



Original Article

## Relationship between the extent of Implementation of Kiswahili Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Vihiga County and Student Kiswahili Achievement and Attitudes Towards Kiswahili

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**Keywords:**  
*Achievement,*  
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*Effective,*  
*Implementation.*

Effective curriculum implementation is essential for the realisation of set objectives. This study examined the relationship between the extent of implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum in secondary schools in Vihiga County and student Kiswahili achievement and attitudes towards Kiswahili. The study used an Ex-Post Facto research design. The target population included secondary school students. Probability sampling approaches were used. Ninety-eight students from national schools were selected 105 from Extra- County schools, and 140 from County schools. Research instruments included; questionnaires, achievement tests, and an attitude scale for students. The test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the evaluation results. Data were analysed using frequencies, means and standard deviations. ANOVA was used to test hypotheses. The study concluded that the Kiswahili curriculum was implemented to some extent in Vihiga County. Students' performance was influenced by the extent of Kiswahili curriculum implementation. Students performed well where the curriculum was implemented to a large extent. Consequently, it was established that there was a relationship between students' attitudes and the extent of Kiswahili curriculum implementation. Students tended to have positive attitudes towards Kiswahili, where the curriculum was implemented to a large extent. The study recommended that teachers needed to come up with new teaching methods that would focus on improving the performance of students in Kiswahili subjects. This could be achieved through regular in-service training programs that were diversified to accommodate various needs of teachers coming from different schools.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Problem

In his conception of curriculum, Bobbitt (1918) affirmed that curriculum was the course of deeds and experiences through which learners became the adults they should be for success in adult society. In other words, the curriculum encourages the entire scope of formative deeds and experiences occurring both within and outside the school for the purposeful formation of adult members of society. Kiswahili is a language spoken in East and parts of Central Africa. In Kenya, it was selected to be a national language as well as an official language (Constitution of Kenya 2010). According to Hoque (2019), language was the method of expressing ideas and emotions in the form of signs and symbols. These signs and symbols are used to encode and decode the information. Kiswahili subject is taught in schools mostly as a second language except for the inhabitants of the coastal region where it is the first language. The first language learned by a baby is his or her mother tongue. It is the language that he or she has listened to from his or her birth. Any other language learned or acquired is known as a second language (Hoque, 2019). Second language acquisition tends to be referred to as language learning that is done under a controlled context in a classroom

One of the most significant changes in the teaching of Kiswahili in the Kenyan Secondary Schools' curriculum came with the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education. This came about as a result of recommendations by the Mackay Commission (1981), which made Kiswahili compulsory and examinable in both primary and secondary schools. Making Kiswahili compulsory, it meant that a lot of adjustments needed to be made to the teaching of Kiswahili in schools. This is because the status of the language had changed. The new Kiswahili curriculum was implemented in 2003 and saw such changes as the introduction of oral literature, sociolinguistics, short stories, functional writing and new noun clauses, among other reforms (Mose, 2007). With the new changes in place, the questions that arose were concerned with the extent to which teachers were prepared to implement the new curriculum in terms of pre-service and in-service for those who were already in the service. Nnabuike (2016) observed that curriculum implementation entailed the interaction of the learners and the curriculum content under the guidance of the teacher in order to acquire desired knowledge, attitudes and skills. In this regard, it would be impossible to effectively implement the Kiswahili curriculum without teacher training and the provision of adequate instructional resources and infrastructure that would facilitate teaching and learning.

## Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum implementation, according to Orstein and Hunkins (2019), involves presenting new ideas to learners. Garba (2014) defined curriculum implementation as putting the curriculum into work for the achievement of the objectives for which it is designed. However, it is important to note that it is one thing to develop/design a curriculum, and it is another thing to implement it effectively. Objectives of any level of education cannot be achieved if the planned programme for such a level of education is not well implemented. Chaudhary (2015) observed that the process of curriculum implementation involved helping the learner acquire knowledge or experience. Effective implementation took place as the learner acquired the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills and attitudes that were aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society. Selvan (2021) observed that the institution should ensure they make available all the physical resources and encourage innovation in implementing the learning process. Additionally, the institutions should have collaborative relations for purposes such as receiving the service of experts, teachers, and students and extending the services of the institution for continuing education programmes and problem-solving through projects and research.

Nevenkosky (2018) did a study in America on barriers to effective curriculum implementation in America. This was a result of an experienced lack of curriculum fidelity to a new phonics program in the south which created a need to identify barriers preventing full curriculum implementation. The study used the concerns-based adoption model as the conceptual framework. The study was an entirely qualitative case study. The study identified concerns and barriers teachers reported when implementing a new curriculum. Results indicated that teachers required additional information before the expected implementations occurred and an understanding of demands on their personal time. Common themes showed a desire for professional development, peer collaboration, and access to curriculum resources. Onotere et al. (2021) conducted an evaluation of the implementation of the English language curriculum in Nigeria under the nine-year universal basic education curriculum. A sample of 80 pupils and 80 students from primary

and junior secondary schools and 40 teachers from six public schools were used.

Teachers questionnaires and students' Competence questionnaires were used to obtain data for the study. The study concluded that there were inadequate funds and infrastructure in schools. Murunga (2018) assessed how the instructional strategies used influenced the teaching and acquisition of listening skills in the Kiswahili language in Kenyan secondary schools. The study used a sample of 13 secondary schools purposively selected from a total of 41 secondary schools in Wareng District. 13 teachers of Kiswahili and 130 form two learners formed the respondents. The study used a descriptive survey design. An interview schedule and an observation schedule were used to collect data. The 13 teachers were interviewed, and 130 learners participated in focused group discussions, while 13 Kiswahili lessons were observed and tape-recorded. The study found that poor teaching strategies used in the teaching of listening in the Kiswahili language were one of the main causes of the poor levels of language acquisition. The study recommended that teachers of Kiswahili should build into their classrooms listening activities that have as many of the characteristics of real-life listening as possible.

## *Kiswahili Achievement*

Several researchers studying students' achievement have highlighted diverse factors that, in one way or another, influenced their learning outcomes. Teachers have been regarded as an important agents in curriculum implementation. According to Chaudhary (2016), implementation took place when the teacher constructed the syllabus, the teacher's personality, the teaching materials, and the teaching environment interacted with the learner. The relationship between teachers and student achievements showed that teachers with high test scores or highly selective educational backgrounds were more likely to produce gains in student achievement (Gachure, 2020). A teacher who understood the subject content was likely to achieve teaching and learning objectives. Consequently, the teaching method used by teachers in class greatly influenced language performance. Atma et al. (2021) opined that the use of varied teaching styles prevented students from boredom in learning and

could generate motivation and improve their achievement. In addition, when students enjoyed and were motivated to learn, they would have a good attitude. Graves (2016) opined that teachers could realise effective teaching when they employed suitable instructional resources, as the resources possessed essential aspects vis-à-vis the process of teaching and their application translated to a positive teaching and learner performance outcome.

Learning would be passive and boring to the student if teaching and learning resources were not incorporated into the lesson. These resources were supposed to be effectively organised and exploited for any meaningful teaching and learning (Gachure, 2020). The researcher further observed that Language policy played a significant role in the improvement of performance as well as an understanding of a language as witnessed in schools that failed to put in place; proper language policy where issues such as mother tongue and sheng' influence performance in Kiswahili. Chan and Yuen (2014) categorised the school environment into four groups: Teacher characteristics (Level of training, teaching styles, attitudes), learners' characteristics (entry behaviour, attitude, discipline, society influence), School physical environment (buildings, textbooks, ICT, lighting, noise, climatic conditions), and school management characteristics (language policy, motivation policy, subject support policy). These factors greatly impacted student performance and the achievement of teaching and learning objectives. In most schools, according to the researcher, most teachers of Kiswahili were inadequate, and a few were untrained simply because the schools lacked other options for handling things. Having untrained teachers would absolutely lead to poor not even better performance (Gachure, 2020). Furthermore, Dhanapala (2021) observed that a learning environment equipped with conducive resources or determinants would allow learners to handle and manipulate learning tasks more effectively, as the learning environment was believed to be a determinant factor that contributed to stimulating the outcomes of learning that facilitated academic performance by encouraging effective teaching and learning.

Chemutai (2020) investigated the influence of school-based factors on students' KCSE

performance in Kiswahili in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study used a descriptive survey research design. The target population included 55 principals, 55 heads of departments and 110 Kiswahili teachers from 55 public secondary schools. Seventeen schools were purposively selected. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 2 Kiswahili teachers from the 17 public schools. Seventeen principals, 17 HODs and 34 teachers of Kiswahili were selected. The findings of the study indicated that most students had a positive attitude towards Kiswahili and the main problem was the failure to use the library facility, inadequate teaching and learning resources, lack of formal school language policy, and use of mother tongue and sheng, which affected their performance. Adisu (2020) observed that students' attitudes were an integral part of learning and should become an essential component of second language learning pedagogy. This was because attitudes influenced one's behaviour, inner mood and therefore learning. Both negative and positive attitudes had a strong impact on the success of language learning. Ohakamike (2016) noted that one major reason why students failed the English language woefully in the yearly school certificate examination was the negative attitude of some students to the subject.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The status of Kiswahili in Kenya, East Africa and Africa at large cannot be overemphasised. The language has earned an international appeal whereby it is being taught abroad in a number of universities (Oguta, 2014). In secondary schools, it is a core compulsory and examinable subject for all candidates at the KCSE level. Despite the importance of this subject, its performance has been wanting, especially in Vihiga County, indicating a significant challenge in its implementation. The Ministry of Education in Kenya has put in resources in terms of books, infrastructure, and trained teachers to ensure that this subject is performed well, but still, no significant improvement has been registered. Mandukwini (2016) studied challenges towards curriculum implementation in Eastern Cape. Onyango (2019) investigated school-based factors affecting the implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum in primary schools in Homa Bay County, Kenya. Research of literature showed

that no study had been conducted to investigate the relationship between the extent of implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum in secondary schools in Vihiga County and students' Kiswahili achievement and attitudes towards Kiswahili. Therefore, this study examined the relationship between the extent of implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum in secondary schools in Vihiga County and student Kiswahili achievement and attitudes towards Kiswahili.

### Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between the extent of implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum in secondary schools in Vihiga County and students' Kiswahili performance?
- Is there a relationship between the extent of implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum in secondary schools in Vihiga County and students' attitudes towards Kiswahili?

### Research Hypotheses

- *H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between extent of implementation of Kiswahili curriculum in secondary schools in Vihiga County and students Kiswahili achievement.*
- *H<sub>2</sub>: There is a relationship between extent of implementation of Kiswahili curriculum in secondary schools in Vihiga County and students' attitudes towards Kiswahili.*

### METHODS

The research design for this study was the Ex-Post Facto research design. The design was used in explanatory studies where the alleged cause and effect have already occurred. The researcher does not manipulate the independent variables. It is used when the researcher sought to determine the cause of differences among groups. In the current study, the researchers sought to explain the differences in student performance in relation to the extent of curriculum implementation. The criterion of the measure included the extent of curriculum implementation that was compared with students' performance in order to explain the relationships. The target population included all schools and students in Vihiga County.

### Sample and Sampling Procedure

The probability sampling method was used to select students and schools.

### Sampling of Schools

The sample size obtained for the study was 45 schools in Vihiga county. The schools that participated were categorised into three strata, namely: National schools, extra-county schools and county schools. There were two national schools, 32 extra-county schools and 125 county schools. This method was used in order to find out the extent to which each of these schools implemented the Kiswahili curriculum since these schools differed in terms of the type of students they enrolled in terms of performance, infrastructural development and the general teaching and learning resources available in the schools.

**Table 1: Sample Size for Schools**

Type of school	No.	Sample size
National	2	2
Extra-county	32	9
County	125	34
Total	159	45

Source: Field data, 2021

### Sampling of Students

The total number of students in the 159 targeted schools was 34,188 from 4 students of these students, 1020 were in national schools while 14756 were in Extra-County schools, while 18412 were from County schools. Ninety-eight students from

national schools were selected, 105 from Extra-County schools and 140 from Sub-County schools. Students were selected to participate in the study so as to ascertain how their attitudes impacted the achievement of effective implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum. The results of the students' sample were as presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Distribution of the Sample Size for Students**

Type of school	No.	Sample population
National	1020	98
Extra-county	14,756	105
County	18,412	140
Total	34,188	343

Source: Field data 2021

### Research Instruments

Data were collected by the use of attitude scales and achievement tests. Students were given a Kiswahili achievement test in order to rate their performance in the subject. The test comprised of grammar questions that were done by all students selected to rate their performance in Kiswahili.

### Pilot Testing

The questionnaires, attitude scales, and achievement tests were piloted in the county to ascertain their validity. The test-retest method was used to check the reliability of the instrument's results. Data were analysed by use of means and

standard deviations. Inferential data was analysed by use of ANOVA.

## RESULTS

### Implementation of Kiswahili Curriculum in Secondary Schools

The first research question sought to ascertain the extent of implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum in secondary schools in Vihiga County. To achieve this, schools were categorised into three groups. These included schools that had implemented the curriculum to a large extent, some the extent and low the extent. The findings are indicated in

Table 3.

**Table 3: The extent of Implementation of Kiswahili Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Vihiga County by Type of School**

The extent of Kiswahili curriculum implementation	%
To a large the extent	25.0
To some the extent	40.2
To a low the extent	34.8
Total	100

The findings in

Table 3 established that only 25% of the schools in Vihiga County had implemented the Kiswahili curriculum to a large extent, 40.2% to some extent and 34.8% to a low extent. Findings signified that most schools in Vihiga County had implemented the

Kiswahili curriculum to some extent hence implying that the Kiswahili curriculum had not been implemented to the desired level. This could be a result of the challenges that public schools experienced, such as large class sizes resulting from

the 100% transition policy implemented by the government in (2018) as well as inadequate teachers, teaching and learning materials.

**Kiswahili Performance of Secondary School Students by Type of School**

The researcher sought to find out the Kiswahili performance of secondary school students in Vihiga

County by type of school. Schools were grouped according to their type. That is National schools, extra-county schools, and sub-county schools. The mean scores and standard deviations were obtained from the Kiswahili achievement test administered to the learners. The findings are indicated in

Table 4.

**Table 4: Distribution of Kiswahili Mean Achievement Scores by Different Categories of Schools**

School	Mean	N	SD
National School	57.56	98	17.6
Extra-County School	49.34	105	17.83
Sub-County School	36.03	140	16.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>46.26</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>19.33</b>

From the results in

Table 4, national schools had a mean of (M= 57.56, SD= 17.6) followed by Extra-County Schools (M= 49.34, SD=17.83) and Sub-County schools that attained a mean of (M= 36.03, SD= 16.21) with an overall mean of (M= 46.26, SD= 19.33). These findings concluded that the national schools performed better in Kiswahili, followed by the extra-county and sub-county schools. This could be a result of criteria of enrolment whereby national schools and extra-county schools selected students with better grades as compared to the sub-county schools. In addition, national schools and extra-county schools were adequately equipped in terms of human, financial, and physical resources. Okong’o et al. (2015) observed after a study that the accessibility of the teaching and learning resources

upgraded the school’s viability as they were fundamental things that could achieve excellent academic achievement.

**Implementation of Kiswahili Curriculum and Students’ Kiswahili Achievement**

The study examined Kiswahili subject performance of public schools based on the extent of curriculum implementation. Schools were grouped according to the extent to which they had implemented the curriculum, after which their performance was assessed. A checklist that looked at the availability of teaching and learning resources, syllabus coverage and ICT integration was used as a yardstick for grouping the schools. The findings were as follows.

**Table 5: Distribution of Kiswahili Mean Achievement Scores of Students by Different Levels of Implementation of Kiswahili Curriculum**

Level of Implementation	n	X	SD
Large The extent	103	57.03	18.33
Some The extent	100	49.25	13.19
Low The extent	140	36.87	14.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>46.53</b>	<b>17.6</b>

The schools were grouped into three categories, namely: Schools where the Kiswahili curriculum

had been implemented to a large extent, Schools where the curriculum was implemented to some

extent and schools where it was implemented to a low extent. The descriptive statistics in *Table 5* indicated that Kiswahili performance was high in schools where the curriculum was implemented to a larger the extent ( $M= 57.03$ ,  $SD 18.33$ ) as compared to schools where it was implemented to some the extent ( $M = 49.25$ ,  $SD = 13.19$ ) and low the extent ( $M= 36.87$ ,  $SD= 14.51$ ) with the overall mean performance of ( $M=46.53$ ,  $SD 17.6$ ). This implied that schools where the curriculum was implemented effectively performed better in Kiswahili subjects as opposed to schools where it was not well implemented. Chaudhary (2015) observed that the process of curriculum implementation involved helping the learner acquire the planned or intended experiences, knowledge skills, ideas and attitudes.

*Table 6.*

**Table 6: Distribution of Mean attitude of students towards Kiswahili by different levels of implementation of Kiswahili curriculum in Vihiga County**

Level of Implementation	N	X	SD
Large the extent	114	3.4737	1.074
Some the extent	114	2.3158	1.092
Low the extent	115	1.6174	0.864
Total	343	2.4667	1.2697

#### Findings in

*Table 6* indicated that in schools where the Kiswahili curriculum was implemented to a large the extent, their students had a mean attitude of ( $M= 3.47$ ,  $SD= 1.074$ ), some the extent, ( $M= 2.3$ ,  $SD= 1.092$ ) and low the extent ( $M= 1.617$ ,  $SD= 0.864$ ). This implied that students developed positive attitudes in schools where the curriculum was implemented to a large extent as compared to where it was implemented to some extent and low the extent.

#### Tests of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

*H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean Kiswahili achievement scores of students in schools with different levels of implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum.*

#### Level of Implementation of Kiswahili Curriculum and Student's Attitudes towards Kiswahili

The study also sought to find out students' attitudes towards Kiswahili in relation to the extent of Kiswahili curriculum implementation. Students' attitudes have been considered to greatly influence students' performance. The schools were grouped into three, those that had implemented the curriculum to a large extent, some the extent and low the extent. Students' attitudes were assessed by the use of attitude scales administered to the students. The findings were as presented in

*H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference between mean attitudes of Kiswahili scores of students in schools with different levels of implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum.*

H<sub>01</sub>:  $X_1 = X_2 = X_3$

H<sub>1</sub>: Not all means are equal.

#### *Relationship between the extent of Kiswahili Curriculum Implementation and Students' Performance*

The study sought to establish whether there was a significant relationship between the extent of Kiswahili curriculum implementation and students' Kiswahili subject performance. The first null hypothesis of no relationship was tested by use of One-way ANOVA. The findings were as presented in



Table 7.

**Table 7: ANOVA Summary of Performance**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25154.016	2	12577.008	52.967	.000
Within Groups	80733.348	340	237.451		
Total	105887.364	342			

ANOVA test was carried out to test the null hypothesis of no significant difference between mean Kiswahili achievement scores of students in *Table 7* revealed that the p-value of ( $p=0.000$ ) was less than the significant value (0.05). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there was a significant difference between the mean Kiswahili achievement scores of students in schools with different levels of curriculum implementation. The findings indicated that with effective curriculum implementation, there was a likelihood of improvement in student performance in Kiswahili subjects; hence secondary schools where the Kiswahili curriculum was successfully implemented had a high likelihood of recording better student performance in Kiswahili. A school where the curriculum had been implemented to a large extent and that learning in a conducive classroom environment that could boost an individual's self-esteem led to successful learning (Bajaj, 2013).

schools with different levels of curriculum implementation. Study findings illustrated in

***Relationship between Mean Attitude towards Kiswahili of Students in Schools with Different Levels of Implementation of Kiswahili Curriculum***

The second Null hypothesis sought to examine the relationship between the extent of Kiswahili curriculum implementation and students' attitudes towards Kiswahili subjects. ANOVA test was carried out to test the null hypothesis of no significant difference between mean attitudes towards Kiswahili of students in schools with different levels of curriculum implementation. The researcher sought to find out whether students' attitudes towards Kiswahili were affected by the level of curriculum implementation in the school. The schools were divided into three categories; where the curriculum was implemented to a large extent, to some extent, and to a low extent. The findings are presented in *Table 8*.

**Table 8: ANOVA Analysis The extent of Curriculum Implementation by Attitudes**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	201.147	2	100.573	97.639	.000
Within Groups	350.218	340	1.030		
Total	551.364	342			

Study findings illustrated in *Table 8* revealed that the p-value of ( $p=0.000$ ) was less than the significant value (0.05). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there was a significant difference between mean attitude scores towards Kiswahili of students in schools with different levels of curriculum implementation. The findings indicated that with effective curriculum implementation, there was a likelihood of improvement in student attitudes towards the

Kiswahili subject; hence secondary schools where the Kiswahili curriculum was successfully implemented had a high likelihood of creating positive attitudes in Kiswahili. Ohakamike (2016) reviewed the attitudes and achievements of students in the English language, and it was observed that if the learning environment was not conducive to learning, students were likely to develop a negative attitude toward the subject with the resultant poor achievement.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that the Kiswahili curriculum was implemented to some extent in Vihiga County. Consequently, it was established that there was a relationship between students' attitudes and the extent of Kiswahili curriculum implementation. Students tended to have positive attitudes towards Kiswahili, where the curriculum was implemented to a large extent. Finally, students' performance was influenced by the extent of Kiswahili curriculum implementation. Students performed well where the curriculum was implemented to a large extent.

## Recommendations

There is a need for teachers to come up with new teaching methods that will focus on improving the performance of students in Kiswahili subjects. This could be achieved through regular in-service training programs that are diversified to accommodate the various needs of teachers coming from different schools. For effective Kiswahili curriculum implementation, the ministry and school administration should provide adequate resources in order to achieve the set curriculum objectives. Further, the school administration needs to augment and monitor platforms that allow students to hold interactive discussions in Kiswahili in and out of school for the purpose of enhancing their interest and improving their attitudes. This could be achieved through extra-curriculum activities and the enactment of favourable language policies that promoted the subject. Additionally, students should actively engage in speaking correct Kiswahili, reciting poems, and dramatising set books in order to improve their Kiswahili scores. Finally, all the stakeholders should conduct a needs assessment so as to come up with relevant remedies for tackling the challenges that affect the effective implementation of the curriculum specific to their schools.

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