivated them to work to some level since they felt disrespectful and even undervalued, affecting their willingness to participate in classroom practices. On the other hand, Vaileth (2019) found that teachers continue to use outdated teaching methods that are incompatible with modern classroom conditions due to a lack of frequent in-service training. In a similar vein, Phillips and Chokolo (2017) found that teachers with minimal in-service training had weak understanding and abilities on how to enable teaching and learning in the current era of science and technology when teaching and learning are heavily reliant on computer technology.

## **Conclusions**

Effective teaching and learning and good academic performance in community-based secondary schools in Tanzania is still wanting. Unless the observed challenges of poor



teaching-learning environments, a problem of medium of instruction, poor parental engagement in children's education, shortage of teachers, poor managerial skills among school leaders and a lack of in-service training among teachers are solved, community-based secondary schools are likely to continue faring poorly.

### **Recommendation**

The study emphasizes and recommends that the government should increase number of teachers, revise the policy governing medium of instructions in schools, improve the teaching and learning environment as well as infrastructures, schools should fully engage parents in decision making, improve training on in-service teachers and school heads should be empowered with pedagogical leadership skills to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment in the community-based secondary schools in Tabora region in Tanzania.

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