

Attitude of Public Junior Secondary School Teachers towards the Implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya

By

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the attitudes of public junior secondary school teachers in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County, towards the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Employing a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, the research was grounded in John Dewey's Constructivist Theory. A sample comprising five schools, five principals, 46 teachers, and one Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO) participated. Data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, and observations, and were rigorously tested for reliability and validity using Cronbach's Alpha, member checking, and triangulation. The findings revealed that teachers' attitudes play a critical role in the successful implementation of the CBC, with positive attitudes being key to its effective adoption. The study recommends targeted professional development programs to improve teacher preparedness, better resource allocation to support the curriculum, enhanced collaboration with educational stakeholders, and ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms. These strategies are essential to ensuring the long-term success of CBC implementation in Kamukunji Sub-County.

Keywords: Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), Teacher attitudes, Curriculum implementation, Professional development, Resource allocation, Educational stakeholders, Teacher readiness, Continuous evaluation.

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Introduction

One of the most important aspects of the Competency-Based Curriculum's (CBC) effective acceptance and implementation is the attitude that instructors at public junior high schools have toward its implementation. The relevance of the curriculum, the teachers' readiness to apply it, and the support they receive from educational authorities all influence the attitudes of teachers (Otieno, 2022). The degree to which educators are open to adopting new practices has a direct impact on the success of several global educational reforms. Since the CBC places more emphasis on the development of skills and competencies than on rote memory, there has to be a major change in the ways that teaching is delivered (KICD, 2017). Thus, it is vital to comprehend the attitudes of educators as unfavorable opinions may impede the successful execution of curricula, whilst favorable opinions might improve the educational experiences and achievements of pupils (Mokoro, 2023).

Globally, countries like the United States and Finland have successfully implemented competency-based education by prioritizing teacher readiness and support (Watson & Murnieks, 2020; Sahlberg, 2019). In Africa, nations such as Zambia and Rwanda have faced challenges in adopting similar educational models, emphasizing the need for comprehensive teacher training and adequate resources (Musafiri & Rubagiza, 2021; Bwembya, 2020). The Kenyan government has made efforts to align CBC with Vision 2030, aiming to produce learners capable of contributing to socio-economic development (Mokoro, 2023). Understanding teachers' attitudes in Kamukunji Sub-County is crucial for effective CBC implementation, as positive attitudes are linked to improved educational outcomes (Njagi, 2023).

There has been significant global diversity in the opinions of public junior secondary school instructors toward the adoption of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Due in large part to robust institutional backing and extensive professional development programs, teachers' opinions toward competency-based education have typically been positive in industrialized nations like the US and Finland. Because competency-based learning is in line with Finland's educational system, which places an emphasis on lifelong learning and holistic development, instructors there have embraced it (Tynjälä & Gijbels, 2012).

Similar to this, in the US, teachers' attitudes have improved despite some early reluctance as they were given sufficient training and resources, which allowed them to easily switch from conventional ways to more student-centered approaches (Levine & Patrick, 2019). These illustrations show that instructors are more likely to have a favorable attitude toward curricular improvements when they receive the necessary training and support, which is essential for the reforms to be implemented successfully.

The Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) has been implemented differently by public junior secondary school teachers in several African nations. These attitudes are typically influenced by the resources, training, and institutional support that are made available to them. For instance, teachers in Uganda opposed the Lower Secondary Curriculum, which integrates CBC concepts, mostly because they had not received enough training and preparation. While teachers acknowledged the potential benefits of the CBC in enhancing practical skills and critical thinking, a study by Tumusiime, Bananuka, and Aguti (2019) found that many expressed skepticism and frustration over the lack of comprehensive professional development and resources to support its implementation. This lack of planning resulted in emotions of overwhelm and unpreparedness, which influenced a general disapproval of the program.

Teachers in Rwanda also had differing opinions on the introduction of the CBC at the secondary level. According to a study by Ndayambaje (2020), a considerable number of teachers voiced concerns about the lack of teaching materials, inadequate training, and large class sizes that made

it challenging to implement the new curriculum successfully. However, some teachers were excited about the shift towards a more student-centered approach that emphasizes the development of practical skills. The instructors were disillusioned and developed a bad attitude toward the CBC because they believed that the government had not sufficiently addressed these issues. These instances demonstrate how crucial it is to address the training and logistical requirements in order to encourage teachers in African nations to have a favorable attitude toward curricular improvements.

In 2018, Kenya introduced the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) to replace the traditional 8-4-4 system. This new curriculum emphasizes hands-on learning and skill development, aiming to equip students with the competencies needed to tackle 21st-century challenges (KICD, 2017). CBC's learner-centered approach contrasts with the rote memorization and content-heavy focus of the previous curriculum, promoting the development of practical skills, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities (Waweru & Nyaga, 2023). However, the successful implementation of CBC depends significantly on teachers' attitudes, as they are the primary agents of curriculum delivery in classrooms.

Research has shown that teachers who hold positive attitudes towards educational reforms are more likely to adopt and effectively implement new curricula (Otieno et al., 2022). In the Kenyan context, studies have identified the need for enhanced teacher preparation, resource allocation, and professional development to foster positive attitudes toward CBC implementation (Koech & Wambua, 2021). Positive emotional responses, cognitive readiness, and proactive behaviors among teachers are essential for CBC's success (Waweru & Nyaga, 2023). Despite the global recognition of CBC's potential benefits, limited research has been conducted on teachers' attitudes toward its implementation in Kenya, highlighting the importance of this study in Kamukunji Sub-County (Njagi, 2023).

Because of the region's distinct educational issues and varied demographic makeup, the researcher chose to carry out a study in Kamukunji Sub-County to investigate the attitudes of public junior

high school teachers regarding the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC). Nairobi's Kamukunji Sub-County is known for its dense population and stark socioeconomic differences, which may have an impact on student performance and teacher attitudes. Furthermore, being an urban sub-county with a diverse population representing a range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, the region offers a microcosm of the difficulties that CBC implementation may encounter nationwide. Comprehending the attitudes of educators in this type of environment can shed light on the wider consequences of curriculum changes and identify particular assistance requirements for their successful execution in comparable urban settings.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers at Kamukunji Sub-County's public junior secondary schools generally display a positive attitude towards the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). They recognize the potential benefits of CBC in enhancing student learning outcomes, equipping learners with practical skills, and fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Karumba & Mugo, 2023). This enthusiasm is driven by a clear understanding of CBC's foundational principles, which aim to shift the focus from rote learning to a more holistic educational approach. Teachers believe that their commitment and positive perception are crucial for the successful realization of CBC's objectives, such as nurturing creativity and practical competence among students (Ndirangu & Kibui, 2022).

However, this ideal enthusiasm is tempered by significant challenges. Issues such as inadequate teacher training, resistance to change, and the unavailability of necessary resources hinder effective CBC implementation (Wachira & Ng'ang'a, 2021). Many teachers feel overwhelmed by the additional demands that the CBC places on them, leading to negative attitudes and reluctance to fully embrace the curriculum. The lack of support from the government and school administrations exacerbates these challenges, creating a gap between the intended and actual outcomes of the CBC. If these barriers remain unaddressed, the effective implementation of CBC in Kamukunji Sub-County is at risk, potentially compromising students' educational and future career prospects. This study aims to investigate how the attitudes of public junior secondary school

teachers in Kamukunji Sub-County influence the successful implementation of CBC, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address these challenges.

Research Question

What is the attitude of public junior secondary school teachers in Kamukunji Sub-County towards the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum?

Theoretical Framework

The study, anchored on Dewey's interpretation of Constructivism theory, explored the attitudes of public junior secondary school teachers in Kamukunji Sub-County towards the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Constructivism, as posited by Dewey (1938), emphasizes active, experiential learning where knowledge is constructed through engagement with the environment. This theoretical framework aligns with CBC's focus on practical competency development, promoting a student-centered approach that prioritizes critical thinking, problem-solving, and hands-on learning experiences (Mayer, 2020). In this context, teachers are seen as facilitators who guide students through meaningful experiences, encouraging them to actively participate in their learning process. The study highlighted the critical role of teachers in fostering environments conducive to experiential learning, essential for the successful implementation of CBC principles.

The research aimed to understand how the principles of CBC intersected with teachers' instructional practices and their perceptions of their role in nurturing students' competencies. Dewey's Constructivism theory suggests that education should be centered on students' experiences and interests, allowing them to engage in meaningful activities that promote deep understanding (Dewey, 1938). Teachers in Kamukunji Sub-County were expected to adopt instructional strategies that facilitate inquiry, exploration, and collaboration, thereby aligning with CBC's objectives of developing students' practical skills and competencies (Mayer, 2020). By embracing this student-centered approach, teachers could help students construct their own

knowledge, thereby enhancing their ability to solve real-world problems and achieve the educational outcomes envisioned by the CBC.

Review of Related Empirical Literature

Leat, Reid, and Lofthouse (2020) conducted a study in the United Kingdom that examined teachers' attitudes toward the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) through the lens of Constructivist Learning Theory. This research focused on secondary school teachers and employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both surveys and interviews. The findings revealed that teachers generally held positive attitudes toward CBC, yet emphasized the need for ongoing professional development and adequate resources. Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of collaborative planning and peer support in helping teachers effectively adapt their practices to this curriculum. In contrast, the current study specifically targets public junior secondary school teachers in Kamukunji Sub-County. While it also employs Constructivist Learning Theory, it further integrates Ecological Systems Theory to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing CBC implementation. This dual-theoretical framework aims to enhance the effectiveness of the study's outcomes by considering the various layers of environmental influences on teachers' attitudes and practices. By adopting this localized and nuanced approach, the research seeks to address specific professional development needs and resource requirements, thereby offering targeted interventions for effective CBC implementation in Kamukunji Sub-County.

Additionally, Olaniyan and Ojo (2020) conducted research on teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in Nigeria. This study focused on selected secondary schools in Lagos State that were actively engaged in implementing the curriculum. Utilizing a qualitative research design informed by curriculum theory, the research explored teachers' perceptions, the challenges they faced, and strategies for effective CBC implementation. In the current study, a mixed research design was employed, targeting Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QUSA), public junior secondary school teachers, and students specifically in Kamukunji Sub-County, Kenya. This comprehensive approach aimed to gather both qualitative

and quantitative data, providing a thorough understanding of attitudes toward the Competency-Based Curriculum within this specific context.

Silas (2020) investigated teacher-related aspects impacting the implementation of a competency-based curriculum at the lower primary school level in Luanda Sub-County, Vihiga County, Kenya. The study utilized a descriptive survey design, targeting 50 head teachers, 620 lower primary school teachers, and 900 Grade 3 pupils. Through simple random sampling, a sample of 15 head teachers, 186 teachers, and 90 pupils was obtained. Data were collected using questionnaires for teachers, interview guides for head teachers, and focus group discussion guides for learners. Analysis was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings revealed that only a small percentage of teachers (8.0%) reported limited exposure to ICT tools and knowledge of their usage. Teachers rated their perceived ICT knowledge and skills as moderate, with a clear indication that their perceived ICT efficacy was low. Most teachers were not utilizing technology to deliver content regularly. However, a significant majority (84.69%) believed that ICT positively impacted the implementation of the competency-based curriculum, considering its digital nature. Additionally, almost all teachers (98.6%) held positive perceptions towards the curriculum's implementation. The study was conducted in Vihiga County, which is predominantly rural.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a Convergent Mixed Methods Design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data was gathered through a descriptive survey, while phenomenology was used for qualitative exploration, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) implementation. The study was conducted in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi. This is a high-density urban setting, engaging 17 public junior secondary schools. It focused on all 17 public junior secondary schools in Kamukunji, including 99 teachers, 17 principals, and 1 Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO). The researcher used a combination of probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Stratified sampling selected five schools, while purposive and systematic sampling chose participants from principals, teachers, and QASO. A mix of quantitative questionnaires and qualitative tools like focus groups,

interviews, and document analysis was employed. These instruments were designed to ensure comprehensive data collection.

Findings and Discussions

Teachers were asked to indicate how much they agreed with certain statements in a survey to convey their opinions about the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). They responded by checking a box in each of the following five categories on a Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD). This approach makes it possible to evaluate their viewpoints and the degree to which they feel that CBC implementation is important in a more nuanced way. The results are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Implementation of CBC (n=40)

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
i)	I feel positive about the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC).	8 20%	12 30%	4 10%	9 22%	7 18%
ii)	The CBC will significantly improve students' learning outcomes.	10 25%	14 35%	6 15%	4 10%	6 15%
iii)	I am enthusiastic about teaching under the CBC framework.	9 22%	8 20%	4 10%	10 25%	9 22%
iv)	I believe the CBC is better than the previous curriculum.	10 25%	11 27%	5 13%	10 25%	4 10%
v)	I feel adequately prepared to implement the CBC.	7 18%	8 20%	6 15%	9 22%	10 25%
vi)	I receive sufficient support from the administration regarding CBC implementation.	8 20%	8 20%	4 10%	10 25%	10 25%
vii)	I believe my students benefit from the CBC approach.	11 18%	12 30%	2 5%	10 25%	5 13%
viii)	I feel motivated to learn more about CBC.	12 30%	13 32%	5 13%	6 15%	4 10%
ix)	I am confident in my ability to teach using the CBC	11 18%	12 30%	4 10%	9 22%	4 10%
x)	The CBC implementation has been a positive change for our school.	12 30%	11 18	6 15%	8 20%	3 7%

Source: Kamukunji Field Data (2024)

Based on responses from 40 educators, Table 1 provides a summary of teachers' opinions of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The data exhibits a spectrum of viewpoints, indicating both skepticism and support. For instance, a sizable percentage of educators really believe that CBC will enhance learning outcomes, and they are inspired to find out more. But issues arise when it comes to administrative assistance and readiness, as evidenced by the fact that a significant portion of instructors feel underprepared and believe they are receiving insufficient help. This table offers insights for resolving problems and improving curriculum adoption tactics by highlighting roadblocks and identifying consensus areas in CBC implementation.

With (20%) strongly agreeing and (30%) agreeing with the competency-based curriculum's influence, most instructors have a positive attitude on its implementation. This suggests that educators generally favor CBC. There is, however, a sizable amount of doubt as well, with (22%) disagreeing and (18%) strongly disagreeing, indicating conflicting opinions on the efficacy of CBC. Confidence in student outcomes is particularly high; (35% and 25%) of respondents, respectively, strongly agree and agree that CBC would improve students' learning outcomes. The fact that just (10%) disagree and (15%) strongly disagree shows how widely people feel about the curriculum's potential advantages. There are regions of optimism and anxiety among instructors, as seen by the difference between general attitude and confidence in student results.

Teachers' enthusiasm for teaching the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) varies. A noteworthy (25%) disagree and (22%) strongly disagree, suggesting varying degrees of interest and various personal views regarding the new curriculum, even while (22%) strongly agree and (20%) agree that they are happy about CBC. There is a generally good opinion as compared to the previous curriculum; (27%) of instructors think that CBC is an upgrade, and (25%) of teachers strongly agree. However, (25%) disagree and (10%) strongly disagree, indicating a lack of confidence in the benefits of CBC over the previous curriculum. Teachers' varied reactions to CBC show their support as well as their reservations, indicating the need for further interaction and assurance to bring attitudes into line.

Merely (18%) of educators firmly concur, and (20%) concur that they are sufficiently equipped to execute the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). This shows that a sizable percentage of teachers (25%), feel unprepared, highlighting the urgent need for further assistance and training to improve preparedness. In a similar vein, opinions about administrative support show conflicting sentiments: (20%) strongly agree and (20%) agree that school administration provides adequate help. Nonetheless, (25%) disagree and an additional (25%) strongly disagree, indicating that a sizable proportion of educators believe there is insufficient administrative assistance. These results underline the need for more focused professional development and enhanced administrative involvement in order to close these gaps and facilitate the successful implementation of CBC.

With (30%) agreeing and (18%) strongly agreeing that children benefit from the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), the majority of instructors have high hopes for the program's effects on pupils. Nonetheless, there is a noticeable lack of confidence, as (13%) strongly disagree and (25%) disagree, indicating worries or mistrust over the curriculum's ability to benefit children. On the other hand, a large percentage of instructors (32%) including those who strongly agree (30%) say they are eager to learn more about CBC. There is a generally positive attitude towards additional professional development associated to CBC, with just (15%) strongly disagreeing and (10%) disagreeing. This passion for learning stands in stark contrast to the differing opinions on the direct effects of CBC on pupils, pointing out areas that may require further explanation and assistance.

Teachers' confidence in their ability to teach utilizing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) is mediocre. A sizeable percentage (22%) disagree, and (10%) strongly disagree, that they are confident in their abilities to teach using CBC, despite the fact that 18% strongly agree and (30%) agree. This indicates different degrees of certainty and some worries. With respect to the curriculum's overall impact, a significant majority of teachers (30%) strongly agree and (27.5%) agree, think that CBC has been a beneficial shift. Further, (20%) disagree, and (7.5%) strongly disagree, indicating that opinions on the curriculum's efficacy and impact on the learning environment are divided. These opposing viewpoints draw attention to the necessity of focused interventions to deal with difficulties of confidence and accentuate the benefits of CBC.

The statistics show that the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) is generally well-liked and that people think it might be beneficial for children. But there are still a lot of unanswered questions about teachers' confidence and motivation, administrative support, and readiness. The management is perceived by many instructors as not providing enough support, and there is a broad range in teachers' excitement and confidence when it comes to teaching CBC. These contradictory responses highlight the need for focused initiatives to deal with these problems. More training, increased administrative support, and addressing teachers' differing levels of passion and confidence are all necessary to improve CBC implementation. Stakeholders may guarantee a more successful and widely accepted CBC implementation by concentrating on these areas.

The following responses were obtained from head teachers during interviews on the attitudes of public junior secondary school teachers in Kamukunji Sub-County toward the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC): Head teachers observed that teachers' attitudes regarding the implementation of CBC were not uniform. While some educators were enthusiastic and had a positive attitude, praising the CBC's emphasis on holistic development and student capabilities, others voiced worries about the difficulties and added effort brought on by the new curriculum. They emphasized that although the CBC is thought to be advantageous for students' learning, teaching staff acceptability and preparedness differ.

According to the Sub-County Director of Education during the interview:

Teachers' opinions on the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) are largely favorable. To address these obstacles, the SCDE acknowledged that some instructors are finding it difficult to adjust to the new curriculum. This underscores the need for continued assistance and professional development. Although CBC was praised for its ability to enhance student learning outcomes, the SCDE expressed concerns about inadequate planning and the need for more robust administrative assistance. This indicates that although there is a positive attitude about CBC in general, in order to ensure a more seamless adaptation process and better overall results, it is necessary to address deficiencies in teacher preparation and strengthen administrative support for successful implementation (KSCDE Personal Communications July 8, 2024).

Further findings from the Interview with the SCDE indicated that:

The concerns regarding the placement of Junior Secondary (JS) within primary schools and the extended duration teachers spend as interns are indeed valid. Teachers are navigating a complex transition, and these structural issues add to the challenges they face." He further noted that these challenges vary across schools, influenced by factors such as school environment, leadership style, and individual teacher dispositions. Despite these challenges, the QASO observed a positive shift in attitudes due to ongoing professional development, adding, "Ongoing professional development and retooling have led to a gradual positive shift in attitudes. The need for teachers to adapt to CBC for professional relevance is also contributing to this shift (KSCDE Personal Communication July 8, 2024).

The Sub-County Director of Education (SCDE) and head teachers agreed that the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) had benefits, such as the ability to enhance student learning and promote a more all-encompassing approach to education. They did, however, also draw attention to a number of issues, mostly with relation to the teacher adaption process. Instructors conveyed difficulties with insufficient planning and the want for stronger assistance. The SCDE and head teachers agreed that improving administrative assistance and offering focused professional development were essential to implementing CBC successfully. In order to guarantee that educators have the resources and assistance they need, addressing these issues is essential. This will eventually result in a more successful integration of the CBC into the educational system.

These results are consistent with research by Hsiao, Chou, Hsieh, Chang, and Hsu (2020), which found that attitudes toward competency-based learning have improved. Indeed, 87.2% of the 117 users that participated in their satisfaction surveys expressed satisfaction with the Competency-Based Learning Assessment System across a range of quality characteristics. The fact that this high degree of satisfaction persisted across many user groups highlights how competency-based methods may improve educational results. Positive responses in both studies demonstrate the increasing acceptability of competency-based curricula, but they also show the necessity of continuous assistance to handle any issues that may arise during implementation.

Additionally, the findings align with literature that emphasizes the importance of holistic education and the role of CBC in fostering creativity and engagement in the classroom (Waweru & Nyaga, 2022). However, consistent with the literature, challenges such as insufficient resources, complex content, and the need for more comprehensive training are evident (Mwangi & Njuguna, 2021). Despite these obstacles, the enthusiasm for CBC implementation, driven by ongoing professional development and administrative support, mirrors findings in recent studies that highlight the importance of teacher motivation and support in curriculum reform (Kamau & Njoroge, 2023).

Summary of Findings

The study reveals that teachers exhibit a blend of optimism and concern regarding the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). While educators generally favor the transition to student-centered learning that emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills, challenges like inadequate training, limited resources, and increased workloads impede their full support. Nevertheless, there are positive trends in teachers' attitudes, attributed to improved training programs, administrative backing, and favorable classroom experiences. The data indicates that a significant majority of teachers in Kamukunji Sub-County, 80.4%, support CBC implementation. However, ongoing challenges emphasize the need for continuous support and professional development to facilitate effective adoption of the curriculum.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Kamukunji Sub-County's public junior secondary school teachers are mostly in favor of the Competency-Based Curriculum's (CBC) adoption. Even if they understand the advantages of a student-centered approach that develops practical skills and critical thinking, problems like insufficient training, scarce resources, and heavier workloads still exist. While the majority of teachers responded positively, this shows that they are open to implementing the CBC, it also emphasizes the need for further professional development and guidance from educational authorities. In order to increase student results and teachers' ability to implement the CBC successfully, it will be imperative to address these problems.

Recommendations

Prioritizing thorough teacher training programs is advised in order to support Kamukunji Sub-County's effective implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The goal of these programs should be to solve issues with task management and resource availability while providing educators with the tools they need to deliver the CBC in an efficient manner. Teachers may exchange best practices and boost their confidence in executing the curriculum by creating a supportive atmosphere through cooperative planning and peer mentorship. It is important to build ongoing feedback systems to evaluate the efficacy of training activities and tackle emerging difficulties, so guaranteeing that educators receive sufficient support in their duties.

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