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Original Article

Confronting Challenges Facing Teachers in Implementing Competency-Based Curriculum in Uganda: A Case of Secondary Schools in Gulu City

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*Uganda,
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This paper investigated the challenges facing teachers in implementing a competence-based curriculum in secondary schools in Uganda. The study employed a qualitative research approach that utilised a case study research design. The sample of the study included 50 teachers who were randomly selected, 4 heads of schools, and 4 education officers who were purposefully selected from 4 public secondary schools found in Gulu City, Uganda. Observations and interviews were used to collect the required information. The findings established that teachers faced a variety of challenges that impeded the effective implementation of a competence-based curriculum in teaching and learning. The researcher also noticed that teachers face a big problem in the implementation of competency-based curricula: insufficient training of teachers and limited engagement of teachers in workshops and seminars that would help enrich them with some skills. So, in a sense, the implementation of CBC started without enough teacher training. Poor infrastructure in schools, limited numbers of housing facilities for teachers, no recommended teaching materials given to teachers, too many students in the classroom, and high computer illiteracy rates among teachers limited the success of CBC implementation in Uganda, especially in government-aided secondary schools. Based on the results of the study, the researcher recommended the following strategies to improve the implementation of CBC in secondary schools in Uganda: revamping teacher professional development; in order to effectively facilitate learning and engage with contemporary learners, teacher educators must be with teaching teachers; establish a robust plan for ongoing constructive interactions by NCDC with all other stakeholders; provide timely resources; and invest enough in schools so that they can deliver the right curriculum. Ensure regular inspection; the inspection role should be equipped to ensure the consistency of the curriculum. Teachers should encourage and practice more project-based learning and also harmonize and implement the language of instruction and evaluation policy clearly to avoid confusion among teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

The world is changing, and we need to get ready for our kids to take on new difficulties in the twenty-first century. They have to pick up new abilities and stay up-to-date on the newest technology, and this requires serious curriculum reform to fit the current demand in the world market and life skills for a proper and sustaining economy. The school curriculum must reflect these changes, thus preparing us for our challenges. (Hassan & Shkak, 2020).

The education system should be able to give someone the potential and values to work in an area where they can acquire the skills, knowledge, and competence to do the necessary services (Nakabugo et al., 2011). While several scholars have given differing accounts of the origins of CBE, research indicates that the majority of them agree that the behavioural objective movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s is the primary source of CBE. The original behavioristic competency-based education method was criticised, but it has since made a resurgence and is relevant. These days, CBE initiatives are common in developing nations like South Africa, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Ethiopia, as well as wealthy nations like the United States, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. The increasing awareness of the necessity of direct growth is the reason for the focus on competence-based education of capabilities and not just on acquiring qualifications, as capabilities are perceived as pre-

requisites for employability and also a link between education and the labour market (Mulder et al., 2011).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) declared that the purpose of education should be to assist children in realising their full potential, thus establishing a connection between life skills and education. The Jomtien Declaration on Education for All (EFA) from 1990 lists life skills as essential learning tools for ensuring one's survival, developing one's capacity, and enjoying a high quality of life. Scotland, Finland, and Canada implemented CBC, and it was successful because of the vigorous training of teachers and the good financial support given to the education sector. It was successful in Rwanda because her neighbours have good curricula as well as teachers and complex research done by Rwanda's national curriculum and ministry of education. In South Africa, the attitude, growth, and proficiency of the teachers caused the curriculum to fail during the implementation stages, and this reflected the negative attitudes of teachers in the curriculum in South Africa (Ngeno et al., 2021).

While Uganda Vision 2040 seeks to make Uganda a modern, wealthy nation, the National Development Plan acknowledges the shortcomings in the country's current educational system, particularly the ineffectiveness and uneven quality of secondary instruction. Sustainable Development Goal 4 encourages

inclusive and high-quality education, while National Development Plan II focuses on strengthening mechanisms for quality, effective and efficient service delivery, and improving human capital and the relevance of skills development and quality education. Consistent with what was previously mentioned, the Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan (2017–20) advocates for the equitable, relevant, and superior education of all individuals. The study is predicated on the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP, 2009–2018), which included tactics for raising secondary education's calibre and applicability. Ensuring that "students in post-primary education are ready for both higher education and the workforce" was the goal of ESSP sub-objective 2.2. This aligns with the current 2017–2020 strategic plan as well. One of the ministry's tactics to accomplish this goal was to update the curriculum and remove any shortcomings in order to enhance guidance and evaluation (MoES, 2008). A nation can equip its citizens with values, knowledge, and skills that will help them to live in the global village, which is defined by rapidly advancing technology, by using a skilled-based curriculum (UNESCO, 2015).

Further, IBE-UNESCO (2017) claimed that CBC gives students the capacity to use the skills they have learned through learner-centred techniques to perform practically and measurably. On the other hand, Uganda's lower secondary curriculum and secondary school teaching methodology have been content-based, exam-oriented, and cramming-based, in contrast to CBC, which is skill acquisition, values, and attitudes (Reagan WAMAJJI, 2020). "Youth need to access quality, productive, and relevant education above the basis of schooling, which bridges life skills, technical training, and non-formal education" (UNICEF Report, 2019). Most of the developing countries are concentrated with youth, they are facing high unemployment rates, and most of them have resorted to negative social acts (UNESCO, 2013).

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in Uganda made a decision to undertake a reform of

the Lower Secondary Education Curriculum (2008). The major aim was to make a shift from the old, tried-and-trusted model of secondary education to a broader and more inclusive curriculum that can satisfy the needs of different abilities (NCDC, 2020). This reform comes with a series of changes at different levels to enhance the quality of instruction. Key among the changes is the training of secondary school teachers towards competency-based education. The training of secondary school teachers takes the form of continuous professional development (CPD) workshops, defined as the means of updating, developing, and broadening the knowledge acquired by teachers during their initial training and/or providing them with new skills and professional understanding (Nakabugo et al., 2011).

Competency-based curriculum has had serious implementation challenges since its trial stage in 2019 and its actual implementation in 2020 in January. Teachers, parents, school administrators, the parent-teacher association, the board of governors, the parliament, and the ministry of education and sports have all noted flaws in the curriculum's content and structure at the same point. The schools appear to be unprepared to implement the new curriculum (CBC). The curriculum states that teaching should end at 2:30 PM, and students should engage in self-discovery with their teachers through project work and other extracurricular activities. However, several schools continue to teach learners past the stipulated time, leaving one or two days a week for projects. The Ministry of Education and Sports themselves, under the national curriculum development center, have not been able to produce textbooks but instead prototypes and the old text books for traditional text books to conduct teaching and learning in schools.

The shift from knowledge-based or content-based to thematic- or competency-based curriculum in Uganda since 2020 In February, many complaints have been realised from parents, students, teachers, the entire community, and other stakeholders in the education sector in Uganda

about the new lower secondary school curriculum (Tumuheise et al., 2023). All the public-school teachers, especially those in rural areas, are complaining a lot about how to use instructional materials due to the insufficient training received by teachers. Private schools are also expressing the same problem, and they are despising the new curriculum, but it is unclear what is actually happening in those schools. It needs to be investigated so that clear information can be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Sports as well as the National Curriculum Development Centre. The implementation faced resistance from the parliament of Uganda because all the parliamentarians wanted this to be implemented on the condition that the textbooks for the new curriculum were ready and teachers received proper training on CBC, but the ministry of education insisted on its implementation.

Along the way, certain shortages have been noticed in Uganda's new secondary school curriculum. One of the shortages is the inadequate workshops and training for teachers on CBC methodologies. The government has tried its best; however, only a few people have been thoroughly trained. These people have also been tasked with training the rest, but all in vain. This has left the CBC to face an uphill struggle towards implementation. Furthermore, there are also inadequate resources to achieve some of the outlined skills and competencies. A key area of the CBC is that it will inculcate 21st century skills that will make learners critical thinkers and innovators. Moreover, the government schools that have received the books testify that they cannot cover the population (Kidega Charles et al, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' Professional Development and Implementation of CBC

The Ministry of Education and Sports in conjunction with the Japan International Cooperation Agency introduced Continuous Professional Development (CPD) workshops under the Secondary Science and Mathematics

Teachers (SESEMAT) program for science teachers. However, the performance trend in science subjects has persisted to date (UNEB, 2020). Besides, the knowledge-based curriculum has continued to bring out school graduates who are not creative and competitive in the job market. Hence, a shift from the traditional knowledge-based education to competency-based education (Kani Olema, D., & Manyiraho, D., & Zami Atibuni, D. 2021)

A shift from a knowledge based to a competency-based curriculum is a major reform that calls for teachers' professional development as an integral component (Nakabugo, 2011). Nakabugo and others continue to suggest that effective professional development includes training, practice, and feedback with the provision of adequate time and follow-up support. Teachers are change agents but when you go to the field of education in Uganda, it is a different story because they are not recognized and sometimes mistreated. Those who intend to join the profession are seen as failures in life and they cannot put much effort into the curriculum implementation. In turn, effective professional development (PD) is needed to help teachers learn and refine the instructional strategies required to teach these skills. However, research has noted that many professional initiatives appear ineffective in supporting change in teachers' practices and student learning. It is very important to discover the effectiveness of teacher's professional development in curriculum implementation.

Instructional Materials and Implementation of CBC

For the curriculum to be implemented effectively in a particular country or school, resources are a very important aspect. Teachers are often complaint about a lack of resource, there are not any textbooks, materials, facilities for effective implementation. Responsible community members act as educational resources, in certain skills, and respected community people may be included in the school program for the effective

implementation of CBC (Mohamed Isse Sidow, 2022).

The opinion put forward by Bogliaccini (2007: 685) reveals that teachers in many countries experience many hurdles if there is a shortage of resources like textbooks, furniture and study materials. This explains why most teachers are using the traditional textbooks to teach in the CBC according to a report by the policy analyst Prosper Mubangizi (2022). Without appropriate and reasonable instructional materials, it will not be easy to effectively implement CBC in Uganda.

Teacher's Attitude and Competency Based Curriculum Implementation in Secondary Schools

A favourable or negative assessment of people, things, events, actions, ideas, or pretty much anything in your surroundings is what Zimbardo & Reading (1999) characterised as attitude. Judicial in nature, attitudes arise according to the ABC model (emotion, behaviours, and cognition). The emotional reaction known as the affective response conveys a person's level of preference for an object. An individual's usual behavioural propensity might be indicated verbally or physically by their behaviour intention.

Makunja (2016) conducted research on challenges facing teachers in implementing CBC in Morogoro Municipality. This study indicated clearly that education officers and curriculum developers experienced some challenges that impeded the execution of the CBC program in secondary schools. In this world to have a successful implementation of any educational reform, teachers, parents and other educational officers should be brought on board at the initial stage such that it is not new to them since they are the immediate stakeholders in curriculum formulation in schools (Wambiri & Ndani, 2016). Initially, teachers were not using computers in their teaching and learning classes so, it means that young men and women can effectively implement competency-based curriculum than their counterparts the older teachers as revealed in the study.

Teachers are able to work hard so as to achieve their set targets since teachers are put in the decision-making process (Chebii, 2014). Teachers can be disappointed if they are not involved in the planning process because they can intend to act against it intentionally. Failure to involve teachers in the decision-making process as far as any educational policy is concerned is planning to fail. For example, in a study conducted by Kabombwe (2019) in Zambia. The researcher looked into how history teachers in the Lusaka district behaved when using CBT techniques to teach and learn about history. These outdated techniques lacked performance-based assessment and frequently assessed recall of facts, knowledge, and concepts that had been memorized (Kigwilu & Mokoro, 2022).

Societies, teachers and other stakeholders always decide best based on their wishes, experience, and attitudes. It is important to investigate their attitudes toward the fruit implementation of any educational reforms (González & Surikova, 2022). The research was conducted on teachers' perceptions towards their preparedness and support to make the change from a content-based to a competency-based curriculum. The implementation of the English Language, arts curriculum at San Jose State identified that for them to implement this curriculum stakeholders' willingness and attitude that were put into consideration before implementation. Their readiness attitude and willingness were one of the materials that was put in place for its success to be realized. A study conducted in Tanzania on teacher's attitudes towards the concept of CBC and training by Mwita et al. (2022).

Knowledge Gaps

According to UNECSO (2013 b) clearly states that teachers are getting low pay than most of the other profession in Uganda. Teachers are not recognized and not treated well when it comes to payment of salaries and sometimes late payment. If even we have Competency-based curriculum and teacher are not motivated, the satisfaction would not be derived by the students, parents, employers and MoES. This has demotivated

teachers from carrying out the real services in the schools. This study therefore would help the government to realize the problem against this implementation because teachers are not actually willing to implement it due to limited training, motivation and the use of instructional materials. The CBC consumes and demand a lot from teachers as well as students and teachers can give the full time to do only one work with the little with little pay. Limited research on CBC implementation in Uganda.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a case-study research approach and was qualitative in nature. The goal of the study was to examine a single unit to represent the complete population of a certain region, which made the research design helpful. Using a range of data sources, a case study design was used to make it easier to explore a phenomenon in its context.

Sampling Technique

This study sampled the target population purposefully, as postulated by Creswell & Creswell (2018) in qualitative research. The participants selected were the right people with knowledge about the topic of the study. 58 participants were interviewed as the final respondents, and since the study is on competency-based curriculum, it was important to choose teachers, headteachers, and education officers who are the immediate persons in schools. 50 teachers, 4 headteachers, and 4 education officers at the city council were interviewed. They were the curriculum developers, so it was important to get first-hand information from them. All the participants were selected purposefully. Teachers, city education officers, head teachers, and heads of departments were selected because they were perceived as the right people to provide reliable information on the various dimensions of the study.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Both primary and secondary data were collected. Secondary data was gathered from government

circulars, textbooks, reports, newspapers, journals, and the internet. Primary data is collected from the sample population using document analysis, interview methods, and observation.

The Interview Method

This is a method of data collection where the investigator gathers data through direct verbal interaction with participants. Instead of written responses, the subject gives the needed information verbally in a face-to-face relationship. Semi-structured interviews were employed to generate qualitative data using interview guides. Interview guides were used by the researcher to systematically interview teachers, head teachers, and education officers. The interview method helped the researcher get immediate feedback and provide room for adequate information regarding the implementation of competency-based curriculum, as indicated in the appendices. This was done because the researcher and the respondents met face-to-face, and questions were answered verbally on the spot.

Observation Method

Non-participatory observation was employed to observe teachers and learners during the teaching and learning process. The observations were made to obtain information on the teachers' pedagogical knowledge of using different instructional methods and materials that reflect CBC (Ebrahim, 2018). Observations were used to help the researcher determine the ability of teachers to apply competence-based approaches, assessment activities, and projects provided to students in an actual classroom environment.

Data Analysis

The use of a qualitative approach permits the researcher to obtain primary data through a semi-structured interview and allows him to receive secondary data through document mining and analysis. These instruments provided information on challenges teachers faced in implementing CBC in secondary schools in Uganda, policies,

and the background of CBC in Uganda's education systems. The research site documentation provided necessary information regarding instructional materials, laboratories, libraries, staff performance data, school vision and mission, students' learning outcomes and achievement data, daily attendance recorded, monitoring data, teacher and staff professional training data, and school newsletters. Secondary data has a greater purpose than study because gathering and analysing these documents provides more reliable and efficient information to supplement interviewees' responses. They offered a helpful check on the data obtained during interviews. Additionally, he said that when "other techniques failed to resolve a question, documentary evidence can provide a convincing answer." In order to determine how much instructors in a sample of secondary schools in Gulu City were utilising CBC approaches to teaching and learning, the researcher spent time looking through teachers' files, lesson plans, and schemes of work. Documents are valuable as research tools because they strengthen and confirm the data acquired through other methods, such as interviews. As a result, three data collection methods were employed in this study to counteract any biases or weaknesses in one method. Classroom observation for teachers was direct, and education officers as well as heads of secondary schools were interviewed. Data collected from interviews and observations were transcribed, coded, and analysed using themes. The themes and patterns identified help us understand the challenges faced by teachers in implementing competency-based curricula in Uganda. The findings from different data sources, for instance, document analysis, interviews, and observations, were triangulated to ensure validity and reliability. The convergence or divergence of data provided a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by teachers. Informed consent of participants was obtained before data collection; participants' confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the study; and ethical guidelines and protocols were followed during all stages of this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Challenges Facing the Implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum

Lack of Adequate School Infrastructure

The teachers claimed that a lack of adequate learning facilities, such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and tables, made it difficult for them to implement CBC. The majority of the secondary schools, according to the teachers, had high enrolment, but there weren't enough classrooms to accommodate the large numbers (Isaboke et al., 2021). Lack of learning facilities, such as inadequate classrooms, makes it difficult to implement CBC in pre-primary schools. Similar findings were reported by the World Bank (2006), which highlighted that overcrowding in classrooms caused by extremely high student enrolment and a lack of permanent classrooms made it necessary for institutions to combine some students of different grades. The results also support those of a study by Lucy Nyambura and O (2013), which examined the factors influencing curriculum implementation in public primary schools in Suswa Division, Narok County, Kenya, and found that insufficient physical facilities have an impact on curriculum implementation. The results concur with those of Makunja (2016), who looked into the difficulties teachers faced when implementing the CBC in Tanzania. There are a limited number of laboratories where you can conduct practical training, or experiments specialised in science subjects.

One of the Biology teachers said:

Our laboratory does not have sufficient equipment for practical training. For example, there are only 14 devices for 77 to 89 students per class. Each student must own their own equipment to be able to perform practical exercises and experiments effectively. However, due to lack of staffing, 7-9 students share apparatus.

This prevailing reality in schools highlights the need to improve the practical examination environment in secondary schools so that students

can excel in the practical examinations. These results show that CBC implementation can be hampered by a lack of suitable and adequate infrastructure. To accommodate the large number of students in secondary schools, it is necessary to prioritize building more classrooms.

Inadequate Training of Teachers on CBC

Teachers claimed that while they supported the CBC, they were unable to successfully implement it because they lacked the necessary knowledge and abilities. Teachers lack adequate knowledge of CBC because they were not fully engaged in the training being conducted by the NCDC, DES, and MOEs of which teachers are not fully engaged. This was also confirmed during the interviews with the teachers, as was reported. The majority of teachers lacked CBC training. Lack of in-service training limits teachers' pedagogical knowledge to apply competency-based approaches in teaching and learning processes (Wabule, 2021). One of the principals interviewed said:

Teachers are enthusiastic about implementing CBC, but a major challenge faced by the majority of teachers is a lack of knowledge (Osai et al., 2021). Most of them have no training and therefore do not have a clear understanding of competency-based approaches.

“I think that if teachers receive CBC guidance, they will be able to put it into practice with confidence. Teachers did not receive enough in-service training or seminars to keep them updated on the new curriculum. This is the biggest challenge faced by almost every teacher at this school. Therefore, CBC is not effectively implemented in most secondary schools in Gulu city, northern Uganda” (Education Officer).

The results concur with those of KNUT (2019), which found that teachers struggled to implement the curriculum because they received insufficient training. The report also emphasized how inadequate, ineffective, and brief the CBC training sessions were. Similar to this, Makunja (2016) emphasized the difficulties in

implementing CBC in Tanzania. According to the study, teachers' inadequate training in teaching and assessment techniques had a negative impact on how the Curriculum was implemented. Therefore, it can be concluded that poor teacher preparation can impede the successful implementation of CBC in secondary schools. Therefore, the government must offer more chances for teacher training in the implementation of CBC.

Lack of Adequate Teaching-Learning Materials

Inadequate supply and unavailable instructional materials were reported as one of the challenges being encountered as teachers try implementing competency-based curricula. The secondary school teachers also emphasized that they lacked sufficient CBC teaching resources (Hassanein, 2021). The teachers claimed that they lacked sufficient activity workbooks and textbooks for students. In these circumstances, students who lacked workbooks were compelled to complete the same tasks as others who had workbooks by using common exercise books (Wanjiku, 2022). More student workbooks should be made available, and teachers should receive more in-service training on CBC, in order to properly implement the curriculum (Kridel, 2012).

During his interview, one of the academic masters said:

Textbooks alone are not enough to meet the increasing number of students. In our school, the books-to-student ratio is 1:7 to 1:10. But in other schools, the situation is even worse, and you can imagine how difficult the situation is (Head of Department Arts).

Additionally, the textbook content lacked clarity on how students should be taught according to CBC requirements (Muthanje et al., 2020). The head of the Department of Science of one of the schools said that teachers lack access to sufficient learning resources and materials. This demonstrates how the shortage of teaching-learning resources has hindered the efficient implementation of the curriculum in secondary schools. These results are consistent with the

Manizabayo, (2019) report, which noted that the government had delayed distributing textbooks to schools and that the majority of CBC learning areas lacked approved books and materials.

Books for senior three students in Gulu city were received in July 2023 by the time I was in the field for data collection and many of the teachers were using the old textbooks this has brought a lot of problems, especially on the teacher's side when it comes to lesson planning and actual facilitation.

Most books produced by individual authors are of low quality and some consist of questions and answers. Unfortunately, students prefer to read books with questions and answers and learn by memorizing and cramming. This limits their ability to learn through discovery and problem-solving (Physics Teacher).

The results concur with those of a case study conducted by Byungura et al., (2019), which investigated the connections between school profiles and capacity to implement CBC in Rwanda. The study's conclusions showed that the schools' lack of infrastructure and insufficient teaching-learning resources made it difficult to implement the curriculum.

As stated by one of the representatives of parents:

we don't have money for survival based on the current economy of our country. Paying school fees and buying scholastic materials is a very big problem for parents. And we urge the government to support us parents to ensure that our children have bright future.

Large Class Size and Inadequate Number of Teachers

A higher number of students in a classroom affects student-instructor interactions and can also prevent peer exchanges during discussions in the classroom (Nkya, 2021). Since every student learns differently, the instructor's pace in a high-density class may work for some students but not for others. The teachers elaborated on how the curriculum calls for hands-on learning, which calls for each learner to participate in the learning

activities. This demonstrates that, in relation to the number of teachers and facilities offered for the implementation of CBC in secondary schools, the number of students per class is not manageable (Ayeni & Olowe, 2016). Based on the interviews, it was evident that teachers are grappling with a number of challenges including many learners against one teacher in a class. This result is consistent with Wambua & Samuel, (2019) study on the impact of large class sizes on the successful implementation of the curriculum, which found that the current teacher-to-student ratio of 1:66 was too high. Therefore, it was thought that it should be cut to as little as 1:30 by both the head teachers and the teachers.

According to the respondents, it was difficult to accommodate individual differences in a large class. The results concur with those of Hipolite, (2019), who investigated the difficulties in implementing CBC in public secondary schools in Tanzania's Morogoro Municipality. Limiting the class size can be beneficial for both students and educators, leading to improved performance of learners as instructors will be able to assist students with learning difficulties individually (Marginson, 2020). Interview responses indicated that students entering secondary school with low skills pose a challenge for teachers when implementing CBC. These results were also confirmed by interviews with secondary school principals and academic masters, who confirmed that many students were indeed of low ability. One academic teacher said in an interview:

The low quality of students is a big challenge for us. Most of the selected students from Community-based middle schools like ours are not particularly suitable for attending secondary school. Their low academic performance makes it difficult to support them, especially when relying on learner-centred approaches. For example, the limit for most students in this school is 70 out of 250. So, you can imagine how difficult it is to deal with them (E School Academic Master).

The headteacher made a similar statement.

I don't know what's wrong with our government...they don't take education seriously. We admit students with very low skills, some of whom can't even read or write properly. Last year we gave Form One a quick test.

Surprisingly, some students barely knew the correct spelling of their names. So how can teachers use the CBC approach to help such students understand concepts?

Lack of Cooperation from Parents

The teachers acknowledged that it was challenging to deal with uncooperative parents. The teachers explained that because the parents lacked sufficient knowledge of the curriculum, they were not supportive of its implementation. Similar to what was reported, one of the headteachers saw that parents' lack of cooperation made it difficult to implement CBC in secondary schools in the area of the study. One of the teachers had to say: "Parents' lack of cooperation and ignorance are obstacles for teachers, so they don't collaborate with educators". This is a sign that parents are not actively participating in the curriculum's implementation because they do not have a thorough understanding of it. This result is consistent with the findings of a study by Alfarsi et al. (2021), which examined the impact of parental involvement on curriculum implementation in public primary schools in the Ndeiya zone of Kiambu County, Kenya, and discovered that parents' absence from school activities impedes efforts to actualize the curriculum. The same was echoed by OLIBIE et al. (2017) who looked into how Nigerian secondary school principals perceived the impact of parental involvement in curriculum implementation. The study found that parental involvement in implementing the curriculum in schools was minimal. Similarly to this, Sifuna, D.N &Obonyo (2019) looked at the issues preventing successful CBC implementation in Kenya. The study made clear that the curriculum implementation process lacked parental involvement and that the instructional materials were inadequate. Additionally, the results support

those of Wambua & Samuel (2019), who investigated the alleged difficulties in involving parents in the implementation of CBC in early years education. The study found that the implementation process was hampered by parents' lack of education regarding what CBC is all about.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of a new competency-based curriculum has faced difficulties, involving a lack of support from teachers and school administrators, and low parental and community involvement due to inadequate education about the change in the curriculum. Teachers' unwillingness to change their teaching methods and adopt learner-centred pedagogy and politicians' predictable criticism affected the implementation of CBC. It is also true that with the outbreak of COVID-19, the focus of national priorities changed from all sectors to healthcare.

Teachers may struggle to effectively implement a competency-based curriculum if they do not receive adequate training and support. This includes understanding the principles and methods of competency-based education as well as learning how to design assessments that align with the curriculum. Many schools in Uganda face challenges in terms of access to resources and infrastructure. Teachers faced difficulties in implementing a competency-based curriculum without appropriate textbooks, teaching materials, technological tools, and well-equipped classrooms. In overcrowded classrooms, it can be challenging for teachers to address the individual needs and learning styles of each student. Competency-based education requires personalised instruction and ongoing assessment, which can be difficult to achieve with large class sizes and limited instructional time. The successful implementation of a competency-based curriculum requires support from various stakeholders, including school administrators, parents, and education officials. Lack of support or understanding from these stakeholders hindered teachers' efforts in implementing the new curriculum. Shifting from traditional grading systems to competency-based assessments has

been a challenge for teachers. They struggled to develop accurate and meaningful assessments that assess students' competencies and faced resistance from students and parents who are accustomed to traditional grading methods.

It is important to note that while these challenges may exist, they can be addressed through professional development opportunities, increased investment in education infrastructure, and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in the implementation process. All teachers and school administrators still require high-quality training in order for them to comprehend the why, how, and what of the new teaching strategies. This was designed so that the quality of execution would be directly influenced by their appreciation and buy-in of the new curriculum as the final implementers.

Recommendations

The transition from knowledge acquisition to competency and skills acquisition represents a significant shift that is consistent with both our Vision 2040, which focuses on skilling youth and preparing them for the workforce, and with global teaching and learning practices. To execute the competency-based curricula smoothly and effectively, the following suggestions might be helpful:

Revamping Teacher Professional Development Support Systems

Kanyonga et al. (2019) made the case that the majority of teacher training colleges and licensure programs primarily concentrate on the necessary learning topics, including psychology, curriculum, and education history, which may not be directly related to what it takes to be a successful teacher. Through its lifelong teacher professional development program, Singapore places a high priority on teacher training (Dhongre & Chacko, 2019). Finland also places a high priority on teachers, providing them with rigorous training and ensuring that a small number of them work consistently with the same category of students during a specific time to address individual differences (Cook, 2018). Teachers are

to assist students in realizing their potential and skills, developing their thinking skills, and becoming smarter (Gyagenda, 2023). According to Tromp & Datzberger, (2021), insufficient and sub-teacher-training programs were to blame for the lack of adequate training and supplies for Ugandan teachers. According to Akello & Timmerman (2018), SDG4 calls for a major increase in the number of qualified teachers available by 2030 through international cooperation for teacher education in developing countries, particularly the least developed and small island developing states. Participatory action research can be used by Ugandan teachers to evaluate their instructional strategies and the academic achievement of their students (IBE-UNESCO, 2017). These assist in the delivery of professional support and on-site reorientation to teachers in specific high-risk areas, including lesson design, assessment, classroom pedagogy, and curriculum interpretation. The assertion that teachers will require greater support than in the past is corroborated by Nakabugo et al. (2011).

Creation of a Comprehensive Plan Outlining NCDC Guidelines

It is required to plan to satisfy competing limitations of relevance and acceptability with organisations that implement basic guidelines of the curriculum, particularly local governments and schools. The policy ought to offer an unfettered platform for educational institutions plus other local authorities to assume pivotal roles in the creation, growth, and promotion of curricula (Gouédard et al., 2020). Research on education reform initiatives involving stakeholders can help us comprehend the varied roles that stakeholders play in shaping future careers. Due to their investment in their children's education, parents play a significant role in educational systems (Francis, 2014). As a result, they must comprehend the justification for the switch from the previous curriculum to the new one as well as the new assessment system that goes along with it.

Ensure that the Policy and Instruction Language Are Consistent and Applied

Harmonise and apply the assessment policy and instruction language for lower secondary schools, whether they are private or public, to optimise the anticipated benefits. Amone (2021) backs this idea, stating that "many schools are reluctant to adopt this programme Considering the disparity between the language of instruction and assessment at the lower primary level" They note that while evaluating students in English, it is superfluous to instruct them in their mother tongue. Consequently, in lower primary schools, the language of assessment needs to match the language of instruction. This also holds true for lower secondary schools, where competency-based curricula are taught and learned.

Improved School Funding

Enough money should be put into schools to enable them to teach the curriculum. The minimal number of infrastructure and instructional supplies needed for every government-aided school to operate efficiently should be provided by the MoES in a timely manner (Robert & Owala, 2021). Because competency-based curricula require a fundamental shift from passive to active learning, they require a very different infrastructure. For educational institutions to implement a competency-based curriculum that can stimulate student participation, they require the newest technology at all levels, as well as smart boards, laboratories, creative centers, and contemporary classrooms. This essentially means that the administrators must be fully convinced of the advantages of the new competency-based learning paradigm for their institutions to reap its benefits. Every school needs a staff room, enough permanent classrooms, and separate restrooms for male and female students.

Recruitment of Inspectors to Enhance Regular Inspection

The supervisory position should be prepared to guarantee that CBC is implemented consistently. In order to do this, funding and personnel should be made available to the Directorate of Education

Standards (DES) and local authorities so that they can carry out quality assessments and training. Despite its importance in curriculum implementation, Atieno Otieno et al. (2021) affirm that personnel currently available for the monitoring role in regrade are inappropriate for good quality monitoring and guidance. To make sure that the existing assessment system covers the complete curriculum and is compatible with it, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) should work with UNEB to implement a progressive overhaul of it. Furthermore, as the alternate way recommended by the curriculum, teachers should be qualified to conduct continuing assessments during their practicum. Similarly, teachers should have timely access to tools that support continual assessment.

Encouraging more Project-Based Learning

Higher order thinking abilities are required of Singaporean teachers when assigning projects to their pupils. These assignments allow students to learn by doing, which promotes exploration, a sense of discovery, and teamwork (Gyagenda, 2023). The new lower secondary curriculum for Uganda has certain project-based learning components; however, the operationalization needs to be examined, particularly with regard to frequency, efficiency, and relevance. Additionally, to instruct instructors on project-based learning for students. According to Mukembo et al., (2020), in Uganda, project-based learning can be utilized to teach and encourage entrepreneurship and agriculture. This can be accomplished by fusing agricultural expertise, community services, and entrepreneurial abilities to accomplish greater objectives. Leaders in the business department and agriculture would also work closely with other stakeholders to enhance skills and creativity among the learners and Parents would collaborate with kids, and local authorities to achieve the aims of CBC in schools.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Entire Educational System

Assessing and analyzing whether school policies, initiatives, and developed curricula are

successfully attaining their intended objectives and goals and eliminating community challenges is crucial. Assessment, monitoring, and evaluation must be ongoing and documented, and they should provide policymakers and reform implementers with information. There is donor-supported monitoring and evaluation in Uganda, but because it is limited in scope, there is still a need for internal local forces as these could present real gaps that need to be filled (Kumar et al., 2023). Through the Ministry of Education and Sports, the government can fund studies and innovations pertaining to educational policy, embrace constructive criticism and results, and involve academics and professionals at all phases of layout and assessment. In any educational system, measurement and evaluation are essential. Exams ought to be distributed to districts or even individual schools. The primary driving force and motivation of the Ugandan educational system is now passing exams, which has increased examination fraud. Cheating exams in Uganda were blamed on finances, insufficient teaching ethics, and educational syllabuses. Grades have become the sole focus of education (Kidega Charles et al, 2023).

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