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**An Examination of the Challenges Affecting the Implementation Of
Competency-Based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools in Imenti
North, Meru County-Kenya**



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An Examination of the Challenges Affecting the Implementation Of Competency-Based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools in Imenti North, Meru County-Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To examine the challenges affecting the implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Imenti North, Meru County-Kenya.

Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive research design and was conducted in 208 primary schools in Imenti North sub-county, involving 208 head teachers and 1,745 teachers. A simple random sampling method was used to select 30% of the target population, yielding 62 head teachers and 524 teachers. Pre-testing was carried out in 21 schools in Imenti South sub-county with 6 head teachers (purposively selected) and 52 teachers (randomly selected). Data were collected using self-structured questionnaires. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, while validity was ensured through face, content, and criterion measures.

Findings: The results showed that 29(62%) and 16(34%) principals strongly disagreed and disagreed that there was a committee that was established in their schools to internally monitor and evaluate CBC programs whereabouts. Additionally, there was a negative opinion on the reception of CBC by various stakeholders such as parents and teachers. Nine 9(19%) strongly disagreed, 17(36%) disagreed and 21(45%) were neutral. This shows that the idea of change from 8.4.4 system was not yet fully internalized the idea that CBC was the new norm.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: The school management should initiate programs such as walks for purposes of lobbying for funds from well-wishers. The ministry of education should set up public address rallies in various schools to give out information on what exactly is CBC and how it works. This would demystify any misconceptions on the education systems to teachers and parents. The ministry of education should set up policies that guide on how delivery of CBC by teachers would be measured. This would enable teachers understand what is supposed to be achieved and how it would be measured.

Keywords: *Implementation, Competency-Based Curriculum, Public Primary schools, Imenti North, Meru County-Kenya*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The shift from content and educator focused educational program to Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), is a move towards enabling learners augment their individual abilities with educational demands (Yao & Lin, 2025). According to Williams (2025), the effective acknowledgment of educational plans depends intensely with the availability of financial resources, parental support, teachers' contributions towards the learning process. Various nations have gone through this similar path of changing old curriculum to a new CBC. However, the implementation the new curriculum has faced diverse challenges. In Europe, a report by Eurydice (2025) that assessed the challenges and opportunities that exist on education policy perspective, revealed that national education systems have increasingly emphasized competency-based and key-competence-oriented curricula aligned with broader lifelong learning goals. These reforms aim to better support learners' mastery of transferable skills and real-world problem solving, but concerns related to alignment of assessment practices, teacher preparedness, and stakeholder support across school systems, still persist.

In South Africa, Sepadi & Molapo (2024) explored the understanding and the interpretation of teachers on Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) which comprise the new National Curriculum Statement currently implemented in South African schools. The study revealed inconsistencies between the 'optimistic' view of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to improve curriculum implementation despite continuously changing the curriculum, and the 'pessimistic' scenario where teachers consistently refer to obstacles to curriculum implementation. The study suggested that CAPS implementation is hampered by inadequate training of teachers, lack of resources, and too much paperwork.

In a West African nation such as Nigeria, Adeoye et al. (2025), explored the implementation challenges of the Curriculum Based Curriculum in elementary schools. It was found out that insufficiency of resources and poor policy implementation to support learning. In East-African nation like Rwanda, CBC implementation has been engulfed with few teaching materials; available teaching materials being softcopy hence not practice to every student; low resources to purchase new text-books; English language barrier; resistance to change by teachers; lack of quality time for mentoring program; lack of internet in classes; few numbers of class buildings; and lack of enough training of teachers (Mutabazi & Saine, 2025).

Kenya government through the ministry of education has been able to roll-out the first CBC to PP1 to grade 8 (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2025). However, this process of implementation has been faced with various challenges involving all stakeholders such as parents, teachers and the school management (MOE; Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), 2022). CBC requires stakeholders like parent not only to participate in fees and basic needs, but also get involved in various tasks such as assignments (Ranji et al., 2025). This makes the burden tough on parents since some of them did not go to school hence do not have reliable academic background to

constructively participate in the tasks. In addition, there have been extra costs added to parents so as to efficiently fund the CBC (Mwereria et al., 2025).

Further on, change in curriculum has also been a hard task on teachers trained on 8.4.4 system. There has been no training on the new curriculum so that teachers are at par with what is expected of them. The school management have been added an extra task of monitoring and evaluation of the new curriculum (Simiyu, 2025). This monitoring and evaluation required trained staff and resources for effectiveness. CBC has not yet still addressed these issues hence making it a concern for this study to explore various challenges and their subsequent solutions that can be offered before it is implemented in secondary schools (Ranji et al., 2025).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The constitution of Kenya upholds the principal privileges of a child to free quality fundamental education. In implementation of this right, the government of Kenya introduced 8-4-4 system of education in order to deliver graduates who are independent (Mwereria et al., 2025). However, the 8-4-4 system of education became too much examination oriented therefore paving the way for the newly launched competency-based curriculum. This curriculum is currently being implemented in PP1, PP2, grade 1-4 as from 2018. Nevertheless, there has been a massive outcry from Teacher Unions, Parents-teachers Association and even the community that CBC has challenges related to financial sources, management of teaching resources, involvement of parents, monitoring and evaluation, ICT and government regulations (MOE, 2025).

Up until now, this educational plan has confronted various difficulties that even the Ministry of Education, has sooner or later distinguished the escape clauses in the educational program (Akala, 2021). There is deciphered with respect to arrangement at the local school levels. In a review that was directed among chosen regions inside Mount Kenya Region by UNESCO (2022), it was discovered that the degree of acknowledgment of the CBC by educators, students, guardians and the local area is problematic. Hence, this review looks to analyze how execution has been impacted with an incorporation to these issues.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To examine the challenges affecting the implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Imenti North, Meru County-Kenya.

1.4 Research Question

What are the challenges affecting the implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Imenti North, Meru County-Kenya?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Empirical Review

The Kenyan new Competency Based Curriculum [CBC] changes are pointed toward sustaining each student's latent capacity and making a road for distinguishing, supporting and fostering the students' gifts (Sepadi & Molapo, 2024). This support is through improving the learning tracks and pathways which are given at secondary schools (MOE and KICD, 2022). Basic education is organized into three levels; early years training, center school schooling and senior school. The new skill-based CBC was carried out in January 2017 and is being executed in elementary schools. According to Ministry of Education [MOE] (2025), the skill based educational program was additionally carried out from grade three to four. Nevertheless, over the short duration of time that CBC has been implemented, it has engulfed issues such as lack of motivation to some teachers due to unfavorable working conditions and low students' cooperation attitude. Ranji et al. (2025) investigated the challenges facing the implementation of Curriculum Based Education and Training [CBE-T]. The challenges discovered were low understanding of CBET concept, lack of support facilities and resources, and large number of students in classrooms (Yao & Lin, 2025).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive research design. This is because descriptive research design is a method used when describing the characteristics of the population being investigated (Taber, 2019). The study was conducted in 208 primary schools in Imenti North sub county. The 208 primary schools formed the target population because the sub county had the highest number of primary schools in Meru County. The respondents were 208 head teachers and 1745 teachers. The study used simple random method to select a sample size of 30% of the target population. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sample size of 30% is adequate for descriptive survey. Therefore, in sampling the primary school head teachers and teachers, the total sampled population was 62 head teachers and 524 teachers. Self- structured questionnaires were used a method of data collection whereby each category of respondent had different type of questionnaire to answer.

Pre-testing of the study was done in 21 primary schools in Imenti south sub-county. This was 10% of the main study sampled population (Bond et al., 2023). This was because these primary schools had also implemented the CBC in their system and they were not included in the final study. The respondents were headteachers and teachers. The headteachers were selected using purposive sampling method while teachers were selected using simple random sampling method. This study used Cronbach alpha coefficient in assessing the reliability of the study's instruments (Klein et al., 2025). To precisely validate research instruments, this study considered face, content and criterion types of validity. SPSS was used to analyze the results with detailed explanation issued on each outcome.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Reliability Statistics

Pre-testing of the study was done in 21 primary schools in Imenti South Sub-County. The respondents were 6 headteachers and 52 teachers. The pre-test results were measured using Cronbach alpha coefficient in assessing the reliability of the study's instruments. The Cronbach alpha value was 0.89 indicating that the instruments were reliable to be used as data collection tools in the main study. As described by Klein et al., (2025), a coefficient value of more than 0.7 indicates reliable instruments.

4.2 Response Rate

The study had priorly issued two types of questionnaires to 62 head teachers and 524 teachers respectively. Forty-seven (47) head teachers answered the questionnaires while 488 teachers gave feedback on their questionnaires. This was 76% and 93% response rates from headteachers and teachers respectively.

Table 1

Response Rate

Sampled Population	Response	Percentages
62 headteachers	47 headteachers	76%
524 teachers	488 teachers	93%

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of challenges affecting Implementation of CBC (Head master's Responses)

The headmasters were required to give their opinion on the set of questions asked. They were supposed to: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = neutral, 4= agree and 5 = strongly agree. Table 2 gives the results.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of challenges affecting Implementation of CBC (Head master's Responses)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
The government has provided enough support to smoothly implement CBC	0(0%)	13(28%)	27(57%)	7(15%)	0(0%)
There has been great reception of CBC by various stakeholders such as parents and teachers	9(19%)	17(36%)	21(45%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
There is a committee established in this school to internally monitor and evaluate CBC program	29(62%)	16(34%)	2(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
CBC implementation has attracted various parties such as sponsors who take part in funding and resource provision	7(15%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	40(85%)	0(0%)
There have been trainings and clear procedures on how teachers should go about in teaching the new curriculum	11(23%)	0(0%)	6(13%)	27(57%)	3(7%)

Table 2 indicates that most headteachers 40(85%) agreed that CBC implementation has attracted various parties such as sponsors who take part in funding and resource provision. There has been curiosity from various parties on what CBC entails and how they could contribute to its success. This has made them participate in additional funding and providing their personal resources in various activities of the primary schools. However, 29(62%) and 16(34%) principals strongly disagreed and disagreed that there was a committee that was established in their schools to internally monitor and evaluate CBC programs whereabouts.

This was to say that there was either lack of enough resources or poor management in the schools to ensure that the committee was in place and ensured that the program was effective. Additionally, there was a negative opinion on the reception of CBC by various stakeholders such as parents and teachers. 9(19%) strongly disagreed, 17(36%) disagreed and 21(45%) were neutral. This shows that the idea of change from 8.4.4 system was not yet fully internalized the idea that CBC was the new norm. Most teachers and parents did not like to be engaged so much on the activities of the children. In agreement, Simiyu (2025), the previous education system in Kenya of 8.4.4. demands were less as compared to CBC whose requirements involved everyone involved in the life of the child in school, both at home and school.

The study also inquired the various challenges that Imenti North primary schools were facing in relation to the rolling out of the CBC system. The principals named lack of consistent training of the teachers, unavailability of most teaching resources, increased parent/guardian involvement in child's learning which did not go well with most of them. This is because they complained on

strained resources and lack of education hence not fit to guide their children on educational matters. Lastly, there was increased teacher burn-out effects due to overworking.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics of challenges affecting Implementation of CBC (Teacher's Responses)

The teachers were required to give their opinion on the set of questions asked related to challenges affecting CBC learning. They were supposed to: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = neutral, 4= agree and 5 = strongly agree. Table 3 gives the results. 488

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of challenges affecting Implementation of CBC (Teachers' Responses)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
We have periodic trainings on various precepts of CBC	115(24%)	0(0%)	61(13%)	280(56%)	32(7%)
There is a consultative channel through which we can consult fellow teachers within and outside the school on CBC matters	197(40%)	176(36%)	10(2%)	105(22%)	0(0%)
Teaching students under CBC system is easier than 8.4.4 system	321(66%)	166(33%)	1(1%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
There is confidence and focus portrayed by students when they get engaged on their skills	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	420(86%)	68(14%)
The school provides adequate teaching resources	0(0%)	135(28%)	280(57%)	73(15%)	0(0%)

Table 3 shows that most teachers 420(86%) and 68(14) agreed and strongly agreed that confidence and focus was portrayed by students when they got engaged on their skills. Further on, the teachers indicated that there had periodic trainings on various precepts of CBC. 280(56%) agreed and 32(7%) strongly agreed on that. This finding is actually in line with the headmasters that there was training done on CBC but the issues came out of their consistency, no wonder they indicated that it was periodic. This shows that the number of trainings offered was the problem. It took so long for one to be certain on the next dates of training. This should not have been the case since the CBC program was new and currently being implemented. Therefore, consistency of training as established by Sepadi and Molapo (2024), would be ideal to counter any challenges on procedures teachers face during implementation of the CBC program.

Nevertheless, 197(40%) and 176(36%) of the teachers strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that there was a consultative channel through which they could consult fellow teachers within and outside the school on CBC matters. What this meant was that every school had its way

of implementing the CBC program which should not be the case in the first place. This raises a concern on the quality of content of CBC that was being offered. The findings tally with Ranji et al. (2025) which revealed that quality would be deemed present when teachers had systems to comfortably communicate with their fellow teachers on how CBC program was faring and what they were doing to make the implementation easier.

This was not the case. In line with this, 321(66%) and 166 (33%) teachers strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that teaching students under CBC system is easier than 8.4.4 system. This meant that the teachers were struggling with coming to terms with CBC education system requirements let alone implementing it through teaching. Sepadi and Molapo (2024) found out that being a new curriculum, teachers were still not yet familiar with all what was needed to be done as far as implementing CBC was concerned.

In an open question, the study also inquired on what challenges teachers were facing in implementing CBC in the primary schools. Teachers mainly complained that they were finding it a hard task to balance all the teaching requirements; the tasks at hand were more than their salaries; and reduced morale to teach since they were being overworked.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the findings

The results showed that 29(62%) and 16(34%) principals strongly disagreed and disagreed that there was a committee that was established in their schools to internally monitor and evaluate CBC programs whereabouts. This was to say that there was either lack of enough resources or poor management in the schools to ensure that the committee was in place and ensured that the program was effective. Additionally, there was a negative opinion on the reception of CBC by various stakeholders such as parents and teachers. 9(19%) strongly disagreed, 17(36%) disagreed and 21(45%) were neutral. This shows that the idea of change from 8.4.4 system was not yet fully internalized the idea that CBC was the new norm.

Additionally, 197(40%) and 176(36%) of the teachers strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that there was a consultative channel through which they could consult fellow teachers within and outside the school on CBC matters. What this meant was that every school had its way of implementing the CBC program which should not be the case in the first place. This raises a concern on the quality of content of CBC that was being offered. Quality would be deemed present when teachers had systems to comfortably communicate with their fellow teachers on how CBC program was faring and what they were doing to make the implementation easier. 321(66%) and 166 (33%) teachers strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that teaching students under CBC system is easier than 8.4.4 system. This meant that the teachers were struggling with coming to terms with CBC education system requirements let alone implementing it through teaching.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concluded that there was either lack of enough resources or poor management in the schools to ensure that the committee was in place and ensured that the program was effective. Additionally, there was a negative opinion on the reception of CBC by various stakeholders such as parents and teachers. In addition, the idea of change from 8.4.4 system was not yet fully internalized the idea that CBC was the new norm. Most teachers and parents did not like to be engaged so much on the activities of the children. The previous education system gave them the deliberate leeway to this but the CBC was so much demanding and straining to everyone involved in the life of the child in school, both at home and school.

Further on, lack of consistent training of the teachers, unavailability of most teaching resources, increased parent/guardian involvement in child's learning which did not go well with most of them. This is because they complained on strained resources and lack of education hence not fit to guide their children on educational matters. Lastly, there was increased teacher burn-out effects due to overworking. Adding to that, the teachers were struggling with coming to terms with CBC education system requirements let alone implementing it through teaching. That is to say that teachers were still not yet familiar with all what was needed to be done as far as implementing CBC was concerned. The teachers were finding it a hard task to balance all the teaching requirements; the tasks at hand were more than their salaries; and reduced morale to teach since they were being overworked.

5.3 Recommendations and Contributions of the Study

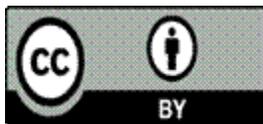
The school management should initiate programs such as walks for purposes of lobbying for funds from well-wishers. The ministry of education should set up public address rallies in various schools to give out information on what exactly is CBC and how it works. This would demystify any misconceptions on the education systems to teachers and parents. The ministry of education should set up policies that guide on how delivery of CBC by teachers would be measured. This would enable teachers understand what is supposed to be achieved and how it would be measured.

The school head masters should laise with the management to come up with training programs for teachers to enable them have a grasp of what CBC entails and provide various solutions to everyday activities at school. Parents should be educated by the schools on why their input is valuable in their children's academic journey. Lastly, there should be continuous on-work trainings initiated by the ministry of education to enable the teachers understand the CBC system and therefore being at a position to offer tailor made solutions to the systems.

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