# Challenges in Implementation of Alternative Assessment Among Public Secondary School Teachers in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania

**Kassim Peter Mlawa, PhD[1], Evaristo Andreas Mtitu, PhD[2]**

[1,2] Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Open University of Tanzania
[1]Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5685-5900
[2]Orcid: https://orcid.org://orcid.org/0000-0002-5251-5124

**ABSTRACT:** This study examined the challenges in implementation of Alternative Assessment (AA) among public secondary schools teachers in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania. The study used case study research design and the sample of population involved were 47 which included secondary school students (27), teachers (15) education officers (2) and head of schools (3) from Iringa Municipality. The sampled population of study was selected through simple random sampling for students and teachers while purposive sampling was used for education officers. The study used qualitative approach. The data collection methods which were used are interview, Focus Group Discussion and observation. The study showed that there are three (03) main challenges which were encountered in implementation of AA in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania which are shortage of time, limited knowledge of teachers about AA and shortage of teaching and learning resources. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the government through the Ministry of Education and Vocation Training (MOEVT) should develop a relevant curriculum which is implementable in order to avoid other education objectives not to be reached and the government should increase enough fund to the MOEVT in order to have more teaching and learning resources which embraces the AA requirements.

**Corresponding Author:**
**Kassim Peter Mlawa**

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Alternative Assessment, Teaching and Learning Environments, Public Secondary Schools, Students, Teachers, Iringa Municipality, Challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

Mosha (2012) notes that a competence based curriculum which embraces AA seeks to develop in learners the ability to know, to learn and learn how to learn, to do things, to learn and work with other people. Same to Rutayuga (2010) comments that Alternative Assessment requires a shift from assessing set of learning contents to assessing each learning outcome. Komba and Mwandanji (2015) observed that teaching and learning strategies are featured by the inquiry that focuses on real life phenomena in classroom, outdoor and laboratory activities through which students are given to investigate, and construct their own truths. Teachers assess their students extensively through ongoing performance based, formative assessment and performance tasks are used which require the students to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Generally, Alternative Assessment develops when learners engage in practical activities. In a Alternative Assessment, teaching and learning is required that students engage in various practical experience (in and outside the classroom) that give opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems. Alternative Assessment is a way to measure a competency for a vocational skill, to prove their competence; the learner must demonstrate an ability to work (Brislow and Patrick,2014).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically Alternative Assessment was started early 1970s when competence based emerged for the first time in the United States of America (Richard & Rogers, 2001).Thereafter, the movement spread into European countries such as the United Kingdom and Germany in the 1980s (Wolf, 2001). Similarly, Komba and Mwandanji (2015) Australia adopted the competence based curriculum which uses Alternative Assessment in 1990s.Other countries adopted competence based curriculum due to globalization for instance in South Africa, Alternative Assessment was introduced in 1998s.

In United States of America, the history of Alternative Assessment programs in higher education is distinguished by three overall phases: (a) innovative teacher education programs in the 1960s and beyond; (b) vocational education programs in the 1970s and beyond; and (c) more recent programs over the last decade and a half, particularly those taking advantage of online or hybrid models,

advances in adaptive learning technology, or direct assessment. The initiation of AA per se has been traced to 1968 in US higher education, when 10 colleges and universities were funded by the US Office of Education to develop training programs for elementary school teachers (Tuxworth, 1994;Klein- Collins, 2012;Ford, 2014). This pilot program, which represent the first phase of competency- based models in higher education, were part of broader efforts to reform teacher education in the 1960s, specifically to improve teacher preparation and the accountability of teacher education programs. These pilot AA programs initiated the first widespread use of the word "competency" in association with learning and teaching (Ford, 2014). In addition, several key characteristics associated with current AA programs were prevalent in these training programs, including the specification of competences to be learned (including what a learner should be able to do), the modularization of instruction, the use of evaluation and feedback, and the personalization of instruction ( Tuxworth, 1994;Ford, 2014, p. 110).

In Netherlands, the traditional qualification structure upon which all educational programmes were based have changed into a competence-based qualification framework. The Dutch Department of Education, Culture and Science requires all institutions to use competence-based qualification profiles as starting points for their curricula by 2011. The switch to this competence-based qualification framework was motivated by various factors, including the over-abundance of qualifications (over 700) and the inability of vocational education to respond quickly enough to changes in the labour market (Eurydice, 2006). Furthermore, innovations in the emergence of competence-based education were expected to better link educational programmes to job requirements and to close the gap that exists between the labour market and education (Tillema et al.,2000;Biemamans et al., 2004).

In China, a research conducted by Jin and Li (2011) aimed to examine curriculum reform in China from 2001 to 2008. Their key finding was that the curriculum was post-modernised in intent and action, implying it was learner-cantered. However, teachers were not seen to be crucial to the intent and action of the curriculum. In addition to these empirical findings, another study was undertaken in China by Wang (2010). it examined the translation of policies into practice and focused especially on the role of middle-level administrators in language curriculum implementation. The findings highlighted the critical role that the departmental heads as middle-level administrators played in translating policy into practice, as well as underscored the need for them to provide the necessary motivation and resources for such implementation to occur.

In Japan, launched a major curriculum reform the following year, in 1998. Keita Takayama saw the reform as a competence-based curriculum (2013) in line with the OECD's vision, and certainly the OECD described it favourably (OECD, 2012). However, it is difficult to know exactly how the reform concepts translate into French or English. Japan promoted the reform under the slogan (ikiruchikara) "zest for living", referring to the hope that it would encourage an eagerness to learn. A new section of the curriculum, called "Integrated Study", aimed to "foster children's ability and quality to find a theme, think, judge and solve a problem on their own; and enable children to think about their own life, urging them to explore subjects with creativity"(OECD, 2012: 188), goals that faintly echo the OECD's key competencies. However, sensitivity to PISA results and national testing introduced in 2007 narrowed the original focus to formal schooling (Takayama, 2013).

In Africa soon after, in 1997, South Africa launched a curriculum reform that was labelled "outcomes based education" but which, as mentioned above, some analysts interpreted as a competence-based approach (Chisholm &Leyendecker, 2008; Malcolm, 1999). In the same spirit, South Africa cast its new curriculum as a complete rupture from the former system and its pedagogy (Jansen, 1999), linking closely with learner-cantered instruction and constructivist approaches to learning newly emerging from apartheid, a decade after its introduction the reform was widely contested within the country even while South Africa was exporting it to other countries in the region (Chisolm, 2007), and outcomes-based curriculum was officially abandoned in 2010 (Chisolm, 2015: 411).

In Ghana, the study conducted by Acquah et al., (2017) who sought to establish the challenges facing the implementation of Competency Based Training Programs (CBT) in training institutions. The study reported that implementation of the AA approaches had contributed immensely to the training of highly skilled graduates needed in the industry. Further, the study highlighted that in spite of the realized positive outcomes, the curriculum had not been effectively implemented in some of the training institutions due to inadequate funding of the institutions, lack of infrastructure development and lack of policy guidelines in the institutions.

In Kenya, a study by Branyon (2013)   sought to understand how teachers enacted the common curriculum and identified what influences affected their beliefs and decisions regarding their enactment. The findings indicated that although the schools used a common curriculum, the results achieved showed marked differences in the students' learning experiences. The study suggested that teachers need to adjust their approach in order to improve student performance.

In Tanzania, AA was presented in 2005 following curriculum review process. The revised curriculum was characterized by the following; first it emphasized competence development than acquisition of content knowledge (MoEC, 2005).Second, the curriculum emphasized the use of learner centred activities based pedagogy during teaching and learning processes. The pedagogy should direct the use of participatory teaching and learning strategies as much as possible to help learners demonstrate self-esteem, confidence and assertiveness (MoEC, 2005).Third emphasized the use of formative assessment focused on target competencies. According to Kitta and Tillya (2010). The revised curriculum emphasized teachers to assess student achievement frequently using AA methods focusing on set of knowledge, skills and attitude.

Among of the studies conducted have investigated the different issues on competence based curriculum but have not emphasized on practical experience. Kafyulilo et al., (2013) conducted a study on implementation of competence based teaching approaches in

Tanzania, noted that pre service teacher needed a kind of practice with a competence based approach. Also, studies conducted by Wangeleja (2010) reveals that teaching of competence based curriculum required teachers to understand both content and pedagogy. Moreover, a study done by Haki Elimu (2012) reveals that the trends of students' poor performance in the certificate of secondary education examination (CSEE) in Tanzania relate with the poor conceptualization of the implementation of the education curriculum.

Recent studies on teachers' classroom practices in implementing the revised competence-based curriculum in secondary schools (Banda, 2011; Timothy, 2011, TIE, 2011) shows that majority of secondary school teachers are not implementing the revised competence-based curriculum which uses AA. This is because teachers have narrow understanding of competence-based curriculum. Thus, they have continued to teach and assess using the traditional teaching and assessment methods. This denied adaptation of new skills and knowledge of the real life according to the surrounding environment. This proposal therefore, aims to address the implementation of competence based on practical experience in and out of the classroom as it will help stakeholders to know if AA is practically or not practically practiced.

**THEORETICAL REVIEW**
This section aimed to provide theoretical views which underpin the use and implementation of AA in classroom. Researchers and educators draw on relevant theories to validate the actions they take and practice in the classrooms. In this case, they equate AA with constructivist theory which considers learners as the central focus of classroom practices. This study was guided by constructivist theory of learning specifically, citing the work of Dewey (1933) ; Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1936).

**Constructivist Theory of Learning**
The foundation of constructivist theory comes from the work of Dewey (1933), Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1936) (Bond, 2006). It challenges the behaviorist assumptions about how students learn and advocates for alternative approaches to learning (Shepard, 2000). Jonassen (1991),as cited in Ruschoff and Ritter (2001) suggests that constructivist learning theory is based on the view that learning is an active, creative and socially interactive process, and knowledge is perceived as something learners must construct rather than being something that can be transferred.

AA is based on a constructivist view of learning where by the student, the text and the context impact learning outcome (Wiggins, 1993). Constructivism means student construct their knowledge by connecting present knowledge with existing or previsions knowledge. Constructivist theory emphasizes the students' role in the learning process (Brunner, 1986). A constructivist approach to learning and instruction has been proposed as an alternative to the objectivist model, which is implicit in all behaviorist and some cognitive approaches to education (Charles, 2012).

Constructivists believe that prior knowledge impacts the learning process. In trying to solve different problems, perceptual similarities between existing knowledge and a new problem can remind people of what they already know. This is often one's first approach towards solving different problems. Information not connected with a learner's prior experiences will be quickly forgotten. In short, the learner must actively construct new information into his or her existing mental framework for meaningful learning to occur (Banda, 2011).

Assessment of student learning is of two types: formative and summative. Formative assessment occurs during learning and provides feedback to the student. It includes evaluations of ongoing portfolios, and demonstrations of work in progress. Student collaboration also provides a form of formative assessment (Kitta & Fussy, 2013). The teacher's role in a constructivist classroom is not so much to lecture at students but to act as an expert learner who can guide students into adopting cognitive strategies such as self-testing, articulating understanding, asking probing questions, and reflection. The role of the teacher in constructivist classrooms is to organize information around big ideas that engage the students' interest, to assist students in developing new insights, and to connect them with their previous learning. The activities are student-centered, and students are encouraged to ask their own questions, carry out their own experiments, make their own analogies, and come to their own conclusions (Brooks and Brooks, 1993 ).

The constructivist approach to teaching and learning is based on a combination of a subset of research within cognitive psychology and a subset of research within social psychology (Huitt, 2003). The theory of constructivist learning is vital to understanding how students learn. The idea that students actively construct knowledge is central to constructivism. Students add (or build) their new experiences on top of their current foundation of understanding (Gogus, 2012 ).

It is not enough to simply know the theory of constructivist learning. Educators must also know how to implement it in their classrooms. Their goal is to create a welcoming environment that promotes active engagement in learning. In the theory of constructivist learning, instructors act as facilitators. They must promote collaboration and adjust their lessons based on the prior level of understanding of the class. Once they identify students' existing knowledge, instructors must work to grow the understanding in those areas (Shemwelekwa,2008).

**Piaget Constructivist Theory**
Jean Piaget was a Swiss Biologist, philosopher, and behavioral scientist who developed one of the most significant theories in cognitive psychology (Lutz  and Huitt, 2004). Lutz and Huitt (2004) further add that, Piaget theory advocates that, individuals are

born with reflexes that allow them to interact with the environment and these reflexes are quickly replaced by constructed mental schemes or structures that allow them to interact with and adapt to the environment.

Piaget's theory of constructivism addresses how learning actually occurs, not focusing on what influences learning. The role of teachers is very important. Instead of giving a lecture the teachers in this theory function as facilitators whose role is to aid the student when it comes to their own understanding. This takes away focus from the teacher and lecture and puts it upon the student and their learning. The resources and lesson plans that must be initiated for this learning theory take a very different approach toward traditional learning as well. Instead of telling, the teacher must begin asking.

Instead of answering questions that only align with their curriculum, the facilitator in this case must make it so that the student comes to the conclusions on their own instead of being told. Also, teachers are continually in conversation with the students, creating the learning experience that is open to new directions depending upon the needs of the student as the learning progresses. Teachers following Piaget's theory of constructivism must challenge the student by making them effective critical thinkers and not being merely a "teacher" but also a mentor, a consultant, and a coach (Piaget,1971).

Some strategies for teacher include using different varieties of AA methods and procedures, having students working together and aiding to answer one another's questions. Another strategy includes designating one student as the "expert" on a subject and having them teach the class. Finally, allowing students to work in groups or pairs and research controversial topics which they must then present to the class.

### Vygotsky's Constructivist Theory

Levy Vygotsky a Russian psychologist and sociologists who was born in 1896 in Russia to a middle class of Jewish family. Vygotsky's socio cultural theory of human learning describes learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture. The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky believed everything is learned on two levels. First, through interaction with others, and then integrated into the individual's mental structure. A second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development is limited to a "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). This "zone" is the area of exploration for which the student is cognitively prepared, but requires help and social interaction to fully develop (Briner, 1999).

ZPD is an expression which Vygotsky used when he was trying to explain cognitive development. According to this outlook cognitive development is not a spontaneous process but occurs with the child's interaction with the physical world. It happens when children are embedded in social context, surrounded by people of greater expertise willing to share their knowledge with the child. The concept of the More Knowledgeable, other is integrally related to the second important principle of Vygotsky's work, the Zone of Proximal Development. This is an important concept that relates to the difference between what a child can achieve independently and what a child can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner.

For example, the child could not solve the jigsaw puzzle (in the example above) by itself and would have taken a long time to do so (if at all), but was able to solve it following interaction with the father, and has developed competence at this skill that will be applied to future jigsaws. Vygotsky (1978) sees the Zone of Proximal Development as the area where the most sensitive instruction or guidance should be given - allowing the child to develop skills they will then use on their own - developing higher mental functions. A teacher or more experienced peer is able to provide the learner with "scaffolding" to support the student's evolving understanding of knowledge domains or development of complex skills. Collaborative learning, discourse, modelling, and scaffolding are strategies for supporting the intellectual knowledge and skills of learners and facilitating intentional learning.

### Dewey's Constructivist Theory

John Dewey was an American Psychologist and Philosopher who promoted the value of personal experience in learning. Dewey (1944) proposed that, a primary function of schooling was to prepare young people to live a democratic society and that one's reflection on personal experiences would provide the foundation for the development of the necessary attributes for successful living (Luiz and Huitt, 2004).

Luiz and Huitt further add that, Dewey's thoughts on education, originally published in his 1938 work *Experience and Education,* analyzed both traditional and progressive education. Traditional education's focus was more on curriculum and heritage, defining a student's learning path for them; a progressive education focused on the student's interest rather than that of the instructor or subject. In Dewey's opinion, neither of these schools of thought was sufficient. Dewey believed that traditional education was too strict and progressive education too spontaneous. He believed that traditional education left little regard for the learner's interests and progressive education was too individualized.

According to Dewey, powerful educational experiences are a result of two fundamental principles: continuity and interaction. Continuity refers to how experiences, both past and present, influence the future while interaction refers to how one's current situation influences their experiences. Dewey combined these two principles, stating that one's present experiences are a direct result of how their previous experiences interact with and influence their present situation.

Simply put, Dewey stated that human experiences- past, present, and future- influence the capacity to learn. He once said that: 'Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is, not a preparation for life; education is life itself. Dewey challenged educators to begin providing learners with experiences that resulted in growth and learning, believing that these experiences would someday result in growth and creativity in learners' future experiences. In other words, a good experience now would impact future decisions and experiences. This is what Dewey called the continuity of experience.

**Implication of Dewey's, Piaget's and Vygotsky's Constructivist Theories in Education**

Schunk (2000) advocates that, the work of Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky present a powerful case that human being seek meaningful interactions with the environment and construct knowledge of themselves and the world around them through these interactions. Collectively, these theorists provide the foundation for an approach to learning called constructivism. Furthermore, Moshman (1982) pointed out three competing forms of constructivism; firstly, Exogenous by Vygotsky (1978) who proposed that, the individual first adopts social and cultural artifacts and then adapts these to his own knowledge structures; secondly Endogenous view point which are more influenced by Piaget (2001) who proposes that knowledge structures come first and guide one's interaction with the environment; thirdly, Dialectical position which purports that both correct and incorrect, knowledge and cognitive processing competencies derive from the interaction of the individual and environment as proposed by Dewey (1944).

Learners are actively engaged in constructing their meaning from their learning experiences; active making sense of new knowledge and deciding how to integrate it with previously learned concepts and information (Weimer, 2002). In this case, learners are able to achieve deep learning as the teacher provides contexts and opportunities within their assessment practice for students to be flexible in their learning strategies and to take responsibility for their learning. Supporting this view, Van Hattum-Janssen and Pimenta (2006) assert that learners are in charge of their learning because they are capable of constructing their own knowledge and understandings from multiple world views.

The responsibility of students' learning no longer lies in the hands of the teacher, but in large part within the learners themselves. Thus, when learners are enabled to be responsible for their own learning it means a change in the role of the teachers and learners in many factors that have influence on the learning process such as curriculum design, material used and assessment of students. Herman *et al.,* (1992) as cited in Bond (2006) claims that a constructivist approach to learn supports the need to integrate AA methodologies with instructional processes and curriculum content. Shepard (2000) argues that to be consistent with social constructivist pedagogy, AA must be used to reflect recent understanding about how students learn. Teachers need to re-conceptualize their understanding and knowledge of assessment, moving from assessment for record keeping to assessment for the improvement of students' learning. He also claims that it is essential that classroom assessment be congruent with important learning goals.

Rueda and Garcia (1996) note that this shift towards constructivism is reflected in the application of AA forms such as performance-based assessments, portfolios, and other means designed for better indication of performance in a more authentic context. Shepard (2000) adds that the aim of assessment in the classrooms must be changed fundamentally so that it is used to assist learners to learn and to improve teaching instead of being used only to rank learners or certify the end products of learning. Mosha (2000) suggests that, regular student's AA provides useful information that can be used to judge student's learning progress and give teachers opportunity to take remedial actions so as to improve performance. Principles of classroom assessment require the expectations and intermediate steps for improvement to be made visible to students and that students should be involved in the assessment process. Based on the preceding discussion, it is evident that teachers should move from teacher- centered assessment practices that exclude learners to participation which uses AA process. Classrooms should be changed in a manner that improves learners' performance and helps attainment of learning goals (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013). This means that AA strategies should be utilized in order to encourage intellectual independence and acquisition of higher order thinking skills. Therefore, this study intended to find out how teachers implement AA in their classrooms. Questions asked: are they integrating assessment in their classroom as advocated by constructivist theory?; how do they view their learners?; are learners active or passive?; are learners involved in assessment process as the theory advocates?; what types of assessment methods are used by teachers?; And whether or not the types of assessment promote knowledge construction or memorization of knowledge as the theorists above suggest.

There is a need for ongoing training to help teachers understand and implement AA. Understanding and implementing the new curriculum depends on personal and professional change. The main purpose of AA is to improve student learning and motivation to learn (Gronlund, 2006). In this regard Gronlund suggests that a sound classroom assessment requires a clear conception of all intended learning outcomes of instructions and a variety of assessment procedures that are relevant to the instruction, adequately sample student performance and fair to everyone.

In addition, according to Gronlund (2006), a sound assessment requires specification of criteria for judging successful performance and timely and detailed feedback to students emphasizing strength of their performance and weaknesses to be corrected. Teachers are required to develop classroom assessment that align with practices recommended by experts of educational measurement and

assessment. For example education measurement and assessment experts have recommended that students should clearly be informed about grading procedures in advance and involve in the assessment process (Stiggins and Chapuis, 2005).

Also students should be given continuous and formative assessment feedback, rather than judgmental feedback about their academic performance (Brookhart, 1994).

Gomez (1999) in Afrianto (2017) explains that, there are several aspects that teachers should be prepared for the professional training; teachers should first be made aware of the benefits of assessment portifolios so that they become convinced that it is an attractive to their current testing system, especially because alternative assessment requires more work initially than standardized tests.

Well-trained skillful professional teachers are obviously required to make alternative assessment work well in the field. This will be an aid to insufficient government budget allocated for national education despite of the educational problems relating to lacking budget like poor paid of teachers' salaries, insufficient school facilities and unavailability of advanced teaching and learning aids which are still unsolved (Afrianto, 2017). Moreover, teachers are encouraged to use more than one assessment method in order to have enough, accurate evidence of student learning and it is emphasized that the assessment should match the learning target and provide a meaningful feedback to students (Nitko, 2001).

## METHODOLOGY
### Design and Approach
This study employed qualitative research approach because it involves the collection of wealth of narrative data and visual data in naturalistic setting and giving interaction between one person and another person. The qualitative approach helps a researcher to understand problems through observation. Qualitative approach further helps to collect data through participation of participant on open and flexible environment and share their feelings together.

### Population and Sampling
A sample size of 47 respondents will appear in the study. The participants will be obtained on three schools, two education officers, three head of schools and fifteen teachers will be obtained from three schools and twenty seven students will be obtained from three schools

### Methods of Data Collection
This study employed interview, Focus Group Discussion and observation. The interview method to collected data from two education officers, three headmasters or headmistress and fifteen teachers. Focus Group Discussion was used to students, nine students from form five of each school and participant observation was used to observe interaction on both teachers and participants. A researcher sat behind the class room to observe participants how they implement and practice competence based education.

### Data Analysis
Qualitative data will be analysed basing on the themes. Data collected will be interpreted to give meaning. In order to validate the accuracy of information, coding will be used for data analysis to understand the ideas

### Validity and Reliability
Validity was ensured through preparation of research instruments in a simple manner under the guidance of two research experts and was established using a technique known as respondent validation, this basically involved testing the initial results with the participants in order to see if the results still ring true. On the other hand reliability was ensured through recording the data in a table to provide an overall assessment of the data collection process and the updated assessment of the results, as they come. The use of the table for recording data provided the researcher with a chance to quickly interpret the results as per the record of every individual respondent and realize the progress of the research.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
### Shortage of time
Different challenges have been noted during the implementation of Alternative Assessment in Iringa Municipality. The researcher asked secondary school teachers from the schools visited to identify the challenges which face them during the teaching and learning process using AA approaches, the following were their voices:

> "Alternative Assessment implementation become difficult due to limited time allocated, for instance my subject has topics which need to be covered within a single academic year, if I use Competence Based Curriculum methods I will find that all listed topics in the syllabus are not completely finished"

(Interview with Civics teacher from school A, 27/05/2024).

"It is time consuming to use Alternative Assessment teaching techniques/methods like presentation and portifolio because because they demand a lot of time"
(Interview with Biology teacher from school B, 28/05/2024).

When the researcher asked the academic teacher from the visited schools to explain the challenges which are facing secondary schoolteachers during the implementation of Alternative Assessment, they had the following to say:

> "Of course Alternative Assessment need more time for its implementation, otherwise it will remain hypothetical. There are methods recommended as convenient Alternative Assessment learning approaches like projects and field work which require both teachers and students to go outside the classroom to learn, but this consume a lot of time"

(Interview with Academic teacher from school C, 29/05/2024).

The Focus Group Discussion with the secondary education officer from Iringa Municipality showed that teachers are facing a huge shortage of time during implementation of the
Alternative Assessment of their respective subjects they teach. The topics allocated in the syllabi are more compared to the time allocated if Alternative Assessment methods are to be used effectively. The following are the words from secondary education officer to reveal the truth of this statement:

> " It is impossible to use Alternative Assessment methods all the time if teachers are to complete all the topics on time, and this has been the reason for student failure because teachers who exactly use Alternative Assessment methods do not complete their topics on time compared to those who use both competence as well as content based methods"

(Focus Group Discussion with Secondary Education Officer from Iringa Municipality, 30/05/2024).
"….Overloaded syllabi is one of the challenges I think which causes the implementation of Alternative Assessment to be difficult"
(Interview with the Academic teacher from school B, 28/05/2024).

**Limited Knowledge**
Limited knowledge among the secondary school teachers have been mentioned by teaches as one of the challenges that cause the implementation of Alternative Assessment to be difficult. Teachers are less informed about Alternative Assessment and therefore application of Alternative Assessment methods become impossible. The interview, Focus Goup Discussion and Observation support this statement:

> "….Iam incompetent in using Alternative Assessment methods when teaching my students and therefore I do opt to use content based methods inorder to rescue the situation"

(Interview with Biology teacher from school A, 27/05/2024).

> "….Different Alternative Assessment methods and approaches are well known and very popular but the issue which come to me is the limited knowledge I have on how to use them"

(Interview with Physics teacher from school B, 28/05/2024).

> "….Alternative Assessment approach is good when I read the books and experience I got about it from the college but I cannot exactly apply it in real classroom setting during my teaching and learning process"

(Interview with Geography teacher from school A, 27/05/2024).
> "….There are some of the Alternative Assessment methods which I cannot apply in my teaching and learning process like projects, portfolios and field trips. Therefore I need more knowledge concerning these Alternative Assessment approaches"

(Interview with English teacher from school C, 29/05/2024).

The above statement is in line with the explanations provided by the head of school from school B via Focus Group Discussion as follows:

> "….The teachers in my schools are not confidently using Alternative Assessment methods and approaches during their teaching and learning for the reason that they don't understand well on how to apply them in classrooms"

(Focus Group Discussion with head of school from school B, 28/05/2024).

**Shortage of Teaching and Learning resources**
Shortage of Teaching and Learning resources have been a big challenge facing secondary school teachers in their implementation of Alternative Assessment in Iringa Municipality. Most of the visited schools are facing overcrowded classrooms, shortage of teaching and learning facilities particularly the ICT tools. For the matter of evidence the following interviews with teachers, head of schools and secondary school education officer prove this statement:

> "….Imagine my class consists of more than sixty (60) students where others don't have even chairs and desks, now in that situation how can teaching and learning by using Alternative Assessment methods like group discussion and presentation be successful in the class like this? I think the answer is NO!"

(Interview with Basic Mathematics teacher from school A, 27/05/202).

"…..In today's time, science and technology has developed to a great extent. Teaching and learning of i Alternative Assessment s integrated with ICT technology but unfortunately enough my school don't have even a single computer except a tablet which I obtained from the government in the recent time. Therefore it becomes difficult to use tools like projectors, sound recorders etc which are highly recommended as Alternative Assessment teaching and learning Aids"
(Interview with Chemistry teacher from school B, 28/05/2023).

"…. This school has no books, for instance my subject has a ratio of one book to sixty     students (1:60), that is to say, a single book used by sixty students. In this circumstance teaching and learning using Alternative Assessment Approaches become so difficult"
(Interview with Biology teacher from school C, 29/05/2023).

"…. Most of teachers lack adequate training about Alternative Assessment and that is why they fail to implement its methods properly"
(Interview with Secondary School Education Officer From Iringa Municipality , 30/05/2023).

"…..We receive insufficient fund from the government, as you know that each and every school is enabled by the government after the removal of school fees popularly known as education without fees, therefore most of important requirements including teaching and learning facilities which support Alternative Assessment are missed unintentionally"
(Interview with Head of School from school C, 29/05/2023).


## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
### Conclusions
In the light of the findings of this research, it is fairly concluded that the implementation of AA should go hand in hand with preparations of suitable/conducive environments or requirements. Significant number of teachers declared that there are different challenges that face them during the implementation of AA in secondary schools like shortage of time, limited knowledge about AA and shortage of teaching and learning resources. Hence the government should invest significant efforts in order to make the implementation of AA successful in the country.

### Recommendations
In line with the research findings, the following recommendations are made:
Firstly, the government should provide significant support to education colleges and Universities which train secondary school teachers so that they can implement well the AA. Secondly, teaching and learning environment which support the use of AA approaches should well be prepared by the government and other education stakeholders so as to enable teachers implement AA successfully. Thirdly, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training should develop a relevant curriculum which is implementable in order to avoid other education objectives not to be reached due to limited time.

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