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## ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES FACING UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS IN TEST CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES IN TANZANIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined how instructors implement tests in their teaching and learning process and address the challenges facing them during practising test.*

**Methodology.** *Three universities were chosen. The study was informed by transcendental phenomenological designs. Purposive sampling obtained responses from 48 key informants. Interviews, observations, and documentary analysis were used concurrently to gather data. The data were analysed thematically. Ethical issues were addressed.*

**Results.** *The analysis revealed that university instructors face multiple challenges, including a large number of students; a lack of manpower/instructors, resources, training on test construction and internal moderation commitment; and a heavy teaching load.*

*The study **concludes** that assessment is crucial for improving the teaching and learning process and thus determining its quality. Issues that should be addressed include mandatory workshops and seminars for instructors who have not undergone teacher education. Universities should ensure that sufficient human and material resources are available to strengthen assessment efforts aimed at improving teaching and learning.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Test, Test Construction Practices, University Instructors, Teaching and Learning, Assessment.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, a test is used for improving grades, and it is termed as assessment of learning. This implies that learning is measured through facts, and the information found in tests is used to judge student performance and report these findings (Earl & Katz 2006).

However, the paradigm shift (competence-based assessment) emphasises tests as part of the formative assessment that focuses on student learning difficulties (diagnostic view) and finding immediate solutions (Popham 2008). This process of assessment is termed as assessment for learning. It is an assessment that enables instructors to understand the ability of the student to comprehend the learned materials and whether or not they can apply it to a real-life situation. Besides, instructors would like to use tests to check whether students can critically analyse their learning.

Therefore, they use assessment as learning, which focuses on the ability of the student to link assessment and learning through self-reflection. Assessment is a process of developing and supporting metacognition of students (Earl & Katz, 2006). Students are capable of reflecting on prior knowledge and linking it to new knowledge into a meaningful way.

Test may be conceptualised as an assessment tool that comprises a list of items that relate to the desired learning outcomes during and by the end of course instruction (Babygeya, 1998; Enon, 1998; Gichuhi, 2014; Linn & Gronlund, 2000). Gronlund and Waugh (2009) explain the two major types of tests, that is, teacher-made tests and standardized tests.

Teacher made tests are normally prepared by a teacher for diagnosing student difficulties in learning and as result give feedback to the teacher about the progress of teaching and learning. Standardised tests, on the other hand, follow strict procedures in setting questions; in moderating, administering, and marking the tests; and interpreting and communicating the test results. Popham (2008) defines a standardised test as one designed to yield norm-referenced or criterion-referenced inferences that are administered, scored, and interpreted in a standard predetermined manner (p. 282).

The major aims of standardised tests are to measure the intelligence, aptitude, and achievement of students whose results can be interpreted based on norm-referenced. Furthermore, Babygeya (1998) points out that, when selecting the sample items, three questions need to be answered:

The first question is "*What has been taught?*". This invites the instructor to consider the instructional objectives. The second question is "*What is to be measured?*". This question requires the instructor to include some items and leave out others. The third question is, Are items in a test a representative sample? With regard to this question, the test developer needs to confirm the representation and precision of the objectives.

Therefore, content evidence related validation is determined by using a table of specification. This is a two way chart which shows the content coverage, domains and instructional objectives used during test development (Babygeya, 1998). Looking at the content evidence-related validity in setting the items in the test, instructors have to focus on the content covered, the domains to be measured, and the aims of the curricula.

Despite the fact that assessment is a complex activity that requires instructors to assess multiple skills, instructors are employed based on their academic qualifications, and promotional ranks with higher grade-point averages (GPAs) in their first degrees as a key requirement (Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2019; UDSM job advertisement for teaching Assistants and part time tutors, October, 2020).

With regard to this criterion, a majority of instructors, especially those who did not undergo teaching courses and teaching programmes, find themselves ineffective when it comes to demonstrating assessment skills that could enable them to effectively construct and administer tests in their classroom and in teaching and learning activities (Sanga, 2016).

Notably, taking into consideration the number of students in the classroom, the teaching workload, the insufficient number of instructors, and instructors' abilities, interests, perceptions, teaching experiences, expectations, and varying orientations and backgrounds (Sanga, 2016); various studies associate assessment competence literacy to the lack of training on teaching and assessment (Popham, 2009); and/or in-service assessment training (Komba & William, 2017).

Some university instructors lack competence in test item construction, as some of them were employed based on their academic performance alone and not based on their attending pedagogical training, which should accompany their academic credentials. This is because they are not professional teachers.

Rather, they are subject experts but not professional teachers who generally should possess knowledge on test construction and administration. In that way, they find that they are incompetent in teaching and in assessing teaching and learning activities. Again, during the course of action, they find that insufficient training is offered in their respective universities.

Thus, instructors need to be exposed and oriented to teaching and assessment skills in order for them to integrate teaching activities, learning activities, and expected learning outcomes (objectives) during teaching and learning processes (Sanga, 2016). Studies indicate that sending teachers for professional development such as seminars and workshops as well as attending conferences in teaching and assessment help to improve their assessment beliefs and competencies, as well as their use of desirable classroom assessment practices (Sanga, 2016; Koloï-Keaikitse, 2017).

Most of studies have been conducted in primary and secondary schools, which had left a gap in the literature, since few studies have focused on universities, which have a different socio-cultural context. Thus, addressing the challenges facing instructors in test construction practices is of paramount importance towards improving teaching and learning processes in universities. To achieve the current study, the specific **objectives** were the following:

- I. Examine the challenges experienced by university instructors in test construction practices in Tanzanian universities.
- II. Find out the strategies that would address the challenges experienced by universities instructors in Tanzania.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed a transcendental phenomenological research design. This design was propounded by Edmund Husserl in 1931. Husserl believed that humans' lived experiences could be taken into consideration during the research methodological process. Transcendental phenomenological design focuses on consciousness from the first-person point of view; those that experience the phenomenon first-hand offer the truest meaning of it (Moustakas, 1994).

The use of this design helped the researcher to stand firm by suspending subjectivity during tools development, data collection, analysis, and reporting of the findings. The study believed that instructors play multiple roles in test construction, from designing to releasing the results, for example, coursework and university examination results.

Therefore, interviewing the instructors with lived experiences on test construction practices would bring sufficient data that might be useful in improving examination construction in Tanzanian universities. The sample size was 30 university instructors and 12 heads of department from three universities.

Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used to obtain representations. Interviews, observations, and documentary analysis were used to gather data. Data were analysed thematically, and patterns and similarities were used during coding and interpretation. Trustworthiness was assured through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Ethical issues were addressed by following the necessary procedures of adhering to ethical conduct.

## RESULTS

The study findings are presented in the following subsections:

### **(i) Challenges Experienced by University Instructors during Test Construction Practices.**

#### **a. Large Number of Students**

During interviews, most of the university instructors mentioned a large class size as a major challenge affecting their test construction practices. Most of the interviewed instructors believed the current test construction activities were mostly influenced by the number of students in one programme/course.

More particularised explanations were revealed in the tendency of the university instructors to use short answer test item types and few questions to evaluate students' learning achievement. This means that most instructors were avoiding using types of test items that would require too much time to mark since they had a large number of students in one course or programme. Emphasising this notion, one of the instructors of educational courses remarked:

In one programme, I am teaching more than 800 students and another programme with more than 600 students. With this number of students, it is not easy for me to measure their understanding in different learning outcomes. It is also not easy to give them many essay questions. Rather, you give only one which makes it easy for you to mark. (Interview with Senior Lecturer 2)

During the interview with one of the heads of department and a senior lecturer, she showed her concern with regard to the effect of class size on instructor test construction practices:

I have more than 3,500 students from the first years to the third years but with only 50 instructors. This student-instructor ratio has negative implications when it comes to students' assessment and teaching. For example, due to a big load of teaching and marking, instructors don't have enough time to prepare marking schemes and do peer review or even use the Table of specifications during test construction. This has been affecting the validity and reliability of the tests constructed. (Interview with Head of Department 3)

The finding above suggests that instructors had insufficient time to follow the recommended test construction principles during test construction. This situation also forced professors to include unreliable test items. On this particular aspect, one professor (head of department) had this to say:

The number of students is a problem in this department. It has really affected even the assessment practices, and many students complain that some of the test items come only from one area of the content taught and much of the content is not covered. The nature of test items is also not friendly as instructors prefer short answer types of questions to longer ones. (Interview with Head of Department 2)

Following the findings above, it is clear that instructors were not using the table of specifications as part of their test construction practice. This finding was also supported by document review findings from the selected universities: out of 50 test items reviewed by the researcher in all the selected universities, only 18 (36%) of them covered all the content students were taught, whereas 32 (64%) covered only a small part of the content taught. This means that most instructors tended to avoid the types of test items that demanded too much time in marking due to their having a large number of students in one course/programme.

### **b. Inadequate Teaching and Learning Resources**

Interviews also revealed that inadequate resources such as printers, photocopy machines, manpower, and other important facilities were revealed to affect university instructors' ability to construct quality test items. The findings revealed that none of the three universities had facilities to support their instructors. During interviews, one experienced instructor had this to say:

I have been in this university for 20 years now. Some years ago, we had one photocopy machine for this department. This photocopy machine was used by instructors during tests/examinations. Slowly as the number of students increased, the service was removed. Therefore, instructors have now to look for other alternatives during test construction. Imagine you have more than 650 students; which means, you have to make 650 question papers. These are only for one test in one course. This is too much to me. (Interview with Senior Lecturer2)

Sharing the same concern, another professor demonstrated the inadequacy of resources:

The nature of the test items we construct is also affected by the facilities available here. For example, in this department, only the head of department has access to the printer, computer, and photocopy machine but for administrative duties. Others don't have such privileges. So, before I think of how I will test my students, I have first to think of how much cost will I incur in the process, and this will imply the type of test items to be set. In fact, we compromise good tests due to our inability to meet the costs involved and the university's failure to offer the teaching and learning resources as is required. This is a normal practice here. (*Interview with Lecturer 3*)

This implies that instructors were sometimes forced to spend their own money to print and photocopy tests. One experienced instructor had this to say about the challenges they were facing during the test construction process:

Sometimes, it is very challenging when you are in the middle of your lesson, then you are required to prepare the test, print it yourself, make copies, and find venue for administering the test, request assistance from other colleagues for invigilation. Oh! It is a very tiresome activity that's why, sometimes; I prefer short answers or projects which may not take much of my time to administer in classroom tests. In fact, continuous assessments are very difficult to handle. (*Interview with Senior Lecturer 1*)

This shows that lack of facilities was negatively affecting the whole academic process as instructors were now forced to use test items that did not need much money and also resources, that is, large venues and invigilators.

### **c. Lack of Training on Test Item Preparations**

Interview findings unveiled that, with the exception of education, academic fields had very few training courses on test construction for their instructors. Subsequently, most instructors complained that they had never been trained to prepare and construct test/exams items using guidelines, such as a table of specifications, types of test items, use of Bloom's taxonomy, and how to ensure they used valid and reliable assessment tools. Regarding this, one novice instructor had this to say:

The only knowledge I have regarding test construction is about types of test items. But, actually, I do not know much about what procedures I should follow. Earlier you mentioned the table of specifications, but I could not say whether I was using it or not until you helped me to have a clue. Actually, I have been using it but I was not aware of it. I think today I have learned about it from you. (*Interview with Assistant lecturer 1*)

Just to confirm this assertion, one of the lecturers had the following to say:

We do rarely have test/exam item construction orientation or seminars for instructors here in this university. We could expect to have one or two each academic year because these instructors are only subject experts, not teachers by profession. So, they only use their experience to construct test items. That is why you find they know nothing about test construction procedures or standards of good test items. (*Interview with Lecturer 2*)

Another instructor had this to say: "Many university instructors are not teachers by profession, and the few professional teachers lack on the job training on test construction" (*Interview with Lecturer 3*).

Lack of sufficient knowledge about principles and procedures of test construction was also discovered during the interviews and it was clearly observed in the following three

cases. These cases represent a majority of the instructors. When asked by the researcher to explain the principles of test construction they knew and followed, they gave the following responses:

**Case 1:** As I know, principles are subjective, since every person has different ways to construct a test depending on the needs of students. On my side, I would wish my students to avoid reading notes and paraphrasing what they have read, that is conceptualisation. (Interview with Assistant Lecturer 1)

**Case 2:** I follow the following procedures during test construction, i.e., (1) identify learning outcomes, (2) focus on course description, and (3) do topic outlines that I covered in the class. (Interview with Assistant Lecturer 3)

**Case 3:** I follow the following test construction principles, i.e., (1) consider topics coverage, (2) weight distribution, (3) phrases to be used in constructing the questions, (3) time allocation, (4) marks distribution against time to be used to respond to the question, and (5) construct a test that measures all levels. (Interview with Senior Lecturer 5)

The three cases show a clear lack of adequate knowledge on principles guiding test construction among interviewed university instructors. This suggests that most of the university instructors did not have sufficient training on test construction practices. Likewise, another instructor, when asked to say how he ensured that his test was valid and reliable, said:

I have learned the principles of assessment/testing from different countries and different universities. (2) In order to construct a test which is valid and reliable, I use simple language, (3) I construct tests that measure all levels of domains, (4) I construct the test based on the coverage of the topics and not out of what was taught, and (5) I give different questions that measure different levels of students' understanding. (Interview with Lecturer 6)

The assertion above shows that instructors did not have sufficient knowledge about how to ensure that their tests were valid and reliable. Many factors that affect test reliability and validity were not being taken into consideration by most of the interviewed university instructors. This indicates the need for professional training among university instructors. To support this, one senior lecturer with an education background noted:

The mistake we make is that we think everyone with high GPA is competent to teach at university. With this fallacy, universities are busy recruiting instructors with high GPA, but they forget that a GPA is not a factor for teaching or assessing students in other countries. In those countries, before an individual is employed as an instructor, apart from having high qualifications, one has to undergo professional training first, which in fact is oriented towards teaching activities. Here, in our country, universities never take that into consideration. After one has been employed, he or she can start teaching and assess students' learning. (Interview with Senior Lecturer 6)

The finding above illustrates the need to provide professional training to all university instructors upon their hiring. They have to be oriented to teaching and how to assess their students. This suggests that most university instructors did not have sufficient training on test construction practices.

#### **d. Lack of Internal Moderation Commitment**

During interviews, it was revealed by most of the heads of department (lecturers) that most of the instructors were not attending internal moderation meetings. Because of this, most of the problems observed by external moderators remained without being solved, since only a few instructors were attending the meetings. On this matter, one head of department (lecturer) shows his concern by saying:

Another challenge we are facing on recommended test construction is a lack of internal moderation commitment shown by most of the instructors. Internal moderation meeting is a platform where we discuss and learn from external moderators' comments. Failure to attend these meetings makes instructors continue making similar mistakes every year. We are not learning from external moderators' reports at all. (Interview with Head of Department 6)

The quotation above shows clearly that instructors did not benefit from the external moderators' comments because they were not attending internal moderation meetings. These meetings are a platform where external examiners comments would be discussed and shared among instructors.

## **(ii) Ways of Addressing Challenges Experienced by University Instructors on Test Construction Practices**

Measures of overcoming challenges facing instructors when it comes to test/examination construction practices are explained herewith.

### **a. Increase the Number of Instructors**

This suggestion was given by the majority of the instructors. It was observed that there has been an increase in the number of students in recent years, but that it is not proportional to the number of instructors available in the respective universities. In this particular regard, during interviews, one instructor noted:

With the big number of students we have now, how do you expect that I should construct the test/exam that observes all procedures? What I can do is to set an exam that is easy to mark. To address this problem, I urge the government to employ more instructors; otherwise, assessment of students' learning outcomes will not make any difference. (Interview with Professor 8)

These views from the respondent underscores the need for the government to employ more instructors to address the challenge of the insufficient number of instructors working at universities which, as a result, has been compromising the standards of education in universities when it comes to test/exam construction.

### **b. Increase Budget Allocated to MoEST**

It was noted that some instructors were using part of their salaries to photocopy test items and sometimes buy materials that otherwise should have been purchased by the university. Regarding this issue, one of the instructors had this to say:

I sometimes feel bad and sorry for the instructors with large class sizes. This is due to the fact that they use their own money to print tests and sometimes photocopy the tests out of the university premises. This is unethical, because the tests may leak since we cannot ensure their security. Given this situation, I am of the opinion that the university should give priority to assessment conduct because it is one of the core priorities of the university. There is no way one can separate teaching from assessment. Therefore, the

budget should be increased to address inconveniences like what I have mentioned. (Interview with Senior Lecturer 7)

Another instructor with a large class size offered another suggestion to address the problem:

The university can add funds that could be used to buy supplies and other materials for tests that are not paper and pencil; e.g., projects. Therefore, my suggestion is that the university should think about allocating more funds for buying stationeries. In doing so, some of my worries would be partly resolved. (Interview with Lecturer 7)

Based on these views, one notes that there has been a shortage of funds allocated to the universities for academic matters. However, as a way of responding to what the instructors had said, the head of department from one university, during the follow-up questions, gave a clear explanation about the need to increase the budget for teaching and learning activities:

Very small consideration has been put on teaching compared to other roles, such as research, consultancy, and publications. This is due to the fact that more research and consultancies are needed to make the university go on functioning smoothly. (Interview with the Head of Department 4)

The head of the department's statement demonstrates that teaching and assessment were being compromised for the sake of research, consultancies, and publications. However, this should not be allowed to continue. Instead, there should be enough funds allocated to support and promote teaching and learning activities. Otherwise, teaching effectiveness will not materialise, and instructors will continue to experience hardships in their teaching, including test construction. Therefore, government intervention in terms of increasing budget allocations for academic matters in universities is an urgent matter.

### **c. Giving Incentives to Instructors with Big Teaching Loads**

It was suggested by the respondents that motivating instructors with big teaching loads by giving them some monetary incentives was important. On this particular issue, it was noted that some universities were giving incentives to their instructors with big workloads although others were not doing so. Therefore, all universities should have a clear and consistent policy on how to incentivise workers, particularly instructors, to motivate them. One instructor elaborated on this issue:

I have been teaching in this university for almost five years now, but I have never received any coin as an incentive for having a big workload. Where I was teaching before, we used to have this kind of incentive. It was categorised based on the number of classes one had and the size of the class. At the end of the semester, you would receive an allowance that could add to your pocket! Again, during marking, we were given an honorarium. Therefore, there is a need for universities to consider this. (Interview with Lecturer 8)

### **d. Capacity-Building Training**

It was observed during the interviews that there was a need to build capacity on teaching and assessment. This was suggested by most of the interviewed instructors. It was also reflected in the completed questionnaires. On this, during the interviews, one instructor had this to say:

Capacity-building training should be mandatory for all instructors who do not have educational background. There is a big difference in assessment of teaching and learning outcomes between the instructor who has educational background and the one who does not have one. However, I am not saying that instructors with educational background always construct tests/exams that are perfect! No! They do have their own problems at times, but theirs can be easily solved through a few corrections and directions given here and there. (Interview with Senior Lecturer 9)

Looking at what has been explained by interviewees, the universities need to see how they can best offer this kind of training to the instructors. These findings show the gap from one university to another and among individual instructors. However, the methods of training may be different from one university to another depending on the resources and experts available in the university.

#### **e. Improved Infrastructure**

There was a concern on improving infrastructure, specifically, the size of the class in relation to the number of students, availability of standby generators in case a shortage of power, classrooms (auditoriums and lecture halls) to be installed with projectors and other teaching and learning facilities. With regard to this, one head of department commented:

Although there have been university efforts made in building lecture rooms which can accommodate about five hundred students, the university needs to put aside some amount of money that could be used to build other lecture rooms which can accommodate more than one thousand students. If this is done, it will assist much in reducing the overcrowding of students in some venues during the administration of examinations and tests. (Interview with the Head of Department 8)

The findings expressed in the quotes above show that there is limited teaching infrastructure in the universities. Therefore, the universities should address these problems and also increase the teaching morale of their instructors. It should be noted that assessment is part and parcel of the teaching and learning processes since it acts as a central role to the teaching process. Therefore, there is no learning if there is no assessment. Universities should get more funds that could be budgeted for improving the infrastructure. This will make the university a better place for knowledge dissemination and acquisition, as it is the centre of excellence.

#### **f. Change Instructors' Attitude toward Test/Exams Items Construction**

There was a suggestion given by some heads of department and a few instructors on changing the mindsets of the instructors on test/exam item constructions. This was observed following the fact that there were some comments from external moderators and examiners on constructing the tests which cover a broad spectrum of items, including objective to essay/extended-item types.

However, it was observed that some instructors were not ready to change and accordingly work on the suggestions given by the examiners. When they were asked by the heads of department and sometimes the moderators, they would say that multiple-choice items and their related objective items were too easy for university students.

Therefore, they stuck to extended items, and when their final results were cross-examined, big discrepancies among the students' results were observed. Regarding this, one of the heads of department made this suggestion:

I think instructors need to change their attitudes towards test/exam item constructions. This is because all students need to be given an equal chance to demonstrate their levels of understanding. However, constructing the tests that lie in one category denies students the opportunity to show their abilities. (Interview with Head of Department 10)

The findings expressed in the above quotation indicate that there is a serious problem in test/examination setting. This was observed by the researcher when reviewing test/exam papers in some courses. One instructor said the following to reinforce this finding:

I don't see any reason as to why I should set objective questions, such as multiple choice and matching items in my course. The nature of my course does not encourage those types of questions. Rather, it needs solid and very hard questions to get to know the student who is serious with studies or who came here to joke. (Interview with Lecturer 4)

Therefore, instructors need to be aware of the varieties of test items. This awareness could be acquired through a hands-on workshop. Instructors should give students the benefit of the doubt and include questions with mixed items, from objective to subjective kinds of test items as students have different learning abilities and needs. Therefore, constructing examinations that cut across a variety of items indicates fairness among the students and allows them to show their potentialities. In such a situation, there is a great chance of students to meet their needs and feel more secure.

#### **g. Provision of Policy Guideline**

Instructors suggested that, since the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) has the mandate to monitor and evaluate the implementation of teaching across the universities across the country, it should therefore prepare and give policy guidelines to the universities that require instructors without teaching profession to attend a teaching course. This suggestion was made due to the fact that some instructors were observed to have limited teaching and assessment skills.

During my classroom observation, I noted some differences among instructors: some instructors were good at teaching, but a review of their tests and examinations by internal and external moderators showed that a lot was left to be desired. On this need for a policy guideline, one instructor with teaching profession background had this to say:

You know that there is neither mandatory training nor policy guideline that can force instructors to attend the teaching course prior to being hired. Given this situation, every individual is teaching according to his/her experience. This teaching behaviour may sometimes accelerate teaching ineffectiveness. However, if TCU could make deliberate efforts to prepare the policy guideline, I think there would be an improvement in terms of teaching and assessment. (Interview with Senior Lecturer 1)

In addition to that, one instructor without teaching profession showed how important it was for TCU to prepare a policy guideline:

We need the policy to make sure that every individual who teaches in the university has teaching and assessment skills. Such policy should be prepared by the TCU in order to create harmonisation of knowledge among university instructors. Otherwise, if each university is left on its own, as is the case now, despite the fact we are offering the same knowledge to our students, we may create knowledge discrepancies among them. (Interview with Lecturer 3)

Based on the findings of this paper, it is clear that each university has its own way of providing professional development to its instructors. However, the modes of training on teaching and assessment have to be cross-examined by TCU, which may then come up with a policy document that can show necessity for instructors to undergo training prior to and after hiring.

## DISCUSSION

This discussion section explains both the challenges and strategies of test construction practices by referring to other previous scholars.

**Enrolment rates in relation to teaching and learning resources.** The findings obtained from the current study on enrolment rates are in agreement with previous studies (Yeni et al., 2016; Adu & Orivel, 2006; Effah, 2005; Teferra & Altbach, 2004; Chevaillier, 2000). These studies observed that the situation in most African countries is particularly grave. Effah (2005) gave the example of Ghana, where a university built for 3,000 students was at the time of the study coping with about 24,000 students without corresponding expansion in academic and physical facilities, thus overstressing the existing facilities to their maximum elastic limits.

Giving another example, Obanya (2004) cites the University of Yaoundé, Cameroun, which in 1993–94 had over 40,000 students on a campus originally intended for 5,000 students. Furthermore, Galabawa and Narman (2004) commented that a shortage of classroom buildings and laboratory rooms for practical activities creates overcrowding and diminishes the quality and quantity of teaching and learning process with serious implications for attainment of goals.

**Staff development programmes.** This finding corroborates other studies, such as Oruonye, Ojeh, and Ahmed (2018), Rubeba and William, (2017), and Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2015), which found that most state-owned universities were not adequately following staff development programmes.

An academic staff could not live up to their expectations because of the inability of the government and university administration to supply them with in-service training and current practices in their fields. Writing on the importance of professional development for university academic staff, Okeke (2000) states clearly that the opportunity for staff development through conferences is imperative and has become noticeable with the challenging development in the society with the rapid rate of technological changes.

The training received by workers a few years ago is likely inadequate to meet the challenges of today's school system. Hence, according to scientist, the academic staff ought to regularly attend conferences and seminars to update their knowledge and expand their capacity to develop skills and knowledge needed to meet new challenges.

Above all, non-attendance at conferences often resulted in a high rate of staff attrition, mediocrity, and stagnation of staff growth and development.

**Moderation activities.** Writing on the importance of moderation, Handa (2018) and Nutal (2007) view moderation as a process of ensuring that grades awarded are fair and reliable and that the marking criteria are consistent. In the same line of argument, Bloom says that moderation ensures that instructors are in a consistent, accurate and well-designed manner.

This suggests that moderation of assessment is the process of ensuring quality standards. Similarly, Bloxham et al. (2016) emphasise that moderation is a first-class warranty system that plays an important position in the coaching, learning, and assessment cycle in higher education. Instructors should make sure all tests are effectively moderated in order to maintain fairness and provide justice to students with varying needs.

**Changing the mindset towards test construction items.** According to Egger and Merkt (2016), mindsets are beliefs about oneself and people who believe themselves to act in a different way though they are in the same environment. Therefore, instructors have to change their attitudes and embrace new reforms and ideas to make their teaching and testing more effective.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on these findings, the study concludes that university instructors were facing several challenges, including a large number of students, lack of manpower/instructors, lack of resources, lack of training on test construction, lack of internal moderation commitment, and a large teaching load.

In order to address these challenges, this study therefore proposes that mandatory workshops and seminars be conducted for instructors who did not go through teacher education. This study was conducted in only three public universities, thus, more detailed studies to include private universities as well are recommended. Likewise, an intervention study may be conducted to improve test construction practices among university instructors in Tanzania.

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**АНОТАЦІЯ / ABSTRACT** [in Ukrainian]:**ВИРІШЕННЯ ПРОБЛЕМ ВИКЛАДАЧАМИ УНІВЕРСИТЕТІВ У ПРАКТИЦІ РОЗРОБКИ ТЕСТІВ У ТАНЗАНІЇ**

**Мета** цього дослідження полягала в тому, щоб вивчити, як викладачі впроваджують тести у процес викладання, і вирішити проблеми, які постають перед ними під час тестування на практиці.

**Методологія.** Було задіяно три університети. Дослідження базувалося на трансцендентному феноменологічному дизайні – життєвому досвіді опитуваних, воно зосереджено на свідомості поглядів опитуваного. Цілеспрямована вибірка була використана для отримання поглядів 48 провідних викладачів. Для збору даних одночасно використовувалися інтерв'ю, спостереження та аналіз документів. Дані проаналізовано тематично. Були розглянуті етичні питання.

**Результати.** Аналіз виявив, що викладачі університетів зіткнулися з кількома проблемами, зокрема: великою кількістю студентів, браком робочої сили/викладачів, браком ресурсів, відсутністю підготовки щодо

побудови тестів, відсутністю внутрішніх помірних зобов'язань та великим навчальним навантаженням.

Дослідження дійшло **висновку**, що оцінювання має життєво важливе значення для покращення процесу викладання та навчання, тому, визначаючи його якість, слід вирішити низку питань, таких як обов'язкові семінари та тренінги для викладачів, які не мають педагогічної освіти. Університети мають забезпечити достатньо соціальних і матеріальних ресурсів для посилення оцінювання з метою покращення викладання та навчання.

**КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА:** тест, практики створення тестів, викладачі університетів, викладання та навчання, оцінювання.

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