

Challenges Experienced in the Implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the challenges facing the implementation stage of the competency-based curriculum in junior secondary schools in Kenya. Kenya has been offering the 8-4-4 since 1983. This was a curriculum in which many teachers were trained. The competence based- curriculum marks a mile stone in education since it is shifting education from memorizing and knowledge base to skills acquisition and long-life learning. The study collected both primary and secondary data through observation and reviewing findings from past research studies. Thematic content analysis was done to analyze the data. The study targeted 204 public junior secondary school teachers. The study used Simple random sampling technique to sample 100 junior school teachers. Study employed observation and interview as data collection tools. The study found out that inadequate training of the teachers handling the CBC is a challenge. Lack of adequate resources is also a major challenge since junior schools lack classrooms, laboratories and well as sanitary facilities. Lack of good will by the heads of the institutions towards junior school teachers possess a challenge. Finally, lack of internet connectivity is a challenge facing ICT integration among many schools. The study recommends for the government to avail enough resources to ensure effective implementation of the CBC. It is also recommended that the heads of institutions should have good will towards the junior school teachers.

Key words. Challenges, experienced, implementation, competency-based curriculum (CBC) public junior secondary schools, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

In the whole world, countries are focusing on competence-based curriculum. Education is seen as a basic human need according to the sustainable Development Goal SDG 4. It also emphasis on the high-quality education to the learners. The competence-based curriculum is the best ever since it is equipping the 21st learner with knowledge and skills as well as confidence to problem solving (Kimario & Otieno, 2022). Globally, the change towards competency-based curriculum education (CBE) is basically because it is equipping learners with the 21st skills, competences and attitudes. The most leading nations are the Singapore, German, France, United States, Canada, Netherlands and Finland in the implementation of the competence-based curriculum since it stresses skills acquisition and competences. IBE-UNESCO (2017), the curriculum enables learners to retain concepts taught as opposed to memorization. Studies show that the competence-based education enables learning to be learner centered as opposed to 8-4-4 curriculum which was teacher Centre learning and hence enhancing the preparedness of the 21st learners to handle the contemporary problems and give appropriate solution (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). Despite the benefits coming with the Competence based curriculum, there are numerous challenges facing the implementation stage.

In Malaysia, Muraraneza and Mtshali (2018) asserted that competence-based education implementation was challenged by factors like stakeholders lack of knowhow, lack of funds, inadequate facilities like classrooms and laboratories and inadequate monitoring and evaluation of the CBC implementation. They suggested that for the implementation of the competency-based curriculum to prosper, the government should avail the necessary

resources as well as putting in place efficient monitoring and evaluation measures in the implementation of the competence-based curriculum.

In South Africa, the competence-based curriculum has faced slow growth. This is because of a number of factors. These factors include inadequate resources for teaching and learning, huge workload for the teachers, lack of adequate teacher training, lack of enough facilities, inadequate government financing and poor communication.

In Nigeria, Babajide and Smith (2022) asserted that for successful implementation of the CBC to take place in junior schools, there must be adequate funds, proper communication and sensitization of the teachers on how to handle the curriculum. This means that the government should avail enough resources in schools to cater for resources, facilities such as labs and classrooms, in-service training and teachers as well as recruitment of qualified teachers to successfully handle the curriculum.

Levy and Murnane (2013) did a study on competence-based curriculum and asserted that implementation of competence-based education is faced with the problem of resistance by educators, stakeholders in the education systems, the use of traditional method of teaching and the used of the traditional method of evaluation and assessment of the outcomes of learning. Equally there is a challenge of infrastructure like classrooms and resources for teaching and learning. Competency based curriculum aims at equipping learners. The competence-based curriculum is equipping the learners with the 21st stressed competences which include: learning to learn, digital literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, imagination, self-efficacy with the 21st century competencies; communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem Solving, creativity, imagination, digital literacy, self-efficacy and learning to learn.

In line with Momanyi and Rop (2020), one of the most problems facing the implementation of the competence-based curriculum is inadequate teacher preparation. Additionally, teachers are lacking competence in Information Communication Technology (ICT) integration in teaching and learning (Silas, 2020). Moreover, the teachers need to be sensitized on the integration of the ICT in teaching and learning. Learners need to be digital literacy in line with the core competences stress under the implementation of the competency-based curriculum.

In Africa, most of the developing countries like South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and Mozambique are shifting their systems of education to competency-based curriculum. In Kenya, the government initiative to shift from the 8-4-4 system of education to competency-based education one of the most significant milestones in equipping learners with the 21st century skills need for a holistic learner. The CBC in Kenya was launched in Kenya in 2017 to scale the level of education to the world standards of collaboration and also aligning with the education with the needs of the 21st century. The CBC transforms education from memorization to acquisition of practical skills. Isaboke, Wambiri and Mweru (2021) the transition for 8-4-4 to competency based curriculum in Kenya came with challenges which include; lack of teachers preparedness, lack of resources like classrooms and laboratories, delays in supply of textbooks, parents raising concerns that education is costly, poor management by heads of the institutions, poor connection between the junior secondary schools teachers and primary teachers where junior secondary schools are domiciled, inappropriate exams and examining methodology.

Parents should play a key role in supporting implementation of CBC. Parents should enable conducive learning environment for learning. This involves helping learners in homework, guiding the learners as well as providing internet services for the (Amunga, 2020; Mwarari, 2020). Several measures have been put in place to sensitize parents but still parental involvement remains a challenge (Wairimu, 2022).

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The implementation of the competency Based Curriculum in Kenya is a major concern among the education stakeholders in Kenya. A lot of emphasis has been put in the way the CBC is being implemented (Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education Reform (PWPER), 2023). Not much has been done in ensuring the preparedness of the CBC teachers (Muchiri, 2021). The Teachers Service Commission asserted that teachers are not well equipped enough for the implementation of the CBC (Achieng' & Koros, 2023). Momanyi and Rop (2019) support the argument by indicating that the teachers in junior schools are not adequately ready to handle

the CBC hence the poor implementation at the classroom level. Ngeno (2023) found out that several education stakeholders in Kenya are raising concerns on how adequately the teachers are prepared to teach learners under competency Based curriculum. It is out of these gaps that the researcher did this research to find out the challenges faced in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in Kenya. Many studies have been done on the possible factor for making CBC effectively implemented. Very few studies have been carried out to investigate the possible challenges facing the implementation of the CBC in junior secondary schools making this study timely and relevant. The study therefore will fill the gap on the challenges faced in the course of implementing the competency-based curriculum in public junior secondary schools in Kenya.

OBJECTIVE

The study was guided by the following objective

1. To identify and analyze the challenges experienced in the implementation of competency Based Curriculum in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The study targeted 204 public junior secondary school teachers. The study used Simple random sampling technique to sample to sample 100 junior school teachers. The study employed several methods to collect qualitative data on the challenges facing the implementation of the competency-based curriculum (CBC) in public junior secondary schools in Kenya. The study collected data through reviewing existing research on competency-based curriculum in the globe and also in Kenya where the study was done. That gave basic information by highlighting major themes and issues that informed data collection. By reviewing studies, reports, and academic papers, the literature review offered insights into the successes and challenges encountered in different contexts, thus allowing for a comparative perspective. The researcher visited junior public secondary schools and made observations to get the firsthand information on the challenges facing implementation of CBC. This method gave a true and direct picture of how the CBC is being implemented in classrooms. Observation enables the researcher gather information on availability of resources, teaching methodology applied by teachers, participation of learners in the classrooms as well as evaluation methodologies of learners. The study also used a combination of secondary and primary research analytical techniques leading to insight comprehension of challenges experience in the implementation of the CBC in public junior secondary schools in Kenya. The researcher also visited junior secondary teachers at TSC retooling centers to ascertain the challenges they face during the implementation stage of CBC through interview.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study found out that most of the teachers teaching the learners in junior secondary school's face challenges of resources in schools. This concurs with the findings of Muraraneza and Mtshali (2018). 98 percent of the teachers expressed that they have not adequate teaching resources such as ICT integration facilities like internet connectivity. Only 2 percent of the teachers in junior secondary schools said that they have adequate teaching resources. The study also found out that 93 percent of the junior secondary school teachers strain in adapting with the CBC. 7 percent of the junior school teacher agreed that they don't strain while adapting to CBC. It was observed that teachers are struggling to shift their pedagogical approaches in teaching. Some are still using the 8-4-4 methodology of the curriculum implementation. The study further found out that there was challenge in teacher learner ratio where some schools have very many learners for instance where a teacher is handling 60 learners in one class room.

The study found out that there is a challenge of teachers in the junior secondary schools. The few available teachers are not well trained to handle the learning areas in the junior secondary schools. 99 percent of the junior school teachers agreed that there are no adequate teachers in junior schools in Mbooni West Sub-County. 1 percent of the teachers agreed that there are enough junior school teachers in junior secondary schools. This finding concurs with the findings of Babajide and Smith (2022) in Nigeria who asserted that many teachers are ill-equipped to handle the learning areas taught in junior secondary schools in Kenya. According to Orodho (2017), inadequate teacher training hinders the efficient implementation of any given curriculum and hence the

findings of the study concur.

The study also found out that the attitude and perception of education stakeholders towards the competency-based curriculum is a challenge towards its implementation. 77 percent of the junior secondary schools agreed that attitude and perception of education stakeholders pose a challenge in the implementation of the CBC. 33 percent of the junior school teacher disagreed that attitude and perception of education stakeholders does not affect implementation of CBC. Teachers have negative attitude towards the implementation of the CBC since most of them are handling learning areas that they were not trained at the university or training colleges due to inadequate teachers. Parents and guardians have negative perception towards CBC because it is costly and involving in terms of facilitating learning and teaching resources as well as guiding learners in doing extended and homework. This finding concurs with the findings of Levy and Murnane (2013)

Further the study found out that poor relationship between the head of institutions and junior secondary teachers is a challenge. 94 percent of the junior school teachers in Mbooni West Sub-County agreed that poor relationship between junior school teachers and administration is a challenge to the implementation of CBC. 6 percent indicated that there is no poor relationship between junior school teachers and administration and hence it is not a challenge. This is because the junior secondary school is domiciled in primary school compounds as proposed by the presidential working part of 2023. The heads of institutions suffer inferiority complex because of leading more educated teachers in junior secondary schools who have degrees while the heads of the institutions have certificates. This mostly affects the implementation of the CBC. This study findings disagree with Muraraneza and Mtshali (2018) who found out that the implementation of CBC is affected by lack of ICT integration and not the relationship between the teachers in junior secondary schools and the administrators.

The study also found out that lack of resources such as teaching and learning aids, recreational facilities, enough infrastructure such as classrooms and laboratories affects the implementation of the competency-based curriculum. 100 percent of the junior school teachers in Mbooni West Sub-County agreed that junior schools have not adequate resources for the implementation of CBC. This finding concurs with the findings of Isaboke, Wambiri and Mweru (2021). Some of the head teachers send learners home to collect some school levies such as activity fees, funds for paying board of management employed teachers interrupting the teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

The competency-based curriculum is seeing to it that the learners acquire the 21st century skills. The curriculum is ensuring effective transition from memorization learning as well as teacher centered learning to learner centered learning. The curriculum implementation is facing tremendous challenges. One of the critical challenges is the lack of skills needed in the implementation. The teachers who are key stakeholders are not adequately prepared to handle this curriculum. The teachers need to be taken through thorough training on the teaching pedagogies, teaching methodologies and evaluation methods.

Another challenge facing the implementation of the competency-based curriculum is the insufficient resources. Many junior schools have inadequate facilities. Some of the resources such as classrooms, laboratories, sanitary facilities, textbooks, digital devices, internet connectivity are lacking. To address this gap, the government has to channel more resources in form of funds to ensure that the necessary resources are available. The heads of institution should source more resources from the non-governmental organizations, the constituency development fund (CDF) to finance the necessary projects which are required in ensuring that the competency-based curriculum is adequately implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With reference to the challenges identified, the study recommends some recommendation. First, the teachers implementing the competency-based curriculum need to be given thorough training on areas touching teaching methodology, pedagogies, ICT integration in teaching and learning and evaluation methods. The study recommends for retooling training by the teacher's service commission and the Kenya institute of curriculum development so as to equip the teachers with the necessary skills to implement the competency-based curriculum.

Secondly, the study recommends that the government should avail enough funds to facilitate the availability of teaching resources. The heads of the institutions should use the availed funds to put in place classrooms, laboratories, sanitary facilities as well as proper offices for lesson preparation for the teachers. The heads of the institutions need to install internet in their institutions in schools to promote ICT integration in teaching and learning.

Lastly, the study recommends that the head of institutions to do away with inferiority complex and handle junior schools' teachers with decorum irrespective of the low level of education of the heads of institutions as compared with the junior schools who have degrees. The heads of the institutions should ensure conducive working environment for the teachers as well as learners. This means in the event of disagreement; proper methods should be applied in looking for peace.

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