



## Status of teacher preparedness in public Junior School in Kirinyaga County, Kenya

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### Abstract

*Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) was introduced in 2017 to replace the 8-4-4 system but this new system has been marked by several challenges that potentially could impede quality standards of education. Specific objectives for this study were to assess how well teachers were prepared in Public Junior Secondary (JS) Schools in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. The study was guided by Dewey's Social Constructivism theory in 1968 and it emphasizes education's role in social and moral development. A descriptive research design was adopted. Target population were 819 respondents comprising 195 head teachers and 623 JS teachers in Kirinyaga County, Kenya and the County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. The study used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table to determine samples size and arrived at 132 head teachers and 242 regular teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers while random sampling was employed to select regular teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. The study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Thematic analysis was used to for qualitative data. Results show that there was moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between teacher preparedness to teach and quality of education ( $r=0.324$ ,  $p= 0.000$ ). Additionally, the findings indicate that JS teachers were ill-prepared to implement CBC. Although teachers had attained minimum qualifications of a teacher, their teaching qualification(s) do not adequately prepare them for the CBC. The professional development program that teachers attend enhance their teaching skills for CBC and teachers who do not attend any additional professional development program after graduation have serious challenges handling the CBC. Main challenges facing JS teachers include; inadequate resources, teaching subjects they never specialize in, lack of cooperation with the school management, and teacher shortage. Recommendations are the Ministry of education should properly prepare teachers for curriculum implementation, should provide teachers with the necessary training, resources, and expertise.*

**Keywords:** Junior Secondary, Teacher preparedness, Teacher qualification, Years of Experience

### INTRODUCTION

Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) is an educational approach that focuses on development of specific skills, knowledge and competencies in students rather than just covering predefined body of knowledge or content (Koskei & Chepchumba, 2020; Akala, 2021; Mugambi & Chepkonga, 2022). Competency-Based Curriculum was introduced in Kenya in 2017, having been developed by Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). This marked the introduction of the third education system in the country, following the 7-4-2-3 and 8-4-4 systems. Teachers play important role in accomplishing envisioned goals and objectives of educational institutions (Kapur, 2018). It is imperative to emphasize need of sufficient number of qualified teachers to ensure delivery of high-quality education (Edutopia, 2016). However, as highlighted by Cobbold (2015), the challenge of securing ample number of qualified teachers for schools is a major public policy concern confronting numerous countries. According to the Education and Training Commission of Europe (2010), teacher preparation is crucial component that offers students greater job options, improved social skills, and personal fulfillment. Teacher credentials can be assessed from a dual perspective, considering professional credentials, as suggested by Köpsén (2014). These qualifications are associated with acquiring essential skills, and creative competencies required for effective and high-quality participation in teaching profession (Caena, 2014; Bautista et al., 2016). Mukamenza (2017) also highlights that CBC being implemented in the country has been adapted from more developed nations, presenting challenges for underdeveloped and developing countries in its adoption. The problem of Kenya's teacher shortage dates back to colonial era, when German missionaries brought Western education to the country in 1847. The TSC anticipated that teacher shortage would decrease somewhat overall and at primary level between 2019 and 2023, while staying constant at secondary level, despite consistent increase in student enrollment and overall



learner transition from primary to secondary (Abdi & Kharbirybai, 2019). However, according to Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2025), despite efforts to recruit more teachers, a shortage of 72,422 teachers remains. Public primary schools that host junior schools face staffing challenges. This is despite government plans to recruit 20,000 more teachers on contract.

Budgetary limitations, insecurity in some areas, teacher preferences for stations, a desire to be with families, and health concerns have all been blamed for Kenya's teacher shortages and deployment imbalances (TSC, 2019). In Kenya, there have been concerns among education stakeholders regarding readiness and preparedness of teachers to effectively implement CBC (Ondimu, 2018; Waweru, 2018; Momanyi & Rop, 2020). The initial phase of CBC implementation is already encountering various obstacles, thus impeding the process. Research conducted by Kaviti (2018) showed that development of CBC was hurriedly executed and the pilot phase in 2017 was rushed, lasting only an average of ten weeks. Out of the 160,000 teachers responsible for primary education at the lower primary school level, only 2,000 received training. Kenya National Union of Teachers (2018) stated that several teacher-related factors continue to raise concerns. Further, quality of CBC is influenced by various factors, among which are the professional development, qualifications and availability of teachers which are required (Waruingi et al., 2022; Muchira et al., 2023).

### Materials and Methods

This study adopted positivism research philosophy. This study employed descriptive research design. The target population for this study was 819 individuals comprising of 195 head teachers and 623 JS teachers working in 195 J Ss in Kirinyaga County, and the CQASO (Table 1).

**Table 1. Target Population**

Target respondents	Target Population
Head teachers	195
Teachers	623
CQASO	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>819</b>

Krejcie & Morgan (1970) was used to arrive at a sample of 132 head teachers and 242 teachers. Stratified random sampling was used to sample public JS in the county. Purposive sampling was used to sample 132 schools hence 132 head teachers. Simple random sampling was used to sample 242 teachers. The QASO was automatically included in the study. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 24 and data analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

### Results and Discussion

**Table 2. Teachers' Qualifications and Preparedness to Teach**

*Key: SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, N= Neutral, A=Agree, SA= Strongly agree, M=Mean, Std=Standard Deviation.*

Statements	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	M	Std.
I have the necessary academic qualifications to teach at the J S level.	4.1	21.8	3.5	33.5	37.1	3.78	1.267
My teaching qualification(s) adequately prepared me for the Competence Based Curriculum.	21.8	43.5	11.2	9.4	14.1	2.51	1.316



The professional development programmes that enhanced teaching skills for CBC	11.2	12.4	4.7	49.4	22.4	3.59	1.271
Teachers who do not attend any additional professional development programmes after graduation have serious challenges handling the CBC	10.0	4.7	15.9	45.3	24.1	3.69	1.183
I feel confident in my ability to implement the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) OK.	38.2	48.2	2.4	7.6	3.5	2.16	1.148
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.14</b>	<b>1.237</b>
<b>N=170</b>							

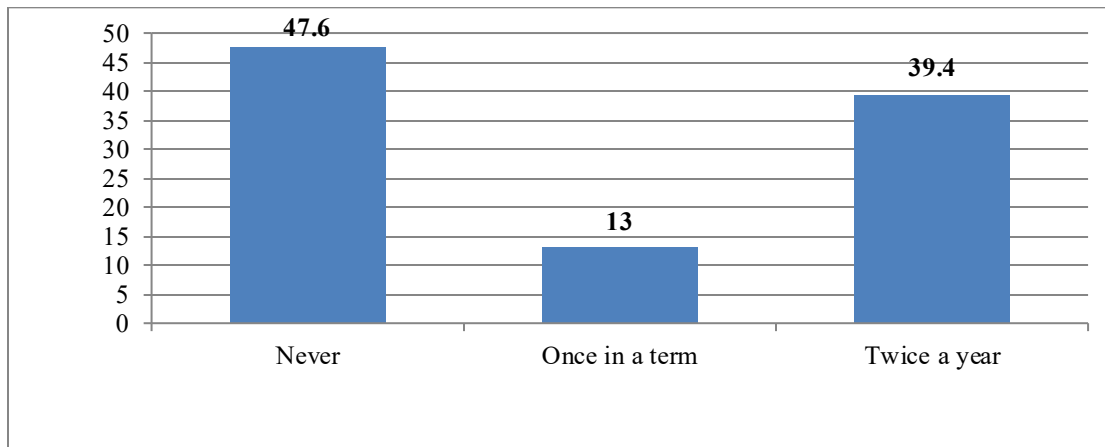
Results on teachers' academic qualifications to teach at the Junior Secondary (JS) show that on paper, the teachers meet the necessary educational standards required for the role. Despite their academic credentials, a significant number of teachers feel that their qualifications did not adequately prepare them for CBC implementation. This shows a gap between traditional teacher training programs and the demands of the CBC. Professional development (PD) programs seem to positively impact teachers' CBC teaching capabilities implying that ongoing in-service training helps bridge the preparedness gap, equipping teachers with the skills needed for CBC. Teachers who do not attend additional PD after graduation report significant difficulties in handling CBC which underscores the critical role of continuous professional learning in adapting to curriculum changes. There is a notable lack of confidence among teachers in implementing the CBC, with a low mean score which suggests that despite training efforts, many teachers still feel underprepared, likely due to the complexity and novelty of the CBC framework. Findings support Isaboke, Mweru, and Wambiri (2021) that JS teachers are not adequately prepared to implement the Curriculum. According to Nkya (2021), the majority of teachers had not participated in any in-service training, despite having favorable opinions about the move from content-based to CBC. In addition, only a few JS teachers had attended specialized training or workshops related to teaching at JS while majority had not attended specialized training or workshops related to teaching at JS.

The finding was backed up by an education officer who put forth that;

The training that has been given is for a few teachers and, therefore not sufficient for reasonable implementation of CBC. For effective CBC implementation to be achieved, a way has to be designed to train all the teachers. The mechanisms for conducting regular workshops and seminars for the new curriculum are inadequate since only a few teachers get a chance to participate in the trainings. (Interview, QASO, Sept, 11, 2024).

According to the findings, only a small percentage of JS teachers have access to specialist training, while others have simply received foundational instruction from universities. This has resulted in teachers' ignorance of how to help students develop the necessary skills throughout the teaching and learning process. Results are consistent with Abdullahi (2020) who found that majority of instructors in Garissa County's public schools had not received training on how to execute the new curriculum. Furthermore, a research conducted in Kirinyaga County by Muchiri (2021) found that 87% of instructors were not trained on implementation of a competency-based agriculture curriculum.

**Frequency of Engaging in Professional Development Activities**



**Figure 1. Frequency of Engaging in Professional Development Activities**

Results show that majority of the JS teachers have never engaged in PD activities. Results show that the frequency of attending to PD is also very low. The training period was very short hence challenged effective implementation of the CBC. Teacher training must last at least two years, according to the Ministry of Education. As a result, the training was insufficient because it did not follow the suggested time frame. The findings support Okeyo and Mokua's (2023) assertion that majority of public JSs are not well equipped to implement CBC. The new curriculum had not been taught to the majority of their teachers. Furthermore, just 18.9% of teachers received training more than thrice, whereas 81.1% were trained once, twice, or three times. This indicates that the frequency of training was low.

**Table 3. Duration of the Training or Workshops**

Duration of the training or workshops	Frequency	Percentage
One day	35	56.5
Less than a week	17	27.4
One week	10	16.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>

Results show slightly half of the teachers attended one day training, others less than a week, and a few attended trainings for one week. This was supported by an education officer who explained that;

Majority of JS teachers are yet to receive professional training on the new curriculum. The time allocated for the training is not enough and teachers are constrained by work load that limits their attendance to workshops and seminars on content-based curriculum. Most of the teachers only have qualifications from higher institution of learning and little professional development. The trainings are mostly conducted on a day which is not enough to make teachers competent to implement CBC. (Interview, QASO, Sept, 9,2024).

The results imply that the time allocated for teacher trainings is not enough. CBC program aims at ensuring that practical skills are instilled in students and hence teachers training programs need more time to ensure that the teachers are adequately prepared on both theory and practical aspects of CBC. Results are in agreement with Sitenei (2020) that majority of JS teachers only attend one week training, while others attend two weeks training. Mugabo et al. (2021) also established that there is disparity in CBC teacher training and inadequate training.

**Table 4. Relevance of the Professional Development Programmed**



Relevance of the professional development programmes	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	4	6.5
Relevant	15	24.2
Very relevant	43	69.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>

Results show that only a few teachers opine that the PD program was either neutral or relevant while the majority opined that the training was very relevant. Results imply that the PD programs are relevant to CBC training. However, the teachers feel that the current academic and professional qualifications are insufficient to meet the demands of the CBS in JS. They hence recommended additional qualifications or trainings that they believed are necessary as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Additional Qualifications or Trainings for JS Teachers**

Additional Qualifications or Trainings	Frequency	Percentage
Health science integration	112	65.9
Integrated social studies	92	54.1
Visual and creative arts	88	51.7
ICT technology integration	156	91.7

**N=170**

Findings imply that the teachers feel that the PD courses have not fully prepared them for teaching home science, integrated studies visual and creative arts, and ICT technology hence the need to incorporate them in the training programs. Results concur with Ndambukia, Recha, and Karan (2024) that the professional development courses are not adequate and they need to be improved especially on technical and practical subjects like sciences, home science, ICT, and agriculture.

**Table 6. Challenges Faced by JS Teachers**

Challenges Faced by JS Teachers	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate resources (text books, laboratory equipment, practical materials) and facilities (laboratories, classrooms, workshops)	168	98.8
Teaching subjects we never specialize	112	68.9
Lack of cooperation with the school management	78	45.9
Teacher shortage	136	80.0

**N=170**

Results show that the main challenges facing JS teachers include; inadequate resources (text books, laboratory equipment, practical materials) and facilities (laboratories, classrooms, workshops), teaching subjects they never specialize, lack of cooperation with the school management and teacher shortage.

During the interview, a very strong point regarding challenges faced by JS teachers was raised by the CQASO who said that;

The main challenges faced by JS teachers are poor resources and facilities. The public schools are poorly equipped with facilities and workshops which are very essential for practical skills. There is also a shortage of books on the new curriculum. The large population of pupils exceeds the capacity of a available teachers, and discomfort teaching unfamiliar subjects due to lack of



training. The majority of the parents are products of the outcome-based education (8-4-4 curriculum) therefore they have very little knowledge of the new curriculum. This therefore makes it very difficult for parents to understand what is going on in the curriculum and not able to assist their children with homework and other home supervision required of them. Additionally, political influence and administrative dominance contribute to uneven teacher distribution (Interview, CQASO, Sept, 12,2024).

Results show that the JS teachers face various that hinder them from effectively implementing CBC. In order to provide high-quality instruction and promote successful learning outcomes in JSs, it is crucial to make sure that teachers have thorough training and support in the areas they teach. Findings concur with Okeyo and Mokua (2023) that teachers are facing difficulties in getting books for certain classes in the CBC. Some teachers in JS have low mastery of the subject content because in most JS, agriculture subject is taught by teachers who are not technically trained to teach the subject and therefore they could not easily master the subject content.

**Table 7. Measures to Improve JS Teachers preparedness**

Measures to improve JS Teachers preparedness	Frequency	Percentage
Attend more training sessions on CBC	170	100
Develop a positive attitude towards teaching	140	82.3
Improve on relationship with parents	102	60
Understand and support weak students	88	51.7

**N=170**

Results show that the key measures to improve JS teacher preparedness include; attending more training sessions on CBC as suggested by all teachers, developing a positive attitude towards teaching, improving on relationship with parents, and understanding and supporting weak students.

The finding was backed up by an education officer who put forth that;

JS teachers need specialized training on competency-based curriculum. Some teachers develop a bad attitude towards teaching especially when they are delegated subjects that they are conversant with. Ensuring that teachers have resources and facilities to implement CBC will improve their prepared in teaching junior secondary. (Interview, CQASO, Sept, 16,2024).

Findings imply that improving JS teachers' professional training would help to improve teacher preparedness in implementing CBC at the JSs level. This is because teachers are key pillar in education since they are expected to provide resources and materials for CBC implementation. The teachers as well need to understand the weak students and help them to improve in academics and extra curriculum activities.

**Table 8. Teachers Opinion on Quality of Education in Junior Schools**

*Key: VH-Very high, H-High, M-Moderate, L-Low, VL-Very low.*

Statements	VL %	L %	M %	H %	VH %	M	Std.
Academic performance	1.2	13.5	46.5	14.1	24.7	3.08	1.042
Students engagement in practical	30.6	39.4	5.3	6.5	18.2	2.42	1.446
Students engagement in Extra curriculum activities	4.1	7.1	40.6	19.4	28.8	2.89	1.745
Students engagement in class	8.2	6.5	8.2	27.6	49.4	4.04	1.259
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.11</b>	<b>1.373</b>

**N=170**

The findings present a varied situation of the quality of education in Junior Schools as perceived by teachers, with notable strengths in classroom engagement but challenges in practical and extra curricular participation. Teachers rated the academic performance of students in Junior Schools as fair suggesting that while students are not underperforming, there is still significant room for improvement in academic outcomes. The students show limited



involvement in hands-on or practical learning activities. This could reflect a lack of resources, inadequate teacher training for practical-based instruction, or a curriculum that is not sufficiently oriented toward experiential learning which is key to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Engagement in extracurricular activities was rated as moderate suggesting that while some students are involved in co-curricular programs (sports, arts, clubs), participation is not widespread. The variability in responses also points to inconsistencies in how such activities are implemented across schools. Teachers reported high levels of classroom engagement suggesting that students are attentive and actively involved during lessons. This is a positive indicator of teaching effectiveness and student interest, possibly aided by the interactive strategies encouraged under CBC. Findings imply that teachers perceive the quality of education in Junior Schools to be average, with students showing good engagement during classroom lessons but lower involvement in practical and extracurricular activities. This disparity suggests that while theoretical instruction is progressing well, the holistic development focus of CBC emphasizing hands-on learning and co-curricular engagement is not yet fully realized.

**Table 9. Coefficient of Correlation**

Variables		Quality education	Preparedness
Quality education	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	170	
Preparedness	Pearson Correlation	.324**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	170	170

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient for teacher preparedness to teach and quality of education in JS in Kirinyaga County, Kenya is 0.324, with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between teacher preparedness to teach and quality of education. The study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teacher preparedness to teach in Public JS and quality education in public JS in Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that JS teachers are not adequately prepared which affects the quality of JS education. Only a few teachers are able to access specialized training in CBC. The time allocated for the trainings is also very limited for the teachers to grasp skills especially in practical. The training lasted a few hours on a single day and did not address how teachers could use it to assist students in developing new abilities. Only a few teachers are technically trained to teach STEM subjects. This was attributed to the mode of recruitment done by the TSC at JS which is not based on the subject specialization of the teachers but the period of stay after graduation.

The recommendations are;

The Ministry of education to properly prepare teachers for curriculum implementation, and provide teachers with necessary training, resources, and expertise. The government of Kenya (GoK) through the TSC should employ teachers at JSs based on subject specialization. This is to ensure each subject is taught by the technically trained competent teachers to the specific subject. This will address the problem of the knowledge of the subject matter by teachers. Organizers of the CBC trainings should consider increasing time allocated for training JS teachers.

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