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The Relevance of the Teacher's Instructional Approaches on the Implementation of Competency Based Curriculum in Private Primary Schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County, Kenya

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***Abstract*: This paper presents the findings of a study that investigated the influence of the relevance of the teacher's instructional approaches on the implementation of Competency Based Curriculum in private primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County in Kenya. The study employed a descriptive study design to collect data from the target population who were the head teachers, lower primary school teachers in the private schools offering the Competency Based Curriculum and Kirinyaga Central Sub-County. The study collected data from a sample size of 149 respondents selected using random sampling and census techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules and analyzed by descriptive and correlational statistics using Statistical Package for Social Sciences tool version 27 and through thematic narrations for qualitative data. The results of the study indicated that teachers' instructional approaches influence the implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum to a great extent with 83.3% of the respondents affirming these findings. The value for Pearson's Correlation Analysis Model was 0.866 implying that there is a strong positive relationship between the teachers' instructional approaches and the implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum. This study recommends that teachers should employ a wide range of instructional methods such as the use of projects and simulations.**

***Keywords*: Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), teachers, curriculum implementation, educational reforms, instructional methods, simulations, learner-centred approaches.**

1. Introduction

A. Background to the Study

Education is widely recognized as one of the most effective means through which a nation can empower its citizens both economically and socially. It serves as a foundation for instilling essential values, knowledge, attitudes, and skills that contribute to personal growth and national development. (Rwigema & Andala, 2022). For sustainable progress, a nation must establish a quality education system capable of addressing the challenges and opportunities of an ever-changing global environment. Such a system should equip learners with relevant knowledge and practical skills that prepare them for the labor market (Acquah, Frimpong, & Borkloe, 2017). Globally, many nations have embraced the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) as a means of developing a skilled workforce that can effectively responds to current labor market demands. According to UNESCO (2021), the term competency refers to the capacity to apply learning outcomes-comprising knowledge, skills, values and attitudes-effectively within specific contexts such as education, employment, and personal or professional growth.

The curriculum review from the Knowledge Based Curriculum to Competency Based Curriculum began in the United States of America in the 1970s and later expanded to European countries such as the United Kingdom and Germany in 1980s (Ford, 2014). It then spread further to other countries such as Australia, Canada, India, Denmark, New Zealand, Brazil, Malaysia and Finland. The developing countries of Asia and Africa such as South Africa, Nigeria, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Zambia started adopting the CBC in their respective countries in the late 2000s (Murararaneza, Mtshali and Mukamana, 2017). The aim of the curriculum review was to equip learners with practical skills and competencies so that they can fit in the ever-dynamic job market.

Kenya is currently implementing two education systems concurrently: The Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) and the Knowledge Based Curriculum (popularly known as the 8-4-4 curriculum). The latter is being implemented from form two upwards to the university) and the newly introduced Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), is being implemented from the Pre-School, Grade One to Grade Six and Junior Secondary School, now at Grade Nine. The 8-4-4 structure has been criticized as being theoretical in terms of its curriculum content and does focus less on the skills and competencies of the learners. Due to the shortcomings of the 8-4-4 system of education, the Ministry of Education rolled out the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in January 2019 which will eventually replace the current Knowledge Based 8-4-4 Curriculum (KICD, 2019).

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B. Statement of the Problem

The Competency Based Curriculum is relatively new in Kenya and is being implemented in both public and private schools in Kenya. Private schools in Kenya have been given freedom to run the teaching and learning of the new Competency Based Curriculum with minimum supervision from both Ministry of Education yet they majorly operate as business enterprises. The implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum has been beset with challenges including ill-preparedness of teachers in instructional methods and learner assessments yet are the key stakeholders in the implementation of any curriculum reforms in schools. Teachers act as the bridge or interface between the curriculum designers and the curriculum consumers (learners) and therefore no curriculum implementation can succeed without involving the teachers. Therefore, the quality of learning and education in a country largely depends on the quality of the teacher instructional methods the teacher is the main implementer of the curriculum in the school (Chebet, 2016). This study therefore seeks to assess the relevance of the teacher's instructional approaches on the implementation of Competency Based Curriculum in private primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County in Kenya.

C. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of the relevance of the teacher's instructional approaches on the implementation of Competency Based Curriculum in private primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County.

D. Research Question

What is the influence of the relevance of the teacher's instructional approaches on the implementation of Competency Based Curriculum in private primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County?

E. Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in private primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County, Kenya. The respondents were limited to the teachers handling learners in lower primary school (Grade One to Grade Three) and the head teachers of those respective schools.

F. Theoretical Framework

The study was underpinned by the Curriculum Implementation Theory which was originally formulated by Gross (1971) but revised by Rogers (1981). The theory postulates three conditional factors that are important for the success of the implementation of any new curriculum or educational programme: the competence and ability of the teacher, the clarity of the implementer, and the support from the management (Gross, 1971: Tom 1981). The teacher, who in this case is the core implementer should be very competent by being knowledgeable of the changes of the innovation or the new curriculum. The teachers should have a positive attitude towards the new curriculum and be equally innovative in terms of its implementation. According to Omollo, Odongo and Raburu, (2016), a teacher who is not aware of the changes in the instructional methodologies of the new curriculum will not be competent enough to implement it. However, the competence of the teacher can be enhanced through capacity building in new content areas and teaching methodologies.

G. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is the graphical presentation of the relationship between the study variables. Figure 1 shows the diagrammatic representation of the independent and the dependent variables.

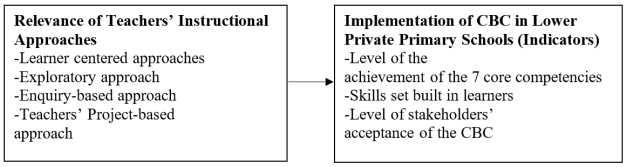

Fig. 1. Conceptual framework

2. Literature Review

The success of the implementation of the CBC will largely depend on the teachers who are the subject instructors. Teachers need to be properly trained on the new content, pedagogical methods and approaches. According to Sturgis and Casey (2018) a competency-based curriculum should adopt a learner-centered pedagogical approach with authentic formative assessments of the learners' level of development of the competencies and acquisition of skills for application in real life cases. Sturgis and Casey (2018) further add that a teacher should play the role of a facilitator who guides the learning process and less of an expert whom learners draw knowledge from. The teacher should apply such strategies as role plays, case studies, projects, study visits and problem-solving tasks in guiding the learning process. Teachers should be creative and innovative enough to design activities for learners who should use exploration to develop their competencies (Hidayanti, Rochintaniawati, & Agustin, 2018).

The competency-based curriculum requires teachers to be innovative and use a wide range of instructional approaches when conducting lessons. Irmeli (2018) avers that teachers should use a variety of approaches and modules that enable impartation of skills to learners while at the same time, the learners getting a chance to apply the knowledge acquired. The modules proposed by Irmeli (2018) are exploratory study periods, enquiry-based and use of individual or group projects. In exploratory learning approach, the learners are encouraged to learn new concepts through exploration, investigation and experimentation to uncover relationships with less of the teacher lecturing the learners.

According to Irmeli, (2018), in an enquiry-based learning, the students are encouraged to explore the learning materials and stimuli, share ideas and ask questions rather than being passive and listening to the teacher telling them what they should know. Project based instructional approach involves a teacher giving learners a chance to develop new knowledge and skills though in small tasks, case studies or projects that are challenging but mimic real-life cases and finding solutions to those challenges and how demonstrating how they can apply

those solutions in a practical manner in real-life cases. Brainstorming has been noted by Hidayanti, Rochintaniawati and Agustin (2018) to improve the originality, creativity and fluency of learners at elementary school level.

3. Research Methodology

A. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive study design. Cooper and Shindler, (2003) opine that descriptive design can be used when determining how variables of a study influence each other. This research design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on how in-service training of teachers influence the implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County.

B. Target Population and Sample Size

The study target population were the teachers in the private primary schools handling lower primary section and the head teachers of those schools. Lower primary implies learners from Grade One to Grade Three. The total target population of the study were the head teachers of private primary schools, teachers and the Sub-County Director of Education. The study sampled 169 respondents using simple random and census sampling techniques.

C. Research Instruments

This study employed the questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection from the teachers and the head teachers. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed-ended question items with a variety of alternative answers for the respondents to choose from. The closed-ended question items were graded on Likert scale. The study also interviewed the Sub-County Director of Education because this was a key informant who supervises the implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum in the entire sub-county in both public and private schools.

D. Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

Validity of a research instrument is the extent to which such an instrument accurately measures what it is expected to measure (Cresswell 2009). In order to ensure the validity of the research instruments, the question items were evaluated and appraised by the experts in the field of curriculum design and implementation and adjustments made to ensure that the question items truly covered and represented the domain of indicators under study.

Reliability of the research instruments is the extent to which the research items produce consistent results after repeated trials (Cresswell, 2009). In order to test the reliability of the research instrument, the researcher employed test-retest method by administering the questionnaire twice to a sample of twenty respondents from the neighbouring Mwea East Sub-County within an interval of two weeks. The results of the two set of tests were then computed and correlated using the Pearsons Product Moment Correlation Coefficient model (r) to test the strength of the test-retest reliability coefficient which produced a value of 0.732, which is an acceptable and good measure of reliability coefficient.

E. Data Analysis Procedures

This study collected both qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data which was collected through interviews and from the open-ended questions was described into themes and presented in content narrative summaries through holistic description of the objective of the study. Quantitative data, which will be collected from the closed-ended items in the questionnaire, was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 tool and then analyzed into descriptive and correlations using Pearsons Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis.

4. Findings

A. Demographic Information

The findings of the demographics revealed that majority of the respondents were female teachers (68%) while the male teachers were 32% as shown in figure 2.

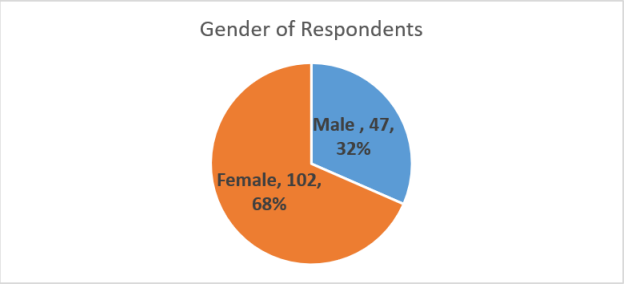

Fig. 2. Gender of respondents

Figure 2 shows that the number of female teachers is more than double that of the male teachers. This implied that that there is a gender imbalance in terms of teachers employed by private primary schools especially at the lower primary level, between Grades One and Three. Most schools prefer female teachers over their male counterparts. In terms of age, majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of between 20-39 years. It was further noted that majority of the respondents had three-four years of experience in teaching the competency-based curriculum. In terms of education level of teachers, majority of the respondents either had a certificate or diploma in education. A few of the respondents had graduate and postgraduate qualifications.

B. Education Level of Respondents

The study sought to establish the education attained by the respondents who were the head teachers and the teachers. The findings are captured in Table 1.

Table 1
The education level of respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	65	43.7
Diploma	54	36.2
Degree	21	14.1
Postgraduate	9	6.0
Total	**149**	**100.0**

The findings from Table 1 indicate that the majority of the respondents have a certificate level of training in teaching (43.7%) followed by those with a diploma level qualification (36.2%). The respondents with a degree were 14.1% while those with postgraduate training were 6.0%. A certificate level training is the nationally accepted first level for all teachers handling learners in primary schools in Kenya. This information shows that the teachers have the requisite formal training for the implementation of any curriculum with over a half of them having attained higher training of diploma in education and above.

C. Teachers' Level of Preparedness for Competency Based Curriculum

The study sought to establish the teachers' level of knowledge and preparedness for the implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum. The findings are as captured in Table 2.

Table 2
Teacher's level of preparedness for the implementation of CBC

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Low	29	19.5
Moderate	26	17.4
High	94	63.1
Total	**149**	**100.0**

The findings showed that 29 (19.5%) of the respondents stated their level of preparedness for the CBC was low. This shows that they did not have confidence in themselves implementing the CBC to the learners. The findings further showed that 26 respondents (17.4%) stated that they had substantial knowledge of the CBC curriculum and were prepared to a moderate level. Those respondents who stated being ready and prepared for the implementation of the CBC were 94 (63.1%). Since the CBC curriculum has already been rolled out in schools, it is expected that all teachers should be well prepared for its implementation. For effective implementation of the CBC, teachers should adopt learner centred instructional methods.

D. The Relevance of the Teachers' Instructional Approaches on the Implementation of Competency Based Curriculum in Schools

The study sought to establish the relevance of the teacher's instructional approaches and how it influences the implementation of Competency Based Curriculum in private primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County. The CBC requires teachers to be innovative and use a wide range of instructional approaches when conducting lessons. Irmeli (2018) proposed three approaches for the use in instruction of CBC: exploratory, enquiry-based and project based. It is advisable for the teacher to adopt a learner-centred approach in the CBC instruction. Majority of the respondents (77.8%) stated that they use learner-based approaches in learner instruction.

E. The Learner-Centred Approaches used by the Teachers for Instruction

The most common learner-centred approaches adopted mainly in CBC learner instruction are exploratory, enquiry-based and project based. Exploratory learning encourages learners to experiment, investigate and explore new concepts and relationships in their area of interests and less on lecture method of learning. In enquiry-based learning, the learners are encouraged to explore the learning materials and stimuli, share ideas and ask questions rather than being passive and listening to the teacher telling them what they should know. In project-based instructional approach, the teacher gives the learners some challenging tasks and small projects for them to find the solutions to those challenges and how they can be applied in real-life situations (Irmeli, 2018).

The study enquired from the respondents the learner-based learner instruction approach they use mostly. Out of the 116 respondents, 53 representing 45.7% stated that they use exploratory approach; 37 respondents (31.9% of the respondents) stated that they use enquiry-based approach while 26 respondents (22.4% of the respondents) used project-based approach in learner instruction. This shows that the most preferred learner instructional approach for CBC by teachers and head teachers in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County is the exploratory approach.

F. Frequency of the Use of Learning Methodologies

Teachers can employ various teaching and learning methodologies in learner instruction. The most common learning methodologies are: brainstorming and group discussions, question and answer, demonstrations and simulations, extended learning out of classroom, role modelling and mentorship and lecture method. The respondents were asked to state the frequency of the use of these learning methodologies. The responses were graded as follows: 1-Never (N), 2-Seldom (Se), 3-Sometimes (So), 4-Often (O) and 5-Almost Always (AA). The findings are captured in Table 3.

The findings indicate that 47 (31.5%) of the respondents indicated that they almost always use brainstorming and group discussions as a preferred learning methodology while 69 (46.3%) stated that they often use brainstorming and group discussions as a learning method. The findings further show that 30 (20.1%) of the teachers in Kirinyaga Central Sub-county sometimes prefer to use brainstorming and group discussions methods in the instruction of learners in lower private primary schools. The teachers who seldom use this method were three

Table 3
Frequency of the use of learning methodologies

Statement	N-1	Se=2	So=3	O=4	AA=5	N	Mean	St. Dev
Brainstorming/Group Discussions	0 (0.0 %)	3 (2.0%)	30 (20.1%)	69 (46.3%)	47 (31.5%)	149	4.00	0.772
Question and Answer	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.3%)	16 (10.7%)	54 (36.2%)	77 (51.7%)	149	4.38	0.732
Demonstrations and Simulations	1 (0.7%)	4 (2.7%)	31 (20.8%)	55 (36.9%)	58 (38.9%)	149	4.11	0.871
Extended Learning out of Classroom	2 (1.3%)	8 (5.4)	39 (26.2%)	66 (44.3%)	34 (22.8%)	149	3.82	0.893
Role Modelling and Mentorship	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.3%)	26 (17.4%)	73 (49.0%)	48 (32.2%)	149	4.12	0.734
Lecture	32 (21.5%)	31 (20.8%)	54 (36.2%)	18 (12.1%)	14 (9.4%)	149	2.67	1.211

(2.0%). Generally, all the teachers, though in varying percentages, use brainstorming and group discussions as one of the methods for learner instruction.

The findings also show that majority of the respondents use question and answer method with 54 (36.2%) of the teachers stating that they often use it; 16 (10.7%) of the respondents indicated they sometimes use it while 77 (51.7%) stated that they always use the method of learner instruction. Generally, 98.6% of the teachers stated that they use question and answer method in learner instruction.

The third learning method that can be used in learning is demonstrations and simulations. The findings show that 31 (20.8%) of the teachers sometimes use it; 55 (36.9%) often use this learning method while 58 (38.9%) always use this method in learner instruction. Generally, 96.9% of the teachers use demonstrations and simulations in learner instruction though at various degrees.

Another learning method being used in CBC instruction is Extended Learning out of Classroom. This is learning that is done outside the stipulated classroom hours and it includes field work and other academic trips. The findings show that 34 (22.8%) of teachers always engage in extended learning out of classroom; 66 (44.3%) of the teachers often engage learners in extended learning while 39 (26.2%) of the teachers sometimes engage learners in extended learning out of classroom. The findings indicted that eight teachers (5.4%) seldom engage in extended teaching out of classroom while two teachers (1.3%) never engage learners in extended learning out of classroom. The study findings generally indicate that teachers normally engage learners in extended learning out of classroom.

The study further sought to establish whether teachers have adopted the use of role modelling and mentorship as another method of learner instruction. The findings show that 48 (32.2%) of the respondents always use this method of learner instruction; 73 (49.0%) often use this method while 26 (17.4%) of the teachers sometimes use this method of role modelling and mentorship for learner instruction. The teachers who seldom use this method were only two (1.3%) of the respondents. This clearly shows that teachers strive to be good models to their learners.

On the question of whether teachers use lecture method in learner instruction, 32 (21.5%) of the respondents stated that they have never used that method for learner instruction; 31 (20.8%) stated that they use the method; 54 (36.2%) stated that they sometimes use the method; 18 (12.1%) of the respondents indicated that they often use the method while 14 (9.5%) of the teachers stated that always use that method. It is generally observed that many teachers do not use lecture method for instructional assessment.

G. The Extent to which the Teacher's Instructional Approaches Influence the Implementation of CBC in Schools

The study examined the extent to which the teacher's instructional approaches influence the implementation of CBC in private primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County. The respondents who comprised of the head teachers and the teachers were asked to rate their responses on a Likert Scale of four grades as described as follows: a very great extent, a great extent, a moderate extent and low extent. The findings are captured in Figure 3.

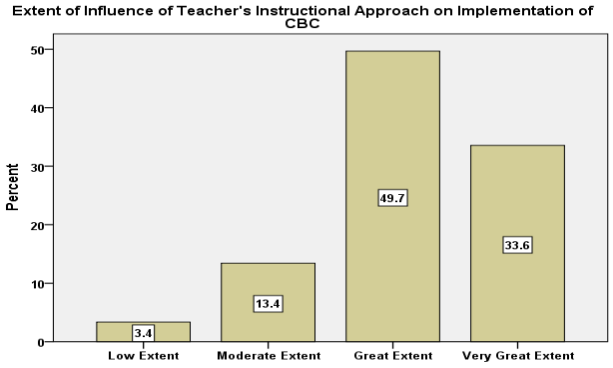

Fig. 3. The extent to which teacher's instructional approach influences the implementation of CBC

The findings from Figure 3 indicate that five respondents (3.4%) were of the opinion that teacher's instructional approaches influence the implementation of CBC in private primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub County to a low extent; 20 respondents (13.4%) stated that it influenced to a moderate extent while 74 respondents (49.7%) felt that it influences to a great extent. The respondents who felt that teacher's instructional approaches influenced the implementation of CBC to very great extent were 50 (33.6%). These responses attest to the fact that teachers should adopt instructional methods or approaches that are learner-centred in their instructional roles for effective implementation of the CBC in primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County. The most common learner-centred approaches include exploratory study periods, enquiry-based and use of individual or group projects

H. Correlations Analysis between the Variables

The study computed a Pearson's Correlation analysis between the independent variable (teachers' instructional approaches) and the dependent variable (Implementation of CBC in private primary schools). The value for the Pearson's Correlation Moment analysis for the two variables at 95% confidence level (2-tailed test) was 0.866 implying that there is a strong positive relationship between teachers' instructional approaches and the implementation of CBC private primary schools in Kirinyaga Central Sub-County. This implies that teachers' instructional approaches directly affect the implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum to learners. Therefore, teachers should adopt learner-centred instructional approaches that emphasize more on the acquisition of skills and competencies than those that focus on the acquisition of knowledge for the sake of it.

5. Conclusions

The study established that in most schools, teachers have adopted learner-centred instructional approaches such as exploratory and enquiry-based. However, most teachers did not

use projects and simulations as an instructional approach because it was deemed expensive and also most schools lacked the necessary infrastructure and equipment for these instructional methods.

6. Recommendations

This paper recommends that schools should collaborate closely with parents to encourage their support in providing the necessary materials and equipment for learner projects and simulations. Finally, the study recommends involving teachers in the design, formulation and development of CBC materials and resources to help validate the content for specific grade levels. This will foster greater ownership, support and positive attitudes towards the curriculum.

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