

# **Challenges Facing Teachers in Implementation of Competence Based Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Iringa Municipal**

## ***Abstract***

*This study explores challenges facing teachers in implementation of competence based curriculum in secondary schools in Iringa Municipal, Tanzania. The study employed Qualitative approach, and a case study design. Purposive sampling was used to obtain sample of 47 respondents. Data collection instruments used were interview, focus group discussion and observation. Data from field was analyzed through thematic analysis. The study came up with the following findings Shortage of time, Limited Knowledge and Shortage of Teaching and Learning resources. The study came up with the suggestions to the government, The Ministry of Education, science and technology, Ministry of Education, science and technology should develop a curriculum which is implementable in order to avoid other education objectives not to be reached due to limited time. The Ministry of Education, science and technology should go to developed countries to learn from them in order to overcome the challenges encountered in our education system, especially implementation of Competence based Curriculum. There should be follow-up mechanisms by The Ministry of Education, science and technology and schools in particular for Competence Based Curriculum teaching approaches offered by secondary school teachers in Tanzania*

**Key words:** Competence, Curriculum, Implementation.

## **Introduction**

### **1.2 Background of the study**

Mosha (2012) notes that a competence based curriculum seeks to develop in learners the ability to know, to learn and learn how to learn, to do things, to learn and work with other people. Same to Rutayuga (2010) comments that competence based curriculum require a shift from assessing set of learning contents to assessing each learning outcome. Komba and Mwandaji (2015) observed that teaching and learning strategies are featured by the inquiry that focuses on real life phenomena in classroom, outdoor and laboratory activities through which students are given to investigate, and construct their own truths. International research on competence based education by Brislow and Patrick (2014) revealed that Finland education system widely acknowledge as

one of the best quality compared to other systems in the world with a competence based system. Teachers assess their students extensively through on going performance based, formative assessment and performance tasks are used which require the students to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Generally, competence based develops when learners engage in practical activities. In a competence based curriculum, teaching and learning is required that students engage in various practical experience (in and outside the classroom) that give opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems. Competence based assessment is a way to measure a competency for a vocational skill, to prove their competence; the learner must demonstrate an ability to work.

Historically competence based was started early 1970s when competence based emerged for the first time in the United States of America (Richard & Rogers, 2001). Thereafter, the movement spread into European countries such as the United Kingdom and Germany in the 1980s (Wolf, 2001). Similarly, Komba and Mwandangi (2015) Australia adopted the competence based curriculum in 1990s. Other countries adopted competence based curriculum due to globalization. In Africa competence based curriculum was introduced South Africa in 1998s.

In United States of America, the history of competency- based programs in higher education is distinguished by three overall phases: (a) innovative teacher education programs in the 1960s and beyond; (b) vocational education programs in the 1970s and beyond; and (c) more recent programs over the last decade and a half, particularly those taking advantage of online or hybrid models, advances in adaptive learning technology, or direct assessment. The initiation of CBE per se has been traced to 1968 in US higher education, when 10 colleges and universities were funded by the US Office of Education to develop training programs for elementary school teachers (Tuxworth, 1994; Klein- Collins, 2012; Ford, 2014). This pilot program, which represent the first phase of competency- based models in higher education, were part of broader efforts to reform teacher education in the 1960s, specifically to improve teacher preparation and the accountability of teacher education programs. These pilot CBE programs initiated the first widespread use of the word “competency” in association with learning and teaching (Ford, 2014). In addition, several key characteristics associated with current CBE programs were prevalent in these training programs, including the specification of competences to be learned

(including what a learner should be able to do), the modularization of instruction, the use of evaluation and feedback, and the personalization of instruction ( Tuxworth, 1994;Ford, 2014, p. 110).

In Japan, launched a major curriculum reform the following year, in 1998. Keita Takayama saw the reform as a competence-based curriculum (2013) in line with the OECD's vision, and certainly the OECD described it favourably (OECD, 2012). However, it is difficult to know exactly how the reform concepts translate into French or English. Japan promoted the reform under the slogan (ikiruchikara) "zest for living", referring to the hope that it would encourage an eagerness to learn. A new section of the curriculum, called "Integrated Study", aimed to "foster children's ability and quality to find a theme, think, judge and solve a problem on their own; and enable children to think about their own life, urging them to explore subjects with creativity"(OECD, 2012: 188), goals that faintly echo the OECD's key competencies. However, sensitivity to PISA results and national testing introduced in 2007 narrowed the original focus to formal schooling (Takayama, 2013).

In Africa soon after, in 1997, South Africa launched a curriculum reform that was labeled "outcomes based education" but which, as mentioned above, some analysts interpreted as a competence-based approach (Chisholm &Leyendecker, 2008; Malcolm, 1999). In the same spirit, South Africa cast its new curriculum as a complete rupture from the former system and its pedagogy (Jansen, 1999), linking closely with learner-centered instruction and constructivist approaches to learning newly emerging from apartheid, a decade after its introduction the reform was widely contested within the country even while South Africa was exporting it to other countries in the region (Chisolm, 2007), and outcomes-based curriculum was officially abandoned in 2010 (Chisolm, 2015: 411).

In Kenya, Competence based Curriculum introduced in 2017 to replace the 8-4-4 Education system. Scholars have identified a number of strengths in the competencybased learning approach which Kenya hopes will accompany its implementation which started in 2017. Competency based curricula are flexible as their structure depends on the individual learner. Learners learn in order to know and apply what they learn and not to compete against others. They learn as a team work and sharing of resources for mutual benefit and not hiding books from others or plucking out relevant pages. The 8-4-4 and 7-4-3-3 Education system suffered a lot

because of forcing slow learners to repeat and forcing fast learners to stay in one class the whole year even when they had mastered everything in the class. The 8-4-4 system was criticised for too much focus on summative tests, examinations and competition. The system burdened the learner with cramming and passing exams. The system used a point system at primary and secondary level to admit students to the next level, which eliminated many learners out of the system. Students who received less than 250 marks in KCPE had very little chance of moving to good secondary schools. Students who received less than D+ in KCSE had very little chance of moving to the next level, and were often regarded as having failed. In the 2018 KCSE examination results over 140,000 candidates received D and below. The high number of wastage at primary and secondary school terminal examinations was one of its weakest points. The CBC has the potential to avoid such pitfalls of throwing learners out of the education system prematurely. ( Amutabi, 2019).

In Tanzania, competence based curriculum was presented in 2005 following curriculum review process. The revised curriculum was characterized by the following; first it emphasized competence development than acquisition of content knowledge (MoEC, 2005).Second, the curriculum emphasized the use of learner centred activities based pedagogy during teaching and learning processes. The pedagogy should direct the use of participatory teaching and learning strategies as much as possible to help learners demonstrate self-esteem, confidence and assertiveness (MoEC, 2005).Third emphasized the use of formative assessment focused on target competencies. According to Kitta and Tillya (2010). The revised curriculum emphasized teachers to assess student achievement frequently using authentic assessment methods focusing on set of knowledge, skills and attitude.

## **2.0 Literature Review.**

This section presents the literature review relevant to assessment of implementation of Competence Based Curriculum. It provides Theoretical Framework of the Study based on Social Constructivism.

## **2.1 Theoretical framework of the study**

The study was guided by Social Constructivism theory. Constructivism is an important learning theory that educators use to help their students to learn. The theory was introduced by Jean Piaget in 1896 -1980. Constructivism is based on the idea that people actively construct or make their own knowledge, and the reality is determined by your experiences as a learner. Social constructivism focuses on collaborative nature of learning; knowledge develops from how people interact with each other, their culture, and society at large. Students rely on other to help create their building blocks, and leaning from others helps them to construct their own knowledge and reality. Social constructivism comes from Lev Vygotsky, and closely connected to cognitive constructivism with the added element of societal and peer influence.

Constructivists hold that integrating information, connecting it to personal prior knowledge and cognitively processing it are the keys to achieving meaning or understanding. Additionally, they think that social engagement and conversation are the best ways for students to learn because they provide them the chance to compare and contrast their own understandings with those of others (John, 2016).

## **3.0 Materials and Methods**

This study employed case study design. The study engaged, education officers in secondary schools, head masters or head mistress, teachers and students from public secondary school. Also Qualitative research approach was employed in this study because it involved the collection of wealth of narrative data and visual data in naturalistic setting and giving interaction between one person and another person. The study was conducted at Iringa Municipal in selected three public secondary schools. Samples of 47 informants were involved. Additionally interview, focus group discussion, and observation were used as data collection methods. Data collected were analysed thematically.

## **4.0 Findings**

## **4.1 Challenges Facing Teachers in Implementation of Competence Based Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Iringa Municipal**

Different challenges have been noted during the implementation of Competence Based Curriculum in Iringa Municipality such as Shortage of time, Limited Knowledge and Shortage of Teaching and Learning resources. Each of the challenge noted is explained in details hereunder.

### **4.1.2 Shortage of time**

Different challenges have been noted during the implementation of Competence Based Curriculum in Iringa Municipality. The researcher asked secondary school teachers from the schools visited to identify the challenges which face them during the teaching and learning process using Competence Based Curriculum approaches, the following were their voices:

Competence Based Curriculum implementation become difficult due to limited time allocated, for instance my subject has topics which need to be covered within a single academic year, if I use Competence Based Curriculum methods I will find that all listed topics in the syllabus are not completely finished. (Interviewed held with Civics teacher from school A).

Additionally Biology teacher of school B said that;

It is time consuming to use Competence Based Curriculum teaching techniques/methods like presentation and portfolio because they demand a lot of time. (Interviewed held with Biology teacher from school B).

The above interview held by Civics teacher from school A said that, Competence Based Curriculum is difficult to implement because of time allocated to that subject, If he use Competence Based Curriculum methods he will delay to cover all topics. So teachers use traditional methods in order to cover all their topics on time. Also interview held with Biology teacher from school A the findings shows that competence based consume a lot of time by using Competence Based Curriculum methods like presentation and portfolio.

### **4.1.3 Limited Knowledge**

Limited knowledge among the secondary school teachers have been mentioned by teaches as one of the challenges that cause the implementation of Competence Based Curriculum to be difficult.

Teachers are less informed about Competence Based Curriculum and therefore application of Competence Based Curriculum methods become impossible. The interview, support this statement:

I am incompetent in using Competence Based Curriculum methods when teaching my students and therefore I do opt to use content based methods in order to rescue the situation. (Interviewed held with Biology teacher from school A).

The above quotation revealed that teacher is incompetent to use Competence Based methods so he opt to use content Based methods to rescue the situation which is not good for students achievement's. So he lacks enough knowledge on how to practice Competence Based Curriculum.;

Additionally, Physics teacher from school B said that:

Different Competence Based Curriculum methods and approaches are well known and very popular but the issue which come to me is the limited knowledge I have on how to use them.(Interviewed held with Physics teacher from school B)

The above finding revealed that teacher have somehow knowledge of Competence Based methods and approaches but lack knowledge on how to use them to students, It implies that teacher lack enough knowledge on how to practice to students. So teacher needs enough knowledge in order to implement competence Based Curriculum.

#### **4.1.4 Shortage of Teaching and Learning resources**

Shortages of Teaching and Learning resources have been a big challenge facing secondary school teachers in their implementation of Competence Based Curriculum in Iringa Municipality. Most of the visited schools are facing overcrowded classrooms, shortage of teaching and learning facilities particularly the ICT tools. For the matter of evidence the following interviews with teachers, head of schools and secondary school education officer prove this statement:

Imagine my class consists of more than sixty (60) students where others don't have even chairs and desks, now in that situation how can teaching and learning by using Competence Based methods like group discussion and presentation be successful in the class like this? I think the answer is NO. (Interviewed held with Basic Mathematics teacher from school A).

The above quotation shows that in the classroom have no enough chairs and desk, that situation hinder application of Competence Based Curriculum methods like group discussion and presentation. So in order to implement competence Based Curriculum it needs enough learning resources.

Additionally, Chemistry teacher from school B said that:

In today's time, science and technology has developed to a great extent. Teaching and learning of Competence Based Curriculum is integrated with ICT technology but unfortunately enough my schools don't have even a single computer except a tablet which I obtained from the government in the recent time. Therefore it becomes difficult to use tools like projectors, sound recorders etc which are highly recommended as Competency Based Curriculum teaching and learning Aids. (Interviewed held with Chemistry teacher from school B).

The above quotation shows that school lack computers, projectors and sound recorders which help on application of Competence based curriculum, So it implies that lack of ICT technology hinder teachers to use Competence based to their students in classroom and outside the classroom.

## **5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

There are three (3) main challenges that face teachers during the implementation of Competence Based Curriculum. These challenges are: shortage of time, limited knowledge about Competence Based Curriculum and shortage of teaching and learning resources. In shortage of time, the teachers claimed that if they rely on using Competence Based Curriculum they cannot finish the topics on time and thus at the end of academic year they find themselves leaving the students to sit in their final examinations with unfinished/untaught topics. In limited knowledge about Competence Based Curriculum, the teachers revealed to have little knowledge about Competence Based Curriculum and hence caused them not to use it or to use it partially or wrongly. In shortage of teaching and learning resources, involving shortage of infrastructures to support teaching and learning using Competence Based Curriculum like scarcity of chairs and desks, teaching and learning rooms/classes, lack of ICT tools and equipment and shortage of funds allocated by

the government to the education sector. Implementation of Competence Based Curriculum should go hand in hand with preparations of suitable/conducive environments or requirements.

Teaching and learning environments which support the use of Competence Based Curriculum approaches should well be prepared by the government and other education stakeholders so as to enable teachers to implement Competence Based Curriculum successfully.

The Ministry of Education, science and technology should develop a curriculum which is implementable in order to avoid other education objectives not to be reached due to limited time.

The Ministry of Education, science and technology should go to developed countries to learn from them in order to overcome the challenges encountered in our education system, especially implementation of Competence based Curriculum.

There should be follow-up mechanisms by The Ministry of Education, science and technology and schools in particular for Competence Based Curriculum teaching approaches offered by secondary school teachers in Tanzania

Similar studies should be conducted on other parts on an assessment of the implementation of Competence Based Curriculum in Tanzania.

Another study should be conducted to examine how teachers training colleges and universities in Tanzania, Train teachers about Competence Based Curriculum in secondary schools.

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