



Teachers' Perceptions on the Implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum in Public Pre-Schools in Hamisi Sub County

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' perception on the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in public pre-schools in Hamisi Sub-County. The study objective was to establish teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the competence-based curriculum in public pre-schools. The study adopted curriculum implementation theory and descriptive survey design. The target population was 38 public pre-schools, 38 head teachers and 320 pre-school teachers. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample which comprised 108 respondents, 96 pre-school teachers and 12 head teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires. The quantitative data was processed and analysed with the help of the SPSS software programme using Pearson product moment correlation. There was a positive influence of attitudes of the teachers ($r = .406$) on implementation of competency-based curriculum. This implies that as the attitudes of the teachers improved the on implementation of competency-based curriculum increased. The findings also indicated that majority of the teachers had a positive attitude towards the competency-based curriculum. The study recommended that the ministry of education and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development to organize for more in-service training for teachers to equip them with subject content knowledge and positively change their perceptions about the competency-based curriculum.

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Introduction

The desire to build up a society that is knowledgeable and the need to expand regional and global competition in the job markets has called for a move to a competency-based curriculum to address the demand and shortage of skilled labour in the education system. The competency-based curriculum is education that seeks to develop in learners the ability to apply appropriate skills and knowledge to successfully perform a function (Republic of Kenya, 2016). Countries around the world are carrying out extensive curriculum reforms to better prepare learners for the higher education demands and job market requirements in the 21st century.

The curriculum emphasizes on the application of skills and knowledge to real life situations. Mosha (2012), states that a competency-based curriculum is one that has specific outcome statements that outline the competencies to be developed or attained. Competency is defined as proven ability to apply skills, knowledge and personal abilities in different study or work situations (Nikolov, Sholkova & Kovatcheva, 2014). The achievement of learners' is directly proportional to teacher preparation and the quality of teachers.

Teacher quality and learner's achievement are related than other types of investments like teacher salaries and abridged number of learners per classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teachers are the implementers of the curriculum hence they play a significant role in development and transforming a learner. As such, teachers need to be highly skilled in the application of teaching methods essential to make learners

learn effectively (Kafyulilo, Rugambuka & Moses, 2012). The quality and significance of the teacher cannot be compared to any variable (Reeves, 2004).

Jadama (2014) contends that how much the teacher knows and understands the subject matter defines how well teachers can teach the curriculum content to the learners. Clarification of misconceptions of knowledge to the learners largely depends on teacher's comprehension of the subject matter through which learning is affected. The perceptions of the teachers are critical for effective curriculum implementation. Changing the teachers' attitude has been highlighted as important for successful implementation of a curriculum (Hawes, 1979).

According to Hawes (1979), curriculum implementation process involves changing the attitudes of teachers' trainers, supervisors, teachers, learners, parents, policy makers and administrators. He argues that positive attitudes do not only influence the willingness of teachers to implement the curriculum but also the pupils' willingness to learn. Gakuu (2006) points that teachers' attitude is critical in the process of curriculum implementation. Therefore, teachers should be well prepared to have a positive attitude for them to implement a new curriculum effectively.

In Mexican, the implementation of competence-based approach curriculum began in 2009 through a number of reforms on basic education and national education policies in which competence was viewed as the application of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes (Secretaria de Education Publica, 2011). The competency- based approach aimed at stimulating students in order to attain optimum academic

performance. The skills, values, attitudes and knowledge were to be applied in day to day activities and learners were expected to reflect them on their endeavours.

Rwanda shifted to the competency-based curriculum in 2015 in order to deal with scarcity in skills in the Rwandan education system with emphasis on science and technology. This was called for due to Rwanda's desire to build up a knowledgeable society in order to meet its global and local demands in the job market. This was in response to Rwanda's education philosophy of making sure that every child at all levels of learning receives quality education to develop their full potential and relevant skills, knowledge and desired attitudes that will help them fit in the society and job market (Republic of Rwanda, 2015). Rwanda's objective is to transform its state by the year 2030 into a knowledge-based society and middle-income country.

In 2005, Tanzania introduced the competency-based curriculum to curb the challenges facing preparation of learners in training institutions that compromise the quality of education. According to Komba and Kira (2013), the graduates who were the products of the old curriculum did not exhibit the competencies and skills that wholly addressed the global job market demands locally, regionally and internationally. Thus, the competency-based curriculum was intended to raise the quality of education in Tanzania and produce learners who could demonstrate and apply the acquired skills, attitudes and knowledge in problem solving in meeting the changing needs and aspirations of the society.

Kenya, like many African countries has a high number of unemployed youths. To curb this problem, education and training in Kenya must be aligned to meet the needs and aspirations of the Kenyan populace and vocational education and training should be emphasized to help reduce the high youth unemployment problem in line with sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 on policy framework on Education, Training and Research (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The social pillar in the vision 2030 singles out education and training as the vehicle into Kenya becoming a middle-income economy. The competence-based curriculum is aimed at producing a self-reliant and creative population which will reduce the unemployment rate in Kenya among the youths.

Consequently, it recommended that for effective curriculum delivery and provision of quality education, teacher capacity building, provision of learning resources and teacher training in all areas either through pre-service and in-service is fundamental. The new curriculum was aimed at creating pathways to domicile talents (Pathways to Education, 2016). The Kenyan new curriculum reforms are aimed at nurturing every learner's potential and creating an avenue for identifying, nurturing and developing the learners' talents through the learning tracks and pathways which will be provided at senior secondary (Republic of Kenya, 2016). Based on the need's assessment study carried out by KICD and the vision and mission of the BECF, there are seven competencies to be developed and they include self-efficacy, citizenship, creativity and imagination, critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration, learning to learn and digital literacy.

The introduction of competency-based curriculum in Kenya has raised a question on the capacity and teachers' preparedness to implement the CBC. The implementation of the competency-based curriculum in its first phase is facing quite a number of challenges. According to Kaviti (2018) the competency-based curriculum was hastily crafted and rushed

through a pilot that was done in 2017. A study carried out by Kaviti (2018) on the new curriculum of education in Kenya shows that the pilot system of the new curriculum took an average of ten weeks, whereby less than 2000 teachers of the total 160000 teachers imparting basic education in Kenya were trained.

According to teachers unions teachers are not prepared to take pupils though the new curriculum which explains their opposition to it. Teachers are not opposing it because they do not want it, rather because they do not understand it. Schools heads have, however insisted that teachers have been adequately trained for the CBC and are ready to implement it. Kenya Primary Heads Association (KEPSHA) chairman Ndolo said he is yet to receive any complaints regarding the new curriculum (Ndolo, 2018). Therefore, there lacks clear evidence on whether teachers have been adequately prepared for the implementation of the CBC.

Statement of the problem

The shift from content and teacher-centred curriculum to competency-based curriculum is a move towards improving the quality of education by allowing children to widen their skills pertinent in their life and diverse application (Komba & Mwandaji, 2016). However, to implement these critical amendments it is vital to equip all the instructors and make them conversant with the new methodologies of instruction and learning for successful implementation of the CBC (MacLellan, 2004). Regarding this, Sudsomboon (2010) points out that the successful realization of competency-based curriculum relies heavily on the instructors, who are required to take up the new role of coaching and facilitating rather being transmitters of knowledge. The perception of teachers on the implementation of the competency-based curriculum is very critical.

The teacher is expected to act as a facilitator in the teaching learning process. All efforts for implementation of the competency-based curriculum must be comprehensive to prepare teachers adequately for effective implementation of the competency-based curriculum. For teachers to carry out the implementation process well, they must have a positive attitude. However, since the introduction of competency-based curriculum, there is little evidence that a study has been conducted to establish the level of teacher perception on the implementation the curriculum and yet it is a crucial activity towards the implementation a curriculum. Therefore, teachers' perceptions towards the curriculum are critical because they are the implementers. This study therefore sought to establish the effect of teacher's perception on implementation of competency-based curriculum in public pre-schools in Hamisi Sub County.

Literature Review

Concept of competence-based curriculum and implementation

The competency-based curriculum lays more emphasis on what learners are expected to do rather than mainly focusing on what they are expected to know. Jallow (2011) posits that a competency-based curriculum is one that aims at developing in learners the ability to do things, to learn and learn how to learn and to know. The competency-based curriculum is considered appropriate for addressing the changing societal needs, technological socio-economic demands of the country. It is aimed at addressing issues of unemployment among the youths and graduates by emphasizing on acquisition of skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes significant in carrying out various errands

(Maodzwa-Taruvunga & Cross, 2012). The competency-based curriculum as outlined by Wangeja (2010) is one where knowledge is constructed and not transmitted and prior knowledge impacts on the learning process. It is a shift from the traditional input driven education whose main focus was development of knowledge to competence-based education which is competence-based education (Young, 2009). Its emphases on the development of skills as combined abilities of values, attitudes, skills and knowledge essential for carrying out different tasks (Mulder, 2014).

According to Mauranaza, Mtshali & Mukamanaza (2017), the competency-based curriculum that is being implemented in the developing countries is borrowed from developed countries and therefore developing countries are facing challenges in trying to adapt it. Frenk, Chen, Bhutta, Cohen, Crisp & Evans (2010) further argues that in this situation a reform in curriculum is hard to plan and slows the process of implementation. The competency-based curriculum discourages mere acquisition of knowledge and lays more emphasis on skill development. Therefore, there is need to change the teaching- learning approaches from rote memorization to approaches that support development of competencies and skills that can be applied in solving life.

Teachers perceptions and implementation of the competency-based curriculum

Teachers are crucial and influential stakeholders in determining the degree to which schools implement curriculum policies (Porter, 2015). Thus, curriculum reforms may not be effectively carried out if the teachers who are very important in executing the changes do not feel the need for curriculum reforms. A study carried out by Kaniuka (2012) observed that curriculum reformed that incorporated teachers in the decision-making process revealed necessity for increased teacher capacity and readiness for effective curriculum reforms to take place and therefore improved learner achievement. The findings from a study conducted by Luhambati (2013) on change from knowledge based to competency- based curriculum among secondary schools in Tanzania stated that some teachers regard the new textbooks as being irrelevant and some respondents conceived it as being impractical and complex.

A study carried out at San Jose State University by Fernandez (2017) investigating teachers' perception on preparedness and support to implement the English language arts curriculum core state standards found teacher competency and knowledge were fundamental in execution of curriculum reforms. Capacity or teacher readiness was considered as a prerequisite to integration of reforms where teachers first obtain a comprehension of the reforms before beginning to implement the curriculum reforms. Teachers make decisions in teaching activity based on their perceptions, experiences and beliefs about their roles and duties in school.

A study carried out by Msuya (2016) on facilitators perception on the concept of CBET found that 33.3 percent of the facilitators had not fully conceptualized the concept of competency-based education and training and could not clearly describe the teaching and learning methods and approaches used in CBET. Although they highlighted learners' active involvement and participatory as highly emphasized in implementing the CBC, they were not familiarized with the terms used in CBET curriculum practices. This slowed down the implementation process of the adopted CBET curriculum impacting on it negatively.

Another study conducted by Shamwelele (2008) also found that mathematics teachers had narrow knowledge on concepts of CBC to the extent of affecting its implementation within the classroom.

Previous studies carried out by Komba & Mwandaji (2016) focused on the shift from content and teacher centred curriculum to competency-based curriculum on improving the quality of education. A study carried by Sudsomboon (2010) pointed out that successful realization of competency-based curriculum relies heavily on the teachers' preparedness. The study sought to find out the teachers' perception on the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in public pre-schools.

Theoretical framework

This study is based on curriculum implementation theory by Gross (1971). Gross (1971) posit that for successful implementation of any educational programme, factors such as teacher competency, clarity and awareness of the implementer, capacity of the implementer, support from the management and attitude of the teachers, learners and stakeholders must be considered.

Gross (1971) states that the teacher who is the implementer should be competent; be aware of the content and what is to be implemented. He argues that when the implementers are not aware of the changes of the curriculum, they may not effective and sufficiently implement the curriculum. The implementer should also have a positive attitude towards the new curriculum and the changes therein. Baumert, Kunter, Blum, Bruener, Voss, Jordan & Tsai (2010), argues that the content knowledge of the teacher has an impact on the child's learning and affects how teachers deliver their content during classroom instruction.

Curriculum implementation theory has a link in this study in that it is about curriculum implementation. Adapting this theory, on effective competency-based curriculum implementation requires trained teachers with content knowledge of the curriculum. Therefore, the theory will help the study to establish teachers' perception on the implementation of competency-based curriculum implementation. The competency-based curriculum emphases that learners be formed with confident, be cooperative with others and lifelong learners through the construction of new knowledge and core competencies. The learners are the architects and active actors of the learning.

According to Gross (1971) capacity of the implementer is significant for effective curriculum implementation. The teachers executing the curriculum should have sufficient knowledge to effectively execute the curriculum. In-service training of teachers is vital for equipping teachers with skills and knowledge necessary for handling a new curriculum. The pre-school teachers should therefore be trained for the competency-based curriculum through seminars, workshops and in-service training to acquire skills, knowledge and behaviours for implementing the curriculum well. Gross (1971) also points the need for changing people's attitudes for effective curriculum implementation. Hawes (1979) agrees with (Gross, 1971) by emphasizing the need for changing teachers' attitudes for effective curriculum implementation.

Research methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted in this study because it was suitable in the primary data collection about teachers' perception and offers an opportunity in making descriptive assertions about a large population. Descriptive survey research design method is used to gather data about

attitudes, opinions opinion and habits of people on any educational issues by administration of questionnaires.

The population for this study consisted of the 38 public pre-schools in Hamisi Sub-County. The County had a population of 320 pre-school teachers. The study targeted 38 head teachers and 320 pre-school teachers. Sample sizes are small groups obtained from the assembled population. Simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of 30% of the target population. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sample size of 30% is adequate for descriptive survey. Therefore, in sampling the pre-school head teachers and pre-school teachers, the researcher used 30% of the target population. A total of 12 pre-schools, 12 head teachers and 96 pre-school teachers were selected for the study. The sample size was 96 pre-school teachers and 12 head teachers.

The study used questionnaires for pre-school teachers and head teachers. The researcher developed questionnaires for pre-school teachers. The questionnaire comprised both structured and unstructured questions. It was based on the objectives of the study. The instrument was deemed reliable because the head teachers have more information on teachers' perception hence will assist in acquiring more data. The teachers understanding of the implementation of the competency-based curriculum.

Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it is intended to measure. To ascertain validity, the instruments were subjected to piloting and analysis. The study used test-retest method whereby the same test was re-administered two weeks after the first admission to the same respondents. After piloting, the validity of each question was examined for clarity, relevance and suitability for the study purpose.

To determine the reliability of the research instruments, the study respondents were issued with questionnaires for them to fill. The same questionnaires were again subjected for retest. The two sets of score for each school were correlated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to test the reliability of the instruments. A co-efficient of 0.7 or above is considered appropriate and hence reliable for collecting data. Data analysis was based on the research questions design at the beginning of the research. The data analysis method that used was based on quantitative and quantitative approach using descriptive and inferential statistics. The collected data was thoroughly checked and examined for completeness and comprehensibility. The data was summarized, classified, coded and entered. This ensured better and efficient analysis. The coded data was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Quantitative data was analysed using measures of central tendency to calculate the mean and mode.

Results

Pre-school teachers' perceptions on the competency-based curriculum

This section addresses the pre-school teachers' perceptions toward the implementation of the competency-based curriculum. Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents (37.6%) perceive the competency-based curriculum as a good idea, (32.3%) indicated that it lacks facilities and it is expensive, (11.8%) feel it should not be implemented and (1.1%) feel that it is shallow compared to the other curriculum. From the information in table 1 the pre-school teachers have mixed reactions about the competency-based curriculum. This agrees with Luhambati (2013) findings which teachers indicated that the new textbooks were

irrelevant they perceived the competency-based curriculum as complicated and impractical. A study carried out by Msuya (2016) on facilitators perception on the concept of CBET found that (33.3%) of the facilitators had not fully conceptualized the concept of competency-based education and training and could not clearly describe the teaching and learning methods and approaches used. Therefore, most respondents felt there was still much that needed to be done for effective implementation of the competency-based curriculum.

Table 1. Pre-school teachers' opinions towards the implementation of the competency-based curriculum.

Opinions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It is a good curriculum	35	37.6
It lacks facilities and is expensive	30	32.3
It should not be implemented	11	11.8
It is child centered	12	12.9
Learners can think critically	4	4.3
Its content is shallow	1	1.1
Total	93	100.0

Correlation Results

Pearson product moment correlation was used to establish the influence of attitudes of the teachers on implementation of competency-based curriculum as shown in Table 2. There was a positive influence of attitudes of the teachers ($r = .406$) on implementation of competency-based curriculum. This implies that as the attitudes of the teachers improved the on implementation of competency-based curriculum increased.

Table 2. Correlation Results.

	Implementation of CBC		Attitudes of the teachers
Implementation of CBC	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Attitudes of the teachers	Pearson Correlation	.406**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

a. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=108

Majority of the pre-school teachers were in favour for the implementation of the competency-based curriculum and perceived it is a good curriculum. However, majority of the teachers had not fully understood the concept competency-based and its requirements. The head teachers also pointed out that some teachers perceive it as an expensive curriculum with many records to keep, more demanding, is loaded with a lot of work and is shallow in terms of content. This agrees with a study conducted by Msuya (2016) which found that the facilitators had not fully comprehended the concept of competency-based education and could not apply the teaching and learning methods recommended by the competency-based education.

Conclusions

Regarding the attitudes of the teachers, the findings show that majority of the teachers had positive attitudes towards the implementation of the competency-based curriculum. They perceived it as a good curriculum if supported and were ready to implement it. However, some felt it was a bit shallow in terms of content. Most of the teacher acknowledged that it was a child centered curriculum that was likely to cater for the interest of the child if fully and effectively implemented.

Recommendations

Teachers' should be adequately prepared in readiness for implementation of a new curriculum through in-service training, seminars and workshops for effective implementation of the curriculum. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development should involve more teachers' in curriculum change process to create positive attitudes among teachers for effective implementation of the competency-based curriculum.

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