



Teacher Workload, Curriculum Alignment, and Adaptation under Tanzania's 2023 Primary Curriculum: Evidence from Gairo District, Tanzania

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Abstract: Tanzania's improved primary curriculum for 2023 emphasizes learner participation, practical activities, continuous assessment, and contemporary skills, but schools vary in staffing, materials, and infrastructure. This study examines how teachers in Gairo District, Morogoro Region, experience and manage curriculum implementation, focusing on workload, professional learning, resource and curricular alignment, adaptation, morale, and perceived benefits. This qualitative secondary analysis covers 12 unique semi-structured teacher-interview records from six schools, five subjects, and Grades 3 and 4. Hybrid thematic analysis combined deductive coding of workload, alignment, learning, coping, morale, and fatigue with inductive coding of workload mechanisms and negative cases. Teachers described cumulative work: dense timetables, large or combined classes, assessment and examination duties, remedial teaching, substitute-material preparation, and learning during implementation. One teacher reported about 70 teaching periods weekly; this is an individual account, not a verified timetable or district estimate. Uneven formal preparation made peer exchange and school-based learning important. Improvisation, grouping, borrowing resources, using personal devices, and extra time helped sustain instruction, but could shift implementation costs onto teachers. Evidence of curricular layering was limited: one teacher described a competency in current planning documents but absent from new books and potentially examinable, prompting use of an older text; another described studying difficult Grade 7 content associated with the former curriculum. The records do not establish that two complete curricula were generally delivered. No participant directly linked exhaustion, cynicism, resistance, or disengagement to repeated reform. The corpus supports implementation strain and some morale vulnerability, but does not demonstrate reform fatigue. As a bounded secondary analysis without a pre-reform baseline, it cannot estimate prevalence or attribute longstanding capacity constraints to the reform. Findings point to alignment between documents and assessments, protected professional learning, workload-sensitive planning, and realistic provision of materials and infrastructure.

Keywords: curriculum implementation, teacher workload, curricular alignment, teacher adaptation, professional learning, Tanzania.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Curriculum reform is enacted not only through official documents but also through teachers' daily interpretive and practical work. When new competencies, pedagogies, assessment expectations, and materials enter schools, teachers must translate them into lessons while continuing to manage timetables, examinations, student support, and institutional routines. Policy enactment research therefore cautions against treating implementation as a simple transfer from policy text to classroom practice; local histories, resources, professional cultures, and material conditions shape how policy is enacted in practice (Ball et al., 2012).

Tanzania's Education and Training Policy 2014, 2023 Edition, and the associated primary curriculum restructured basic education and renewed emphasis on competence development, practical learning, and contemporary skills (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2023; Tanzania Institute of Education [TIE], 2023). A contemporaneous report citing Educational Circular No. 5 of 2023 stated that initial implementation in January 2024 included pre-primary, Standard I, and Standard III in primary schools (Mosenda, 2024). The same report used the term "dual curriculum scenario" to describe a particular Form One secondary-school transition involving general and vocational streams. That official secondary-sector usage should not be assumed to describe primary teachers' experiences in Gairo District. In this study, the related phrase "double curriculum" is treated instead as a proposition to be tested against primary-teacher accounts.

The central implementation challenge is not reform in isolation but the interplay between reform-specific demands and existing system capacity. Learner-centered activities, continuous assessment, practical work, and technology-mediated tasks can require additional planning, monitoring, materials, and professional learning. These expectations can become labor-intensive when schools have few teachers, large class sizes, limited textbooks, inadequate rooms, or unreliable electricity and connectivity. Research on implementing competence-based curricula in Tanzania has long identified teacher preparation, instructional resources, class size, and material alignment as consequential conditions (Kasuga & Kalolo, 2025; Makunja, 2016). A national policy note likewise emphasises ongoing needs in teacher capacity, formative assessment, governance, and the distribution of educational resources (World Bank, 2023).

Teacher-workload scholarship provides a useful lens for examining this interaction. Hargreaves (1994) describes intensification as the expansion and compression of professional work under changing expectations. Lipsky's (1980) account of street-level bureaucracy further shows how frontline workers use discretion to make policy

workable under limited capacity. Teachers' improvisation, peer consultation, grouping, and use of extra time can therefore be understood both as professional agency and as evidence that implementation costs have shifted to frontline actors. Fullan (2007) similarly stresses that early implementation difficulties are not unusual during educational change, but that such difficulties should not automatically be labeled fatigue.

These dimensions of implementation are related but not interchangeable. Workload refers to the volume, density, complexity, or extent of work. Curricular layering, in this context, refers to residual content, materials, grade-level obligations, or examination expectations that persist alongside current planning documents. Reform fatigue requires stronger evidence: participants would need to link exhaustion, cynicism, resistance, disengagement, or diminished commitment specifically to repeated or overlapping reform cycles. High workload, low motivation, or difficult living conditions can create vulnerability to fatigue, but they do not establish it on their own.

Evidence on how these dimensions are experienced in rural or resource-constrained primary school settings remains limited. This article addresses that gap through a case-bound secondary analysis of teacher interview records from Gairo District in the Morogoro Region. Its contribution is empirical and conceptual. Empirically, it documents cumulative workload, uneven preparation, resource-related compensatory labour, adaptation, and positive experiences. Conceptually, it tests implementation claims against the records and preserves supportive, contradictory, and absent evidence.

Recent studies of Tanzania's primary curriculum transition likewise identify resource availability, ICT access, teacher preparation, professional learning, collaboration, and institutional support as conditions shaping implementation (Belege, 2026; Mlenge et al., 2025). These findings provide a relevant national and regional context, but they do not establish the experience of teachers in Gairo; that case-specific evidence is the focus of the present analysis.

1.1 Tanzania's Curriculum Transition and the Problem of Local Enactment

The 2023 policy and curriculum documents articulate a national direction, but implementation is necessarily phased and locally enacted. The primary curriculum is designed for Standards I–VI and aligns with the revised policy's education structure and competence orientation (MoEST, 2023; TIE, 2023). Reports on the transition indicate that different cohorts and levels entered the improved curriculum at different times (Mosenda, 2024). Such sequencing can leave schools simultaneously responsible for learners governed by different curricular arrangements, even when

an individual teacher is not teaching two complete curricula in a single class.

For analytic precision, this study distinguishes three forms of old/new relationship. The first is sequential transition, in which teachers leave former practices and adopt current ones. The second is continuity, in which teachers see the improved curriculum as a refinement of already familiar methods. The third is curricular layering, in which current schemes, syllabi, textbooks, older materials, residual grade obligations, and examination expectations are drawn together in the same period. Only the third approaches the “double curriculum” proposition, and even then it need not mean two complete, officially mandated curricula.

This distinction also prevents causal overstatement. Staffing shortages, large class sizes, inadequate classrooms, poor connectivity, and shortages of books or devices may predate the reform. The relevant question is therefore not whether the 2023 curriculum created every constraint, but how its expectations interact with those conditions to reshape teachers’ work. The study’s analytic framework treats implementation as an encounter between reform-specific demands and contextual capacity, mediated by professional learning and teacher discretion.

1.2 Conceptual Framing

The analysis integrates policy enactment, teacher intensification, and street-level discretion. Policy enactment directs attention to how teachers interpret and translate reform in particular settings rather than merely comply with a fixed script (Ball et al., 2012; Bowe et al., 1992). Teacher intensification focuses on the cumulative consequences of added tasks, compressed time, and reduced space for reflection (Hargreaves, 1994). Street-level bureaucracy highlights the discretionary practices through which teachers bridge gaps among policy, resources, and learners (Lipsky, 1980). Together, these perspectives make it possible to examine both burden and agency without romanticising coping or attributing every difficulty to the reform.

Reform fatigue was treated as a sensitising construct with a deliberately high evidentiary threshold. Direct support would require an account tying exhaustion, cynicism, resistance, withdrawal, or diminished commitment to repeated, continuing, or overlapping reforms. Adjacent indicators—such as overtime, weak motivation, sacrifice, or low morale—were coded separately. This separation guards against converting any account of difficult teaching into a predetermined finding of fatigue.

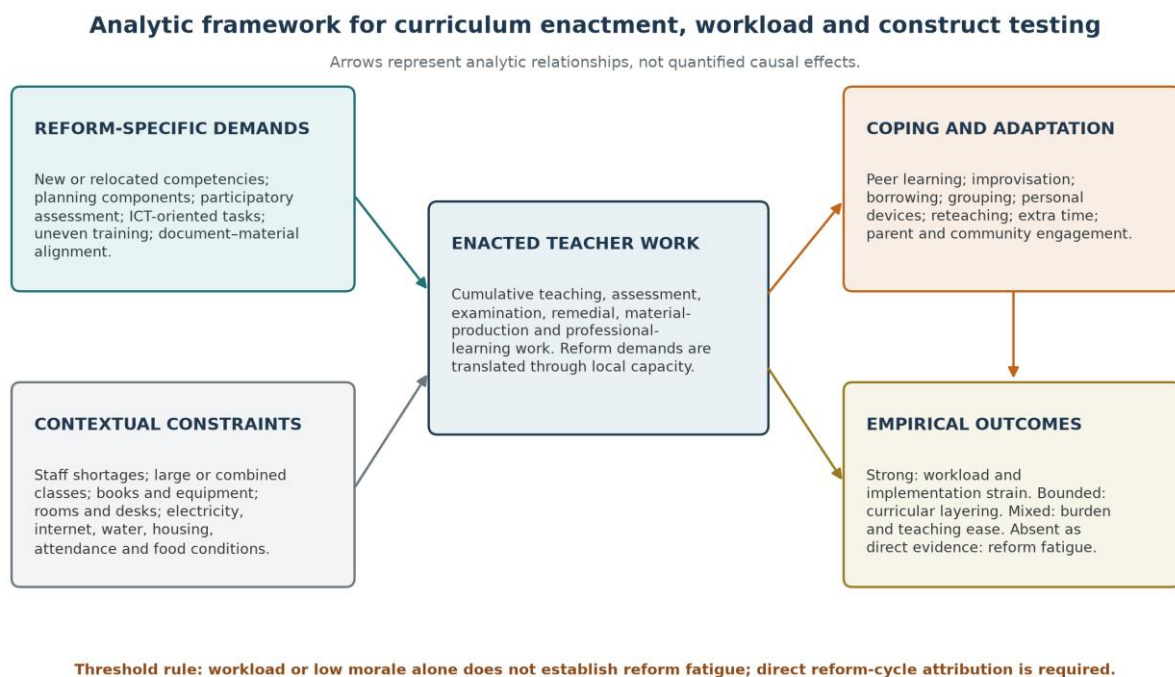


Figure 1. Analytic framework for curriculum enactment, cumulative workload, coping, and construct testing. The relationships are interpretive and are not presented as quantified causal effects.

1.3 Study Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to examine how primary teachers in Gairo District experience and manage the implementation of Tanzania's 2023 improved curriculum, with particular attention to workload, professional learning, resource and curricular alignment, adaptation, morale, and perceived benefits.

RQ1. How do teachers describe the interaction among curriculum implementation, workload, professional learning, resources, and curricular alignment in Gairo District?

RQ2. How do teachers adapt to these conditions, and what do their accounts reveal about implementation strain, morale, continuity, instructional ease, and perceived learner benefits?

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative secondary-analysis design, an approach suited to systematic interpretation of documented experience while requiring careful attention to the original purpose, context, and limitations of the records (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The source materials were semi-structured teacher interview records for secondary qualitative analysis. Because the author did not necessarily conduct the interviews, the analysis was limited to what the records documented; it could not reconstruct interviewer probing, non-verbal cues, or unrecorded context.

2.2 Participants

This study included 12 primary school teachers in Gairo District, Morogoro Region, drawn from six school clusters. The records were anonymized as T1–T12, with two records per cluster. The records covered teachers of Arts and Sports, Historia ya Tanzania na Maadili, English, Mathematics, and Science in Grades 3 and 4. Available descriptors were limited to subject, grade, qualification, and gender.

Table 1: Profile of the 12 interview records

Descriptor	Categories represented	Number of records
Subject	Arts and Sports; History of Tanzania and Ethics; English; Mathematics; Science	3; 3; 2; 2; 2
Grade	Grade 3; Grade 4	6; 6
Recorded qualification (normalised)	Certificate/Astashahada; Diploma/Stashahada; Degree/Shahada	7; 3; 2
Gender descriptor	Male; Female	9; 3
School coverage	Six anonymised school clusters	Two records per cluster

Note. Counts describe the analysed records and are not prevalence estimates for Gairo District or Morogoro Region. Qualification labels reproduce the level recorded in the source materials without inferring equivalence beyond the records.

2.3 Analytic Procedure

The analysis followed a hybrid thematic procedure informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. First, each record was read in full and assigned an anonymised code from T1 to T12. Second, deductive codes were applied to the study aim and questions: workload, implementation burden, old/new alignment, professional learning, coping, morale, perceived benefits, and reform fatigue as a sensitising construct. Third, inductive coding identified specific mechanisms, including timetable density, subject multiplicity, large and combined classes, marking, examination administration, remedial teaching, material

substitution, peer learning, grouping, and extra-time work. Fourth, coded extracts were compared across records and organised into candidate themes. Fifth, candidate themes were tested against negative cases and against the entire corpus. Sixth, an evidence-status matrix distinguished direct evidence, analyst interpretation, contradiction, and absence.

The procedure deliberately separated reform-specific demands from contextual constraints. Reform-specific demands included unfamiliar or relocated competencies, planning components, participatory and continuous assessment, technology expectations, training needs, and misalignment between current documents/materials.

Contextual constraints included staffing, class size, rooms, desks, attendance, food, housing, water, electricity, and connectivity. The analysis then examined how these categories interacted in teachers' reported work rather than attributing the contextual constraints to the reform.

2.4 Translation, Anonymity, and Evidence Handling

The interview records were predominantly in Swahili. Quotations selected for this manuscript were rendered as English analytic translations for meaning and checked against the available parsed records during analysis. No Swahili quotation is reproduced in the manuscript. Public reporting uses participant codes only; school names and filenames are omitted from the manuscript.

Two safeguards were used to reduce confirmation bias. First, the phrase "double curriculum" was not treated as a participant term or an established district-wide condition. Second, reform fatigue was coded only when the record directly linked fatigue-like responses to repeated or overlapping reforms. Accounts of overtime, sacrifice, low motivation, or difficult living conditions were retained as strain or morale vulnerability unless the participant made that reform-specific connection.

2.5 Permissions and Ethics Position

The records were provided for secondary qualitative analysis following the acquisition of institutional and local permission and participant consent. These permissions and consent establish the reported basis for accessing and analysing the supplied material.

3.0 FINDINGS

Six themes were developed. The themes are presented in an order that moves from strongly supported workload mechanisms to the more cautiously assessed constructs in the title. Participant codes indicate evidence locations within the corpus; they do not imply statistical prevalence.

3.1 Cumulative Workload Was Generated by Multiple Mechanisms

Workload was described as cumulative rather than attributable to a single task. Dense timetables, teaching across subjects or grades, large and combined classes, assessment, examination administration, remedial teaching, correction, and production of substitute materials accumulated within the same working week. T5 gave the most explicit account of the timetable and connected a small teaching force to an exceptionally dense schedule.

"Because there are few teachers, we have an accumulation of lessons—for example, about 70 periods in a week." — T5, English analytic translation

The numerical figure is reported as one participant's account, not as a verified timetable or district estimate. Its analytic importance lies in the mechanism it describes: staff scarcity compressed many instructional obligations onto the work of those present. The same participant explained how small fragments of discretionary time were used to prevent competencies from being left completely unattended.

"We use extra time to compensate; even if I find about twenty minutes, I give them at least an introduction to the competency." — T5, English analytic translation

T10 similarly linked a small staff to subject multiplicity and delayed competency coverage, while T12 described how a class of 120 made it impossible to reach or assess every learner. T9 added an organisational mechanism: examination weeks displaced ordinary teaching, even for classes not sitting the examination, because preparation, room arrangement, invigilation, and marking absorbed teachers' time.

"During an examination week, from Monday to Friday, the work becomes examination preparation—even when your class is not sitting the examination ... lessons are lost." — T9, English analytic translation

These accounts support the workload pressure but not a quantified increase attributable to the 2023 curriculum. The records contain no time diaries, verified timetables, payroll data, or pre-reform baseline. Instead, they show that curriculum implementation occurs within congested school organisations, where new expectations can combine with enduring obligations.

3.2 Teachers Were Learning While Implementing

Formal preparation was uneven. Some participants reported no direct implementation training; some received feedback from trained colleagues; and others described brief sessions they considered insufficient. School-based professional learning—often discussed through MEWAKA or teacher continuous professional development—was repeatedly used to interpret difficult competencies and share strategies. The importance of coherent, planned in-service support is also documented in Tanzanian research on competency-based curriculum implementation (Msamba et al., 2023). Professional learning was therefore both an implementation support and part of the work required to make the curriculum usable.

"I have not received training. I am implementing through experience, while teachers who received training give us feedback in the staff office." — T5, English analytic translation

“We were called to the ward centre and instructed, but not in depth and only once; it should happen two or three times.” — T6, English analytic translation

T7’s account captured the immediacy of on-the-job learning for a newly appointed teacher.

“I was appointed in July 2025, so we are learning while at work.” — T7, English analytic translation

The records did not show that teachers resented professional learning. On the contrary, peer learning was usually valued for resolving uncertainty. The burden lay in acquiring implementation knowledge during active teaching, sometimes as examination and staffing demands disrupted the time set aside for collaboration. The evidence therefore supports continuing professional learning work amid uneven preparation, not training fatigue.

3.3 Curricular Layering Was Real but Localised

The strongest evidence approaching a “double curriculum” came from T2. The participant described a competency included in current planning documents but absent from new books. A colleague advised using an old book because the competency could still appear in an examination.

“When a competency appears in the scheme and syllabus but cannot be found in the new books, a knowledgeable teacher may advise you to use an old book to teach it because it may appear in the examination.” — T2, English analytic translation

This is direct evidence of cross-document misalignment and simultaneous use of current planning documents and older instructional material. It is not evidence that every participant taught two complete curricula. T7 provided an adjacent case: while implementing the improved curriculum in Grade 4, the teacher also participated in school-based learning on difficult Grade 7 content that was described as belonging to the old curriculum.

“We study difficult topics, especially for Grade 7, which are based on the old curriculum.” — T7, English analytic translation

The contrast cases narrowed the interpretation. T10 described being instructed to leave former practices and begin current ones, which indicates sequential transition rather than simultaneous delivery. T8 saw substantial continuity in teaching and assessment. T9 reported that earlier training made much of the improved curriculum familiar. T6 described reduced note-writing under learner-centred practice. The defensible finding is therefore localised curricular layering—principally one direct material/document misalignment case and one adjacent

residual-grade case—not a pervasive double curriculum across the district.

3.4 Resource Shortfalls Became Compensatory Teacher Labour

Books, computers, projectors, calculators, tablets, electricity, internet access, desks, rooms, and subject-specific materials were unevenly available. The workload consequence was evident in how teachers bridged the gap. They drew images on boards, made aids, borrowed books, used personal phones, reorganised pupils, searched for materials, and spent additional time explaining what could not be demonstrated.

“We teach many subjects, so I do not get enough time for some competencies. Books are also scarce; when I am supposed to show a pupil a computer image, I have to draw it on the board, and drawing the picture there is difficult.” — T1, English analytic translation

“Some lessons require ICT equipment and instruct the teacher to show a video, but the teacher cannot show it and instead explains only in words.” — T9, English analytic translation

T12 linked material and spatial shortages to assessment reach and pupil participation.

“There are 120 pupils ... you cannot reach every child or assess them all. Some pupils sit on the floor and write on their knees.” — T12, English analytic translation

These accounts show resource-related work intensification: teachers became the compensating mechanism between curricular expectations and local capacity. The interview design cannot establish that these shortages began with the 2023 reform. The finding, instead, is that reform expectations can expose and magnify longstanding capacity gaps.

3.5 Coping Sustained Implementation but Could Normalise Uncompensated Work

Teachers used collaboration, improvisation, grouping, borrowing, personal devices, reteaching, extra sessions, parent engagement, and community support. These practices demonstrated practical agency and helped preserve instruction. Peer learning enabled staff to share expertise; groups redistributed participation in large classes; local materials made some practical activities possible; and extra time helped teachers revisit incomplete learning.

However, coping also shifted costs to teachers. Improvisation required preparation and sometimes personal resources. Extra sessions extended the working day. Parent follow-up and attendance work added relational and

administrative demands. T11 framed commitment in a way that made the risk of normalising unpaid labour explicit.

“Teaching is voluntary work: it requires a spirit of sacrifice, effort, and extra time, setting aside payment for overtime and trusting that God will reward you.” — T11, English analytic translation

“I have not received any other support, apart from MEWAKA; in other matters there is no motivation.” — T11, English analytic translation

The data therefore support a dual reading of coping. It is a productive form of professional agency, but it may also conceal under-support by making extraordinary effort appear to be an ordinary requirement of good teaching.

3.6 The Corpus Supports Strain and Morale Risk, Not Reform Fatigue

No participant directly reported being tired of repeated reforms, exhausted by reform cycles, cynical toward the 2023 curriculum, resistant because of earlier reforms, or disengaging from implementation. The direct reform-fatigue code therefore had no supporting record. Several accounts did indicate adjacent concerns: staff sought motivation for extra work, described sacrifice, or connected difficult living and working conditions to morale.

“There should be motivation for those of us working in difficult conditions; because we are few, we work even beyond normal time.” — T5, English analytic translation

“There are things that can break a teacher’s morale—for example, a teacher has no house ... there is also the struggle for water, and there is no internet.” — T9, English analytic translation

These statements concern occupational strain and vulnerability to morale. They do not tie exhaustion or disengagement to repeated reforms. Positive and continuity cases reinforce that boundary. T3 reported no major challenge beyond continuing improvement. T6 described reduced effort in note-writing, and T9 characterised much of the curriculum as familiar after earlier training.

“I have not observed challenges; we are simply continuing to improve, and we were already trained in how to teach a large class.” — T3, English analytic translation

“Previously, the teacher spent a great deal of time writing notes and explanations. Now we explain only a little, and pupils understand and work with it.” — T6, English analytic translation

“For someone who took part in the earlier project, when this curriculum arrived there was little that was completely new; only a few things had been improved.” — T9, English analytic translation

The evidentiary conclusion is therefore asymmetric. Implementation strain is directly supported; morale risk is supported in a subset of accounts but is not reform-specific; reform fatigue is not demonstrated in this corpus. This does not prove that fatigue is absent in Gairo District. It means that the available interview schedule and records do not establish the construct.

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 Workload as an Interaction Between Reform and Capacity

The findings show that teacher workload resulted from interaction rather than from a single reform effect. Participatory assessment, unfamiliar competencies, planning changes, technology expectations, and continuing professional learning entered schools where teachers already managed dense timetables, large classes, examinations, material shortages, and infrastructure limitations. This pattern is consistent with policy enactment theory: the practical meaning of reform depends on the material and organisational context in which it is translated (Ball et al., 2012). It also reflects teacher intensification, because multiple demands accumulated and compressed available time (Hargreaves, 1994).

The analysis adds specificity to this literature by identifying mechanisms of accumulation. Workload did not appear only as more classroom periods. It included examination-week displacement, individual assessment in large classes, correction, remedial sessions, professional learning during implementation, and the production of substitute materials. The World Bank’s (2023) emphasis on teacher capacity and formative assessment is relevant here: pedagogical expectations cannot be separated from the distribution of personnel and resources needed to enact them.

The negative cases are equally important. Some teachers experienced continuity, instructional ease, or positive learner outcomes. These accounts show that learner-centred approaches can reduce particular forms of labour, such as extensive note-writing, when teachers understand the approach and when materials or practical activities work as intended. Workload effects are therefore differentiated by subject, grade, preparation, resources, and school organisation. A uniform “reform increases workload” claim would be less accurate than an interactional account.

4.2 Curricular Alignment and Localised Layering

The evidence for curricular layering is narrow but policy-relevant. T2's account establishes a meaningful implementation problem: current planning documents, new textbooks, older books, and examination expectations did not align. T7's assigned work suggests residual old-curriculum obligations within the same period. These cases justify attention to localised curricular layering, but they do not support a district-wide claim that teachers operated two complete curricula.

This bounded interpretation also clarifies the relationship between official transition language and local evidence. The phrase "dual curriculum scenario" was reported in relation to Form One secondary streams, not as an official diagnosis of the Gairo primary-school case (Mosenda, 2024). The present analysis therefore does not borrow official terminology to manufacture an empirical finding. It asks whether local accounts show simultaneous old/new demands and answers that question cautiously: yes in particular material and grade configurations, but not as a universal teacher experience.

The policy implication is practical. Transition management should include a systematic audit of alignment among curricula, syllabi, schemes of work, textbooks, teacher guides, and examinations. Where a current competency is missing from new materials but remains examinable, teachers should not have to discover the gap through informal advice or rely on older books without guidance. Clear transition matrices could distinguish retained, relocated, revised, and discontinued content by grade and subject.

4.3 Why Strain Should Not Be Renamed Reform Fatigue

The study's most consequential conceptual result is the absence of direct reform-fatigue evidence. It would have been easy to relabel overtime, sacrifice, low motivation, housing problems, or weak connectivity as fatigue. Doing so would collapse distinct phenomena and overstate what participants said. Fullan (2007) notes that implementation difficulties and performance dips can accompany change, but difficulty does not automatically mean cynicism or withdrawal. The present corpus contains substantial commitment and positive appraisal alongside strain.

A stronger future test of reform fatigue would need questions about the number and perceived frequency of reforms, opportunities for consolidation, emotional exhaustion linked specifically to policy change, trust in reform processes, cynicism, resistance, and intentions to disengage. Longitudinal or repeated-interview designs could distinguish temporary implementation difficulty from accumulating change-related exhaustion. The current

finding should therefore be read as "not demonstrated in these records," not "does not exist."

4.4 Coping, Agency, and the Risk of Hidden Labour

Teachers' coping practices exemplify street-level discretion (Lipsky, 1980). Peer learning, improvisation, grouping, borrowing, and extra time helped convert broad policy expectations into workable lessons. These practices should not be understood only as deficits. They also reflect situated knowledge, professional collaboration, and adaptation to learners.

At the same time, celebrating resilience can conceal institutional responsibility. When teachers repeatedly provide personal devices, create substitute materials, teach beyond normal hours, or rely on moral sacrifice, the system may benefit from labour that is neither fully recognised nor compensated. School-based professional learning similarly requires protection: it is an implementation infrastructure, not free time that can be displaced indefinitely by examinations or routine administration.

4.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

First, curriculum transition should be managed through document and assessment alignment. TIE, assessment authorities, and implementing agencies should review whether competencies in current syllabi and schemes are consistently represented in approved textbooks, teacher guides, and examination expectations. Where old materials remain necessary, official guidance should identify why, for which grade and subject, and for how long.

Second, professional learning should be staged, recurrent, and close to classroom problems. One-off or cascade sessions were insufficient for some participants. School-based learning was valuable, but it depended on colleague expertise and competed with other duties. Protected collaborative-learning time, subject-specific facilitation, and follow-up support would reduce the need to learn solely through trial, informal feedback, or crisis response.

Third, workload review should include more than teaching periods. Examination preparation, invigilation, marking, continuous assessment, remedial sessions, correction, material production, and professional learning should be recognised in workload planning. Staffing decisions should also consider the interaction between subject coverage and class size rather than relying only on aggregate teacher counts.

Fourth, material readiness should be treated as part of implementation design. Curriculum expectations involving video, digital content, practical equipment, or individual assessment require realistic provision for electricity,

connectivity, devices, books, rooms, and desks. Where full provision is not immediately possible, guidance should offer pedagogically sound low-technology alternatives rather than leaving each teacher to improvise independently.

Finally, implementation monitoring should distinguish workload strain, morale vulnerability, and reform fatigue. Brief teacher feedback instruments and follow-up interviews can ask directly about repeated-change exhaustion and disengagement while also documenting positive experiences. Such differentiation would allow support to be targeted without pathologising ordinary learning or overlooking genuine change overload.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Primary teachers in Gairo District implemented Tanzania's improved curriculum through cumulative workload and uneven local capacity. Their work combined teaching, assessment, examinations, remediation, professional learning, and compensation for material and infrastructure gaps. Peer collaboration and improvisation sustained implementation, but extra time, personal resources, and sacrifice could normalise hidden labour.

Curricular layering was evident only in a bounded sense. One direct account showed current-document, textbook, older-material, and examination misalignment; one adjacent account showed residual old-curriculum work alongside improved-curriculum teaching. These cases warrant attention to curricular alignment, but not a claim that all teachers in Gairo—or Morogoro Region—delivered two complete curricula.

Most importantly, the records did not directly demonstrate reform fatigue. They showed workload pressure, implementation strain, and morale vulnerability alongside continuity, instructional ease, optimism, and reported learner benefits. A defensible interpretation must preserve that mixed evidence. The immediate policy priority is therefore not to announce widespread fatigue, but to reduce avoidable implementation burden through aligned documents, sustained professional learning, realistic material provision, and workload-sensitive transition management.

6.0 AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

6.1 Ethics and Consent to Participate

The records were provided for secondary qualitative analysis. The source manuscript reports that institutional/local permission and participant consent were obtained; however, the supplied materials do not identify an ethics-review committee or approval reference, or establish that approval and consent cover secondary analysis. The authors must verify and report the applicable review and permission status before submission.

6.2 Consent for Publication

The supplied materials do not establish that consent and permissions cover publication of anonymised English-translated extracts. The authors must confirm this scope before submission and obtain independent bilingual review of quotations where required.

6.3 Data Availability

The interview records contain potentially identifying qualitative data and are not included with the manuscript. Any access is subject to the permissions governing the original records, consent, and appropriate safeguards. The authors should confirm the journal's preferred controlled-access statement before submission.

6.4 Funding

Funding information was not provided in the supplied materials. The authors should confirm whether the study received funding and revise this statement before submission.

6.5 Competing Interests

Competing-interests information was not provided. The authors should make and confirm the applicable declaration before submission.

6.6 Author Contributions

Author contributions were not specified in the supplied materials. The authors should agree and provide a contribution statement before submission.

6.7 Acknowledgements

No acknowledgements were provided. Add any acknowledgements only after confirming the contributors' permission and the journal's requirements.

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