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Teachers Preparedness to Implement the Competency Based Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya

By

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate teachers' preparedness to competency-based curriculum in public secondary schools in Starehe sub-county, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Shulman theory of knowledge development. The research used convergent concurrent design. Under case study research approach where both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used in sampling target groups in the study since the study used mixed method approach. The study targeted a population of 196 comprising of 144 teachers, 48 headteachers and 4 education officials. The total sample size was 194 participants from junior secondary schools within the study area. Questionnaires collected quantitative data from teachers a while interview guides were used to collect qualitative data from the headteachers and curriculum support officers. The researcher employed a split half method to determine the reliability of the instruments. Validity of research instrument was enhanced thorough pilot study. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically whereas quantitative data was summarized using percentages and frequencies. This was facilitated by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. The rights and privacy of the respondents were upheld. during and after the research. The research finding showed that teachers are not adequately prepared to implement competence-based curriculum therefore there is need for the government to conduct more training of teachers and allocation of, more resources for construction of laboratories, classrooms and employ more teachers in order to reduce student teacher's ratio for effective competence-based curriculum implementation.

Key words: Kenya, Starehe Sub County, Teachers Preparedness, Junior Secondary Schools, Competency Based Curriculum Implementation

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Background to the Study

Competency based curriculum was introduced to Kenyan schools in 2017 as a pilot with the eventual adoption in January 2019. The competency-based curriculum was to be rolled out in January 2018 but was felt that the country was not prepared for its implementation. Teachers haven't been sufficiently prepared while the support learning resources were still being developed. Competency based education in Kenya arrived at achieving the following seven core competencies; Communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, learning to learn and self-efficacy. Learning of these competencies goes hand in hand with imparting of core values. These core values are; Love, responsibility, respect, unity, peace, patriotism, social justice and integrity. Learners are expected to master and incorporate these values and competencies for their application in life. Teacher preparedness in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills will determine a curriculum receptibility (Nthulanyane, 2004). A pilot study done by KICD and reports by Teachers Service Commission indicates that teachers are ill-equipped for the competency-based curriculum.

KICD report (2018) indicates that only 3% of teachers feel adequately prepared for the new curriculum while 20% they were prepared. This report by the curriculum development agency paints a grim picture that CBC has started on the wrong footing. The implementers of a curriculum ought to be thoroughly prepared through in-service, seminars and workshops. Sensitization will make teachers own the project and put full focus. Research done by Rop (2013) on teacher preparedness for the integrated English curriculum in Kenya, it was concluded that teacher preparedness impacted on the curriculum outcome. Unprepared teachers are impediment to the successful implementation of a curriculum. Teachers' unions in Kenya have argued that the competency-based curriculum is being imposed on unprepared tutors. The Secretary General of the Kenya National Union of Teachers raised concern on the Tutor's unsure position on the new curriculum (Wanzala, 2018).

Preparation and planning are important components of successful teaching, which involves the art of combining a number of different tasks into a coherent whole that learners can identify with and which students can recognize, work with and react to. In Starehe Sub County, Nairobi County, perception indicates that a number of public secondary schools are performing decimally in academics. Teachers need to prepare by putting in mind teaching and learning resources that can be used as well as learning activities that will suit the ability of individual learners. Preparation of the teachers should be used to bring out learners' competence as opposed to outdated methods where the teacher was the know-it-all. (Ngari,2021). Assessment of learners' is key in any educational curriculum which prompts the teachers to go extra mile in preparation. Therefore, it is in this background that the researcher intends to investigate on how teachers are

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prepared in implementation of competency-based curriculum to enhance effective learning in public primary schools in Starehe sub county, Nairobi County in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of the competence – based curriculum in public primary schools’ education presents a transformative shift in teaching and learning approaches, aiming to equip students with practical skills and competencies for real-world application. However, the success of this curriculum heavily relies on the readiness and capability of teachers to effectively deliver it in the classroom. One critical component of an effective curriculum is the preparation of the teachers. A study conducted in Pakistan by Ali and Baig (2012) on teachers’ preparedness noted that teachers faced many challenges including lack of in-service training of teachers, lack of teaching and learning resources, lack of knowledge and proper understanding of the CBC among teachers which hindered the implementation competence-based curriculum. Despite the adoption of the new curriculum in public primary schools in Kenya, there exist significance gaps in teacher preparedness for its effective implementation. This study therefore sought to establish the level of teachers’ preparedness in the implementation of competence- based curriculum in junior secondary schools in Starehe Sub- County.

Research Question

What are the perceptions of teachers regarding their level of preparedness for implementing the competence- based curriculum in public primary school education?

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Concern-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) by Hall, Hord and Rutherford (2006). The Model asserts that successful implementation of a new program goes beyond provision of materials and resources. According to Hall, Hord and Rutherford (2006), the most important factor that is normally overlooked when implementing a new curriculum is the human element which constitutes the implementers of the programme. This shows successful implementation of the CBC goes beyond provision of materials and resources, the most important factor are the teachers who are the implementers. This informed the study to focus on the preparedness of the teachers to implement the curriculum. The model postulates that people will respond to a new program in different ways, with unique beliefs and attitudes.

It further explains that change not only occurs by gaining new skills but also by changing individuals’ perceptions. By doing this, the staffs’ comfort and competence level will increase, making them shift their focus from personal concerns to focusing on the desired outcomes of the program. This means that apart from training the implementers of a new program to equip them with skills and knowledge, it will also be important to aim at changing their perception. This informed the current study to investigate and establish how teachers perceive the Curriculum. The model further explains that new programs in learning institutions come and go, often with little improvement to show for the effort. Therefore, the theory will proceed and suggests that before judging the effectiveness of a new programme, the education leaders need to look at the degree of fidelity that the staff members are using the new program and their expertise in it. This

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implies that there is need for the Government to monitor the implementation of the CBC in schools.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation designed to develop and systematize concepts, and linked ideas or issues (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). Figure 1 shows a conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between teacher preparedness and implementation of the CBC. Figure 1.1 illustrates the relationship between teacher preparedness and implementation

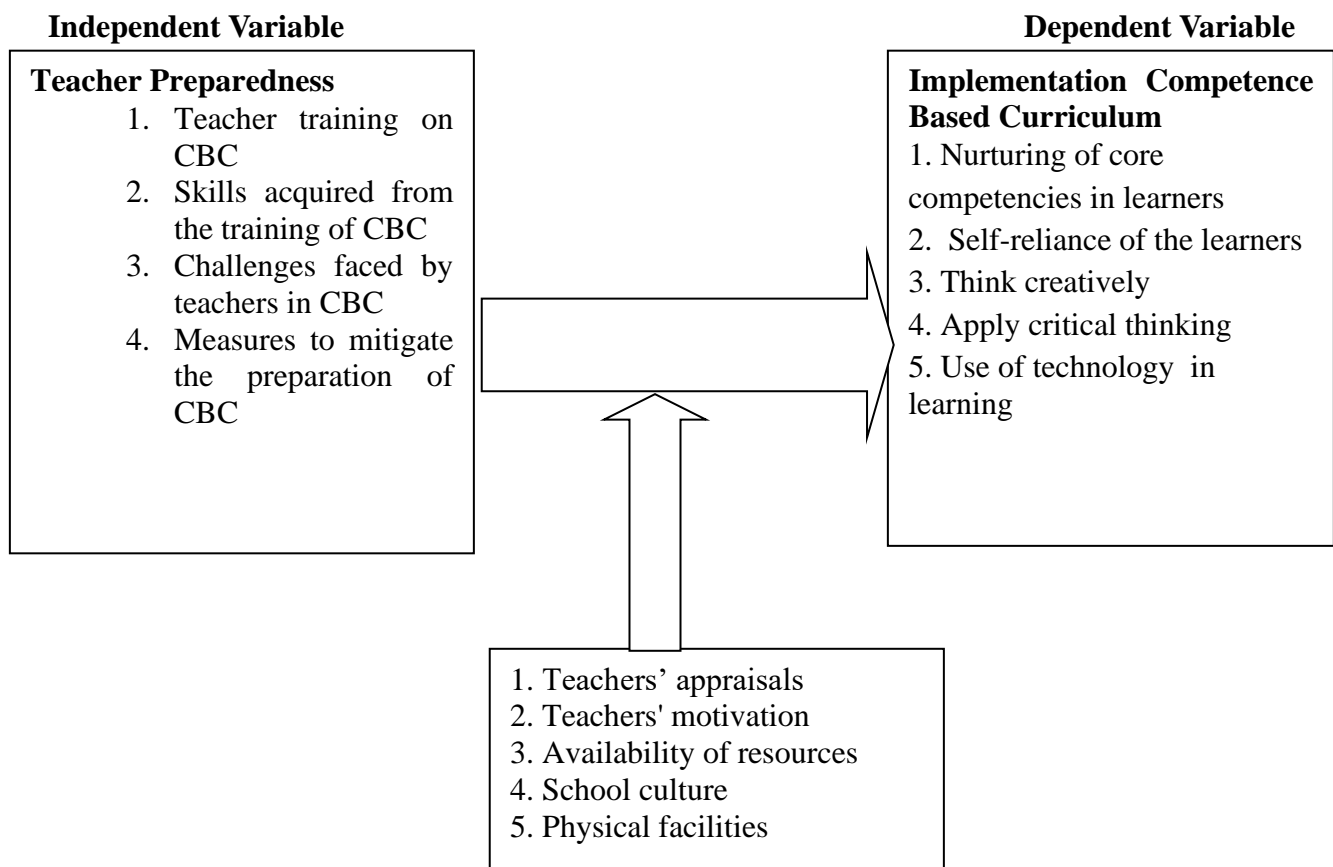


Figure 1.1: The Relationship between Teachers' Preparedness in Competence Based Curriculum

Source: Researchers (2024)

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Review of Empirical Literature

In the USA, Hill and Rous (2021) investigate the support systems for teachers transitioning to Competency-Based Education (CBE). They highlight that personalized coaching and practical workshops are critical for successful implementation. According to their research, "Personalized support and continuous feedback are crucial in helping teachers effectively apply competency-based practices in their classrooms. This study underscores the importance of tailored professional development to address the specific challenges teachers face in adopting new educational practices. In Malawi, a study was conducted by Sabola (2017), who examined the extent to which teachers in Malawi had been trained to implement a revised school curriculum. The study aimed to establish whether teachers had the ability to develop appropriate assessment tools for the revised curriculum in Malawi. The study established that there was minimal implementation of the curriculum in schools. The study reported that majority of the teachers were not trained on how to implement the curriculum. As a result, they used old modes of assessment which were used in the previous curriculum. This implies that it is crucial to train teachers on how to implement a curriculum especially when it calls for change in assessment methods.

Training of teachers influence their abilities to implement a curriculum as reported by Paulo (2014), who conducted a study on pre-service teacher preparedness in integrating CBC in secondary schools in Tanzania. The study purposely selected 16 second year pre-service teachers from the University of Dar-salaam. The findings showed that the pre-service teachers were not trained on new assessment methods and how to prepare lesson plans as stipulated in the CBC. As such, they were still using traditional methods of teaching and assessment. The study recommended a review of teacher education in all universities in order to prepare teachers with the required pedagogical content and knowledge necessary to implement the competence-based curriculum. This implies that training of teachers is crucial for effective implementation of CBC. However, the study used purposive method in selecting the respondents which involves a smaller sample and the results may not be applicable to a larger population. Since this study was conducted in Tanzania, the findings may not be applicable in Kenya. It is important therefore, for us to establish the extent to which teachers in Kenya have been trained to be able to develop CBC lesson plans.

In Kenya, Mwangi and Wanjiru (2021) investigate the challenges faced during teacher training for the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). They report issues such as inadequate training resources and limited follow-up support. The researchers find that "Teachers frequently struggle with applying concepts from training due to insufficient resources and limited ongoing support" This highlights the need for improved training resources and consistent support to enhance the effectiveness of CBC implementation. Additionally, Njeri and Otieno (2022) explored the skills Kenyan teachers develop through CBC training. They highlight that teachers gain crucial skills such as designing competency-based assessments and creating individualized learning plans. The study finds that "Kenyan teachers acquired essential skills like developing tailored learning activities and using assessment strategies aligned with CBC principles, which significantly improved their instructional practices" This underscores the importance of practical, hands-on training in developing effective teaching skills.

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A study conducted by Tonui and Kericho (2016) delved to establish challenges of using ICT in teaching-learning procedures in school institutions in the Rift valley region of Kenya. Among the population of 1,436 teachers, the study targeted 30% of them which was 430. By employing snowball sampling, a small number of teachers in the target population responded to the questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2018). The findings indicated that the greatest challenge that teachers face was unavailability of ICT equipment which hinders effective curriculum delivery. Only 19.5% of the teachers responded that the number of ICT equipment for teachers' use are adequate while 72.3% of them indicated the opposite. Although similar studies have been carried out in the country focusing on the integration of ICT in education, there is still a gap in ICT integration as the top professional skills affecting the delivery of services by the teachers (Oduor, 2018). To address this gap, this study investigated teachers' preparedness on ICT for proper implementation of CBC in public primary schools in Starehe subcounty.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a convergent concurrent research design. Convergent concurrent research seeks to find answers to questions by simultaneously collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data, thereby allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This approach was preferred because of its relevance to educational research (Hallinger, 2018). According to Orodho (2016), research design refers to the place where the research is to be carried out. This study was conducted in public primary schools in Starehe Sub County. Starehe is one of the seventeen sub-counties in Nairobi County. The study targeted a population of 48 public junior secondary, 48 head teachers, 144 Junior secondary school teachers and 2 curriculum Support officers.

Stratified random sampling procedure was employed. This method involved dividing the entire population into distinct strata or subgroups, which in this study were head teachers, teachers, and Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs). Stratified sampling was chosen to increase the precision of the sample by ensuring that each subgroup was appropriately represented, thereby enhancing the overall representative of the sample. The researcher relied on the primary data that was collected through interview and questionnaires. Analysis of data involved sorting out of incorrect responses. Coding and categorization then followed depending on the items on the questionnaire and interview guide. Qualitative data was analyzed through narrative analysis and verbatims which entails redesigning of responses offered by the interviewees by considering the context of every case and different experiences of each interviewee which was arranged. Quantitative data was collected then computed by using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) version 23.0 program which is highly reliable and effective hence recommended. Accuracy of the data entry was confirmed before running any test by checking the missing data.

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Findings

Table 1: Readiness of Teachers in the Implementation of Competence Based Curriculum

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	67	49.0
No	69	51.0
Total	136	100

Source: Research Data (2024)

The information in Table 1 shows that 51% (69) of teachers have received in-service training in preparation for the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), while 49% (67) have not. This near-equal distribution indicates that just over half of the teachers have engaged in professional development related to the new curriculum, suggesting that a majority, though not a significant one, are somewhat prepared for the CBC. In-service training is crucial for equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective CBC implementation. According to Ochieng and Githinji (2021), teacher preparedness through professional development is vital for ensuring the successful application of the CBC, as it helps teachers understand and apply the curriculum's core principles. They argue that teachers who receive targeted in-service training are more confident in delivering the CBC, as they are better prepared to foster the competencies required for student success.

Table 2: Teachers' Preparedness to Implement the Competency-Based Curriculum

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	10	7.4
Disagree	20	14.7
Neutral	30	22.1
Agree	50	36.8
Strongly Agree	26	19.1
Total	136	100.0

Source: Research Data (2024)

According to Table 2 a combined total of 56.0% of teachers (Agree: 20(36.8%) + Strongly Agree: 26(19.1%)) feel prepared or very prepared to implement the competency-based curriculum. This indicates a majority of teachers are confident about their readiness for CBC implementation while 22.1% of teachers are neutral regarding their preparedness. This could suggest uncertainty or lack of sufficient information and training on the CBC. In addition, 22.1% of teachers (Disagree: 14.7% + Strongly Disagree: 7.4%) do not feel prepared to implement the CBC. This indicates a minority of teachers have concerns or reservations about their readiness, which could be due to insufficient training or support. The data reveals a generally positive outlook on the preparedness of teachers for implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), with many expressing confidence in their readiness. This aligns with findings from earlier studies, such as those by O'Brien and Ryan (2016), which suggest that effective training programs contribute significantly to teachers' preparedness and confidence. However, the

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presence of a substantial portion of teachers who remain neutral or disagree about their preparedness highlights areas that need further attention.

Table 3: Teachers' Perceptions on Being Fully Equipped with Subject Content for CBC Implementation

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	30	22.1
Neutral	40	29.4
Agree	66	48.5
Total	136	100

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 3 indicates that 66 teachers, representing 48.5% of respondents, feel confident in their subject content knowledge necessary for implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). This significant proportion suggests that nearly half of the teaching staff is well-prepared in terms of subject content. However, 40 teachers, or 29.4% of the respondents, remain neutral about their readiness. Murithi and Mwenda (2022) found that many teachers feel ambivalent about their preparedness for CBC due to uncertainties about their content knowledge and how to apply it in a competency-focused system. This uncertainty often stems from insufficient access to curriculum resources and varying levels of professional experience. Waweru and Kamau (2021) similarly reported that teachers who expressed neutral or mixed feelings about CBC readiness were often those who had received limited in-service training or had inadequate access to teaching materials.

Table 4: Teachers' Technological Skills for Effective CBC Implementation

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	50	36.8
Neutral	40	29.4
Agree	46	33.8
Total	136	100.0

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 4 indicates 46(33.8%) of teachers agreeing that they possess the required technological skills, it is clear that a substantial number of teachers may struggle with the technological aspects of CBC implementation. This lack of confidence could impact their ability to integrate digital tools and resources effectively into their teaching practices. The relatively low level of agreement suggests that professional development focused on technology might be necessary to ensure all teachers are adequately prepared to use digital resources in their instruction.

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Table 5: Aspects Challenging to Teachers to Implement Competence based Curriculum

Challenge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Competency Assessment	60	44.1%
Integrating CBC with Traditional Methods	50	36.8%
Engaging Students in Active Learning	26	19.1%
Total	136	100%

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 5 shows that 60(44.1%) of the teachers identified competency assessment as a significant challenge in implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). This indicates that nearly half of the educators surveyed struggle with effectively evaluating students' competencies as required by the CBC framework. Competency assessment in CBC moves beyond traditional testing to evaluate a student's ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-life situations. The high percentage reflects difficulties teachers face in designing, administering, and interpreting such assessments. Karanja and Githinji (2020) highlight that insufficient training on assessment strategies is a major barrier to effective CBC implementation. They emphasize the need for comprehensive professional development programs focusing on assessment literacy. Mwangi et al. (2019) discuss how resource limitations hinder teachers from developing diverse and practical assessment tools necessary for competency evaluation. Ochieng and Achieng (2021) point out that the subjective nature of competency assessments can lead to inconsistencies, advocating for standardized guidelines and frameworks to assist teachers. The prominence of competency assessment as a challenge underscores the necessity for systemic interventions educational authorities should prioritize.

In light of these findings, it is essential to provide targeted professional development for teachers to enhance their skills in designing and executing active learning experiences. Training programs should focus on equipping educators with practical strategies and tools to engage students effectively, thereby supporting the successful implementation of CBC. By addressing these challenges through professional development and supportive resources, educational stakeholders can better support teachers in fostering an environment conducive to active learning, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation.

Table 6: Support needed by Teachers to Implement CBC Effectively

Support needed	Frequency	Percentage
Better resources and materials	60	44.1
Regular feedback and guidance	45	33.1
Increased collaboration opportunities	35	25.7
Additional professional development	70	51.5

N=136

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 6 shows majority of teachers (51.5%) identified additional professional development as the most critical measure to improve their readiness for CBC. This indicates a

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strong demand for ongoing training and workshops that deepen their understanding of CBC principles and teaching methodologies. The significance of professional development in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge cannot be overstated. It also underscores the need for targeted, context-specific training programs that address the unique challenges of CBC implementation. As the researcher, it's important to emphasize that sustained professional development is essential for ensuring that teachers remain current with educational reforms and are capable of delivering the curriculum effectively. This finding aligns with existing research, such as the work of Vangrieken et al. (2015), which highlights the importance of collaborative learning among teachers for professional development.

Collaboration not only enhances teachers' individual skills but also contributes to a more cohesive and aligned approach to curriculum implementation. It fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, which is essential for navigating the complexities of CBC. As a researcher, it is important to advocate for the establishment of structured collaboration initiatives, such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These communities provide a formal framework for teachers to engage in ongoing, reflective dialogue about their practices and to collectively solve problems related to CBC implementation. By creating regular, dedicated time for collaboration, schools can ensure that all teachers, regardless of their current level of collaboration, have the opportunity to participate fully.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) faces several challenges, primarily rooted in insufficient teacher training, inadequate infrastructure, and high workloads. The analysis reveals that while a significant portion of teachers feel somewhat prepared to implement the CBC, there remains a notable gap in both the frequency and quality of training. The limited training intervals and inadequate facilities are hindering teachers' ability to fully engage with the new curriculum and deliver practical, hands-on learning experiences. Furthermore, the lack of technological skills among a substantial number of teachers exacerbates these issues, highlighting the need for targeted support and development.

Recommendations

The ministry of education should effectively implement the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), through a multifaceted approach. It is essential to implement a more frequent training schedule, ideally on a monthly basis, to ensure that teachers receive ongoing updates and support for CBC requirements. These training sessions should be hands-on and focused on practical classroom applications, enabling teachers to integrate new strategies effectively without the need for extended absences from their classrooms. Second, the training programs should be designed to enhance practical application. Schools headteachers should leveraging technology for training can significantly improve accessibility and flexibility. Addressing infrastructure limitations is crucial. Investments should be made to improve school facilities, including providing adequate classrooms, laboratories, and workshops to support the practical aspects of the CBC. This infrastructure is vital for enabling hands-on learning and effective curriculum delivery. Providing support for technological skills is essential. Targeted professional

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development should be offered to enhance teachers' confidence and competence in using digital tools, thereby improving their ability to integrate technology into their teaching practices.

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