



## Educators' Awareness and Opinions on the Implementation of Competence-Based Assessment Methods in Tanzania

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**Abstract.** Over the past few decades, Tanzania has implemented significant educational reforms to shift from content-based to competence-based teaching and learning (CBTL) to equip learners with practical skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to real-life problem-solving. Central to these reforms is competence-based assessment (CBA), which emphasises the application of learning outcomes rather than memorisation. Despite strong policy commitment, evidence suggests that the implementation of CBA remains inconsistent across schools and higher learning institutions. This study explored educators' awareness of competence-based assessment methods, their opinions on their effectiveness, the challenges encountered during implementation, and strategies for improvement. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design involving questionnaires and focus group discussions with educators drawn from selected Tanzanian institutions implementing competence-based curricula. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings revealed that although most educators were aware of competence-based assessment principles and acknowledged their value in promoting real-life skills, creativity, and critical thinking, significant challenges hinder effective implementation. These challenges included limited in-service training, large class sizes, inadequate resources, and time constraints, lack of clear assessment guidelines, teacher resistance, and limited administrative support. The study concludes that awareness alone is insufficient to ensure effective implementation of competence-based assessment. Strengthening professional development, improving resource provision, enhancing leadership support, and aligning assessment practices with national policies are critical for realizing the goals of competence-based education in Tanzania.

**Keywords:** *Educators, Awareness, Opinions, Implementation, and Competence-Based Assessment*

### 1. Introduction and background

Over the past few decades, Tanzania's education system has undergone significant reforms emphasising competence-based teaching and learning (CBTL). These reforms emerged in response to concerns that the former content-based and examination-oriented

system was producing graduates who possessed theoretical knowledge but lacked practical skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities required in real-life situations and the labour market (Nkya et al., 2021; Paulo & Tilya, 2005).

The implementation of education reforms in Tanzania has been gradual and guided by major policy frameworks and sector development programmes. A critical milestone was the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995, which introduced a new vision for education focused on quality, access, equity, and relevance (URT, 1995, as cited in MoEVT, 2010). Although still largely content-based, this policy laid the foundation for later reforms by recognising the need for learner-centred approaches and skills-oriented education.

This vision was strengthened through the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) launched in the early 2000s, which coordinated reforms across pre-primary, primary, secondary, teacher education, and higher education (MoEVT, 2010; URT, 1996). Under ESDP, Tanzania revised curricula, introduced participatory and learner-centred pedagogies, and emphasised continuous assessment as part of teaching and learning processes.

The most significant reform towards CBTL occurred with the introduction of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in secondary education in 2005, followed by its expansion to primary education in 2015 (Juma et al., 2025; Makunja, 2015). These curriculum reforms shifted the focus from mere content coverage to the development of competencies such as critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration, and self-reliance (Juma et al., 2025; TIE, 2015). Teachers were expected to adopt interactive teaching strategies such as group discussions, project-based learning, inquiry learning, and problem-solving tasks. In turn, the teachers were not aware of how to implement the competence-based curriculum (Makunja, 2015).

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To examine educators' level of awareness of competence-based assessment methods.
2. To analyse educators' opinions regarding the implementation of competence-based assessment methods.
3. To identify challenges in the implementation of competence-based assessment methods.
4. To propose strategies for enhancing the effective implementation of competence-based assessment methods in Tanzania.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Education and Training Policy**

The revised Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 2014 explicitly emphasised competence development, lifelong learning, creativity, and employability skills, thereby reinforcing Tanzania's shift from content-based curricula to outcomes-based, learner-centred education (Kobol et al., 2024; Lupeja et al., 2021; MoEVT, 2014). In line with this policy direction, the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) undertook comprehensive curriculum reforms, redesigning syllabi to clearly specify intended learning competencies, measurable learning outcomes, learner-centred pedagogical approaches, and formative assessment strategies consistent with Competence-Based Teaching and Learning (CBTL) principles (Komba et al., 2015; TIE, 2013; TIE, 2019). However, empirical evidence indicates that translating these policy intentions into classroom practice has been uneven and largely ineffective (Mwasharifa et al., 2024). Studies reveal that limited dissemination of policy documents, inadequate teacher orientation, insufficient in-service training, and weak instructional supervision constrained teachers' understanding and enactment of CBTL methodologies (Hardman et al., 2012; Kitta &

Tilya, 2010; Ottevanger et al., 2013). As a result, many teachers continued to rely on traditional, teacher-centred practices despite the revised curricular frameworks. This disconnect between curriculum design and classroom implementation created a significant policy–practice gap, leading to unintended and suboptimal learning outcomes, particularly in relation to the development of practical competencies and higher-order thinking skills among learners (Nkya et al., 2021). Through reflections on the mentioned studies, it can be noted that there is a gap in research on competence-based assessment for educators. This study intended to reveal the competence-based assessment aspect to educators, which has not been directly investigated by the researchers.

## **2.2 Assessment Reforms by the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA)**

When competence-based curriculum reforms were introduced in Tanzania, the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) introduced continuous assessment (CA) components and competency-oriented test items in national examinations with the intention of shifting assessment practices away from rote memorisation towards the evaluation of learners' ability to apply knowledge, analyse information, solve problems, and demonstrate practical competencies (Komba et al., 2015; MoEVT, 2014; NECTA, 2014). This reform was designed to ensure that assessment practices were consistent with the principles of Competence-Based Teaching and Learning (CBTL), where learning outcomes emphasise skills, attitudes, and real-life application rather than factual recall alone. However, empirical studies indicate that NECTA's integration of competence-based assessment procedures has remained partial and largely superficial, with traditional examination formats continuing to dominate assessment practices (Kigwiru et al., 2022; Kitta & Tilya, 2010; Ottevanger et al., 2013). One of the major challenges in implementing continuous assessment has been inadequate teacher preparedness (Komba et al., 2015). Teachers, who are the primary implementers of assessment reforms, often lack clear guidance and sufficient professional training on the content, structure, weighting, and standardisation of continuous assessment tasks (Hardman et al., 2012; Kigwiru et al., 2022). Consequently, continuous assessment practices varied widely across schools and teachers, resulting in inconsistencies and significant discrepancies between continuous assessment scores and national examination results. These inconsistencies undermined the practicability, utilisation, validity, and reliability of continuous assessment as a meaningful measure of learner competence, thereby weakening its intended role in supporting competence-based education and authentic assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Kigwiru et al., 2022; Nkya, 2021). This study comes up with some practical reasons for the variation in assessment practices and systemic challenges, including the essentials of in-service training to educators.

## **2.3 Teacher Education Reforms**

Teacher education curricula were revised to prepare teachers to implement competence-based pedagogy and assessment, with increased emphasis on micro-teaching, extended practicum, reflective practice, and learner-centred instructional methodologies (Mwakyobwe et al., 2023). These reforms aimed to equip pre-service teachers with practical skills for facilitating active learning, continuous assessment, and the development of learners' competencies rather than rote memorisation (Kitta & Tilya, 2010; Makunja, 2016). The revised curricula also sought to align teacher preparation with national education reforms that promote competence-based education and training (CBET) across all levels of schooling (URT, 2015).

However, when newly trained teachers are employed in schools, they often encounter in-service teachers who were trained under content-based and examination-oriented pedagogical models and who may have limited awareness or understanding of the ongoing curriculum reforms. As a result, experienced teachers frequently exert professional and cultural influence on novice teachers, encouraging them—either explicitly or implicitly—to conform to traditional, teacher-centred instructional practices such as lecturing and note-giving. This school-based socialization process undermines the effective implementation of competence-based teaching and assessment, as novice teachers gradually abandon learner-centred approaches in order to fit into established school routines and expectations (Hardman et al., 2012; Makunja, 2016; Nkya et al., 2021). Consequently, the gap between teacher education reforms and classroom practice persists, limiting the transformative potential of competence-based education in schools.

#### **2.4 Curriculum Alignment with 21st-Century Skills**

Curricula now explicitly integrate transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication, ICT use, and entrepreneurship. This change is documented, yet teachers' awareness is still a dream because they do not clearly understand the 21st Century skills to be developed to the learners. Nonetheless, there are few teachers in schools where the enrolment of the learners is very high escalated by the free education policy (Juma et al., 2025).

Despite the efforts challenges still exist in the implementation of competence-based assessment in Tanzanian schools and higher learning institutions. This leads educators to continue relying on traditional, summative methods such as written examinations, which may not accurately measure learners' competencies (Deomeney & Kitula, 2025; Paulo & Tilya, 2005). Limited understanding of competence-based assessment methods, inadequate professional development, large class sizes, heavy teaching loads, and insufficient teaching and learning resources have constrained effective practice (Juma et al., 2025).

Consequently, although Tanzania has made significant policy and structural reforms towards competence-based education, a gap remains between policy intentions and classroom practices, particularly in assessment. This gap provides the foundation for the present study, which seeks to explore educators' awareness of competence-based assessment methods and their opinions on how effectively these methods can be implemented. Understanding educators' awareness and opinions is essential for strengthening assessment practices and ensuring that Tanzania's competence-based education reforms achieve their intended goals.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

This study is guided by two theories, namely: Constructivist Learning Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Constructivist Learning Theory informs the pedagogical foundation of competence-based assessment by emphasising active learning, real-life problem-solving, and authentic assessment practices (constructivist learning theory emphasises that learners actively construct knowledge through engagement and experience, which aligns with competence-based approaches) (Constructivist Learning Theory; ELM Learning, 2025; Growth Engineering, 2024). The Theory of Planned Behaviour explains educators' adoption of competence-based assessment by linking their awareness, attitudes, perceived institutional expectations, and perceived control over resources and skills to their actual assessment practices (in TPB, behavioural intentions are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, which in turn influence actions such as implementing instructional practices) (Ajzen, 1991; Theory of Planned Behaviour Summary, 2025).

Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding both the educational rationale for competence-based assessment and the factors influencing its implementation in Tanzanian institutions (Constructivist Learning Theory; ELM Learning, 2025).

## **4. Research design and methods**

### **4.1 Research design**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate educators' (secondary school and higher education teachers') awareness of competence-based assessment methods and their opinions on the effectiveness of their implementation. The choice of a mixed-methods design was informed by the nature of the research problem, which required both quantifiable evidence of awareness levels and an in-depth understanding of educators' perceptions and experiences (Almalki, 2024). Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches enabled the researchers to triangulate findings and enhance the validity and comprehensiveness of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kabanga & Mlollele, 2023).

### **4.2 Population and sampling procedures**

The study was conducted in selected educational institutions implementing competence-based curricula, involving a population of both teachers in secondary schools and lecturers in higher learning institutions. These institutions were purposively selected because they had formally adopted competence-based teaching and learning approaches, making them relevant contexts for examining competence-based assessment practices. The sample comprised sixty-two (62) educators drawn from these institutions.

To ensure adequate representation of different categories of educators, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. Educators were first grouped according to their working place (secondary school and higher education). From each stratum, participants were randomly selected. This procedure ensured that respondents are coming from the targeted areas thereby improving the representativeness of the sample and the credibility of the findings (Kabanga & Mlollele, 2023). Ultimately, thirty-two (32) educators participated in the quantitative phase of the study, while thirty (30) educators participated in the qualitative phase.

### **4.3 Data Collection**

Data collection process was conducted in two complementary phases. In the first phase, questionnaires were administered to 32 teachers to generate quantitative data on educators' awareness and opinions regarding competence-based assessment methods. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and Likert-scale items designed to capture levels of familiarity with competence-based assessment, frequency of use of various methods, and general attitudes towards their implementation. This instrument was chosen because it allows efficient collection of standardised data from a relatively large group and enables comparison of responses across participants (Ikram & Aziz, 2021). The questionnaires were distributed and collected in person, and all completed instruments were returned, yielding a 100% response rate.

In the second phase, qualitative data were collected through six (6) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Members were different to those who filled the questionnaires, and the aim was to check the consistency of the answers filled in the questionnaire and those given by the participants in the focus group discussion. Each focus group discussion comprised five (5) participants. FGDs were used because they facilitate interactive discussion, allowing participants to collectively reflect on their experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding competence-based assessment. Through group interaction, participants were able to build on each other's ideas, revealing shared meanings and

institutional realities that could not easily be captured through questionnaires alone (Basnet, 2018; Mwilongo, 2025). The FGDs were guided by a semi-structured protocol focusing on understanding educators' practical experiences with competence-based assessment, perceived barriers, and suggestions for improvement. All discussions were conducted in a conducive environment within the institutions, audio-recorded with participants' consent, and later transcribed verbatim.

#### **4.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis followed parallel and complementary procedures for quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and charts. This enabled the researchers to summarise patterns of awareness and general trends in educators' opinions regarding competence-based assessment methods (Ikram & Aziz, 2021). These numerical summaries provided an overall picture of how widely competence-based assessment is understood and perceived among the sampled educators.

Qualitative data from FGDs were analysed thematically and the letters P, Q, H, D, F, M represent the code of the presented argument for a specific question in the given focus group discussion. The researchers began by reading the transcripts repeatedly to familiarise themselves with the data. Initial codes were then generated based on recurring ideas and significant statements related to awareness, implementation practices, challenges, and support needs. These codes were subsequently merged and organised into broader categories, which were refined into key themes representing educators' shared experiences and perceptions. Thematic analysis was considered appropriate for this study because it allows for systematic identification and interpretation of patterns within qualitative data, thereby providing deeper insight into participants' lived experiences with competence-based assessment (Hecker & Kalpokas, 2024).

Throughout the research process, efforts were made to enhance the trustworthiness and rigour of the study. Triangulation between quantitative and qualitative findings was used to validate results, while careful documentation of procedures ensured transparency and replicability. Ethical considerations were observed, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and the use of data solely for academic purposes.

The methodological choices made in this study were guided by the need to obtain both breadth and depth of understanding regarding educators' awareness and opinions on competence-based assessment. The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods provided a holistic perspective that strengthens the credibility and relevance of the findings.

### **5. Findings**

The findings are organised according to the study objectives, and they are presented starting with quantitative findings, followed by qualitative findings as follows:

#### **5.1 Educators' awareness of competence-based assessment methods**

##### ***Familiarity with competence-based assessment methods***

Most respondents agreed that they are familiar with competence-based assessment methods (48.4% agreed, 45.2% strongly agreed, while 6.5% were neutral). Figure 1 summarises the findings.

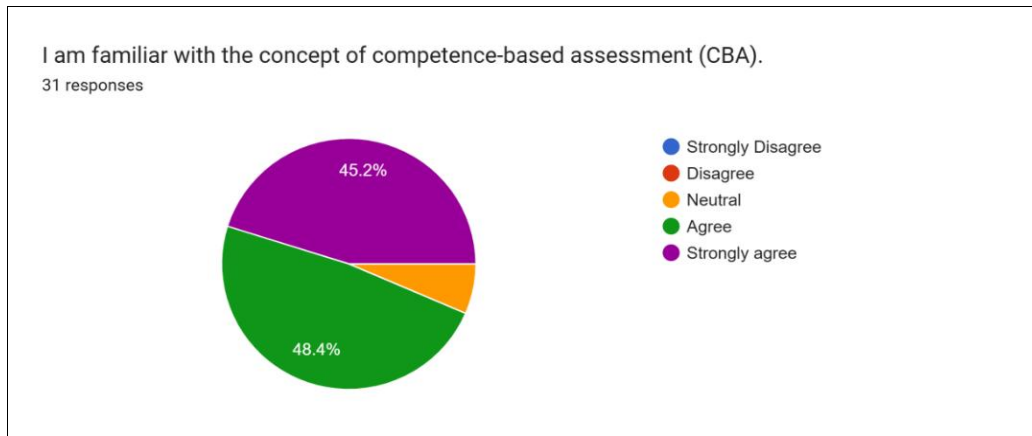


Figure 1: Educators' awareness of competence based assessment methods

In the focus group discussion, respondents argued that CBA is an approach that focuses on skills, application, and real performance rather than memorisation. Below is the anchor example.

.....CBA evaluates what learners can do in real-life situations. Recognition of learner-centred and performance-based assessment principles. **Focus group P November 2025**

From the findings, it can be viewed that the majority are familiar with competence-based assessment methods (Kibani, 2018; Mushi, Makwinya, & Kalungwizi, 2025). Nevertheless, the 6.5% of respondents who were neutral cannot be ignored, as they express doubt about understanding the methods and, therefore, affect their implementation.

## 5.2 Understanding the difference between competence-based and content-based assessment

Educators who participated in filling the questionnaires showed that they understand the differences between competence-based assessment methods and content-based assessment methods (51.6% agreed that they know the differences, 45.2% strongly agreed, while 3.2% participants were neutral). Figure 2 summarises the findings.

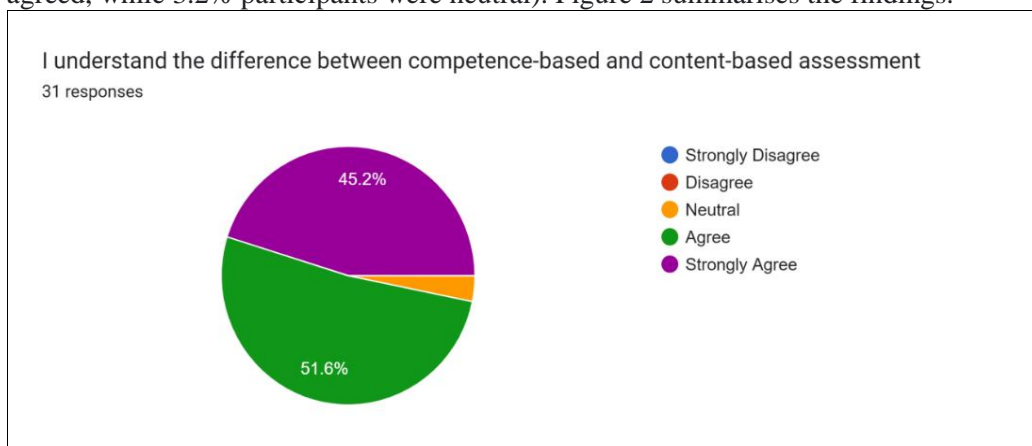


Figure 2: Differences between competence based and content based assessment

In the focus group discussion, respondents mentioned competence-based assessment methods as a sign of distinguishing them from content-based assessment methods. There responses were as follows:

*Competence-based assessment methods are performance-based, project-based, portfolio-based, observation-based, and simulation-based. They are normally applied in a formatively and summative manner. They focus on knowledge of using self- and peer-assessment, these tools are aligned with real-life tasks and competencies (Focus group discussion Q November 2025).*

From these findings which are in line with Komba and Mwandanji (2015) and Mushi et al. (2025) , the 3.2% of the participants who were neutral present query on whether those competence-based assessment methods are applied or if there is application of content-based methods in assessing learners' achievements in learning making these respondents to remain neutral. Or they really do not see the differences between the two assessment methods. When participants were asked about their ability to identify key components of competence-based methods, the majority showed that they can identify (64.5% agreed that they can identify, 29% strongly agreed, and 6.5% were neutral). Figure 3 below summarises

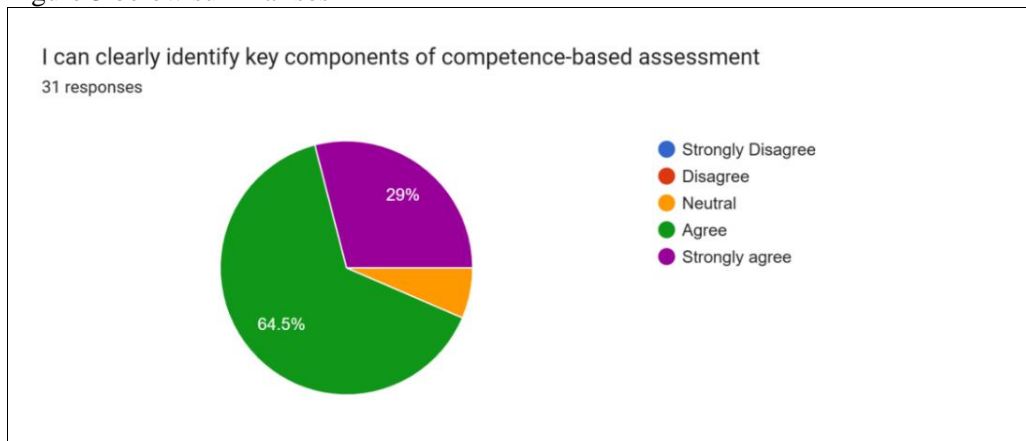


Figure 3: Key Components of competence based assessment

### 5.3 Competence-based assessment vs traditional examinations

Educators argued that Competence-based assessment is more effective than traditional examinations (45.2% agreed, 38.7% strongly agreed, 12.7% were neutral, and only 3.2% strongly disagreed). Referring to Figure 4. It can be argued that competence-based assessment measures ability rather than academic content. It is of paramount importance to make sure that educators' uses competence-based assessment methods so that learners' ability is well developed and assessed.

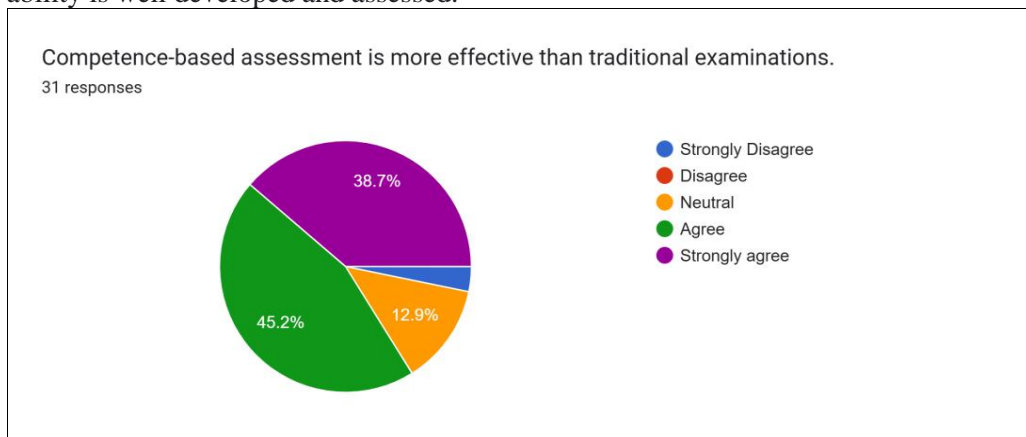


Figure 4: Competence based Vs Traditional assessments

#### 5.4 Applying competence-based assessment methods

In applying competence-based methods, respondents argued that they received adequate training on how to implement competence-based assessment methods, while a few disagreed and strongly disagreed. Figure 5 below shows the level of agreement.

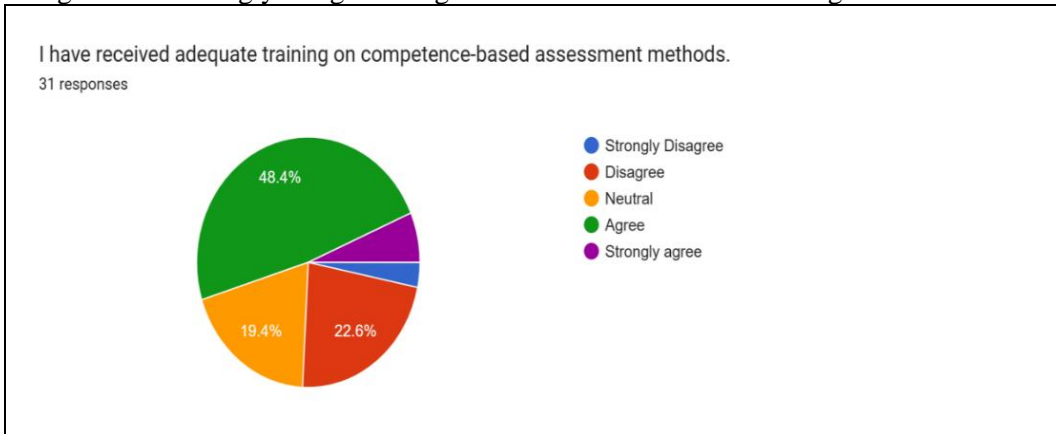


Figure 5: Training about applying competence based assessment methods

From Figure 5, 48.4% agreed that they received adequate training in applying competence-based assessment in teaching and learning. While 19.2% were neutral, 6.5% strongly agreed, 3.1% strongly disagreed, and 22.6% were neutral. This creates attention and a doubtful way of reflecting on how the assessment is now implemented, and whether the respondents have a different opinion on getting training for the effective implementation. The 22.6% of the respondents who declare that they have not received enough training on competence-based assessment may be representative of the majority of implementers in the sense that they have not received enough training on the competence-based assessment, and they do not use it. Questions arise: Can our global educational objectives be achieved? If learners are taught based on content, how can they develop competence? If educators declare that they do not have enough training on the competence-based assessment methods, how can they assess learners' achievement using competence-based methods? Who is to be blamed?

#### 5.5 Educators' opinions on competence-based assessment methods

##### *Measuring students' competencies*

The majority of the responses agreed that competence-based assessment methods are very important as they measure students' competencies instead of memorization refer to Figure 6. Also majority know the assessment tools used in competence-based assessment figure 7, and that they feel confident applying competence-based assessment in their teaching figure 8. This findings can be reflected to the study done by Hussein (2023) and Nyoni (2023), on Challenges of implementing competence based curriculum despite of its wonderful outcomes.

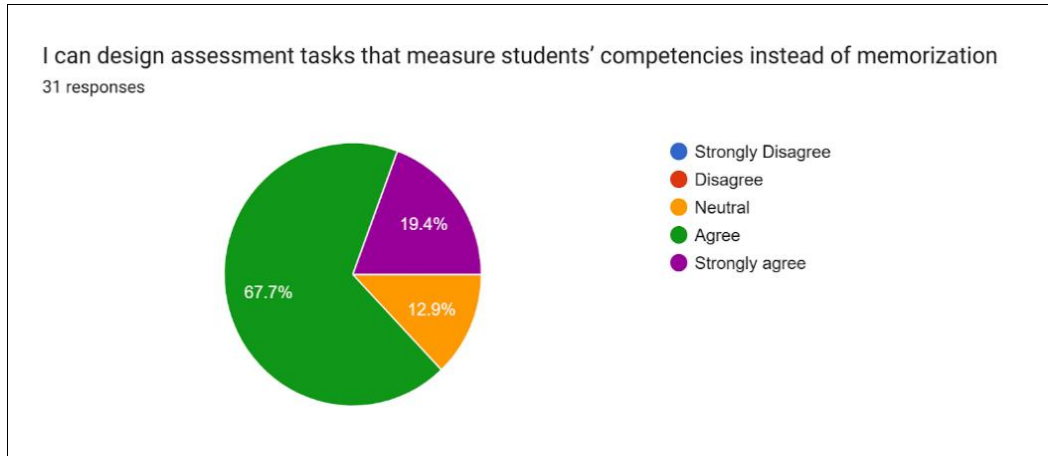


Figure 6: Designing competence bases assessment

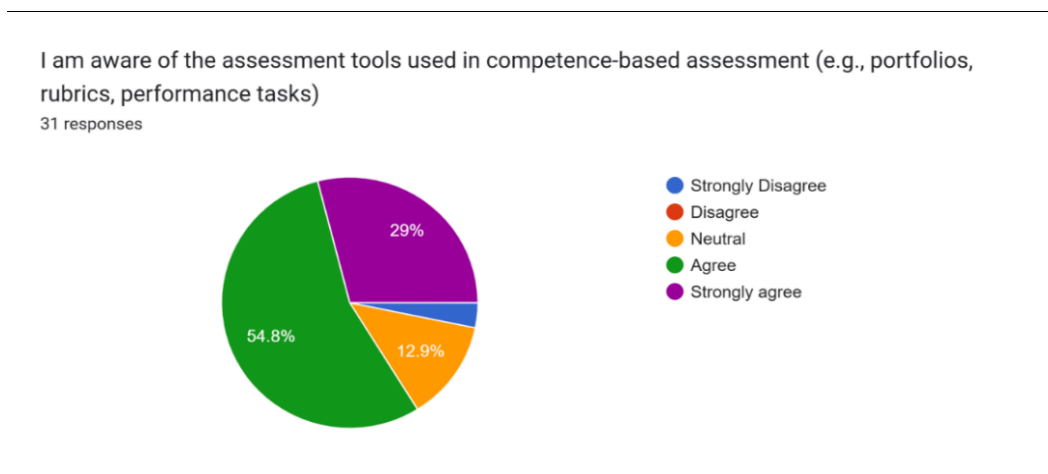


Figure 7: Tools used in competence assessment

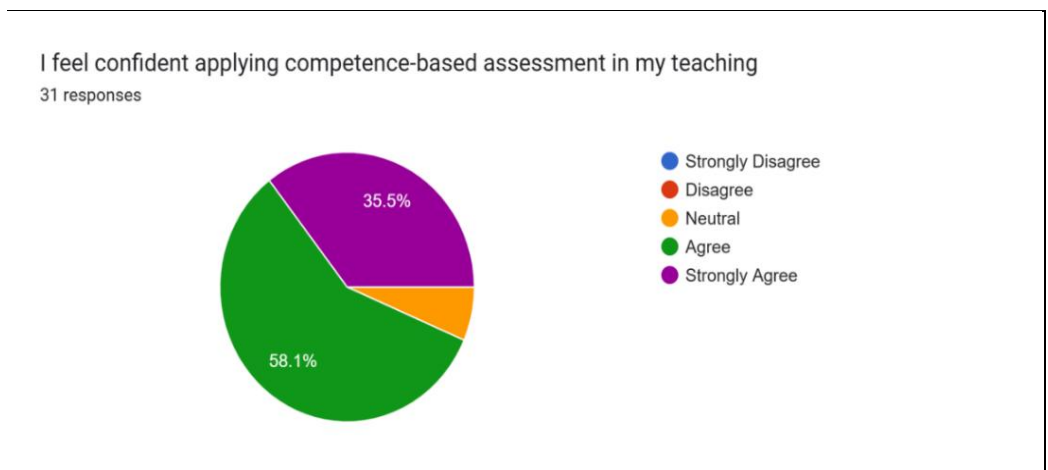


Figure 8: Applying competence bases assessment

### 5.6 Competence-based assessment helps students develop real-life skills

Participants in the study stipulated that competence-based assessment methods develop learners with real-life skills, which will automatically help learners to participate in solving societal problems. With reference to figure 9. 55.2% strongly agreed with the stated role of competence-based assessment, 37.9% agreed, while 3.4% were neutral and 3.4% strongly disagreed. These 3.4% need to be studied and worked out because the

current education in Tanzania is emphasizing on competence based so that learners develop real-life skills. Yet there are some educators who are not aware of the roles of the competence-based assessment methods.

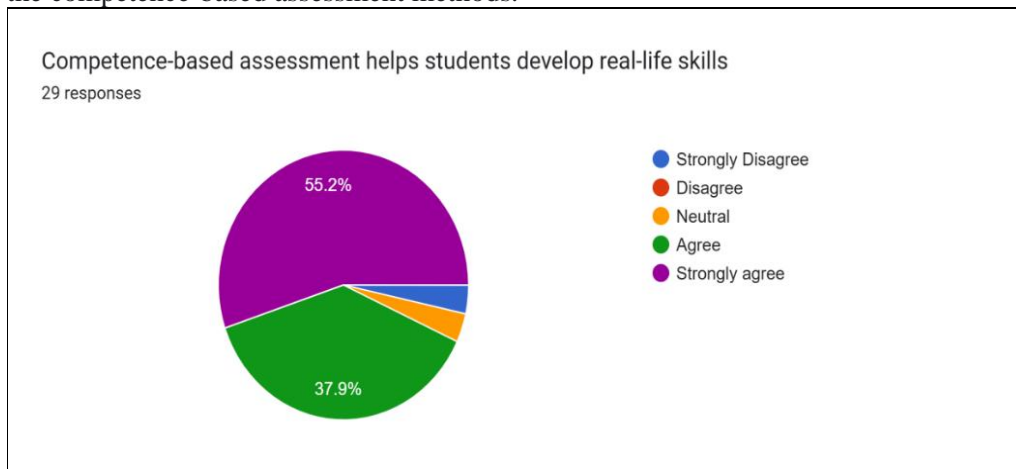


Figure 9: Developing real life skills

### 5.7 Creativity and critical thinking

In responding to questionnaires, respondents disclosed that Competence-based assessment improves students' creativity and critical thinking. With reference Nderego et al. (2025), to figure 10. 56.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that creativity and critical thinking in students is improved when teachers assess using competence-based methods, while 40% agreed and 3.3% strongly disagreed. In this view, the 3.3% of those who do not agree do not clearly show a picture of responding to the current global educational goals and the Tanzanian educational goals which is in line with the study done by (2022).

Creativity and critical thinking was also mentioned in the focus group discussion as the participants contented that:

..... You know CBA enhances critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills not only that I want to add that Learners acquire life skills and workplace-relevant competencies and ... Emphasis on practical readiness for real-life and employment (**Focus group H November 2025**).

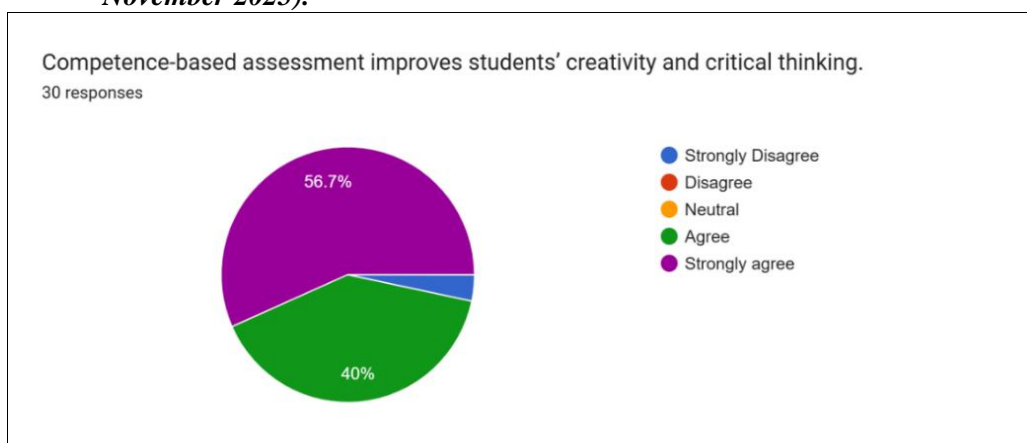


Figure 10: Improvement of creativity and critical thinking

#### 4.8 Alignment of competence-based assessment with the current curriculum

The current curriculum supports the implementation of competence-based assessment. In responding to this questionnaire, 43.3% agreed that the current curriculum supports the implementation of competence-based assessment.

23.3% strongly agreed, 23.3% were neutral, and 10% disagreed. Referring to Figure 11. It can be argued that there is alignment between the competence-based assessment and the curriculum. The challenge remains for educators in how they implement the assessment (Nderego et al., 2022). Sometimes things are well arranged in the plan and documents but the problem comes in the implementation.

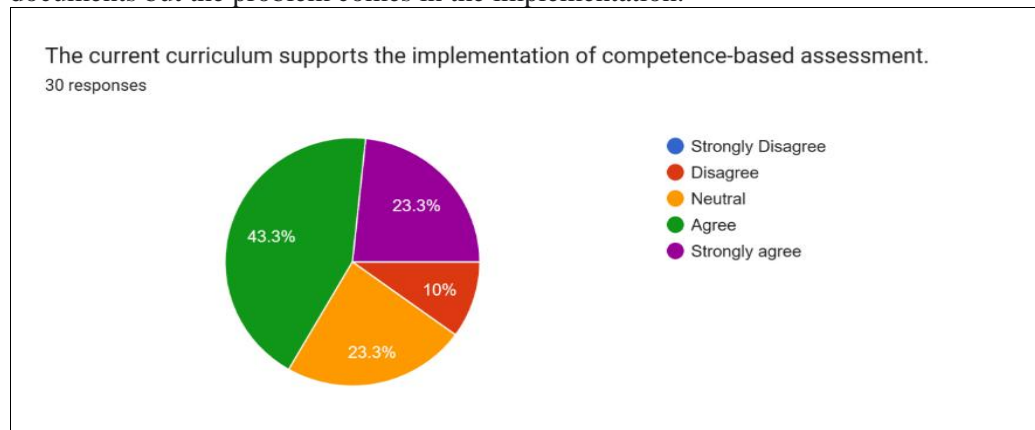


Figure 11: Current curriculum

#### 4.9 Challenges in the implementation of competence-based assessment methods

##### ***Lack of in-service training***

Most of the respondents contended that they lack training of implementing competence-based assessment. From the questionnaires, 51.6% agreed that they lack training, while 41.9% strongly agreed, and 3.2% were neutral, and 3.2% disagreed. This gives a picture that the majority of those who participated in filling the questionnaires are not implementing the competence-based methods properly because of lacking in-service training. Figure 12 summarises.

In qualitative findings it was argued the in-service training is not adequate. In one of the focus group discussion the following were the responses:

*Lack of teachers' preparedness affects the implementation of competence based assessment methods like: Lack of sufficient training and expertise in CBA, Limited exposure to modern assessment techniques and inadequate continuous professional development opportunities (Focus group D November 2025)*

The responses from the questionnaires and focus group discussion reflects a doubtful implementation strategy of the competence based assessment methods because technology is changing and assessment methods also are changing to be in line with the changes of science and technology (Nyoni, 2023). If teachers are lacking up to date knowledge on the proper way of assessing learners achievement the mismatch between the plan and implementation may occur (Nyoni, 2023).

##### ***Large class sizes***

In filling the questionnaires, large class sizes was declared the other factor for improper implementation of the competence-based assessment methods. As summarised in Figure 13. 48.4% strongly agreed, 41.9% agreed, while 3.2% were neutral, 3.2% disagreed, and 3.2% strongly disagreed. Despite the presence of a small percentage of the participants who disagree and strongly disagree, the factor of class can be argued to affect the implementation of the competence-based approach (Nyoni, 2023). Because if the class is bigger than the required ratio, then the teacher cannot reach every student in the class. This was also declared in one of the focus group discussion as the respondents said

.....Overcrowded classrooms makes a teacher struggle to assess the learners' achievements also it is time constraints and difficulty in assessing large numbers of learners .....**“Focus group discussion M November 2025”**

According to the Tanzanian education policy (2014), the agreed teacher students' ratio is 1: 45 at primary level, 1: 40 at secondary school level, but the actual practice exceeds the ratio from 1: 60 Plus, What to do then?

**Resources needed for competence-based methods**

During the study, participants declared that the resources for competence-based assessment are not adequate. 54.8% agreed, 35.5% strongly agreed that resources are not adequate, while 3.2% were neutral, 3.2% disagreed, and 3.2% strongly disagreed.

In the focus group discussions resources constrains was argued by the participants they contended that:

*In our schools there is high shortage of teaching and learning materials, there are limited ICT facilities, internet access, and power supply also high costs and resource-intensive nature of CBA implementation therefore paper and pencils still works for more than 50% (Focus group discussion F November 2025)*

The aspect of resources is a bit problematic because if resources are not adequate how can students develop and demonstrate their ability? How competence be declared without proper assessment? Educational stakeholders are required to pay attention on this because we might be thinking of shifting from content based to competence based yet the practice is vice versa (Nyoni, 2023).

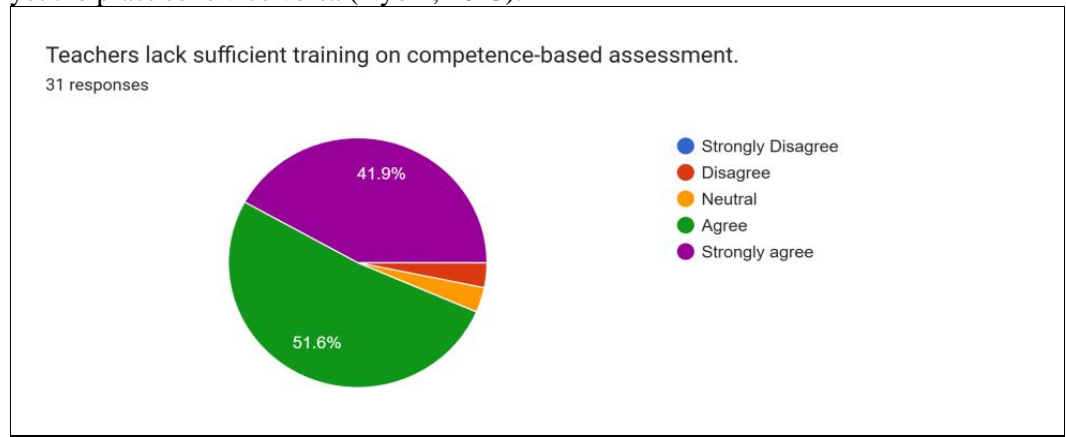


Figure 12: Insufficient training

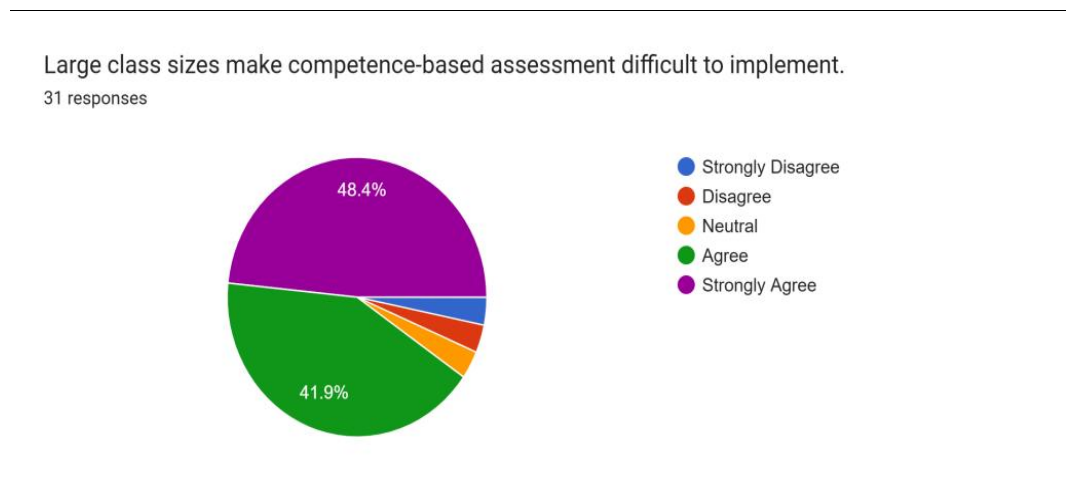


Figure 13: Large class size

Schools lack adequate resources and materials needed for competence-based assessment.

31 responses

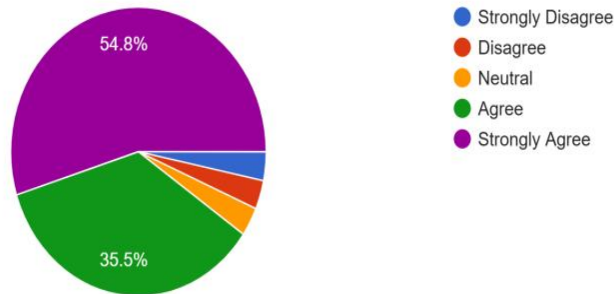


Figure 14: Lack of resources

#### Time consuming

Competence based assessment methods are time consuming Many educators and researchers have reported that competence-based assessment methods are more time-consuming to design and implement compared to traditional tests because they require ongoing, authentic evaluation practices such as projects, portfolios, peer- and self-assessment, and rich performance tasks, which take significantly more time to administer and score (e.g., in classroom settings teachers find alternative assessment methods like peer assessment and oral interviews time-consuming to conduct and manage with large numbers of students).

Competence-based assessment takes more time than traditional assessment.

31 responses

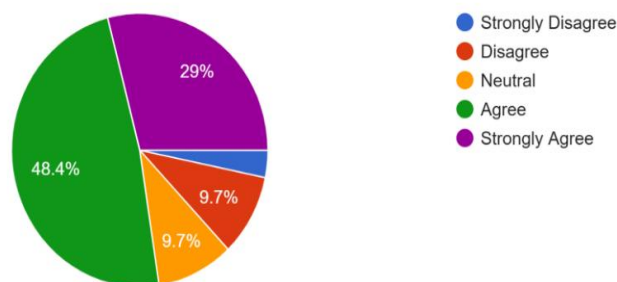


Figure 15: Competence based takes more time

#### Lack of assessment guideline

In the filled questionnaire, it was noted that the implementation of competence based assessment methods is affected by lack of clear guidelines in a given context. In responding to this 63.3% agreed that there are lack of clear guideline of implementing competence based assessment methods, while 26.7% strongly agreed and only 10% respondents were neutral see figure 16.

In the focus group discussion respondents pointed out that in implementing competence based assessment teachers are in dilemma because they lack guidelines, below are the anchor examples:

..... No clear, contextualised guidelines, standardized rubrics, and assessment frameworks are missing or insufficiently communicated to educators, leaving us uncertain about how to plan, design, and apply competency-focused evaluation methods in their classrooms (**Focus group discussion T November 2025**)

The absence of clear guidelines and assessment tools directly aligned with competence-based curriculum expectations makes it difficult for teachers to transition from traditional testing to authentic, performance-driven assessment, resulting in inconsistent and fragmented practices across schools (e.g., teachers lacked specified strategies and tools for competence-based assessment making them continue relying with traditional assessment methods. Nonetheless, weak and unclear assessment guidelines, rubrics, and support materials contribute to limited and inconsistent use of competence-based assessment methods.

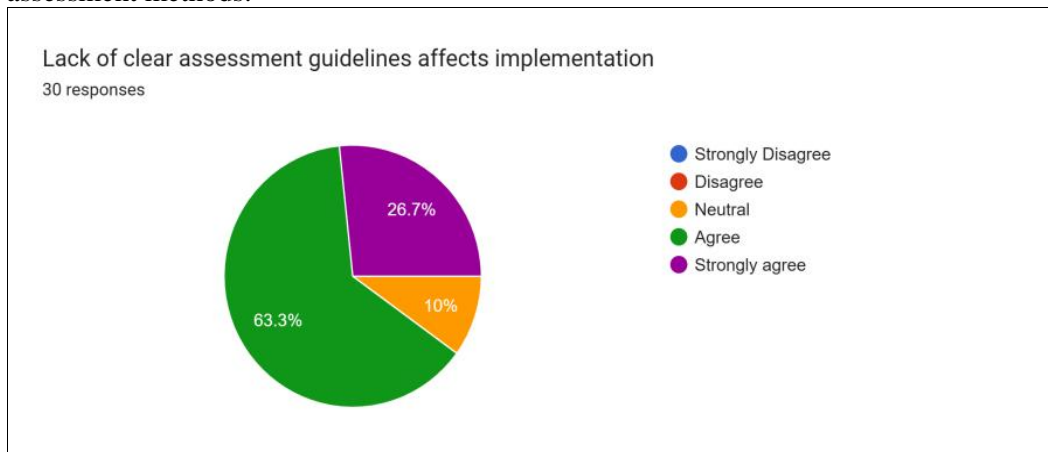


Figure 16: Guidelines for competence based assessment

#### Teachers' resistance to competence based assessment

During the study it was noted that some teachers resist the implementation of the competence based assessment methods implementation due to the fact that it is too demanding. 16.5% strongly agreed that CBA is too demanding, 35.5% agreed while 25.8% were neutral, 19.6% disagree and while 4.2% strongly disagreed figure 17 summarises the findings. In the focus group discussion respondents argued that:

.....some teachers resist the adoption of competence-based assessment (CBA) practices, often because these approaches represent a significant shift from familiar traditional assessment methods and require changes in professional routines, skills, and beliefs (**Focus group discussion R November 2025**).

From the findings, teachers are not ready to learn new ways of assessing students' achievements. The resistance can also originate from contextual and systemic factors, including predominance of traditional assessment practices, limited resources, and heavy workloads, which collectively reinforce teachers' preference for conventional assessment forms and impede the transition to competence-based methods.

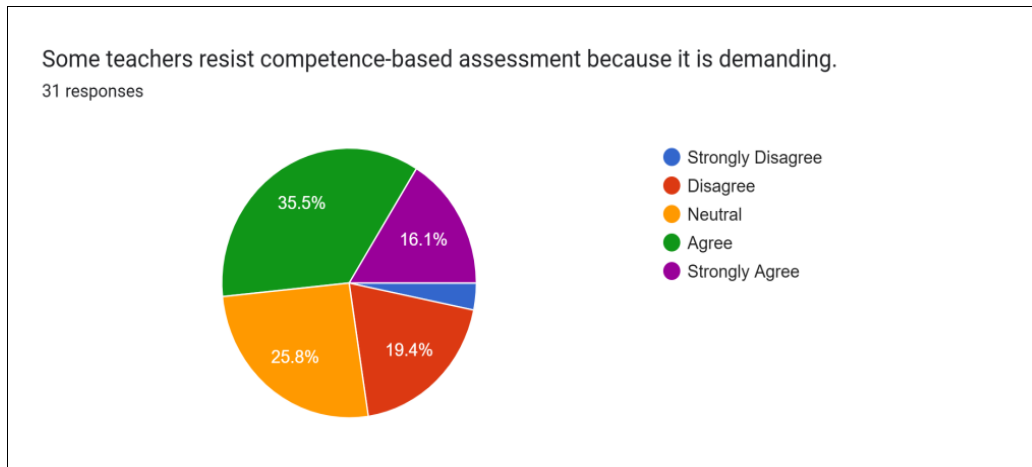


Figure 17: Teachers resistance towards competence based assessment

#### Limited administrative support

Limited administrative support by some leaders significantly undermines the effective uptake of CBA. In the questionnaires 19.4% strongly agreed that limited administrative support affects competence based assessment, 61.3% agreed, 12.9% were neutral and only 6.4 % disagreed. This can be raised as some leaders may fail to provide adequate resources, guidance, supervision, and professional encouragement necessary for teachers to adopt and sustain new assessment practices. According to the UNESCO (2024), global educational reports emphasise that school leaders play a pivotal role in creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning, including assessment practices, yet many spend the bulk of their time on routine administrative tasks rather than instructional leadership, further reducing the support directed towards meaningful assessment improvements.

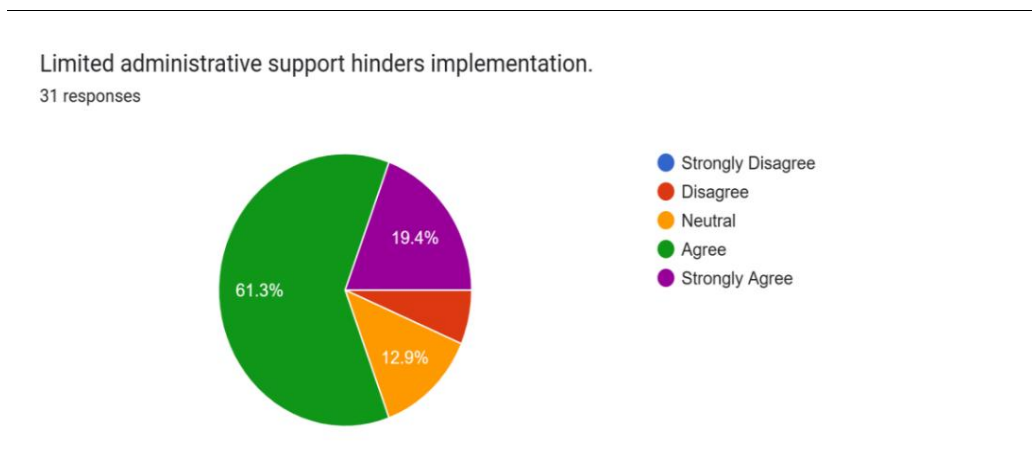


Figure 18: Administrative support

### 5.9 Strategies for the effective implementation of competence-based assessment methods in Tanzania

#### Regular in-service training, workshops, and refresher courses

Continuous professional development through regular in-service training, workshops, and refresher courses are essential for enhancing teachers' understanding and practical application of contemporary pedagogical and assessment approaches. This was agreed by 61.3% of the participants who filled the questionnaire, strongly agreed by 35.5% and only 3.2% were neutral refer figure number 19. Such big number of agreement is due to

the fact that the mentioned programmes help educators remain updated on curriculum reforms, competence-based assessment methods, and emerging educational technologies.

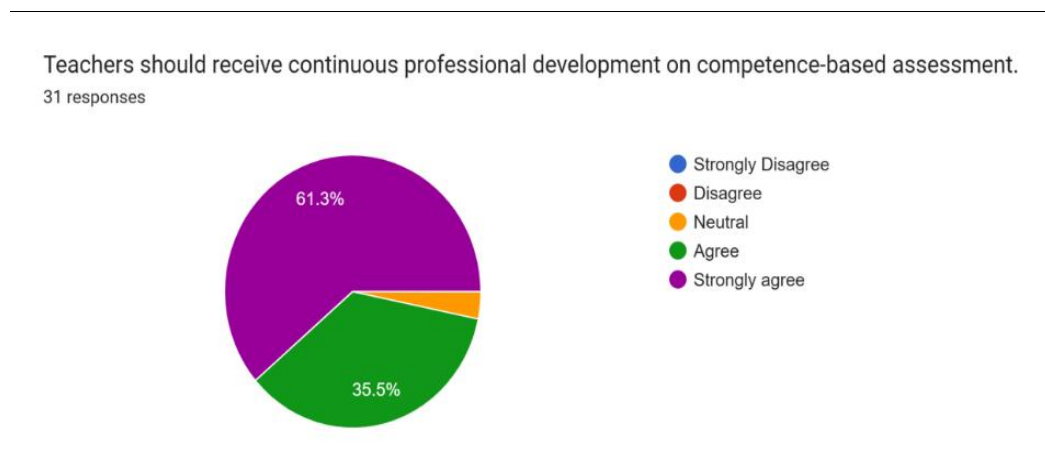


Figure 19: Continuous professional development

*Collaboration with curriculum developers and assessment experts'*

Respondents who filled the questionnaires showed that, Teachers, curriculum designers, and assessment specialists must work closely together to implement educational innovations. Referring to figure 20, where 54.8% of respondents strongly agreed, 41.9% agreed and only 3.2% were neutral. This indicates that cooperation guarantees that teaching methods, assessment procedures, and curriculum objectives are all in line. Since teachers who interact with specialists receive standardised assessment frameworks, technical advice, and useful tools for assessing competencies.

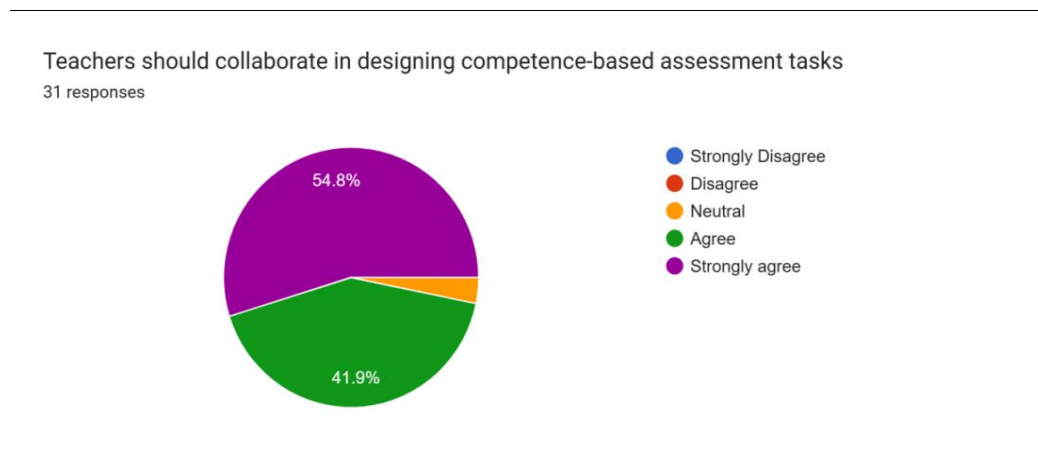


Figure 20: Collaboration

**Government investment in teaching and learning materials**

Implementing competency-based education requires more government funding for instructional resources. Sufficient resources, such as instructional aids, guides, and textbooks, facilitate meaningful learning activities and lessen the dependence on traditional lectures. This was seen in the filled questionnaires that 48.4% strongly agrees that the government should invest on the teaching and learning in schools while 48.4% agreed and only 3.2% were neutral refer figure 21. Additionally, by enabling digital learning and assessment integration, boosting ICT infrastructure—including dependable

internet and power supply—supports contemporary educational practices and equitable access, especially in underprivileged areas to enhance inclusive.

Schools should allocate more resources to support competence-based assessment activities.

31 responses

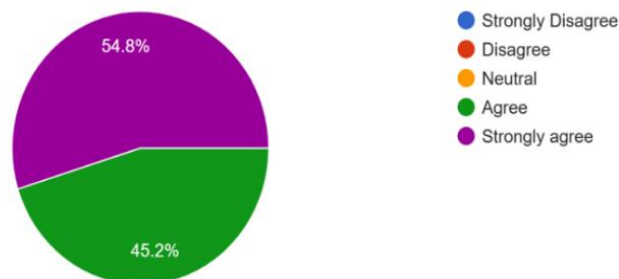


Figure 21: Resources for competence based assessment

The government should make-sure of the availability of assessment tools that are align with competence-based assessment (CBA). since, these requirements are fundamental to accurate measurement of learners' competencies. Such tools include standardized rubrics, performance-based assessment instruments, portfolios, observation checklists, and formative assessment guides. Properly designed and distributed assessment tools support consistency, fairness, and validity in evaluating learners' competencies, while also guiding teachers in providing constructive feedback that enhances student learning and progression

#### ***Supportive leadership at school to the ministry levels***

For the competence based assessment to be successful, effective and supportive leadership from the school to ministry levels is essential. Among the roles of school leaders is to guide teachers and foster collaboration, while other levels of leadership ensures coherent policies and political support, promoting competence-based assessment practices. Nevertheless, clear national assessment frameworks standardize practices that provide explicit criteria and benchmarks, thereby enhancing consistency are essential as well. Moreover, robust monitoring, follow-up, and mentorship are essential for continuous improvement, with mechanisms like school inspections by school quality assures and peer mentoring helping teachers implement policies effectively need to be emphasised.

#### ***Alignment of institutional assessments with national policies***

Educational policies should be clear to educators so that in practice educators should align institutional assessment practices with national education and assessment policies to ensure coherence and credibility within the education system. Educators in respective institutions are encouraged to design their assessment tasks, tools, and reporting systems in accordance with national competency standards and examination requirements. Such alignment will increase the credibility and eventually minimize contradictions between classroom assessments and national examinations, enhances comparability of learning outcomes, which will support the smooth learner progression within the education system.

### ***Recruitment of more teachers***

Adequate teachers are unavoidable in competence-based education. Since competence based assessment requires qualified teachers to alleviate workload pressure, allowing for effective lesson planning and timely feedback. If teachers are enough will automatically lower student-teacher ratios which is crucial for meaningful engagement, enabling personalized guidance and interactive teaching strategies. The government should consider time and manpower allocation for competence-based assessment activities ensures comprehensive evaluation, supported by dedicated personnel to improve reliability and sustainability.

## **6. Discussion of findings**

These findings are discussed according to the study objectives, integrating quantitative results with qualitative insights from focus group discussions and linking them with existing literature.

### ***Educators' Awareness of Competence-Based Assessment Methods***

The findings indicate that the majority of educators are familiar with competence-based assessment methods, as reflected by the high proportions of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of these approaches. This suggests that competence-based assessment has gained visibility within the Tanzanian education system, consistent with the national shift towards competence-based curricula and assessment reforms. Similar findings were reported by Kibani (2018) and Mushi, Makwinya, and Kalungwizi (2025), who observed increasing awareness of competence-based pedagogical and assessment principles among Tanzanian educators following curriculum reforms.

Qualitative evidence further strengthened this finding, as participants described competence-based assessment as focusing on skills application, real-life performance, and learner-centred principles. This conceptualisation aligns with the theoretical foundations of competence-based education, which emphasise authentic assessment and the demonstration of transferable competencies rather than memorisation of content. However, the presence of a small but notable proportion of respondents who remained neutral signals potential gaps in deep conceptual understanding. Such neutrality may reflect partial awareness, uncertainty about practical application, or inconsistencies between policy expectations and classroom realities. As previous studies have noted, superficial familiarity without strong pedagogical grounding may limit effective implementation (Komba & Mwandanji, 2015).

### ***Understanding the Difference between Competence-Based and Content-Based Assessment***

Most educators reported that they clearly understood the distinction between competence-based and content-based assessment methods. Their ability to identify performance-based, project-based, portfolio, observation, and simulation assessments as characteristic of competence-based approaches indicates an encouraging level of conceptual clarity. These findings are consistent with earlier studies by Komba and Mwandanji (2015) and Mushi et al. (2025), which found that teachers increasingly recognise the conceptual differences between traditional examinations and competence-oriented assessment practices.

Nevertheless, the small proportion of neutral responses raises important questions regarding actual classroom practices. It is possible that although educators recognise the theoretical distinction, institutional assessment practices may still be dominated by content-based examinations, creating ambiguity about which approach is truly operationalised in schools. This tension between policy prescriptions and entrenched

assessment traditions has been widely documented in competence-based reform contexts (Makunja, 2015). Therefore, awareness alone does not guarantee consistent implementation.

### ***Competence-Based Assessment versus Traditional Examinations***

Educators largely perceived competence-based assessment as more effective than traditional examinations in measuring learners' abilities. This perception reflects growing recognition that traditional summative examinations often fail to capture complex competencies such as problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity. The finding reinforces the argument that competence-based assessment provides a more valid representation of learners' practical abilities and readiness for real-life contexts.

However, the presence of neutral and dissenting responses suggests lingering attachment to conventional examination systems. This may stem from institutional pressures associated with national examinations, accountability demands, and limited exposure to alternative assessment models. As earlier scholars have noted, examination-oriented cultures are deeply embedded in many education systems, making transitions towards authentic assessment both technically and culturally challenging (Paulo & Tilya, 2005).

### ***Training and Application of Competence-Based Assessment Methods***

Although nearly half of the respondents indicated that they had received adequate training, a substantial proportion reported insufficient or no training. This inconsistency reveals a critical implementation gap. The finding suggests that professional development opportunities related to competence-based assessment have been unevenly distributed or inadequately sustained. The large proportion of educators who were neutral or disagreed regarding training adequacy raises serious concerns about the system's capacity to support effective implementation.

Qualitative data further confirmed that lack of training undermines teachers' preparedness and confidence in applying competence-based assessment. This finding is consistent with Nyoni (2023), who reported that limited professional development remains one of the most significant barriers to competence-based curriculum implementation. Without continuous in-service training, educators may revert to traditional assessment practices, thereby weakening the intended outcomes of curriculum reforms.

### ***Educators' Opinions on the Role of Competence-Based Assessment***

The majority of participants strongly endorsed the role of competence-based assessment in measuring students' competencies, developing real-life skills, and enhancing creativity and critical thinking. These perceptions align with the core objectives of competence-based education and with prior studies by Hussein (2023), Mwakalinga (2021), Nderogo et al. (2022), and Nyoni (2023), which emphasised the potential of competence-based assessment to promote higher-order thinking and transferable skills.

Focus group participants further highlighted that competence-based assessment fosters collaboration, communication, and workplace-relevant competencies, reinforcing its relevance to national development goals and global educational agendas. However, the small proportion of respondents who disagreed or remained neutral suggests that not all educators fully appreciate the pedagogical value of competence-based assessment. This may reflect limited exposure, resistance to change, or misalignment between curriculum intentions and assessment realities.

### ***Curriculum Alignment with Competence-Based Assessment***

The findings suggest that the current curriculum generally supports the implementation of competence-based assessment, indicating coherence at the policy and curriculum

design levels. This aligns with Nderego et al. (2022), who observed that Tanzania's competence-based curriculum is structurally aligned with learner-centred and skills-oriented assessment principles. However, the relatively high proportion of neutral and dissenting responses suggests that curriculum alignment alone is insufficient to guarantee effective practice.

This reinforces the widely acknowledged implementation gap between well-designed policies and classroom realities. As several scholars have argued, curriculum reforms often succeed at the policy level but falter during implementation due to inadequate training, limited resources, and institutional constraints (Makunja, 2015; Nyoni, 2023).

### ***Challenges in Implementing Competence-Based Assessment***

The study identified multiple interrelated challenges that significantly constrain effective implementation.

#### *In-service*

Lack of in-service training, emerged as the most critical barrier. The overwhelming agreement among respondents and qualitative evidence confirms that insufficient professional development undermines teachers' capacity to design, administer, and interpret competence-based assessments. This finding echoes Nyoni (2023), who noted that inadequate continuous professional development weakens alignment between curriculum reforms and classroom practice.

#### *Class sizes*

Large class sizes, were also identified as a major impediment. Overcrowded classrooms limit teachers' ability to observe, provide feedback, and conduct performance-based assessments effectively. The reported teacher–student ratios exceeding national policy standards further exacerbate this challenge, confirming that structural constraints undermine pedagogical innovation.

#### *Resources*

Inadequate resources represent another major barrier. Participants reported shortages of instructional materials, ICT facilities, internet access, and reliable power supply. This finding highlights the contradiction between policy aspirations and material realities. Competence-based assessment requires substantial logistical support, and without adequate resources, teachers inevitably rely on traditional paper-and-pencil tests, as observed by Nyoni (2023).

#### *Time*

Time constraints further complicate implementation. Authentic assessment tasks such as projects, portfolios, and performance assessments are inherently time-intensive. In contexts characterised by heavy workloads and large classes, teachers may find these approaches impractical, leading to selective or superficial adoption.

#### *Assessment guidelines*

Lack of clear assessment guidelines emerged as a systemic weakness. The absence of contextualised rubrics, frameworks, and standardised tools creates uncertainty and inconsistency across schools. This finding underscores the importance of national and institutional assessment frameworks in supporting coherent practice.

#### *Teachers' readiness*

Teachers' resistance reflects both individual and systemic dimensions of change management. Resistance appears linked to workload pressures, limited skills, entrenched traditions, and uncertainty about expectations. This finding aligns with literature on educational change, which emphasises that reforms requiring shifts in beliefs and practices often encounter resistance unless adequately supported.

#### *Administrative support*

Limited administrative support further weakens implementation. The findings corroborate UNESCO (2024), which highlighted the pivotal role of instructional

leadership in shaping assessment practices. When school leaders prioritise administrative tasks over pedagogical leadership, teachers receive insufficient guidance, supervision, and encouragement to adopt innovative assessment methods.

### ***Enhancing Competence-Based Assessment Implementation***

The proposed strategies reflect a comprehensive and system-wide approach to strengthening competence-based assessment. From the study, it has been revealed that: Regular in-service training and continuous professional development, Collaboration with curriculum developers and assessment experts, Government investment in teaching and learning materials, Supportive leadership across all levels of the education system, Alignment of institutional assessments with national policies and recruitment of more teachers may help in enhancing competence based assessment

## **7. Conclusion**

The study focused on selected schools and higher learning institutions in Tanzania. For example, studies in Tanzania have targeted secondary schools and teacher education in higher learning institution settings to explore how educators engage with competence-based initiatives. It has involved educators teaching in competence-based curricula in Tanzanian secondary schools and colleges. Prior research in both primary and pre-primary settings in Tanzania found that while teachers were aware of the competence-based curriculum, their implementation in classroom practices including assessment often still reflected traditional content-based approaches. Again, teachers' conceptions and use of competence-based assessment in Tanzania seem to have limited evidence on actual implementation, and much remains focused on teacher perceptions and readiness rather than detailed empirical linkage to students learning outcomes and the tools used to, measure the learning outcomes. The knowledge and opinions of Tanzanian educators on competence-based assessment techniques were investigated in this study. The majority of participants demonstrated that they understood the advantages of competence-based assessment over conventional techniques since it improves critical thinking and real-world skills and is relevant to teaching and learning when it is in line with the present curriculum goal. However, systemic issues including limited resources, excessive class numbers, and poor training for teachers result in serious malpractices between legislative goals and actual classroom practice. Nevertheless, unclear rules and lack of support affects the implementation of competence-based assessment leading to the cohabitation of traditional and competence-based techniques, endangering Tanzania's educational goals.

## **8. Recommendations**

This study recommends the following for enhancing competence-based assessment in Tanzania, provision of continuous professional development for educators is inevitable since educational needs are changing therefore the educators need to be updated with the changes. Implementing targeted capacity-building for both educators and learners will encourage active responsibility among them.

The government through its managerial structure should develop a clear assessment guidelines which align with curriculum objectives for maintaining consistence of the expected outcomes. Nevertheless, improving resource allocation and infrastructure, enhancing leadership support in schools, recruiting more teachers to reduce class sizes, allocating adequate time for competence-based assessment activities, and aligning institutional assessments with national policies are important measures to improve not only assessment practices but also ensure effective learner engagement.

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