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Original Article

Influence of School Infrastructure on Implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum in Public and Private Primary Schools, Vihiga County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Kenya Has Implemented the Competency-based Curriculum to replace the 8.4.4 System of Education. The study aimed to examine school infrastructure on the implementation of competency-based curriculum in public and private primary schools, in Vihiga County, Kenya. Open System and Theory and mixed methods approach design were anchored for the survey. The population encompassed: 408 head teachers, 4392 teachers, 15 curriculum support offices and 5 Sub-County Education Officers. The researcher used stratified, simple random and purposive sampling methods to identify 81 head teachers, 264 teachers, 5 curriculum support officers and 2 Sub-county education officers for the sample size. A questionnaire, interview guide and observation guide were selected to gather data. The quantitative data was analysed through descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data was analysed in prose and narrative forms. T-test was used to test for the relationship between school infrastructure and implementation of the CBC. The study revealed that public primary schools had inadequate classrooms, laboratories, workshop rooms, internet connection, and science and ICT devices to effectively implement CBC. In contrast, the study revealed adequate classroom, electricity supply, internet connectivity and science and ICT devices for smooth implementation of the CBC in private primary schools. The survey also established inadequate spots and games facilities in both public and private primary schools. The study further established a significant relationship between school infrastructure and implementation of the competency-based curriculum for both public and private schools as indicated by a p-value of 0.000, less than a significant level of 0.05.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital ingredient for any nation's social, economic and political development (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Thus, education influences global endowments more so, the upcoming younger generations' solutions to ever-increasing challenges. According to Kajuju, Nduku and Wambiya (2024), the 21st-century education system should focus on global labour market consistency with current skills, knowledge and attitudes. Since 1985, Kenya has adopted the 8.4.4 system of education that had previously replaced the 7.4.2.3 system of education. The CBC is anchored on a model of 2: 6: 3: 3: 3 that is; 2 years pre-primary, 6 years primary, 3 years junior secondary, 3 years senior secondary and 3 years tertiary learning. The government of Kenya hoped to fill the gap between academic-oriented education learning to learners' skill competencies. Wanjohi (2017) affirmed that the government of Kenya intended to train skilled and holistic with full potential for the present 21st-century global job opportunities. The vital objective of CBC is to identify and nurture learners' potential and pathway to Kenyan socio-economic development.

An assessment survey by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (2017) confirmed that the 8.4.4 learning focused on rigidity examination excellency scores in contrast to exploring learner's skills competencies, aptitudes, potentials, interests, flexibility pathways and abilities. As a result, there existed high learner dropouts and unqualified and unskilled graduates who could not fully fit into the current job opportunities. The move from 8.4.4 to 2.6.3.3.3 aimed to focus on formal assessment from summative assessment of an individual's abilities. It also aims to enable tutors to identify and strengthen individual learner's pathways from pre-primary to tertiary institutions through formative assessment. However, factors such as overcrowding in classrooms, financial constraints, poor institutional governance, high teacher: learner ratio, inadequate instructional materials and infrastructural facilities, lack of time management and collegial leadership, and lack of parental engagement and teacher's professional development hampers effective teaching and learning (Jebii, 2022; Mavale, 2021: Inyega, Arshad-Ayaz, Naseem, Mahaya, & Elsayed, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

In Vihiga County, the introduction of the competency-based curriculum in both public and private primary schools is obstructed by insufficient infrastructure. In spite of CBC's focus on learner-centred learning and hands-on activities, most schools have infrastructural challenges that include a lack of ICT inclusion, classrooms, laboratories, workshops, play fields, inconsistent electricity supply, lack of ICT-trained and skilled teachers, high enrollment, equipment and materials. For successful implementation of the competency-based curriculum, adequate infrastructural existence should be provided to achieve its goals and objectives.

These challenges may not be similar in both public and private primary schools. The existing gaps in the adequacy of infrastructural environment between public and private schools informed this investigation.

Research Objective

To investigate the influence of infrastructure on the implementation of competency-based curriculum in private and public primary schools in Vihiga County, Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

There are no statistical differences when schools are categorized as public and private with the adequacy of school infrastructure and implementation of a competency-based curriculum.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

A survey by Kubai (2023) embraced a quantitative, descriptive research design to investigate barriers facing the implementation of a competency-based curriculum. A questionnaire was adopted for information gathering engaging 120 grade six teachers in Nairobi County, Kenya. Among other findings, the study revealed inadequate ICT infrastructure and inconsistence learner assessment scores for smooth facilitation of competency-based curriculum especially in public primary schools.

In Nigeria, Akpan and Salihu (2023) conducted a survey on the effect of physical facilities on the facilitation of competency-based curriculum in primary schools. The survey noted inadequate infrastructural set-up that includes limited classrooms, laboratories, workshops and recreational and learning facilities and materials that are vital for the facilitation of CBC. These inadequacies obstruct the smooth implementation of CBC which determines current resources for individual's learner's practical activities. The need for adequate funding to improve the infrastructural learning environment and teachers' professional development were identified as key factors aimed at achieving the goals of a competency-based curriculum.

Mulenga and Kabombwe (2019) underscore the importance of ICT infrastructure in ensuring e-learning and e-assessment techniques during the facilitation of the competency-based curriculum in Zambia. A subsequent investigation by Murithi and Yoo (2021) highlighted limitations of financial allocation to schools as a determinant constraint to the availability of ICT infrastructure and trained and qualified teachers in ICT to effectively mitigate the successful application of competency-based curriculum in Kenya.

According to Amunga, Were and Ashioya (2020), most privately-owned schools are endowed with better infrastructural environments contrary to public schools that experience a lack of classrooms, laboratories, music and home science rooms and technology devices needed for the execution of competency-based curriculum. Because CBC requires an individual learner-centred approach, material and physical facilities are needed to enable learners' active participation during the teaching and learning procedure. A lack of infrastructure in public primary schools coupled with high enrollment, insufficient teacher staffing, training and financial incapacity are barriers to the efficient application of CBC.

One concerted effort to achieve the competencies of CBC is to focus on the inclusion of ICT which is vital in the transformation of the learning system from education drills to practical-oriented systems in readiness for any nation's social, political and economic dispensation (Mpisili, 2022). However, the lack of skilled teachers is an impediment to a smooth transition from summative academic knowledge-based curriculum to formative digital learning literacy among Kenyan learners in both private and public schools (Murithi & Yoo, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted in Vihiga County, Kenya. The County was purposively sampled because the extent to which the adequacy of learning infrastructure in public and private primary schools was unknown for the implementation of the competency-based curriculum.

A descriptive design was adopted because quantitative and qualitative instruments were used to gather and analyse the information. The study's target population had 408 head teachers, 15 Curriculum Support Officers (CSO), 4392 teachers and 5 Sub-County Education Officers (SCEO). A stratified sampling technique and simple random technique were used to select 2 SCEO, 5 CSO, 264 teachers (14 private and 250 public) and 81 head teachers (4 private and 77 public). Three tools; observation, interview and question were utilized for gathering information. Quantitative data was collected and analyzed via descriptive statistics based on frequencies and percentages, while inferential statistics were computed using a t-test. Qualitative data were analysed through prose and verbatim forms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Frequencies and percentages were calculated based on the Likert scale whose ranking was premised from 1 – 5. Where strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, not sure = 3, agree = 4 and strongly agree = 5.

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Table 1: Infrastructural Provision and Competency-Based Curriculum

Infrastructure and CBC	Type of school	Responds	SD	D	N	A	SA
Classrooms, libraries, workshops and laboratories are adequate to facilitate CBC.	Public	HT'S	24 (31.2%	43 (55.8%)	3 (3.9%)	6 (7.8%)	1 (1.3%)
		TR'S	86 (34.4%)	133 (53.2%)	9 (3.6%)	14 (5.6%)	8 (3.2%)
	Private	HT'S	-	-	-	3 (75.0%)	1 (25.0%)
		TR'S	1 (7.1%)	2 (14.3%)	2 (14.3%)	6 (42.9%)	3 (21.4%)
Adequacy of sports and games facilities and implementation of CBC	Public	HT'S	20 (25.9%)	25 (32.5%)	3 (3.9%)	19 (24.7%)	10 (12.9%)
		TR'S	61 (24.4%)	78 (31.2%)	21 (8.4%)	59 (23.6%)	31 (12.4%)
	Private	HT'S	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)	-	-	-
		TR'S	6 (42.3%)	8 (57.1%)	-	-	-
Electricity supply is available for the application of CBC digital learnings.	Public	HT'S	7 (9.1%)	14 (18.2%)	5 (6.5%)	29 (37.7%)	22 (28.6%)
		TR'S	13 (5.2%)	20 (8.0%)	18 (7.2%)	123 (49.25)	76 (30.4%)
	Private	HT'S	-	-	-	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)
		TR'S	-	-	-	8 (57.1%)	6 (42.3%)
Internet connection is available for execution of CBC	Public	HT'S	23 (29.9%)	24 (31.2%)	10 (12.9%)	9 (11.7%)	11 (14.3%)
		TR'S	77 (30.8%)	143 (57.2%)	2 (0.8%)	17 (6.8%)	11 (4.4%)
	Private	HT'S	-	-	-	3 (75.0%)	1 (25.0%)
		TR'S	-	-	1 (7.1%)	9 (64.3%)	4 (28.6%)
Adequate laboratory and ICT equipment and devices to facilitate CBC	Public	HT'S	19 (24.7%)	26 (33.8%)	5 (6.6%)	13 (16.7%)	14 (18.2%)
		TR'S	121 (48.4%)	89 (35.6%)	13 (5.2%)	24 (9.6%)	3 (1.2%)
	Private	HT'S	-	1 (25.0%)	1 (25.0%)	2 (50.0%)	-
		TR'S	1 (7.1%)	2 (14.3%)	3 (21.4%)	6 (42.9%)	2 (14.3%)

From the findings, most head teachers 43 (55.8%) and teachers 133 (53.2%) of public primary schools disagree that their schools have adequate classrooms, laboratories, libraries and workshops for efficient facilitation of the competency-based curriculum. However, the finding contrasts those of the majority head teachers 3 (75.0%) and teachers 6 (42.9%) from private schools who agreed that their schools have adequate classrooms, laboratories, libraries and workshops. An observation in most public schools indicated a lack of learning classrooms, laboratories, libraries and workshops that are pre-requisite for an individual's learning activity. Learners were further seen in overcrowded classrooms with limited seating furniture and difficulties in movement, reading and writing. A further follow-up conversation with one curriculum support officer had this to say;

> *"Unlike private schools, classrooms in public schools are tiny, unfinished, with a lack of enough learning materials to motivate learners and teachers during the execution of competency-based curriculum. Most of the classrooms are dilapidated in conditions with high learners' enrollment that prohibits teacher's consistency and effective teaching (CSO, 2)."*

Another SCEO reiterated that,

> *"The government is trying to leverage the classroom environment by financial assistance to cater for increased enrollment and infrastructural development for activity areas of concern (SCEO, 1)."*

The study tested the relationship between adequate classrooms, libraries, workshops and laboratories in public and private schools and the implementation of

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a competency-based curriculum. The inferential statistics t-test was applied to test for the relationship. Table 2 indicates the findings between the adequacy of classrooms in public and private schools and the implementation of CBC.

Table 2: Relationship Between Learning Infrastructure and CBC

One-Sample Test						
Test value = 0						
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Public	37.170	326	.000	1.90520	1.8044	2.0060
Private	14.006	17	.000	3.72222	3.1615	4.2829

The t-test for both public and private schools had a significant level of .000, less than the significant level of 0.05. Hence there is a relationship between classroom infrastructure and implementation of CBC. The finding implies that the execution of a competency-based curriculum in private and public schools differs. It was thus established that private schools had adequate classrooms, libraries, furniture, workshops and laboratories, low learners' enrollment and individual learner attention by the teachers. However, this finding was contrary in public primary schools that face problems of inadequate classrooms, laboratories, workshops and libraries, high learners' enrollment and lack of teacher's attention to learner's different learning abilities thus, teacher's inability to effectively implement the CBC. Teachers to attend to individual learners' differences in learning, this is consistence with Akpan and Salihu (2023) who note inadequate infrastructural facilities to effectively implement the objectives of CBC in Nigeria.

On a flip flop, a large percentage of head teachers 25 (32.5%) and teachers 78 (31.2%) in public schools affirmed that sports and games facilities are inadequate to implement CBC. The survey was similar to head teachers 2 (50.0%) and teachers 8 (57.1%) in private schools who also disagreed with the assertion that their schools are endowed with sports and games facilities adequate to implement CBC. Subsequent observation noted inadequate sporting playgrounds and equipment for ball games, athletics and performing arts that are non-academic and highly valued by the learners' future job opportunities. Most private and few public schools didn't have sports grounds to effectively enable the successful execution of CBC. On the contrary, the majority of public schools had adequate sporting grounds for CBC but lacked the necessary equipment for its application. However, most teachers in both types of schools lacked the professional skills and knowledge to enable sporting and gaming activities to identify and nurture future learners' talents and abilities. The following sentiment was also reiterated by CSO 1,

> *Both public and private schools lack equipment for performing sports, games and other performing arts areas of concern. However, nearly all the private and a few public schools do not have play facilities and equipment for such activities as music, home science, drama, plays, ball games, athletics and indoor games. Besides, the teacher training colleges have not sufficiently equipped teachers with the required skills and content in co-curricular activity areas to make CBC a success.*

The survey also tested sporting facilities and the implementation of CBC using a t-test. This is shown in Table 3.

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Table 3: Relationship Between Sporting Facilities and Implementation of CBC

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Public	34.702	326	.000	2.67890	2.5270	2.8308
Private	12.907	17	.000	1.55556	1.3013	1.8098

As seen from the finding, the significant level for public and private schools is 0.000, less than the significant level of 0.05. Hence, there is a relationship between sporting facilities and the implementation of the CBC. Ngeno, Mweru and Mwoma (2021) underscore the vital importance of physical equipment in the implementation of grade one pupils' competency-based curriculum. Thus, a lack of learning equipment for the teaching and learning of music, Home science, integrated science and ICT integration is likely to negate the goals and objectives of CBC.

Still, another large percentage of the public head teachers 29 (37.7%) and half of the private head teachers 2 (50.0%) agree that electricity supply is available for the execution of competency-based curriculum digital learning. Subsequently, more public teachers 123 (49.25) and private teachers 8 (57.1%) also agreed that there is a supply of electricity for the effective execution of the competency-based curriculum. Keen observation of both private and public schools' availability of electricity supply is a pre-requisite for effective tutoring of the CBC. A similar face-to-face conversation with SCEO and CSO revealed an adequate supply of electricity in both public and private schools except for the lack of adequately trained tutors needed for smooth teaching of CBC.

The study further tested the relationship between the availability of electricity and the implementation of CBC as depicted in Table 4.

Table 4: Relationship Between Availability of Electricity and Implementation of CBC

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Public	60.541	326	.000	3.83792	3.7132	3.9626
Private	36.878	17	.000	4.44444	4.1902	4.6987
Dependent	75.155	344	.000	3.84638	3.7457	3.9470

As depicted in Table 4, the significant levels for both public and private schools were 0.000 (less than 0.05 significant level) hence, there was a statistical relationship between the availability of electricity supply and implementation of the CBC. The finding is congruent with Mulenga and Kabombwe (2019) who established the vital presence of electricity for the execution of ICT learning in institutions. Nevertheless, this finding is contrary to other findings that revealed inadequate infrastructural provision for the implementation of ICT education in schools (Murithi & Yoo, 2021). This survey contradicted the finding of Amunga, et al. (2020), who revealed an adequate and better infrastructural environment that includes classrooms, laboratories, music and home science rooms and technology devices needed for the execution of competency-based curriculum in private schools compared to those in public schools.

Whereas the majority of head teachers 24 (31.2%) and teachers 24 (31.2%) in their public schools disagree that there is a lack of internet connection in schools, the majority of head teachers 3 (75.0%) and

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teachers 9 (64.3%) in private primary schools agree that they have available internet connection to effectively execute the CBC. The survey further observed a lack of internet connection in almost all the public schools except for very minimal cases in boarding public primary schools. Almost all the interviewed CSOs and SCEOs asserted that internet connectivity in public primary schools is a tall order to be achieved due to financial constraints that demands monthly payments, trained and skilled teachers, uninterrupted power supply, inconsistency guaranteed security, and un-availability of ICT laboratory and equipment. This implies that most public and private schools have not succeeded in delivering an efficient transition from the academic-oriented 8.4.4 system of education to the current 2.6.3.3.3 CBC.

The survey also tested for the relationship between the adequacy of internet connection in public and private primary schools and the implementation of CBC as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Relationship Between Internet Connectivity and CBC

One-Sample Test							
Test Value = 0							
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Public connectivity	internet	33.881	326	.000	2.08257	1.9616	2.2035
Private connectivity	internet	32.670	17	.000	4.22222	3.9495	4.4949

As depicted in Table 5, the significant levels of public and private schools were 0.000, less than 0.05 significant level. Thus, there is a significant relationship between the availability of internet connection in public and private primary schools and the implementation of CBC. The finding of Mpisili (2022) is consistence with the current finding that requires ICT inclusion in the process of delivering the CBC in both public and private schools in Kenya.

The finding established that in most public primary schools, there is a lack of adequate laboratory and ICT equipment and devices to facilitate CBC learning as reflected by the majority of head teachers 26 (33.8%) and teachers 89 (35.6%) responses. Nevertheless, some equipment and ICT devices were available in private schools as shown by half of head teachers 2 (50.0%) and teachers 6 (42.9%) responses. The study noticed marginal ICT infrastructure in private schools except for public schools whose ICT inclusion in the implementation of CBC is far from its realizations. However, the study further revealed a lack of learning equipment and devices for the effective application of ICT dispensation for both public and private primary schools. The SCEO 2, had this to say;

> *Although the foundation of CBC is pegged on ICT inclusion, the lack of adequate ICT devices and laboratory facilities is a major setback to its full realization of CBC. A concerted effort should be made by all the education stakeholders to ensure Science and ICT equipment and devices are available for learners' manipulation and effective implementation of CBC.*

The survey further established the relationship between the adequacy of equipment in public and private primary schools and CBC as illustrated in Table 6.

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Table 6: Relationship Between Equipment Connectivity and CBC

One-Sample Test						
Test Value = 0						
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Public	30.492	326	.000	1.97859	1.8509	2.1062
Private	11.524	13	.000	3.07143	2.4956	3.6472

As indicated in Table 6, the public and private schools had a p-value of 0.00, less than the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between the adequacy of equipment in public and private primary schools and the implementation of CBC. The finding concurs with Amunga, et al. (2020), whose study revealed that a majority of private schools have sufficient infrastructure to encourage the provision of CBC education. This calls for a concerted effort by the government to mitigate these challenges by intervening to ensure the implementation of CBC in all schools is achieved.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be deduced that most public schools have inadequate infrastructure such as; classrooms, laboratories, workshops, play fields, equipment, and internet to facilitate the competency-based curriculum in Vihiga County. Nonetheless, private schools have sufficient infrastructure that includes internet connection, play and ICT equipment, constant power supply, laboratories and spacious and sufficient classrooms for enhancement of competency-based curriculum. The finding established inadequate sports and game facilities to effectively make CBC a success. The inferential statistics established that there was a significant relationship between school infrastructure and the implementation of a competency-based curriculum for both public and private schools as indicated by a p-value of 0.05, less than a significant level of 0.05.

The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education and relevant stakeholders should ensure adequate learning infrastructure and effective policies to enable the effective facilitation of the competency-based curriculum.

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