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TEACHER PREPAREDNESS FOR CONTENT DELIVERY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN KENYAN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed teacher preparedness in content delivery and its influence on the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in public and private junior secondary schools in Nyandarua North Sub-County, Kenya. The study was guided by Gross's Curriculum Implementation Theory and employed a correlational research design using a mixed-methods approach. The target population comprised of 324 teachers, Heads of Institutions (HoIs), and Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) from selected public and private junior secondary schools. The sample size comprised of 195 individuals arrived at through purposeful sampling and random sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, and observation checklists. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, and Pearson correlation analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that teacher preparedness, measured through professional qualifications, in-service training, subject content mastery, pedagogical competence, and ICT integration skills, significantly influenced effective implementation of CBC. Teachers who had received adequate CBC training demonstrated greater competence in applying learner-centered teaching strategies and competency-based assessments. The study concluded that teacher preparedness remains a critical determinant in successful curriculum implementation. The study recommends strengthening continuous professional development programs, enhancing CBC-focused training, and improving institutional support systems to equip teachers with competencies required for effective curriculum delivery.

KEYWORDS: Competency-Based Education, Curriculum Delivery, Preparedness, Teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of competency-based education has become a major educational reform globally due to its emphasis on practical competencies, learner-centered instruction, and skills development. Studies indicate that student-centered teaching approaches enhance essential Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) outcomes, including collaboration, analytical thinking, problem-solving,

innovation, and inquiry-based learning (Muchira, Morris, Wawire, & Oh, 2023). Similarly, Kwak (2019) and Choi and Woo (2020) observed that CBC contributes significantly to the development of creativity, reasoning abilities, and problem-solving competencies among learners. According to Levine and Patrick (2019), competency-based education equips students with the necessary abilities for higher education and future professional success. In Kenya, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD, 2017) introduced CBC to develop learners' competencies, values, and skills required for participation in a technologically driven twenty-first-century society.

Globally, several countries have adopted CBC reforms to improve educational outcomes and workforce preparedness. The United States implemented CBC as a response to declining academic achievement and concerns over educational quality (Kellie, 2019), while European countries embraced competency-based approaches to address socio-economic and labor market challenges (Banks, 2009). Research from the United States and South Korea indicates that CBC implementation improved learner autonomy, self-efficacy, lifelong learning skills, and problem-solving abilities (Muchira et al., 2023). However, these countries also encountered implementation challenges, particularly concerning teacher preparedness among other challenges. Studies reported insufficient training opportunities and limited guidance for teachers implementing CBC approaches (Muchira et al., 2023).

The effectiveness of CBC implementation depends heavily on several school-based factors, including teacher preparedness among others. Teacher preparedness occupies a central position because teachers are the primary implementers of curriculum reforms. Effective implementation requires teachers to possess adequate content knowledge, pedagogical competencies, positive attitudes, and technological skills that support learner-centered teaching approaches. Momanyi and Rop (2019) established that teacher preparedness significantly influences curriculum implementation and successful syllabus coverage. Similarly, Akala (2021) and Isaboke, Mweru, and Wambiri (2021) noted that successful CBC implementation depends on teachers' competencies and experience in applying student-centered instructional approaches.

Teacher preparedness further includes participation in in-service training and continuous professional development. Previous studies recommend regular teacher training programs to strengthen pedagogical competencies and facilitate effective curriculum implementation (Arop, Umanah, & Effiong, 2015; Muasya & Waweru, 2019). According to Kanyonga, Mtana, and Wendt (2019), learner-centered strategies such as group discussions, role plays, debates, and experimental activities are fundamental instructional approaches within competency-based education. Consequently, teachers require adequate preparation to transition from traditional teacher-centered instructional practices toward facilitative and learner-centered methodologies.

In Kenya, concerns regarding teacher readiness have emerged since the introduction of CBC. KICD (2017) identified inadequate pedagogical competencies among teachers as a major challenge affecting CBC implementation in primary schools. Research conducted by Waweru (2018) further found that

many teachers experienced difficulties in lesson planning and rubric development, with approximately three-quarters indicating insufficient preparedness and need for additional training. Similarly, the 2023 Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA) report highlighted performance disparities across subjects and recommended enhanced teacher retraining and resource provision to improve curriculum delivery (KNEC, 2024). These findings suggest that teacher preparedness remains a critical factor affecting implementation effectiveness.

Although previous studies have examined CBC implementation challenges within primary education, limited attention has been given to teacher preparedness in junior secondary schools, particularly within both public and private institutions. The transition into junior secondary education introduced new instructional demands and implementation complexities in the primary schools. Therefore, assessing teacher preparedness and its influence on CBC implementation in junior secondary schools remains essential for understanding factors that may facilitate or hinder effective curriculum execution. This study therefore sought to assess teacher preparedness in content delivery and its influence on implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum in public and private junior secondary schools in Nyandarua North Sub-County, Kenya.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

To assess teacher preparedness in content delivery in public and private schools and its influence on implementation of Competency Based Curriculum.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a correlational research design within a mixed-methods approach. The design was appropriate because it enabled assessment of the teacher preparedness in content delivery and its influence on implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum in public and private junior secondary schools, without manipulating variables (Creswell, 2008). Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teaching and learning resources, teacher preparedness, and physical infrastructure influence CBC implementation in junior secondary schools in Nyandarua North Sub-County. The design focused on naturally occurring conditions and used statistical correlation to establish relationships among variables.

3.2 Target Population

The target population comprised 38 public and 7 private junior secondary schools, 234 public school teachers, 43 private school teachers, 45 Heads of Institutions, and 2 curriculum support officers (CSOs), giving a total of 324 respondents. A combination of purposive sampling, simple random sampling, and census techniques was used to select the sample. Public schools were randomly selected, while all private schools, their teachers, and CSOs were included due to their small number. The total sample comprised 195 respondents (60.1%), ensuring representativeness and reducing sampling bias.

3.3 Instruments

Data were collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, and an observation checklist. Questionnaires were administered to teachers and included both closed and open-ended items covering demographics and teacher preparedness. Interview schedules were used for HoIs and CSOs to obtain detailed qualitative information on CBC implementation and resource adequacy. An observation checklist was used to verify the availability of facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, ICT resources, libraries, and playgrounds. Content validity was ensured through expert review, while reliability was tested using the test-retest method and Spearman's correlation coefficient, which yielded a reliability value of 0.76, indicating acceptable consistency.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data obtained was guided by predetermined indicators. The results are presented in the section below.

4.1 Teaching Outside Specialization

The teachers were asked to indicate whether they had ever taught subjects that they were not trained to teach. The responses of public junior school teachers were as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Teachers teaching outside specialization

Parameter	Variable	Percentage
Public JS teachers	Yes	63%
	No	37%
Private JS teachers	Yes	72%
	No	28%

The study found that a significant proportion of teachers in both public and private junior secondary schools taught subjects outside their area of training. In public schools, 63% of teachers reported this practice, while in private schools the proportion was 72%. These findings indicate a widespread mismatch between teacher training and subject allocation across both school categories, which is likely to affect curriculum delivery. Teachers further confirmed that teaching outside specialization negatively affected syllabus coverage. Overall, 80% agreed (Mean = 4.33, SD = 0.83) that syllabus coverage was slowed due to this mismatch.

4.2 In-Service Training for CBC Implementation

Teacher exposure to CBC in-service training was found to be low across both school categories.

Table 2: Teachers' participation in CBC in-service training

Attended in-service training	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Public JS Teachers	56	48	59	52
Private JS teachers	13	30	30	70

The results show that more than half of public-school teachers and a large majority of private school teachers had not attended any CBC training, indicating limited professional development. Teachers recommended improvements in CBC in-service training across several areas. They called for more regular and longer training sessions, including extended workshops for public school teachers and annual refresher courses with online options for private school teachers. They further emphasized the need to strengthen training content by focusing on ICT integration, competency-based assessment, and subject-specific pedagogy. Additionally, they suggested the use of more experienced and interactive facilitators, provision of both printed and digital training materials, and improved motivation through fair and adequate training allowances for all teachers.

4.3 Teacher Preparedness and CBC implementation

Teacher preparedness was assessed across key CBC implementation dimensions.

Table 3: Teacher preparedness indicators

Indicator	Public JS		Private JS	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Lesson planning	3.21	1.39	3.02	1.34
Preparedness to teach CBC	3.09	1.31	2.95	1.31
Adequate CBC training	2.74	1.34	2.84	1.34
Student engagement	3.65	1.09	3.86	1.08
Preparedness to assess learners	2.65	1.32	2.74	1.36
ICT integration	2.77	1.34	2.86	1.34
Availability of sign language teacher	1.73	0.99	2.93	1.38
Availability of PE teacher	2.05	1.12	2.86	1.32

The results indicate only slight differences between public and private junior secondary schools in CBC implementation indicators. Public schools record marginally higher mean scores in lesson planning (M=3.21) and overall preparedness to teach CBC (M=3.09), suggesting slightly better

compliance with planning requirements and teaching readiness. However, both school types show relatively low levels of adequate CBC training, with private schools ($M=2.84$) slightly outperforming public schools ($M=2.74$). Private schools generally demonstrate stronger outcomes in student engagement ($M=3.86$), ICT integration ($M=2.86$), and assessment preparedness ($M=2.74$) compared to public schools, indicating better learner participation and slightly improved instructional support. A major disparity is observed in the availability of specialized staff, where private schools report higher presence of sign language and physical education teachers than public schools. Overall, both categories show moderate preparedness for CBC implementation, with private schools performing better in inclusivity, ICT integration, and learner engagement, while public schools slightly lead in lesson planning and general teaching preparedness.

A Pearson correlation on the mean rates public JS vs. private JS was calculated and found to be $r=0.63$, which indicate a moderate positive correlation. This shows that public and private junior JS teachers rated the given CBC indicators in similar directions. Thus, what public schools rate higher, the private schools also rate higher and vice versa. Nonetheless, a p-value of 0.097 shows that the relationship is not statistically significant at 95% confidence level.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study established that teacher preparedness significantly influences CBC implementation in both public and private junior secondary schools. The widespread assignment of teachers to subjects outside their specialization reflects staffing shortages, which negatively affect syllabus coverage. Interview data from Heads of Institutions (HoIs) and Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) revealed four key challenges affecting CBC implementation, namely teacher shortages and subject mismatch, inadequate in-service training, weak ICT integration in public schools, and challenges in competency-based assessment. These findings indicate that capacity-related limitations continue to hinder effective implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum across junior secondary schools.

These findings corroborate Sikolia (2024) in a study that indicated that public junior schools in Kiminini sub-county face shortage of teachers leading to teaching overloads. Furthermore, the study revealed that public and private JS schools experienced mismatch between teacher training and teaching assignments due to teacher shortage, thereby hampering effective CBC delivery. The findings are also consistent with those of Mutungu, Kimosop and Wambugu (2025) who found that some teachers in JS teach in areas that they have not specialized in, which negatively affect CBC implementation. The study found that most teachers did not receive adequate in-service training, thereby affecting CBC implementation. This concurs with a study by Mugambo et al (2021) in Rwanda, which found that most teachers received in-sufficient training. The study also agree with Sitenei (2020) who found that in-service training for teachers under CBC was limited and targeted only a smaller proportion of teachers. Isaboke, Wambiri and Mweru (2021) also indicate that inadequate training among teachers on CBC has a negative effect on implementation of CBC.

Overall, the study found that majority of teachers were not adequately prepared to implement CBC. For instance, majority did not prepare lesson plans as required and that some especially from public schools applied teacher centered teaching methods contrary to CBC requirements. . Similar studies also indicated that some teachers continue traditional teacher-directed teaching methods instead of adapting to CBC (Nsengimana, 2020; Nyoni, 2018; Momanyi & Rop, 2019). The study also found that teacher preparedness in ICT integration is wanting in public and private schools, which hindered effective CBC implementation. This is consistent with other study indicating that teachers lacked enough skills to integrate ICT in CBC delivery (Omito et al, 2019; Abobo, 2018; Muriithi & Yoo, Muinde & Mbataru, 2019).

6.0 CONCLUSION

The study concluded that teacher preparedness significantly influences the effective implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in both public and private junior secondary schools in Kenya. Teacher shortages and the assignment of teachers to subjects outside their areas of specialization negatively affect syllabus coverage and quality of content delivery. Inadequate in-service training further limits teachers' understanding and application of CBC approaches, while weak ICT integration and challenges in competency-based assessment hinder effective curriculum implementation. These findings demonstrate that capacity-related constraints continue to impede successful CBC implementation, thereby underscoring the need for strengthened teacher training, staffing, and instructional support systems.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission enhances regular and comprehensive in-service training policy that ensures continuous development modules aligned with CBC pedagogy is provided to all teachers. The study recommends that the Teachers Service Commission recruits more specialized teachers to address staffing shortages and reduce subject mismatch. Schools should also strengthen ICT infrastructure and equip teachers with competency-based assessment skills to enhance effective CBC implementation. The head of institutions may consider encouraging improvisation by teachers in creation of teaching aids.

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