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Original Article

An Analysis of Teachers' Insights on Assessment Approaches in the Implementation of a Competency-Based Curriculum for Islamic Religious Education in Secondary Schools in Wakiso District – Uganda

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This study explored teachers' insights on the assessment strategies used to implement the IRE competency-based curriculum in secondary schools in Wakiso District. This study used a phenomenological design with a sample size that depended on the saturation of findings. Secondary school teachers were sampled using simple random sampling while participants in other categories were purposively selected. The interview guide and focus group discussion guide were used as data collection instruments. Data was analyzed using the thematic analysis method. Key findings revealed that teachers perceived competency-based assessment as a more effective way of evaluating student learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education compared to traditional assessment methods. Most teachers agreed that competency-based assessment helps improve student learning outcomes, enhance student engagement, and promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, the study also found that some teachers faced challenges in implementing competency-based assessments. The study concluded that teachers had perceived IRE competency-based curriculum assessment as relevant but a complex activity in its implementation. Based on the study findings, discussion and conclusions, the study recommends that if the IRE competency-based curriculum is to be effectively implemented, the District Education Department, Ministry of Education and Sports officials, UNEB officials and NCDC Officials should develop clear criteria for assessing student competencies and provide tools for teachers to give constructive feedback. Therefore, this study contributes to the field of Islamic education by providing insights into the complexities of curriculum implementation from a teacher-centred perspective. It urges for a more integrated approach that considers teachers as key stakeholders in curriculum development and reform, advocating for policies that support their professional growth and enhance the quality of IRE competency-based education. Thus, the findings underscore the necessity for targeted interventions to empower teachers, ultimately enriching students' understanding of Islamic values within a competency-based framework.

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INTRODUCTION

The role of education in shaping individuals and societies cannot be overstated. Among various educational paradigms, competency-based curriculum (CBC) has gained prominence, particularly in the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE). This curriculum emphasizes the development of specific skills and competencies that learners are expected to demonstrate, thus moving away from traditional rote learning methods (Dede, 2014). In several countries, including those with significant Muslim populations, educational reforms have aimed to integrate CBC into Islamic Religious Education at secondary schools. This integration aims to equip students with not only knowledge of religious texts but also the skills to apply this knowledge in their daily lives and broader societal contexts (Ali, 2020).

The implementation of such competency-based curricula requires careful consideration of assessment strategies, as these strategies play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of the educational process (Anderson et al., 2017). Assessment strategies in educational settings are traditionally categorized into formative and summative assessments. While formative assessments provide ongoing feedback to learners during the learning process, summative assessments evaluate the competency levels of students at the end of an instructional period (Wiggins, 2012). In the context of IRE, these assessment strategies must align not only with educational objectives but also

with cultural and religious values that underpin Islamic education (Rahman, 2019).

The introduction of competency-based curricula in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in secondary schools has revolutionized the approach to assessment and evaluation of student learning outcomes. However, the successful implementation of this curriculum relies heavily on the adoption of effective assessment strategies that align with the competency-based framework.

Assessment plays a crucial role in evaluating student learning outcomes, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and shaping instruction to improve student performance (Birenbaum, 2003). In the context of IRE, assessment is not only essential for evaluating student knowledge of Islamic principles, but also for fostering spiritual growth, moral development, and character building (Sayed, 2017). The introduction of competency-based curriculum in IRE has necessitated a shift from traditional assessment approaches, which focus on rote memorization and summative evaluation, to more authentic and performance-based assessments that capture student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

This study aimed to investigate the various assessment strategies used in the implementation of the IRE competency-based curriculum in secondary schools. By examining current practices, challenges, and perspectives of educators, this research sought to provide insights into the effectiveness of these strategies and offer recommendations for

improvement. Through a qualitative approach that includes interviews and case studies, the findings of this study would contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding educational reforms in Islamic education and the broader field of curriculum development.

This study was guided by Bernstein's Education Theory (1971). Bernstein's Education Theory serves as a guiding framework for analyzing the implementation of the IRE CBC by directing knowledge structure, transition, and acquisition within the educational settings. Central strands of the theory include the notion of classification, which refers to the boundaries between different types of knowledge, and framing, which relates to the control over the selection, sequencing, and pacing of knowledge/content. Bernstein's theory examines how power and control influence Competence Curriculum assessment implementation and teacher independence, highlighting the relationship between what is taught (curriculum content), how it is taught (pedagogy) and how it is evaluated. In this study, the theory unloads how the CBC organizes IRE, balances traditional teachings with CBC competencies, and provides or limits teachers' flexibility in curriculum delivery. By focusing on the sociocultural and institutional dynamics that shape curriculum assessment implementation, Bernstein's theory provides critical insights into how teachers perceive and adapt to the CBC assessment in secondary schools.

Problem Statement

The implementation of a competency-based curriculum (CBC) for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in secondary schools presents a multifaceted challenge that requires thorough examination and assessment. Although the existing curriculum aims to foster critical thinking, moral integrity, and a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings among students, there remains a significant gap in the effective assessment strategies employed to measure these competencies (Wong, & O'Brien, 2020).

Assessment strategies are crucial in gauging whether the objectives of the competency-based curriculum are being met. However, current assessment

practices often rely heavily on traditional examination methods that emphasize rote memorization rather than the application of skills and knowledge in real-life contexts (Oloidi, & Thebe, 2021). This misalignment raises questions about the validity and reliability of these assessments in truly reflecting student competency in IRE. Moreover, there is a lack of professional training and resources for educators to effectively implement innovative assessment strategies that align with the values and objectives of the CBC (Ibrahim, & Ali, 2022). Teachers often find themselves ill-equipped to develop, implement, and evaluate diverse assessment methods that could better capture students' religious and moral development (Tafsir, & Nasir, 2020).

Furthermore, Mugimu (2016) revealed that lack of trained educators proficient in the competency-based approach, insufficient resources and instructional materials tailored for Islamic education, and institutional resistance to curriculum changes stemming from entrenched traditional pedagogies. Once this state remains, the realization of national education goals of promoting basic values of unity, skill acquisition, critical thinking, practical application of knowledge and African agenda 2063 will not be achieved. Therefore, this study aims to explore teachers' perceptions of assessment strategies used in the implementation of IRE competency-based curriculum in secondary schools in Wakiso District.

RELATED LITERATURE

Teachers' Perceptions of Assessment Strategies Used in the Implementation of IRE Competency-based Curriculum

Salim (2017) studied the implementation of curriculum innovation and Islamic religious education at Al-Azhar integrated senior high school in Medan. Results revealed that teachers had a positive perception towards identifying assessment strategies that are suitable for learning. It was identified that IRE teachers had identified assessment strategies like quizzes, daily tests, individual assignments, group assignments, repeat semester examinations, practical works or lab reports, response or practice exams and final exams. Once these are varied the IRE competency

curriculum is likely to be effective and the reverse is true. However, this study was not in the context of a developing country and was not guided by Bernstein's Theory which anchored this current study. Meanwhile, Rustan et al. (2018) investigated re-radicalization in the implementation of the Islamic education curriculum in SMA Masamba South Sulawesi. Results revealed that de-radicalization in Islamic education faced several assessment obstacles as it was not standardized. IRE teachers in schools revealed that there was a lack of standardized assessment strategies which was a big challenge to IRE subject teaching innovativeness.

Muhwezi (2021) showed that teachers' perceptions regarding the use of ICTs in the different aspects of teaching and assessment are critically essential in subject implementation. However, this ICT application in the assessment of Islam is in line with IRE teachers and has not been empirically established which this current study did.

Alemayelu et al. (2021) investigated teachers' perceptions towards the practice of competency-based assessment of learners in Oromia colleges. With the use of mixed approaches qualitative and quantitative methods, results revealed that instructors had unfavorable perceptions towards assessment in the CBC curriculum. Instructors were revealed as giving more attention to grading instead of enabling trainees to be competent through careful engagement using practical assessment tools. Contextually this reviewed study was not carried out in the context of Uganda a developing country as was the case with this current study.

Opundo et al. (2023) investigated challenges facing the implementation of competency-based assessment in Kenyan primary schools in Kayado County. Qualitative results acquired revealed that teachers were not adequately trained and perceived competency-based assessment of learners. This was identified as significantly denying chances upon which competency-based assessment was implemented in schools. However, this study was carried out in primary schools while this proposed study was done on IRE teachers' perception of competency-based assessment in secondary schools. Nonetheless, Wambua (2009) in an analysis of constraints facing the successful implementation of

a competency-based curriculum in Machokos County, Kenya indicated that implementation of the competency-based curriculum was perceived as challenging as there were loopholes and challenges in assessment methods used, alignment of curriculum implementation strategies with an assessment of learners.

Munoz, & Araya (2017) argue that competence-based assessment forces the use of a diversity of instruments and incorporation of different educational agents. In this regard, the diagnostic feedback, contextualization, registry, evidence and results processes imply the incorporation of teachers, students and school administrators in the same. Hence, a change in the evaluative practice implies the ability to apply competencies in the learning process and performance as a way of establishing links of knowledge in contexts. However, this analysis was an assertion while this current study was empirical with field study findings.

Kigwilu, & Mukuro (2022) studied teachers' assessment practices in implementing a competence-based curriculum in secondary schools in the Arumeru District of Tanzania. Using mixed approaches that is qualitative and quantitative Data analysis techniques results revealed that teachers were not adequately prepared to use assessment strategies recommended in the curriculum. This denied them an opportunity to assess these learners as expected. However, this study was not guided by Burnstein's theory as will be the case with the current study. In a theoretical analysis Paulo (2014). A study about secondary schools in Tanzania established that teachers were not trained in new assessment methods of competency-based curriculum. In more or less the same way Muneja (2015) established that teachers lack adequate knowledge of teachings and assessment methods as a key implement to the competency-based curriculum in Tanzania. However, this study was not specifically on the perception of IRE teachers towards IRE assessment which was a focus in this current study.

In addition, Kumba, & Mwandangi (2015) revealed that the majority of the teachers had practised formative students' assessments in less than 50% of

the observed classes. Besides in this analysis, the use of rubric, portfolio, project and activity assessment was not emphasized as will be the case with the current study. Alemayehu, & Olana (2021) studied teachers' perceptions towards the practice of competency-based assessment for learning in Oroma colleges. Using mixed methods that is both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods, results revealed that instructors had negative perceptions towards competency-based curriculum assessment. These teachers perceived that they lacked clarity on competency-based curriculum assessment. Besides this study did not indicate which aspects of CBA were considered as this study rubrics, portfolios and projects.

Farrell et al. (2022) investigated teachers' perceptions of the barriers to the assessment of mental health in schools with implications of educational policy. Following a systematic review of the literature, results revealed that lack of training in assessment and role conflict were considered key barriers to the implementation of CBC. Teachers had indicated that they lacked knowledge, skills and confidence in this assessment denied chances to implement this curriculum. Meanwhile, this was a desktop review of the literature while this current study was empirical with field study findings. Furthermore, Ngarukiye et al. (2022) investigated teacher educators' and student teachers' perceptions of the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy in higher education in Rwanda. Using descriptive statistics, results revealed that teachers had positive perceptions of learner-centred pedagogy with a grand mean of 3.70. Thus, teachers had considered learner-centred methods like those used in the competency-based curriculum as vital in the enhancement of CBC implementation in schools. Besides, this earlier reviewed study was quantitatively done while this current study was qualitative descriptive methods.

METHODOLOGY

The study was anchored on the Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl based on existential phenomenology involving Islamic stakeholders, including IRE teachers, administrators from IRE schools, UMSC officials, and NCDC staff. This study adopted a qualitative research approach.

This approach was selected to broadly explore teachers' perceptions of the assessment strategies used in the implementation of the IRE competency-based curriculum in secondary schools. The selection of this approach implied the use of a descriptive case study design. The main unit of analysis for this study was the teachers in the four selected secondary schools because these are the ones responsible for implementing the IRE competency-based curriculum. The four secondary schools in Wakiso District were selected for the investigation using stratified random sampling. Data collected was analysed using thematic and content analysis techniques.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the study exploring teacher perceptions of assessment strategies utilized in the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education competency-based curriculum in secondary schools in Wakiso District. The data collected from qualitative interviews, focus group discussions, and document review provided insights into how teachers, school administrators and NCDC officials viewed these assessment strategies and their effectiveness in enhancing student learning outcomes.

The first question in this study was 'What are the various strategies used to assess learners in the teaching of IRE competency-based curriculum?' On this question, the main theme was assessment strategies. Results on this question showed that the assessment of the new IRE competency-based curriculum is a continuous one, beginning on the day a student enrolls for senior one. All participants affirmed that the assessment of the IRE competency-based curriculum begins whenever a teacher introduces lessons to learners. Teachers indicated that they must evaluate and have a record of marks for activities, projects and assignments, and at the end of the day, this record of scores is submitted to UNEB to contribute to the final grade.

One of these teachers stated that,

"According to the new CBC curriculum, I know that in all my teaching, whatever students do in IRE contributes to their final grade. Therefore, there is no doubt I ensure that I assess students

frequently in all projects and activities they do. This is based on the idea that whatever they do counts on the final grade."

Whereas another teacher stated that,

"I assess learners daily which is not easy. I created individual files to monitor performance in all tasks they do. Even students are aware that if they don't do better in each assignment and project, this will affect their final grade. The perception of relaxing and hoping that they will read to pass UNEB examinations is long gone. It is because of this that all (students) work hard and collaborate for better grades in all activities and assignments."

These results suggested that the continuous assessment strategies used by IRE teachers including Wakiso District have greatly contributed to effective teaching and learning. These findings were not any different from those of the NCDC documents reviewed of the IRE competency-based curriculum that emphatically stated that,

"Subjects at NCDC are continuously assessed. It was realized that the previous model of summative assessment at UNEB was biased and could not give a true picture of students' conceptualization and understanding. Therefore, with formative continuous assessments, IRE teachers can fairly assess students' skills, understanding and values acquired from Islamic knowledge. This approach eliminates the unfairness towards students who were only assessed on knowledge in one sitting at the end of four or six years of secondary school level."

This finding suggested that a continuous assessment approach is key in evaluating secondary school content. Other aspects of IRE can be effectively assessed to achieve national educational objectives in generic skills, national values, and positive attitudes like democracy, patriotism and cross-cutting issues. These findings were not any different from those offered by headteachers who participated in the current study. One of these headteachers stated that,

"The Ministry of Education and Sports and UNEB request us to remind teachers to assess students on a daily basis and keep records. IRE teachers are more efficient because they have small numbers. The fact that scores offered will contribute to each student's final UNEB grade, teachers cannot relax or else they fail their students. Currently, teachers have complied, which makes my work easy as the accounting officer of the ministry. However, record keeping makes CBC a better alternative but tends to be expensive, especially in USE schools and nearly untenable to a 120-student class."

This finding was not any different from that of another headteacher who stated that,

"Teachers assess students in every lesson. Currently, in the IRE assessment reports submitted in my office, students are slowly progressing in their academic competencies. This is accounted for because students know that any omission will affect their final grades at UNEB. It is a pity that some teachers and schools are abusing this academic facility and award even those with no activity of integration."

These findings implied that the continuous assessment strategy is strongly used by IRE teachers and that this assessment strategy contributes to students' strength especially when it comes to committing to academic work. However, many cannot integrate activities and struggle to expertly apply formative evaluation. Meanwhile, teachers in the focus group discussion also revealed that assessment is done on a daily basis and that results acquired contribute almost 30% of their final grade in IRE and other subjects. One of these teachers stated that,

"We are aware that the grades that we allocate to our learners in the classroom formal assessments are part of the final UCE score. It is therefore important that we take each exercise, assignment, test and exam offered at school seriously. We, therefore, encourage our learners to put in more effort to do whatever they are told to do while in class. But some students are reluctant and at times some aspects of the

learning outcome and skills that are required turn out to be expensive like buying computers.”

This agrees with Bernstein who theorizes that the politics around these subjects decide the resource flow around them and the level of acceptability in schools and communities.

Another teacher stated that,

“There is a strategic move to assess learners on whatever they do at school. Currently, we don’t need to worry about our students getting low grades in the final exams. Teachers in schools have been continuously assessing learners’ work. Even if learners fall sick at least there is a starting point from the grades acquired from the continuous assessments made at the school level.”

These findings implied that assessment in the new IRE competency-based curriculum is formative and allows them to have a broad view of their performance to achieve the core values, goals and skills intended in the curriculum.

Purpose of Assessment

Participants were asked about the extent to which assessment strategies used in the IRE competency-based curriculum are able to achieve their intended objective. Participants also revealed that through assessment you are able to track progress, measure student achievement, guide instruction, and inform curriculum development.

Teachers specifically stated that in doing this, students are aware that whatever they do has an impact on their final grade and whoever fails is likely to be affected in the final UCE exams. Specifically, one of the teachers on this stated that,

“I tell my students that whoever does not participate in the group work will achieve less in the final examinations. Therefore, I distribute responsibilities to all students and in assessment, even if the group has five members, the scores could differ depending on individual students’ participation. This approach to scoring learners makes them more committed to group work.”

These results therefore implied that the assessment of learners in the IRE competency-based curriculum is somehow creative and innovative with each student bearing in mind that assessment is based on individual contribution. However, three head teachers confessed that scoring your own students low ‘may be immoral, insensitive, and unrealistic’ and it threatens the skilling reason for which CBC was started.

The innovation also comes out in the teaching aids that students bring into class. One teacher stated,

“Before 2020, it was rare to see IRE lessons with teaching aids in lessons. However, in CBC, students always move with their topical materials including the Quran as teaching aids. This has translated the syllabus to be expensive, yet the evaluation framework rotates around these materials. When teaching topics like Zakat, students come with items from which it is levied to demonstrate almsgiving among Muslims. This creativity and innovation make students and the lesson livelier and would never forget whatever they observe during the lesson.”

These findings suggested that innovativeness is one of the key aspects of the new IRE competency-based curriculum. This level of innovativeness and creativity is more encouraged even in class as the teacher introduces the lesson, students are charged with the responsibility of using a few methods to arrive at outcomes. At the forefront of this is the project or activity method, demonstration and where possible use of online methods. Hence in assessment, these creative and innovative techniques are praised and recommended and well documented but site visits gave us different results. The majority of schools had no equipment, knowledge or ‘will to use ideal mentalities.

Teachers in the FGD also opined that;

“Assessment helps them to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to tailor instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners. They inform lesson planning and curriculum adjustments to ensure alignment with competency goals.”

Another in the interview teacher also stated that;

“Continuous assessment provides us with ongoing insights into student progress toward achieving specific competencies. It allows teachers to modify teaching strategies based on real-time feedback regarding student understanding and performance.”

Teachers in the FGD also stated that;

“Assessments provide a structured avenue for teachers to give constructive feedback to students. This feedback is crucial for informing students about their learning journey and areas needing improvement. At the same time, teachers can use assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and instructional methods. Results may guide professional development and training needs for educators.”

One of the headteachers also argued that;

“Assessments encourage students to reflect on their learning, identify personal strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for improvement. It also brings out learners’ self-awareness and can enhance their motivation and engagement with the learning process.”

Another teacher in the interview asserted that;

“Through assessments, students gain a clearer understanding of the required competencies and how they can demonstrate their learning. This clarity helps students focus their efforts on achieving specific learning outcomes. At the same time, students can monitor their progress over time, which fosters a sense of ownership of their learning journey. Regular assessments serve as milestones that help students see their development and achievement.”

Assessment Methods

Competency-based education focuses on the mastery of skills and knowledge rather than traditional assessment methods that often emphasize rote memorization or time spent in class. In a secondary school setting, both teachers and students play crucial roles in assessing competencies. The teachers made the following observations in terms of assessment methods.

Teachers in the FGD stated that;

“Through formal assessment, they observe students during class activities, group work, or projects to assess their skills in real-time. At the same time, short assessments that focus on specific competencies can help identify areas where students need improvement. They also involve students in assessing their peers which provides insights into their understanding and application of competencies.”

Another teacher from the interview narrated that;

“We also use projects and presentations where large projects that require students to demonstrate their skills provide comprehensive intuition into their competencies. We also use portfolios and rubrics where a collection of students’ work overtime demonstrates growth and mastery of specific skills which are demonstrable.”

In the FGD of teachers, it was illustrated that;

“Teachers do give learners self-assessment tools to evaluate their competencies using checklists or rating scales, helping them reflect on their learning process and set goals for improvement. Learners are also allowed to do peer evaluations which helps them to learn from one another, gain different perspectives, and develop critical evaluation skills.”

Relatedly in teachers’ interviews, it was revealed that;

“There is the use of reflection journals where students track their learning progress, challenges faced, and competencies achieved that is likely to promote metacognition and self-regulation. We do also use competency mapping where our students can create a visual representation of the competencies which they have achieved and those they still need to work on, promoting ownership of their learning.”

Assessment Grid

Creating an assessment grid for a competency-based curriculum in secondary schools involves outlining specific competencies, the criteria for assessing

them, and the roles of both teachers and students. Teachers in the FGD revealed that;

“Competency area as part of the assessment grid gives a broad category or skill set that students are expected to develop throughout their education and describes the different competencies. In terms of assessment method, the assessment grid gives us the tools and methods we have to use to assess students’ competencies, including both formative (ongoing) and summative (final) assessments.”

During with one of the teachers it was revealed that;

“The assessment grid describes the teachers’ and students’ roles in assessment. The responsibility of the teacher is to facilitate the teaching and learning process, assess students’ performance, and provide feedback. While the students’ responsibility is to own learning process, including participation and self-assessment.”

Therefore, the assessment grid serves as a strategic tool to align teaching, learning, and assessment in a competency-based curriculum. This would ensure that competencies are clearly defined and understood, making the learning process more transparent and equitable for both teachers and students. Through clear expectations and constructive feedback, both parties can engage in meaningful educational experiences that promote holistic student development.

The main finding from these objectives was that assessment practices such as portfolios, rubrics and activities were the recommended evaluation strategies and that IRE teachers had perceived them as important in the implementation of curriculum competencies. Teachers had perceived IRE activity assessment as key in enabling learners to acquire skills required from the CBC. Still, teachers had also perceived the continuous assessment in rubrics and portfolios as motivating and encouraging students to concentrate on the course leading to the achievement of learning ends. However, the context in which all was suggested may not allow some of the assessment styles to flourish.

DISCUSSION

The study was to explore teachers’ perceptions of assessment practices in the implementation of an IRE competency-based curriculum in secondary schools in Wakiso District. Results revealed that evaluation strategies portfolio, rubrics and activities were the recommended evaluation strategies and that IRE teachers had perceived them as important in the implementation of a competency-based curriculum.

Teachers had perceived activity assessment as key in enabling learners to acquire skills required from the CBC competency-based curriculum. Still, teachers had also perceived the continuous assessment in rubrics and portfolios as motivating and encouraging students to concentrate on the course leading to the achievement of learning ends. The findings resonated well with earlier findings like those of Salim (2017) who studied the implementation of curriculum innovation and Islamic religious education at Al-Azhar integrated senior high school in Medan. Results revealed that teachers had a positive perception towards identifying assessment strategies that are suitable for learning. It was identified that IRE teachers had identified assessment strategies like quizzes, daily tests, individual assignments, group assignments, repeat semester examinations, practical works or lab reports, response or practice exams and final exams. Once these are varied the IRE competency curriculum is likely to be effective and the reverse is true.

The study findings were in direct agreement with, Muhwezi (2021) and showed that teachers’ perceptions regarding the use of ICTs in the different aspects of teaching and assessment are critically essential in subject implementation. Hence, teachers with positive perceptions towards CBC assessment were better positioned to implement this curriculum.

The study findings were theoretically supported by Munoz, & Araya (2017) who argued that competency-based assessment forces the use of a diversity of instruments and incorporation of different educational agents. In this regard diagnostic feedback, contextualization, registry, evidence and results processes imply the incorporation of teachers, students and school administrators in the same. Hence, a change of

evaluative practice implies an ability to apply competencies in the learning process and performance as a way of establishing links of knowledge in contexts. Thus, those teachers who perceive this assessment as better would implement it effectively in schools.

However, some IRE teachers perceived this kind of assessment and evaluation as not feasible for many teachers. It was revealed by some teachers that they lacked the necessary skills in this kind of assessment which may not be easy on their side to effectively grade learners. These findings were also supported by Rustan et al. (2018) who investigated re-radicalization in the implementation of Islamic education curriculum in SMA Masamba South Sulawesi whose results revealed that de-radicalization in Islamic education faced several assessment obstacles as it was not standardized. IRE teachers in schools revealed that there was a lack of standardized assessment strategies which was a big challenge to IRE subject teaching innovativeness.

Findings that differed from those of the study were in consonance with, Wambua (2009) in an analysis of constraints facing successful implementation of a competency-based curriculum in Machokos county. Kenya indicated that implementation of the competency-based curriculum was perceived as challenging as there were loopholes and challenges in assessment methods used and alignment of curriculum implementation strategies with the assessment of learners.

The study findings differed from those of Kigwilu, & Mukuro (2022) studied teacher assessment practices in implementing a competence-based curriculum in secondary schools in Arumeru District of Tanzania. Results revealed that teachers were not adequately prepared to use assessment strategies recommended in the curriculum. This denied them an opportunity to assess these learners as expected. The study findings differed from Paulo (2014) who established that teachers were not trained in new assessment methods of competency-based curriculum. In more or less the same way the findings of the study differed from those of Muneja (2015) who established that teachers lack adequate knowledge of teaching and assessment methods as a

key implement to the competency-based curriculum in Tanzania.

The study findings differed from Alemayelu et al. (2021) whose results revealed that instructors had unfavourable perceptions towards assessment in the CBC curriculum. Instructors were revealed as giving more attention to grading instead of enabling trainees to be competent through careful engagement using practical assessment tools. In conclusion, IRE teachers had to a great extent perceived IRE competency-based curriculum assessment as the best strategy for assessing students in the new competency-based curriculum. In addition, the findings of the study differed from Opundo et al. (2023) investigated challenges facing the implementation of competency-based assessment in Kenyan primary schools, in Kayado County. Results revealed that teachers were not adequately trained and perceived competency-based assessment of learners. This was identified as significantly denying chances upon which competency-based assessment was implemented in schools. This hence implied that teachers with negative perceptions towards the IRE competency-based curriculum could not implement its assessment better in the selected secondary schools in Wakiso District.

The study findings indicated also that IRE teachers had not been adequately trained on how to assess the IRE subject. The examinations done at the end of a given period were indicated as still taking an upper hand compared to the continuous assessment strategies recommended in the CBC curriculum. This denied the effective implementation of this curriculum in IRE subject. These findings were in tandem with Farrell et al. (2022) investigated teachers' perceptions of the barriers to assessment of mental health in schools with implications of educational policy. Following a systematic review of the literature, results revealed that lack of training in assessment and role conflict were considered key barriers to the implementation of CBC. Teachers had indicated that they lacked knowledge, skills and confidence in this assessment denied chances to implement this curriculum.

Slightly differing from the current study, this was a theoretical assertion while this current study was empirical with field study findings from IRE

teachers to the extent to which they have effectively complied with IRE competence-based curriculum assessment. Chathair et al. (2023) revealed that assessment is considered a process of gathering information to make appropriate judgments about learners' progress. The contemporary perspectives on pedagogy also apply to assessment which includes specific issues relating to authenticity, technology and inclusion which inform the design of purposeful, fair and reliable assessments. Besides, these were not directly fronted on IRE competence-based assessment more so undertaking the views of IRE teachers as was done in the current study. Hence a general finding that effective implementation of IRE competency-based curriculum in secondary schools in Wakiso District was perceived positively by IRE teachers but it had interfaced with some challenges that need a serious concern by key stakeholders.

The findings of the study were in agreement with Okoye, & Isaac (2015) stressed that assessment in CBC is one of the essential components that assures the validity of all the processes involved in the implementation of the curriculum. Thus, the quality of CBC assessment greatly impacts the achievement of CBC goals. The study findings were almost similar to those of Chanda, & Murebwa (2024) whose results acquired from the different databases including social media indicated that although the ultimate goal of a competency-based curriculum was to address the leveled realities of people, offer solutions and facilitate the process of developing the lifelong learning hobbies and being on the educationally sound and laudable initiative, the adoption of the curriculum reform in Zimbabwe occurred to unprepared educators in many areas including design assessment tools, grading and giving back feedback yet they were the ones required to implement it.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to investigate teacher perceptions of assessment strategies used in the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education competency-based curriculum in secondary schools. The findings of this study suggest that teachers perceived competency-based assessment as a more effective way of evaluating student learning outcomes in

Islamic Religious Education compared to traditional assessment methods. Most teachers agreed that competency-based assessment helps improve student learning outcomes, enhance student engagement, and promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, the study also found that some teachers faced challenges in implementing competency-based assessment, including a lack of resources, inadequate training, and difficulties developing assessment instruments.

The findings of this study have implications for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers. Firstly, the study highlights the importance of providing teachers with adequate training and support to implement competency-based assessments effectively. Secondly, the study suggests that policymakers should consider providing resources and infrastructure to support the implementation of competency-based assessment. Finally, the study recommends that curriculum developers should focus on developing assessment instruments that align with the competency-based curriculum framework.

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