

**TEACHERS' COMPETENCY AS A CORNERSTONE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM IN KENYA.  
A CASE OF LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NAKURU COUNTY**

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**Abstract**

Kenya as a country has embarked on curriculum reforms that have seen the introduction of competency based curriculum (CBC) to replace the outcome based curriculum, which put more emphasis on examination outcome rather than learner's competency. The purpose of the study is to determine the teachers' competency as a cornerstone on the implementation of competency based curriculum (CBC) in the lower primary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. Related literature was reviewed from studies done locally, regionally and internationally. The research employed descriptive survey design. The researcher used stratified and purposive random sampling technique. A sample of 200 teachers and 100 head teachers took part in the study. The researcher used questionnaire and interview guide in collecting data. A pilot study was carried out and a split-half method was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument. Expert judgment was employed to determine the validity of the research instrument. The data collected in the field was analyzed using descriptive and null hypotheses tested at  $\alpha= 0.05$ . The finding of this study revealed that teachers' competency significantly influenced the implementation of the competency based curriculum. The researcher recommends that there is need of adequate and effective training of facilitators and trainers then consistent training sessions and re-training of teachers for efficient implementation of the curriculum. The researcher also recommends stakeholders should adequately create a framework for training programs on preparing the teacher on the paradigm shift from teaching to learning.

**Key words:** *Teachers' Competency, Cornerstone, Implementation, Competency Based Curriculum*

## **Introduction**

In Kenya, formal education was introduced during the British colonial era. Between 1964 and 1985, an education structure 7-4-2-3 (seven years of primary school, four years of secondary school, two years of high school, and three years of university education) was modeled and adopted (Kinuthia, 2009). The 8-4-4 system of education Eight years of primary school, four years of secondary school and four years of university was later introduced in January 1985, following concerns that the basic education provided previously lacked the necessary content to promote widespread sustainable self-employment. The Kenyan primary curriculum is approved for all public schools and private schools except for international schools which usually offer the British or American curriculum, followed by the corresponding examination certificates, the subjects provided in the primary level are; English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Science, Social studies, Religious education, Creative Arts, Physical education and Life skills (Kinuthia, 2009). In a major departure from the 8-4-4 system, the proposed system of 2-6-3-3-3 was launched in 2017 which was designed to take two years in preprimary, six in primary education, three in junior secondary education, three in senior secondary education and three at the University. The Competency-Based curriculum (CBC) has brought new changes in that, Early Childhood Education Development (ECED) was incorporated to the basic education and has two levels only (Pre-Primary 1 and 2) that is PP1 and PP2 and the subject areas are now referred to learning areas. The Pre-Primary learning areas are; Mathematical Activities, Language Activities/Kenya Sign language/Pre Braille Activities, Environmental activities, Psychomotor and Creative activities/ outdoor activity, Religious Education(CRE,IRE,HRE) with a total of 25 lessons per week. While the Lower Primary, learning areas are; Literacy Activities and Indigenous Languages /Braille, Kiswahili Language Activities/Kenya Sign Language, English Language activities, Mathematical activities, Environmental activities, Hygiene and Nutrition

activities, Religious activities (CRE, IRE, HRE), Movement and Creative activities and Pastoral Programme with a total of 35 lessons per week. In designing the Competency-Based curriculum it is envisioned that at the end of the learning period every learner should have competence in the following seven core competency areas; communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, imagination and creativity, citizenship, learning to learn, self-efficacy and digital literacy. However, Khan, (2012) noted that, the need for a criteria or guidelines on how competencies are evaluated and attained during each phase or level of development for instance it is expected that after completion of each level, there are should be clear specifications that a learner started as a beginner level then moved to competent level and then proficient level and lastly expert level.

In practice, a competency is the ability to apply learning resources: skills, knowledge, ethics and attitudes adequately in various defined real- life contexts educational, work, personal or professional development (Njeng'ere, 2017). Learners are thus expected to be presented with resources which they interact with and construct meaning out of them in the Competency-Based approach (Barman, 2011). The Competency-Based models are mainly applicable in vocational education and training due to the emphasis on standards of competence in occupational sectors. The concept is thus more useful in vocational education, since the emphasis is on the ability of the student to perform a set of related tasks with a high degree of skills in addition in the vocational education a particular competency can be broken down through task analysis into its component skills (Brandt & Tyler, 2011).

## Literature

A study conducted by Kafyulilo, (2012) teacher training ought to be a priority in order to actualize reform in education. Any functional system of education should involve consistent retraining of teachers for the efficient implementation of the curriculum. With the CBC seeking an enhanced teacher's role in providing opportunity for the learner to realize and develop full potential, teachers need significant knowledge, skills and ability to interact with all students, setting manageable standards and choosing instructional materials that can accommodate students at different levels. For effective learning especially under the CBC, a good choice of a variety of pedagogy is paramount. Teachers need to be highly knowledgeable in the application of teaching strategies necessary to make pupils learning effectively. Waweru (2018) conducted a study on the influence of teacher preparedness on the implementation of Competency-Based curriculum in primary schools. Findings based from the study established that Teachers were not prepared in implementing the CBC while 98.8 percent of the teachers indicated they were not prepared to implement the CBC especially in the new subjects while 95 percent noted that preparing lesson plans for all lessons was impossible owing to the time writing a single lesson plan takes. The study also established that over 50 percent of the teachers needed support on infusing creativity and imagination, designing assessment rubrics, which are tasks tailored towards discerning learners' abilities in performing specific tasks.

Paulo (2014) conducted a study on pre-Service teacher's preparedness to implement the Competency-Based Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Tanzania. The findings showed that since the competence based curriculum was introduced in secondary schools in the year 2005, there was

no evidence that teacher education curriculum at the University of Dar es Salaam where secondary school teachers are trained had changed to cater for new demands arising from the introduction of competence based curriculum in secondary schools. A study conducted by Hwande & Mpofu (2017) on the preparedness of the primary school to implement the grade three new curriculum in Zimbabwe. The findings showed that teacher development training received was not equal to the teacher's needs, while some of the facilitators were not fluent with the demands of the new curriculum in addition to lack of textbooks and the internet despite the fact that the new curriculum requires internet search among teachers. Kimosop (2019) conducted another study on teacher competence and preparedness. The purpose was to investigate Teacher preparedness in the implementation of the early childhood education development curriculum in Kenya. The study established that majority of pre-school teachers in the country were not well prepared in the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers need to be involved when the KICD and MOE are preparing the curriculum since they are the key implementers.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed descriptive survey research design to get opinions from teachers in Nakuru County about teachers' competency and implementation of CBC. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), descriptive survey design is used in collecting data from the members of a population in order to determine the current status under study. This design is deemed appropriate because it is an efficient method of collecting descriptive data regarding characteristics of a sample.

### **3.3 Location of the study**

This location of the study was in Nakuru County which is located in the former Rift Valley Province and is about 165 km to the north west of Nairobi city the capital city of Kenya. It covers an area of 7496.5 square kilometers. It is geographically located between latitude  $0^{\circ} 25.3'$  North and  $0^{\circ} 53.2'$  North and longitude  $35^{\circ} 24.4'$  East and  $36^{\circ} 04'$  East. Nakuru County borders seven counties; Bomet to the south west, Narok to the south west, Kericho to the west, Baringo to the north, Kajiado to the south, Nyandarua to the east and Laikipia to the north east.

### **SAMPLE**

Two hundred teachers and one hundred head teachers were selected from a target population of 4,513 teachers. Stratified random sampling was adopted. The technique placed the respondents into two strata on the basis of gender (male and female). Simple random sampling was used because it necessitated selecting of schools in such a way that each school had an equal probability of being included in the sample. The main factor to consider in determining the sample size was the need to keep it manageable. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample headteachers.

### **Instrumentation**

Data was collected using a questionnaire for teachers and interview guide for head teachers. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended items. A closed-ended questionnaire is one which the respondent is offered the choice of alternative responses. Open-ended questionnaire is not followed by any kind of choice and the answers have to be recorded in full in order to support and check the alternative choice responses given by the respondent. Interview guide is a useful tool for

collecting data because it provide highly personalized data, high return rate and there are opportunities for probing Koskei & Simiyu, (2015)

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS**

From the study, the following were the findings:

1. The findings indicate that 90% of the sampled schools have only one or none at all trained teacher in the CBC with a learner population of 50-85 pupils per grade.
2. The training sessions were conducted for two-three days only instead of the stipulated five days. This is contrary to the stipulated period, hence giving teachers a raw deal.
3. Training sessions were largely ineffective due to the overload of the training contents in the two-three day training session and the two-three days training sessions was inadequate.
4. Incompetent trainers/facilitators; the trainers had not conceptualized and understood the CBC, hence were unable to adequately facilitate the training effectively.
5. The trainees were too many for the trainers to handle within the short training period.
6. Lack of adequate training materials and inadequate information on the new curriculum.
7. Training sessions were infused with TUSOME and EGMA which has brought confusion in the application of knowledge and teaching approaches.
8. Hygiene and Nutrition and Environmental activities were not well infused into the training workshop.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made;

1. The implementation of the competency- based curriculum was hurriedly done before the majority of the teachers were trained on its contents and teaching methods.
2. The data suggested that inadequate training of teachers will hinder most of them from obtaining a solid base of essential knowledge of Competency-Based curriculum.
3. The study has concluded that most pre-primary, grade one, two, and three teachers have not been trained on the CBC and the few that have attended training workshops have not been adequately trained.
4. Teachers were generally negative about CBC implementation and the training sessions.
5. The implementation of CBC is faced by untold hiccups for example lack of adequate knowledge, skills on CBC and teaching approaches among the teachers, Lack of adequate approved textbooks for teachers and learners, Lack of teachers instructional materials.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Since no research was done to justify the change from Outcomes Based Curriculum to Competency-Based Curriculum framework, education stakeholders should commission summative evaluation of the pilot phase of CBC to determine its effect on learners. This means that CBC should not be implemented in grade 5 before the result of summative evaluation.
2. Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development in collaboration with university curriculum experts should conduct a comprehensive revision of CBC for Pre-primary, Grades One,



Two, Three and Four. It should also develop clear manuals for teachers and the Curriculum Support Officers.

3. The Ministry of Education should initiate a mechanism for systematic in-service and pre-service training of teachers on the CBC.
4. There is an urgent need to incorporate aspects of CBC in teacher training curriculum in Universities and colleges. This will enhance teacher's pedagogical skills in the implementation of CBC in the classroom.

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