



Influence of Headteachers' Institutional Communication Practices on Implementation of Competency-based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools in Matungulu Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya

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Abstract: Communication practices adopted by headteachers are important in the implementation of competency-based curriculum in schools. However, in Matungulu Sub- County, implementation of CBC has not been smooth since many learners manifest low competencies in key CBC learning areas. This study sought to assess the influence of headteachers' institutional communication practices of implementation of competency-based curriculum. This study was guided by the communication management and curriculum implementation theories. The research adopted mixed methodology and concurrent triangulation research design. Target population was 1459 respondents which comprised 84 headteachers, 1371 primary school teachers and 4 Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) from which a sample of 312 respondents was determined using Yamane's Formula. This comprised 20 headteachers, 288 teachers and 4 CSOs. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers and interviews for headteachers and CSOs. There was also document analysis guide. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25) and presented using tables. The study found that CBC implementation is a challenge since many teachers do not cover syllabus in time characterized by low learner competencies. However, many learners manifest good levels of creativity. This has been attributed to headteachers' institutional communication practices. Though, they have adopted communication approaches geared towards CBC implementation. Thus, headteachers should adopt effective communication strategies and approaches to constantly share crucial information about CBC with teachers.

Keywords: Headteachers, Institutional, Communication practices, Implementation, Competency-based curriculum, Public primary schools

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1. Introduction

Education constructively impacts learners' minds, character traits and physical abilities. In the words of Alvy and Robbins (2021), education is viewed as the

process through which every society intentionally imparts knowledge, skills and values from generation to generation. In modern systems of education worldwide, education in school settings consists of a set of academic activities which take place during learners' growth period and are aimed at producing an all-round and

holistic individual who becomes responsible in society (Alvy & Robbins, 2021). To achieve this noble role, different countries in the world continually change their education systems and undertake learner-centered curricula reforms to suit the needs, interests, preferences of learners and to tap into their talents and competencies at any given moment. This has seen many countries across the world adopt competency-based curriculum as a panacea to education challenges.

According to Teles and Ferreira (2021), competency-based curriculum is the form of a curriculum that emphasizes the complex outcomes of a learning process, that is, knowledge, skills and attitudes to be applied by learners rather than mainly focusing on what learners are expected to learn about in terms of traditionally defined subject content. The authors further opine that competency-based curriculum is usually designed around a set of key learner competencies that can be cross-curricular or subject-bound. For example, Lehtinen (2020) avers that, because of the existence of excessive programme overload in many educational institutions throughout the world, education policymakers decided to push for the formulation of objectives to better the structure of education. In this respect, therefore, Lehtinen (2020) further notes that proficiency becomes the primary alternative with the focus on a training programme regarding what learners in primary school settings can do based on what they were taught over the years.

In Finland, where the implementation of CBC has been successful, Hakanen (2022) asserts that much work has been done to put into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects. According to Hakanen (2022), it is vital to note that implementation of competence-based curriculum takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society. In other words, researchers opine that the implementation of CBC entails how the planned or officially designed course of study is translated by teachers into syllabuses, schemes of work and lessons to be delivered to learners.

However, its implementation has not been without its fair share of challenges. In Latin America, Fernández (2020) asserts that only 23.9% of schools have been able to implement CBC with a paltry 20.8% of learners manifesting improved basic number work, language, sciences, life and creativity skills. The researchers opine that failure to implement CBC has been attributed to a multiplicity of dynamics including headteachers' institutional communication practices. According to Walker (2020), headteachers' institutional communication practices entail a set of activities headteachers engage in to share information with key stakeholders on how to implement competency-based curriculum in schools. The World Economic Forum's

Global Competitiveness Report (2021) exemplifies the concept of headteachers' institutional communication practices as the cornerstone for an excellent education system.

A report drawn by the Islamia University of Bahawalpur shows that, in Pakistan, before embarking on the implementation process for curriculum, headteachers are tasked with ensuring that information about CBC is timely and what the implementation entails as well as the roles of every stakeholder (Jamil, 2021). These assertions underscore the vitality of headteachers' communication practices in the implementation of competency-based curriculum. In the United States, research suggests that effective communication is essential for school leadership, with headteachers acting as facilitators of information between various stakeholders (Sullivan & Glanz, 2023). This includes formal and informal communication strategies, with a focus on transparency and inclusivity in decision-making. In the words of Fullan (2024), headteachers often adopt a collaborative approach, promoting open dialogue with teachers and parents.

Similarly, French headteachers, or *chefs d'établissement*, emphasize communication within hierarchical structures and often engage in top-down communication, ensuring that policies and directives are clearly articulated to staff and students (Bourdieu, 2022). Despite these differences, both systems recognize the importance of clear communication for fostering school success and community engagement. However, the implementation of CBC in Indonesia has not been devoid of a multiplicity of challenges. For instance, an assessment survey by Musiman, Sutopo, Muhammad, Madya and Alivermana (2020) found that, despite the activities undertaken by the management of schools in Indonesia, close to 59.4% of learners in primary schools still manifest poorly developed competencies in key learning areas such as mathematics, languages and sciences among others.

In many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the scenario is the same with the implementation of CBC having faced and still facing numerous challenges. For example, an assessment undertaken by Okonkwo (2023) revealed that, since the introduction of competency-based curriculum in Nigeria, the status of implementation still stands at 39.5% success rates. Okonkwo (2023) further noted that many aspects of CBC such as the improvement of learner competencies have not been fully realized with 67.3% of the learners still not able to manifest excellent language skills, 77.4% cannot perform mathematics activities, 45.9% do not manifest improved creativity whereas 35.9% do not have skills to perform essential environmental tasks.

In Kenya, the competency-based curriculum has been introduced as a solution to the challenges which bedeviled the 8.4.4 education system. Mwangi and Muriithi (2023) posit that the 8.4.4 system had loaded

syllabus content and did not respond to the immediate needs of the learners. According to Mwangi and Muriithi (2023), CBC was rolled out in 2018 to tap into the talents and competencies of learners with headteachers' institutional being at the center of the implementation. To this effect, the Ministry of Education embarked on capacity building of schools through re-training and supervision of teachers on CBC models, supply of curriculum support materials to schools, the building of extra classrooms and other forms of infrastructure. A study conducted in Meru County by Kinoti and Njeru (2020) also revealed that there is a need for much preparedness among stakeholders in terms of extensive consultations, training of the implementers and headteachers as well as provision of resources to schools are mandatory so as minimize stress and failures of CBC curriculum. Despite these initiatives, the implementation of competency-based curriculum is still facing numerous challenges.

An assessment undertaken in Nairobi County by Karimi (2020) revealed that implementation of CBC has not been devoid of shortcomings with many learners in public primary schools showing low levels of competencies in basic numeracy, creativity and essential skills such as lifeskills and leadership. This further lends credence to the findings of an earlier report by Uwezo (2016) which also noted that many learners aged between 4-8 years still manifest competencies in mathematics, languages and sciences among others which are below expectations. In Matungulu Sub-county, the situation is not different since the implementation of CBC is still ineffective with many learners still showing the inability to complete tasks, inability to identify problems and solve them, poor communicative competency, lack of creativity, poor team building with peers and low leadership skills. For example, a report by the National Assessment System for Monitoring Learning Achievement (NASMLA) (2020) shows that, despite the introduction of CBC in primary schools, its implementation is still at lower levels since only 19.4% of learners in public primary schools in Matungulu Sub-county manifest improved literacy and communicative competency, 11.9% can undertake mathematics activities while only 16.3% have mastered essential life skills. In other words, mastery of concepts in key learning areas among learners in public primary schools is still below expectations. However, few empirical studies have interrogated the extent to which headteachers' institutional communication practices influence implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools, hence the study.

1.2 Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To assess the status of implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Matungulu Sub- County.

2. To establish the influence of headteachers' institutional communication practices on implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Matungulu Sub-county.

2. Literature Review

In contemporary society, establishing proficient communication tactics among headteachers, teachers, parents and pupils within public primary schools is essential to fostering a prosperous and gratifying educational milieu. Headteachers assume a crucial role in this context, as they are responsible for establishing an atmosphere of effective communication among stakeholders involved in the implementation of competency-based curriculum. In an investigation conducted in Antarctica, Reimers (2020) revealed that communication approaches adopted by school heads play a key role in CBC implementation. The researchers further found that fostering effective communication among key stakeholders could yield positive outcomes within the context of elementary schools.

In the same token, Dubois and Garcia (2022) carried out a study in France which also established that it would be beneficial for headteachers to prioritize enhancing effective communications and connections among teachers, learners and school staff while fostering effective academic activities related to CBC implementation. These findings are indicative of the fact that school heads must ensure that communication strategies adopted are customized to suit the unique cultural environment of primary schools. In many public primary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa, the scenario is the same with communication approaches adopted by school heads being crucial in enabling stakeholders to take part in implementation of competency-based curriculum. According to Opara (2022), many school heads employ physical meetings strategy which involves organizing a designated day for stakeholders to visit the school to engage in meaningful interactions with the headteacher. In other words, this particular communication practice enables school heads to offer feedback and recommendations to stakeholders concerning children's academic, cultural and personal growth as well as gathering information on what is expected of them to facilitate smooth CBC implementation. A study conducted in Nigeria by Ojo and Adeyemi (2024) found that many headteachers employ internet communication technologies, including websites and social media networks, as an additional method. According to Ojo and Adeyemi (2024), this facilitates direct communication with the school and staff, enabling discussions regarding children's academic progress with regard to mastery of CBC concepts. These findings point to the fact that institutional communication approaches adopted by headteachers is key in encouraging active

participation of stakeholders in implementation of competency-based curriculum. In other words, establishing effective communication channels is vital to fostering collaboration and creating an environment where pupils feel nurtured in their academic pursuits.

In Kenya, in many public primary schools, communication practices which school heads adopt are considered crucial in attracting many stakeholders to participate in the implementation of competency-based curriculum. In other words, fostering healthy communication practices by school heads has been regarded and touted as key to motivating teachers to participate effectively in the implementation of competency-based curriculum. For example, a study conducted in Nyeri County by Munyao (2022) found a range of measures available for headteachers to promote effective communication. According to Munyao (2022), these practices encompass a range of approaches, such as open-house meetings, conferences, active participation in school events such as field excursions and sports activities and effective utilization of school newsletters.

These findings are indicative of the fact that communication strategies adopted by headteachers such as open-house meetings provide headteachers a platform to effectively communicate with teachers and other stakeholders regarding educational policies and changes in school programmes as well as academic activities implemented in schools, including school fees and performance targets. Besides, these meetings facilitate teachers and stakeholders in acquiring a more comprehensive comprehension of the CBC pillars and expectations while also allowing them to inquire and seek explanations. This was supported by the findings of a study carried out by Chepcheng' (2023) which revealed that frequent communication with stakeholders is productive in fostering collaboration in endeavours aimed at bolstering children's educational pursuits. Chepcheng' (2023) further revealed that conferences allow teachers to discuss and resolve any academic or behavioural concerns that could impede implementation of CBC. These meetings also provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to engage in dialogue regarding their issues while allowing headteachers and teachers to elucidate their strategies for addressing these problems. This was consistent with the assertions of Muthama (2022) that establishing frequent meetings enhances the relationship between the home and school, fostering a collaborative environment between parents and schools. This implies that utilizing school newsletters to disseminate information is a productive strategy in ensuring their awareness and active collaboration in their children's educational journey.

According to Muthama (2022), headteachers can use this platform to communicate about forthcoming events, recent curriculum adjustments as well as policy

modifications and requirements. Furthermore, using this approach facilitates the reception of input from stakeholders, encompassing their views and suggestions on how best to implement CBC. A study carried out in Kisii County by Olela and Omwenga (2021) established that establishing effective communication channels between headteachers and parents is crucial in fostering parental collaboration in a school's academic programme. According to Olela and Omwenga (2021), headteachers can cultivate robust relationships with stakeholders by adopting various communication strategies, including open-house meetings, parental-teacher meetings, active participation in school activities, and regular dissemination of information through school newsletters.

A study carried out in Machakos County by David (2022) revealed that effective communication strategies adopted by headteachers have resulted in heightened collaboration in learners' academic activities aimed at enhancing CBC implementation. The study's findings also suggest that effective communication strategies which headteachers adopt should consider the cultural and socio-economic contexts of the stakeholders involved. These findings further affirm the fact that effective communication is crucial for promoting greater collaboration in a primary school context and for fostering a good school climate. However, much still needed to be done since David (2022) as well as other reviewed studies have not interrogated how specific institutional communication strategies influence implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools, hence the study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by communication management theory (CMT) whose proponents were Chester Barnard (1938) and Herbert Simon (1947) as a foundational framework for understanding how information is exchanged within organizations and the strategies employed to enhance communication effectiveness. Their work laid the foundation for understanding how communication can influence decision-making and organizational effectiveness. Over time, the theory has evolved to incorporate modern communication technologies and strategies, reflecting the changing landscape of organizational communication. The core principles of communication management theory revolve around clarity, consistency, and engagement. In educational settings, these principles translate into ensuring that all stakeholders such as teachers, parents and learners are well-informed and engaged in the educational process.

Effective communication management involves creating a shared vision, fostering a culture of open dialogue, and using feedback mechanisms to improve practices. These principles are particularly relevant in managing

educational reforms, such as the implementation of CBC, where clear and consistent communication can mitigate resistance and facilitate adoption. In the context of this study, this theory was applicable since it underscored the vitality of headteachers' development of comprehensive communication plans that outline strategies for engaging with different stakeholders. This may involve regular meetings, newsletters, and the use of digital platforms to disseminate information about CBC. Secondly, headteachers can foster a collaborative environment by encouraging teachers to share their experiences and insights regarding CBC implementation. This collaborative approach can lead to innovative solutions and improved practices. Additionally, headteachers can use data and feedback to assess the effectiveness of their communication strategies and make necessary adjustments.

By focusing on strategic communication, stakeholder engagement, and effective feedback mechanisms, headteachers can enhance their communication processes, thereby fostering collaboration, trust, and successful outcomes in the implementation of educational reforms. As schools navigate the complexities of curriculum changes, the principles of communication management remain essential for effective leadership and community integration. The study was also based on the curriculum implementation theory proposed by Bobbit (1918). This theory is founded on the belief that a curriculum should prepare learners for their future roles in the new industrial society. It suggests that teaching classical subjects should be replaced with subjects that align with social needs. According to this theory, a curriculum should be tailored to meet the needs of individuals and the demands of the new industrial society. It emphasizes that people should only be taught skills that are relevant to their tasks, leading to early differentiation in education for boys and girls. To achieve this, Bobbit developed five steps for curriculum development. The first step involves categorizing human experience into major fields. The second step breaks down these fields into more specific activities. The third step focuses on defining objectives based on the abilities required to perform these activities. The fourth step involves selecting objectives that will serve as the foundation for planning activities for learners. Finally, the fifth step entails designing activities, experiences, and opportunities necessary to achieve the objectives. Bobbit (1918) argued for the elimination of traditional school subjects and examinations. He believed that schools should provide

society with what it needs, as determined through scientific analysis. In this study, the theory aligns with the implementation of curriculum by considering learners' strengths, weaknesses, needs, and preferences. It also advocates for changes in teaching methods, taking into account learners' competencies and mastery of subjects and examinations.

3. Methodology

In this study, mixed methodology as well as concurrent triangulation research design were applied. Target population was 1459 respondents which comprised 84 headteachers, 1371 primary school teachers and 4 Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) from which a sample of 312 respondents was determined using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was used to create four different strata based on the number of zones in Matungulu Sub- County. From each zone, five (5) headteachers were selected using purposive sampling. All the CSOs were purposively considered for the study. However, from each zone, 72 teachers were selected using simple random sampling. This procedure realized a sample of 20 headteachers, 288 teachers and 4 CSOs. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers whereas interview guides were used to gather data from headteachers and CSOs. There was also document analysis guide for the researcher. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25) and presented using tables.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, findings of the study as per the objectives of the study are outlined besides highlighting presentation of findings as well as discussions.

4.1 Response Rates

In this study, 288 questionnaires were administered to teachers, and, in return, 280 questionnaires were filled and returned. The researcher also interviewed 16 headteachers and 4 Curriculum Support Officers. This yielded response rates shown in Table 3;

Table 1: Response Rates

Respondents	Sampled Respondents	Those Who Participated	Achieved Return Rate (%)
Headteachers	20	16	80.0
Teachers	288	280	97.2
Curriculum Support Officers	4	4	100.0
Total	312	300	96.2

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 1 shows that headteachers registered a response rate of 80.0% whereas teachers registered 97.2%. However, all (100.0%) of the Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) took part in the study. This yielded an average response rate of 96.2%, which is consistent with the assertions of Creswell (2018) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate. This information was important since it allowed the researcher to generalize the study outcomes to the target population.

4.2 Status of Implementation of Competency-based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools

The study sought to assess the status of implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Matungulu Sub-county. This was measured by analyzing records of learners' manifestation of competencies in key learning areas in line with the CBC rubrics such as basic numeracy, language, creativity skills and essential life and environmental skills. Results are shown in Table 2;

Table 2: Status of Implementation of Competency-based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools

Manifestation of Learning Competencies	Exceeding Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Below Expectations
	%	%	%
Learner competencies in number work skills such as number recognition, ordering and basic operations	31.3	17.9	50.8
Learners can undertake language tasks such as reading, writing and oral activities	29.5	20.5	50.0
Competencies in creativity activities such as drawing, coloring, etching, painting and pattern formation	45.5	25.9	28.6
Learners can undertake tasks in essential environmental or life activities	33.8	27.3	38.9

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 2 shows that slightly less than a third (31.3%) of learners manifest basic numeracy skills such as number recognition, ordering and basic operations which exceed expectations, 17.9% indicated approaching expectations whereas slightly more than half (50.8%) indicated below expectations. Table 2 also shows that only 29.5% of learners exceed expectations in language skills such as reading, writing and speaking, 20.5% approach expectations whereas half (50.0%) of the learners manifest language skills which are below expectations. Table 2 further indicates that 45.5% of the primary school learners manifest creativity skills such as drawing, coloring, etching, painting and pattern formation which exceed learning expectations, 25.9% approach expectations whereas 28.6% are below expectations.

On essential environmental or life skills, slightly more than a third (33.9%) of primary school learners can undertake tasks in essential environmental or life activities, 27.7% approach expectations whereas 38.4% are below expectations. These findings support those of a report done by National Assessment System for Monitoring Learning Achievement (NASMLA) (2020) which showed that implementation of CBC is still at lower levels since only 19.4% of learners in lower primary schools in Matungulu Sub-county manifest

improved literacy and communicative competency, 11.9% can undertake mathematics activities while only 16.3% have mastered essential life skills such as team building and leadership competencies. This implies that, despite the efforts by different stakeholders to improve the learning outcomes of learners in public primary schools, implementation of CBC is still dogged with numerous challenges with many primary school learners registering low grades in key learning areas under CBC, that is, basic numeracy, language, creativity and essential environmental or life skill activities.

4.3 Thematic Analysis

During the interviews, the headteachers and CSOs also responded in favour of the view that many teachers rarely cover syllabus in time with many learners registering low learning outcomes in key CBC thematic areas. Headteacher, H1, noted:

In my primary school, teachers rarely complete their syllabi on time. Sometimes, learners are rushed through the content just to cover the syllabus. This has hurt the learning outcomes of learners in public primary schools

The researcher also observed that many primary school learners have challenges with solving basic number work tasks such as number recognition, counting and basic operations like addition and subtraction. The researcher observed;

The majority of primary school learners recognize numbers from slabs, however, cannot add or subtract operations with ease nor are they able to state the values of numbers.

The researcher also observed that the ability of primary school learners to communicate fluently is a real problem. That is, many primary school learners could not read, write or sound specific words or even state the meanings of words. However, just as indicated by headteachers and primary school teachers, the researcher noted that many primary school learners manifest good levels of creativity. They could colour shapes, form patterns, draw diagrams with ease and undertake crayon

etching with little difficulty. As noted in quantitative findings, these views further point to the fact that primary school learners still register low grades in basic numeracy and language skills, though their level of creativity and innovativeness is good.

4.4 Headteachers' Institutional Communication Practices and Implementation of Competency-based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools

The study sought to assess how the headteachers' institutional communication practices influence implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools. Descriptive data were collected from teachers, organized and summarized into specific thoughts. Results are shown in Table 3;

Table 3: Teachers' Views on the Influence of Headteachers' Institutional Communication Practices on Implementation of Competency-based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
In public primary schools, headteachers always use formal approach to share information on how to implement CBC	41.1	13.6	7.2	26.6	11.5
Headteachers always use SMS to inform teachers about CBC programmes in public primary schools	50.4	14.4	5.8	20.1	9.3
In public primary schools, headteachers always share information about CBC through staff meetings	48.2	6.5	4.3	14.4	26.6
In public primary schools, headteachers always call teachers directly through their mobile phones to share information about CBC	63.3	12.9	7.2	13.7	2.9
Implementation of CBC has not been successful since communication practices adopted by headteachers are not effective	50.4	10.8	3.6	33.1	2.1

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 3 shows that 115(41.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public primary schools, headteachers always use formal approach to share information on how to implement CBC while 39(13.6%) agreed, 21(7.2%) were undecided, 75(26.6%) disagreed whereas 33(11.5%) strongly disagreed. More than half, 142(50.4%), of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that headteachers always use SMS to inform teachers about CBC programmes in public primary schools while 41(14.4%) agreed. However, 17(5.8%) were undecided, 57(20.1%) disagreed whereas 27(9.3%) strongly disagreed. The study found that 135(48.2%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public primary schools, headteachers always share information

about CBC through staff meetings while 19(6.5%) agreed, 13(4.3%) were undecided, 41(14.4%) disagreed whereas 75(26.6%) strongly disagreed. From Table 10, majority, 178(63.3%), of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public primary schools, headteachers always call teachers directly through their mobile phones to share information about CBC whereas 37(12.9%) agreed, 21(7.2%) were undecided, 39(13.7%) disagreed whereas 9(2.9%) strongly disagreed. Slightly more than half, 142(50.4%), of the teachers strongly agreed that implementation of CBC has not been successful since communication practices adopted by headteachers are not effective whereas 31(10.8%) agreed, 11(3.6%) were undecided, 93(33.1%) disagreed

whereas 6(2.1%) strongly disagreed. These findings point to the fact that the implementation of CBC has called for strategic communication methods to ensure that teachers are well-informed about its goals and methods. From the study, headteachers in public primary schools predominantly use formal communication approaches to share information about CBC implementation. These approaches include staff meetings, SMS communication, direct phone calls, and other formal channels. In the same token, a common practice among headteachers is the use of formal communication during staff meetings. These findings are consistent with the assertions of Mukhola (2020) that staff meetings serve as a platform for sharing important educational updates, including CBC implementation details. These meetings allow headteachers to ensure clarity and uniformity in the dissemination of information. Headteachers also utilize these sessions to provide teachers with the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the changes involved with CBC, facilitating a better understanding and smoother implementation.

As pointed out by Ratemo (2017), SMS serves as a quick and effective tool for conveying brief yet critical information. In situations where time is of the essence, headteachers rely on SMS messages to inform teachers about CBC-related events, workshops, or changes in schedules. This form of communication is particularly useful in rural areas where access to other forms of communication might be limited (Mugisha, 2019). Additionally, headteachers make direct phone calls to teachers as another mode of communication. As highlighted by Mwangi (2022), these phone calls are

essential in conveying immediate or urgent information about CBC implementation. They offer a more personal touch and can be used to clarify any misunderstandings that may arise from more formal communication methods. Teachers are often more receptive to this direct communication, which can foster better relationships and enhance the effectiveness of the information shared.

These findings affirm the fact that, though not much has been realized in terms of CBC implementation, headteachers have made efforts to, consistently use formal methods such as staff meetings, SMS, and direct phone calls to communicate CBC-related information. These methods are effective in ensuring that teachers receive timely and accurate updates about the curriculum. However, the challenge remains to explore more dynamic and interactive forms of communication that can further enhance the implementation process.

4.5 Inferential Analysis

To verify the influence of headteachers' institutional communication practices on implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools, data were collected from 16 headteachers of the sampled public primary schools on the number of communication channels they adopt (staff meetings, use of SMs, direct calls) and the average levels of competencies among grade III learners in 2023 national assessment, which was measured in terms of Below Expectations = 1, Approaching Expectations = 2, Meeting Expectations = 3 and Above Expectations = 4) as shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Number of Communication Channels Used by Headteachers and Implementation of CBC Public Primary Schools

Number of Communication Channels Used by Headteachers	Levels of Competencies among Grade III Learners in 2023 National Assessments
2	3
3	2
3	4
3	2
1	2
3	4
2	2
1	1
2	4
3	3
2	2
3	4
2	3
3	4
2	3
3	3

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4 shows that headteachers who use different communication channels to share information about CBC with teachers have their schools witness relatively

improved implementation process evidenced in the levels of competencies manifested by learners in their schools than their counterparts who probably rely on one

mode of communication. This indicates that the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in schools has demonstrated varying levels of success, often tied to the communication strategies frequently employed by headteachers. Schools where headteachers actively adopt a variety of communication channels tend to see smoother and more effective CBC implementation compared to those that rely on a single mode of communication.

When headteachers use diverse platforms such as meetings, emails, WhatsApp groups, and workshops, they ensure that teachers receive consistent, clear, and comprehensive information. This approach allows educators to clarify doubts, stay updated on CBC changes, and align their teaching strategies to the set

objectives. In contrast, relying solely on one communication method may result in information gaps, delays, or misunderstandings. The positive outcomes of improved communication are evident in the learners' performance. Schools where teachers are well-informed and work cohesively under the guidance of an efficiently communicative headteacher often report higher competency levels among their students. These schools exhibit learners who are more adept at critical thinking, problem-solving, and other CBC-required competencies. This further implies that a proactive communication strategy fosters a collaborative environment among education stakeholders, significantly enhancing the effective implementation of CBC and the holistic development of learners. The results in Table 4 were subjected to Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis and results are shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Relationship between Headteachers' Institutional Communication Practices and Implementation of Competency-based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools

		Headteachers' Institutional Communication Practices	Implementation of CBC
Headteachers' Institutional Communication Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.557*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.025
	N	16	16
Implementation of CBC	Pearson Correlation	.557*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	
	N	16	16

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

Table 5 shows Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis which indicates a positive correlation between headteachers' institutional communication practices and implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools ($r(16) = 0.557$, $p = 0.025$ at $\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that there is a statistically significant influence of headteachers' institutional communication practices on implementation of competency-based curriculum in public primary schools, manifested through low learning outcomes in national CBC assessments. This further indicates that clear, consistent, and transparent communication channels ensure that teachers and other stakeholders fully understand the curriculum's requirements and their respective roles. When headteachers articulate the objectives and processes of the CBC, they foster a sense of alignment and clarity among teachers. This, in turn, minimizes resistance to curriculum changes and enhances cooperation. Moreover, headteachers who regularly disseminate feedback, provide updates on CBC progress, and encourage open dialogue significantly contribute to creating an environment of trust and collaboration. Teachers are more likely to feel valued, supported, and confident in implementing the new curriculum guidelines. Conversely, the absence of effective communication from school leaders can lead to misinterpretation of guidelines, lack of enthusiasm, and overall failure in implementing the CBC framework.

Thus, it becomes clear that leadership communication practices serve as a cornerstone in cultivating an educational environment conducive to curriculum reforms. This further implies that enhanced institutional communication by headteachers ensures smoother transitions, better teacher preparedness, and improved learning outcomes for students under the competency-based curriculum.

4.6 Thematic Analysis

During the interviews, the headteachers and CSOs also responded in favour of the view that many headteachers often use different communication approaches and channels to share information with teachers about CBC. Headteacher, H2, noted;

In my primary school, I adopted several communication approaches. These include use of staff meetings, sending SMS and sometimes placing direct calls to teachers. This has made dissemination of information of CBC and implementation easy and faster.

Similar views were expressed by the CSOs who indicated that headteachers have several avenues of

discussing and sharing information about CBC with teachers. However, the interviewees refuted the claims that implementation of CBC has not been successful since communication practices adopted by headteachers are not effective. Despite these differences, these findings point to the fact that the implementation of CBC has called for strategic communication methods to ensure that teachers are well-informed about its goals and methods. These perspectives align with Mukhola's (2020) claims that the communication strategies employed by school leaders are vital, as they provide a means for disseminating essential educational information, including specifics about the implementation of the CBC. The varied results highlight that, despite limited progress in CBC implementation, headteachers have made significant efforts to regularly utilize formal communication methods such as staff meetings, SMS, and direct phone calls to relay CBC-related information. These approaches are effective in guaranteeing that teachers obtain timely and precise updates regarding the curriculum.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The implementation of CBC is still a challenge in public primary schools in Matungulu Sub-County. Many teachers do not cover syllabus in time, unimproved classroom pedagogy characterized by low learning outcomes of learners in key learning areas under CBC. Many pupils cannot perform basic number operations, cannot communicate fluently, cannot read, write or sound specific words or even state the meanings of words. However, many primary school learners manifest good levels of creativity. This has been attributed to headteachers' institutional communication practices. In other words, the study found that although there has been limited progress in CBC implementation, headteachers are making substantial efforts to regularly use formal communication channels such as SMS, staff meetings, and direct phone calls to share CBC-related information with teachers.

5.2 Recommendations

As practice, headteachers should continue to adopt effective communication strategies and approaches to constantly share crucial information about CBC with teachers. As a policy, the Ministry of Education should constantly enforce policy regulations which require headteachers to regularly attend capacity building and training to acquire skills to foster best practices in CBC implementation.

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