

ECDE TEACHER PREPAREDNESS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM (CBC) ADOPTION IN KENYAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates implications of the adoption of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) on student learning outcomes and educational equity in Kenyan higher education institutions. Through reviewing a synthesis of existing studies, this paper highlights advantages and disadvantages associated with the introduction of CBC. The outcomes indicate that students develop more interest, creativity and learn how to apply knowledge in real life situations leading to an increase in academic achievement. Furthermore, CBC is seen as a mechanism for enhancing equity through meeting the different learning needs and equalizing access to quality education across populations. However, among other issues,

this analysis identifies teacher training at various levels, resource allocation as well as ongoing evaluation need greater attention for successful CBC implementation. This emphasizes the need for investing in teacher development programs, providing adequate resources and constantly improving these strategies for maximum impact on students' performance and equal opportunities to education especially at tertiary institutions in Kenya.

Key terms: ECDE, Teacher Preparedness, Professional Development, Competency-Based Curriculum, Kenyan Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

CBC is the new empowerment in the education system in Kenya, with the primary aim being the maximization of the value which the education imparts. Such curriculum model, spiraled across all levels of education, is designed to prepare each learner for the real world in which fast changes occurring at a global scale. In the Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) context, CBC, being the base level, becomes highly relevant, where core skills and attitudes crop in. Yet, the effective use of CBC will rely on the teachers' professional capacity building and readiness to implement. In the first paragraph, a brief description of CBC in Kenya is given, its relevance in the framework provided, the research problem is identified and why teachers should be ready and well-prepared for the successful implementation of CBC in ECDE is also emphasized.

Background

The implication of the CBC in Kenya is so much more than a mere educational reform affair. Established in 2017, CBC was conceived as a response to societal and market trends which advocate for practically oriented learning. This kind of learning is necessary for 21st century's success. This curriculum framework introduces a break from the classical topic-centered

approach which concentrates on the acquisition of fundamental skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and collaboration. The change toward CBC was advocated because it highlighted the shortcomings of the past system whereby memorization was almost always valued over the experience of meaningful learning.

CBC started with a wide and direct consultation and cooperation with several interest groups: educators, policymakers, parents, as well as representatives of industrial sectors. The syllabus development was addressed through the process of revising existing syllabi, awareness on the concept of competency-based learning outcomes, and creation of innovative pedagogical techniques to encourage active student engagement (Wambui, et al., 2021). Additionally, CBC promotes a learning process which puts the learner first, in which the learners are guided, facilitated, and offered opportunities for career guidance and talent development that fitting their interests and career choices.

Within the context of CBC, education is viewed as a multilevel process which spans beyond the realm of formal learning as the experiential learning, communal engagement and the incorporation of real-world contexts into the curriculum. The connection between all the above-mentioned educating techniques nowadays represents a broad move of higher education towards competence-based paradigms in which the emphasis is on the development of transferable skills and permanent learning habits (Biwott et al., 2022). In this vision, CBC points out the significance of customized learning activities based on student's peculiar needs, considering the different gifts, cultures, and approaches to studying among all students.

Going through with the CBC means spreading a process featuring multiple components like training teachers, building infrastructure and sourcing of resources related to curriculum and assessment. The changing of CBC has taken off with an excitement and optimism but in a way has presented obstacles like teacher preparation, the distribution and engagement with the stakeholders. However, CBC depicts the idea of involving all in a way of reinforcing the fact that learning is crucial to all, irrespective of a learner's background or situation.

Significance of ECDE in the Context of CBC

The subject of CBC in turn becomes the core issue in the context of the CBC to a great extent. The first six years out of school make a lifelong difference in cognitive and non-cognitive skills such as problem solving and behavior. All-inclusive kindergarten programs would act as an indispensable ground wherein basic learning area, social qualities, and psychological beliefs are molded which would influence the path of the learner in the following in the course of their education (Luembo et al., 2023). CBC makes it possible for ECDE to follow a holistic strategy within which the different spheres of the child development are given a framework that qualifies them. These spheres include social, cognitive, emotional, and physical development. The curriculum emphasizes on activities of play, experience and questioning and therefore understands that learners at this stage are not natural absorbents of information.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the CBC's well-aspiring of the progressive aspiration, some impediments might arise in the actualization of this implementation, especially ECDE. The study revolves around the issue of ECDE teachers' readiness to meet the needs of CBC and their thinking of being competent in giving satisfactory teaching guided by the curriculum aims. The focus of this analysis is to dig deeper on how well the teacher training and professional development programs are implemented in combining ECDE approaches with the CBC programs in Kenyan higher education institutions (Biwott et al., 2022). The main goals of this study are to determine the readiness of the current ECDE teachers, examine the problems which may appear, explore current professional development approaches and propose recommendations for the process of improving ECDE teachers' readiness and effectiveness in the use of CBCs while teaching preschoolers.

Importance of Teacher Preparedness and Professional Development

For the CBC to be an effective strategy in ECDE, it comes along with a teacher's preparedness and continuous professional development. The ECDE teachers emerge in the frontline when it comes to young children's learning experiences despite playing the role of tutors. Sufficient training endows the teacher with the pedagogical skills, the content knowledge and classroom techniques to correctly practice the CBC fundamentals (Luembo et al., 2023). Additionally, the in-service training is in place to guarantee that teachers keep pace with the emerging innovation, educational philosophies, and effective pedagogy to empower them to execute the CBC plan which aims at equity standard in education and society. Therefore, encouraging teacher development and the facilitating learning subtly is key for the potential transformation of CBC in ECDE to occur.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CBC Adoption in Kenyan Higher Education Institutions

The CBC implementation in Kenyan higher education institutions is an issue that has challenged the scholarly community all across the country; at the same time, it reflects the big role that this educational change has played. According to Isaboke et al. study (2019), there is a deep-rooted reason why CBC was adopted. The rationale was for the curriculum to be in accordance with the demands of the modern job market. The researchers recognized the necessity for graduates to have practical skills and competencies (including employability and work placement) which positions them better than other graduates for a competitive workforce. This mindset is compatible with discussions of educating in context of sustainable development, where curricular reforms are considered critical for wellbeing of the economy, social harmony, and competitiveness in global markets.

Besides researching the reasons behind using CBC and discovering the challenges encountered in its implementation in higher education institutions, scholars have also researched the

solution for these challenges. For instance, Akhwesa (2023) study highlighted potential in change process among faculty members as one of the major challenges to introducing and adopting CBC. Working load, pedagogic autonomy, and lack of understanding of teaching and learning conditions of CBC are perceived to be the elements that cause faculty non-eagerness. Furthermore, resource deficiencies, for example the inadequate infrastructure and limited access to instructional materials have been mentioned as barriers to the execution of authentic curricular activities, which are a common challenge in institutions serving vulnerable or under-resourced students.

The study also shows the use cases of Crudely-Built Context in Kenyan higher education institutions. Benson and Njuguna (2023) give an analysis of the possible impact rooted in the importance of CBC in encouraging innovation, collaboration, and that give room for interdisciplinary learning experiences. Instead of just focusing on the development of transferable skills and abilities, CBC demands teachers to employ student-centered teaching methods to facilitate students in being able to think critically, creatively and solve problematic issues. In addition, CBC are a safe space to tackle the problems of different student groups, such as the ones from vulnerable categories or underprivileged children, by way of supporting different pathways to education. Furthermore, we may assist such students in terms of helping to achieve special educational needs.

Additionally, the literature on CCBP integration in Kenyan universities highlights the relevance of teacher's preparedness and professional developments in enabling a smooth implementation of the new curriculum. A study by Njiru and Odundo (2024) looked into the influence of continuous professional development activities in fortifying teacher competence in CBC. The study team concluded that these instructors revolving around conferences, specialized seminars, and collaborative learning communities were the most critical in building instructors' pedagogical skills and subject knowledge needed for the successful implementation of CBC. They mentioned that one-off training programs won't be sufficient since challenges are ever changing. The teachers have to be enriched with continued support and ongoing professional development in order to overcome these challenges.

Role of ECDE Teachers in The Implementation of CBC

The place, importance, and job of ECDE teachers in the progress of CBC have been stressed on by so many researchers, and the trend suggests that such teachers, who shape young learner's education experience, are in a vantage position. According to Ngeno (2023), Early Childhood Development and Education teachers have two specific - but illuminating - tasks: guiding learning in an inclusive manner and supporting the child in becoming a lifelong learner. Delivering awareness and equipping the ECDE teachers with the responsibility of creating conducive, stimulating, and child development-promoting learning environments is what the ECD teachers can do to encourage cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development in little kids. Their job is not confined only to the teaching of academic knowledge, but to the promotion of vital life approaches, values, and attitudes.

Studies of this matter were related to those of ECDE teachers' skills that are needed to demonstrate CBC principles in the classroom. For example, ECDE teachers are required to have an in-depth knowledge of child development and play theories, methods and age-appropriate approaches to learning as highlighted by Cherotich (2020). Besides that, they must show the ability to evaluate the achievements of the students, help to develop individual approach and stimulate the atmosphere of research and exploration. Moreover, the role of early childhood development teachers in promoting the inclusive education by catering to the various needs in children diversity, culture and employments is paramount.

The training program highlights the significance of on-going professional development for ECDE teachers to have capacity in delivering the CBC to pupils effectively. A research by Kuria (2022) looked into how professional educators' training influence their level of readiness in making the transition to CBC. They discovered that the learning by doing representatives, workshops, cooperative work, and collaboration were essential for a teacher to be able to combine training of skills of CBC with their teaching techniques. A series of professional qualification holds particular value in making instructors possess a high level of competitive skills in terms of understanding the curriculum as well as standardized assessment abilities.

It is also evident from the literature that supportive policies and facilities as well as the programs should exist, so that teachers of ECDE institutions can be able to meet their duties accordingly in the context of CBC implementation. The study by Mohamed (n.d.) indicate the significance of enough staff, class materials, and professional reinforcements stand as regulating elements for it to boost teacher's morale, job satisfaction, and retention. Particularly, cooperative linkages between ECD teachers and heads of families, community members, as well as other relevant stakeholders must exist to ensure that a learning environment which addresses children's psychosocial development and well-being is good.

Factors Influencing Teacher Preparedness and Professional Development in The Context of CBC Adoption

The list of factors impacting the preparedness of teachers and their development in a comparative context of the renewed education is numerous therefore being thoroughly researched. Amukune (2021) says that the availability of resources and support structures is vital. Grants for in-service training and school resources, including CBC-related materials and ongoing mentorship help teachers to better incorporate CBC in their teaching. In the same line, both institutional leadership and the policy framework for the country also play an essential role in creating a conducive environment for teacher development. Communication that works, transparency in the guidelines, and the alignment of the incentives with the professional growth can be foundation stones of the willing teachers' participation in up-to-cutting training.

The sociocultural contexts, teachers' values, norms and attitudes are primary factors that may weaken or promote readiness and professional development in the use of mother tongue based multilingual education. A study Benen (2021) highlighted the cultural values and biases that may be involved in teachers and accepting or resisting curriculum change. Teachers' attitudes

toward change, inquisitiveness to new teaching methodologies, and readiness to partner up with their peers are very crucial to the extent they catch up with teaching and learning through CBC. Professional learning environment is intended to identify and, ultimately, eliminate the factors diverting the teachers' focus from their priorities, so professional development initiatives should be placed and tailored to the specific people's culture and factor.

Providing access to proper professional development and the quality of professional development are key points that need to be considered in order to improve the teacher readiness for the integration of CBC. In the study of Obeywa and Oluoch (2023) it was found out that the teachers need more frequent and well-targeted training sessions which are allowed to reach the teachers easily, and which are the most appropriate to the teachers' needs. Good professional development programs preferences both all activities style group workshops, seminars, training, mentoring, and peer collaboration opportunities to serve the individual learning styles and preferences of different people. Furthermore, monitoring and providing feedback tools may ensure that the professional development shoe be in line with teachers' needs as they change as well as the goals of CBC.

Systemic methods like curriculum coherence, evaluation practices, and accountability mechanisms can play a pivotal role in motivating instructors to enhance their competence and realizing current innovations in CBC. From the Masika's study (2020), this involves the need to link frameworks and learning outcomes together with the essential goal of being consistent in the implementation of the CBC. Another factor is the introduction of transparent regulations as well as standards and performance metrics that enable the establishment of accountability whereby teachers are responsible and their employing institutions also account to the attainment of CBC goals. Policymakers and educators in conflict-affected areas can achieve this by focusing on the root causes, which will encompass a supportive environment that encourages teacher preparation and professional development and in turns result in effective implementation of CBC system in schools in Kenya.

Previous Studies on Strategies for Enhancing ECDE Teacher Preparedness For CBC

While many studies have focused on the ways to improve ECDE teacher preparedness for the implementation of the CBC, others have examined the educational levels of ECDE teachers, work experience, official registration, and the general coordination of ECDE activities. From the research, it is clear that one productive way to assist ECDE teachers is through teacher professional development programs that are undertaken in a goal-oriented manner addressing the pertinent needs of the ECDE teachers. For example, Syomwene's research (2022) emphasized the efficacy of intensive workshops and seminars developed around the philosophy of the CBC, playful learning approaches, and techniques for adequate assessing depending on the age of a child. The programs equip teachers with the practical skills, pedagogical wisdom and curricula for helping them during their first year in CBC and they also help to promote very high-quality teaching practices in the environments for ECDE.

The strategy of joint efforts learning communities and the peer mentoring opportunities prove to be highly productive opportunities of bridge the gap of teachers' capacity for application of CBC for their gain. In line with the research findings of Asava (2021), collaborative networks (teams) allow teachers to exchange on useful pedagogical practices, articulate their ideas, and invent common resources for CBC. Experienced teacher led peer mentoring, where older teachers mentor the younger ones shows the potential for professional development, reflective practice, and emotional support. Through creation of a collaborative learning environment and providing for continuous learning chances, these strategies will give to ECDE teachers to facilitate the implementation of CBC strategies and help with achieving the set learning outcomes.

The use of information technology in learning processes and the insertion of tools and resources that promote ECDE is considered as a strategy that can be used to improve the preparedness of the teachers in CBC. The study of Okeyo and Mokuia (2023) pointed out the interior of the digital platforms for the education apps, and the online resources, those which can assist the teaching methods in complement and pave the road for the interactive and the experienced learnings of the kids. Through the application of technology to their teaching, ECDE educators can improve the student's attention, customize the learning process, grant 24 hours access, among other CBC goals. Furthermore, technology-based professional development platforms offer some fully flexible and quickly reachable learning materials for ECDE teachers who wish to be more digital literate and learner- centred in the classroom by the use of technology.

Impact of CBC Adoption on Student Learning Outcomes and Educational Equity in Kenyan Higher Education Institutions

It is evident that the application of Competency-Based Education in Kenyan universities has attracted quite much attention on how the adjustment has influenced the study outcomes and the educational viable. Studies have indicated that specified competencies grasping rather than rote memorization contribute to the potential of CBC implementation quality in attaining learning outcomes of students. Example of such an accomplishment would be the work by Kikwei (2023) which shows that CBC is about developing practical life skills and analytical thinking, which we need for solving current problematic issues. This shift encourages active engagement in learning and fosters a deeper understanding of subjects, leading to improved academic performance among students.

The integration of CBC in Kenyan universities is anticipated to be effective in education equity by achieving level of playing field including giving the students equal chances for learning and success. Being privileged facilitates a student's autonomy, and the dominant education system triggered the division due to backgrounds. While learning is tailor-made and flexible by nature in CBC and can therefore be adjusted to different learning needs and styles, as highlighted by Ajuoga and Keta (2021). CBC enables students to determine the pace of their learning, as well as give them the chance to more clearly demonstrate proficiency in skills. As a result, it erases the barriers created by limited time and increases the opportunity for all to realize their potential.

As much as the introduction of CBC has several anticipated benefits; there will still be challenges of learning outcomes boost and ensuring equity in the education institutions higher in Kenya. There is a wide array of concerns with regards to the ability of teachers to adequately handle issues of Curriculum based on context, as well as clearing gaps in knowledge and skills in the class (Abdullahi, 2019). The combined mode to perform under the CBC curriculum utilizes teachers' ability of facilitating student learning and their readiness and deep understanding of the curriculum directly informs of its effectiveness. Hence, the teacher professional development programs should be considered as critical in the sense that these should be supported along implementation of CBC so as to bring down negative performances of students and build the education equity.

The extent of resource availability and quality, for example teaching materials and infrastructure, play a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of CBC implementation in Kenyan higher education institutions according to (Kithaka, 2021). Lack of educational resources or particularly the ones located in the remote and deprived areas pose another barrier to students' failure to interact with the curriculum on the highest possible level leading to desired learning results. Attention should be given to resource gaps and fair distribution of educational facilities. These steps should be taken to promote equity in education and ensure that all students in disparate locations and diverse backgrounds have the same chances in learning.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the progress remains a core activity that helps to check the progress and identify the possible areas of improvement. Constant progressive performance analysis of student learning outcomes and feedback from stakeholders can bring useful insights into the curriculum, showing what needs to be worked on and adjusted as soon as possible (Koskei, and Chepchumba, 2020). Through applying a viewpoint of constant improvement to higher education institutions in Kenya, CBC can be improved in order to have a better impact on students' learning outcomes and educational equity which in turn contributes development of more inclusive and equitable education system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore secondary sources such as documented case studies, past implementation experiences, and related studies on the CBC in Kenyan higher education institutions where there are programs in ECDE. The purpose of qualitative research is to be able to grapple with complicated situations leading to deeper understanding of the effect of teacher training, ECDE teacher professional development and the role of ECDE educators during the rollout of CBC.

Sampling Strategies and Sample Demographics

This method of sampling starts with subjective sampling, that is, specific empirical studies, research reports, government publications and peer reviewed academic literature. The facilitator of the discussion committee presents findings from research that were made within the context of Kenyan post-secondary education institutions focusing on ECDE teacher readiness and competence for CBDC implementation. The selection criteria emphasize studies with a rigorous methodology, as well as a bidirectional approach, and evidence from the basis of reality.

Data Collection Methods

The collection of data to be used for this secondary research is through diverse methods, which include in depth research and document analysis. The article will make use of academic databases such as Google Scholar, and JSTOR through systematically searching for keywords with Boolean operators regarding CBC implementation, ECDE teacher preparedness, and professional development done in the Kenyan context (Opondo et al., 2023). Besides state documents, policy briefs, and official releases from the government agencies, the NGOs and the international organizations, these are all consulted for purpose of getting the entire field knowledge.

Data Analysis Techniques Employed

The data analysis process shall include the thematic analysis of the literature and documents that are selected and presumably shall reveal the main themes, patterns, and trends linked to teacher preparedness and professional development for the CBC adoption. The data coding methods, such as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, that make it possible to classify and arrange the data received from literature review are applied. Synthesized findings, identified gaps and inconsistencies as well as meaningful conclusions to accomplish addressed research objectives are included in the analysis (Biwott et al., 2022). As supplementary steps, crucial instruments like CASP checklist could be employed to appraise the quality and reliability of the existing studies and documents.

RESEARCH RESULTS

ECDE Teacher Preparedness for CBC Adoption

The research findings under this theme show the situation is in a state of flux in terms of ECD teachers' readiness for the implementation of CBC. On the one hand, there is moderate level of ECDE teachers who are ready to integrate CBC principles into their teaching, and on the other hand, there are some notable gaps with numerous challenges that were noted. Researches have revealed that elements including teachers' CBC principles awareness, the teacher's classroom knowledge and skills, exposures to professional development and continued learning, and compliance from educational organizations are the ones that decide the extent to which teacher

is appropriate for CBC implementation (Laikipia, 2021). Still, this heterogeneity is related to varying levels of readiness in differing regions, institutions, and categories of teachers, which implies a need for individualized approaches to solve existing problems among groups with specific concerns.

Professional Development Initiatives and Their Effectiveness:

Educator professional development measures have therefore become essential in equipping ECDE teachers with the skills they need to effectively embrace the changes in the CBC regulations. Research evidences the fact that a number of professional development programs teach teachers concepts, application, and resources necessary for culturally responsive teaching; these programs may be structured as workshops, seminars, mentorship, peer collaboration, and online training (Owuor, 2022). Moreover, the studies show that teachers with the context-specific and need-based training are of much help to the ECDE teachers who are in the Kenyan setting and some parts of Africa as well. While the effects of professional development activities deserve close attention, it should be followed by a continuing inspection to make sure that ECDE teachers obtain the long-term help facility throughout their life.

Challenges Faced by ECDE Teachers in Adapting to the CBC

Notwithstanding ongoing initiatives of the government to ensure successful incorporation of CBC into ECDE curricula, several challenges still rise up. However, they face obstacles in the form of traditional practices, lack of sufficient training and support, inadequate resources, overcrowded classrooms, level of assessments match, and cultural differences (Akala, 2021). Teachers of early childhood development also have the task of harmonically blending the new CBC implementation with the traditional teaching approach, creating extra difficulties for them on their way to the new curriculum framework. To overcome these obstacles, comprehensive policy strategies drawing all the actors from the standpoint of policymakers, educational institutions, teacher training programs and other stakeholders will be vital in supplying sufficient resource and support for the ECDE teachers.

Other Relevant Findings from the Study

This study has not only provided possible results regarding ECDE teacher preparedness for CBC implementation, but also other related insights. Such are, for instance, the significance of political leadership and institutional backing to launch and sustain CBC implementation among the teachers, the duty as a service to the community of engaging the parents and students in the curriculum, and the likelihood of social economic factors to affect the teaching profession and general attitude of the teachers toward curriculum change (Owino, n.d.). Similarly, the study reveals that there should be continuous research and evaluation as the CBC process goes on, to identify key obstacles and informs appropriate policies that will enhance the qualitative implementation of ECDE in Kenya.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of the Results in Light of the Research Objectives

The interpretation of results helps to show the competence of ECD teachers to follow the CBC in the colleges and universities in Kenya. The study revealed the various constituents of teacher confidence, showing the strong and weak points involved. Knowing the moderate inclination of some ECDE trainers to CBC concept in respect to the resistance to change, experts lacking adequate professional development opportunities and resourcing, there are some barriers for others.

It is noticeable that there are common issues that different studies have identified as key issues that affect the readiness of the teachers and the adoption of the CBC. As the same challenges, including fear of change, lack of training and resources drop up consistently in different situations, there might be a huge problem underlying the systems; therefore, those issues should be a top priority in order to fix the system (Mwita et al., 2022). On the other hand, the preparedness levels relying on various factors like the location of the country, institutional aid, and specific teacher features are also subjected to changes. Through formulating these outputs, policy makers and teachers can acquire a more comprehensive evaluation of the factors that blindfold ECDE teachers and thus, come up with fine-tuned strategies that can increase preparedness for CBC implementation.

Comparison of Findings with Existing Literature

Comparing the results with the already available data proves that they conform to the earlier evidence on the subject of the early childhood development teacher preparation and informal professional development in the context of the changes of the curriculum. Case studies in various countries that are grappling with similar educational quandaries, including curriculum reform and teacher capacity building program, are priceless tools that can help the Kenyan policy makers and experts to formulate policies and practices (Luembo et al., 2023). Often, common themes such as the necessity of a focused approach to teacher training, fostering collaboration among learners/ teachers and supportive leaders are observed in different contexts, which further vindicate the universal perception of the effectiveness of professional development interventions in improving the preparedness of teachers for implementing curriculum reforms.

Also, this examination accentuates the single-threaded factors which have peculiar aircraft that train ECDE teachers and the idea of CBC in Kenya. Cultural habits, socio-economic inequalities and state organizations shape the development of career-based classes and the effectiveness of the professional growth opportunities (Mohamed, 2023). Through a wider literature that reviews these gains within the existing best practices in curriculum reform and teacher capacity building, the policymakers will be able to align reforms to specific challenges and amplify existing curricula to support early childhood teachers to adapt.

Implications of the Study for Policy, Practice, and Future Research

This research not only presents the CBC implementation process into practice and policy, but also provides direction for further research in preparation of ECDE teachers for the CB learning system. The policy makers can take the conclusions of the study as the base for the making of policies that helps the expanding of the teacher training, resource allocation, and the creation of institution capacities. Through the allocation of the financial resources in training programs for teachers and financial development of infrastructure and engaging the stakeholders, the authorities will create an environment where teachers will be equipped to perform their roles in CBC and young children will learn positively.

This research demonstrates the feasibility of such professional development programs and also shows the necessity of cooperation between teachers and professional developers. Schools, teacher education programs, and nongovernmental organizations across the country could combine their efforts under a quality training mechanism supported by mentorship programs and professional networks for teachers in early childhood development and education (Wambui, et al., 2021). Through encouraging a culture of everlasting learning and collaboration among each other, practitioners then can take it as an opportunity to enrich teachers' job satisfaction, level of motivation and continuously being in the teaching profession, and that in turn contribute to successful students.

For future research, it would be crucial to have longitudinal studies monitoring the long-term situation of ECDE teachers' competency building and change in teaching practices and student performance. Furthermore, studies on various educational strategies, technology, as well as community involvement approaches with the purpose of neonatal education centers development could point out the best learning techniques for ECDE learning milieu. Teachers' preparation is a key element of effective ECDE programs, thus filling the identified research gaps will help advance teachers' readiness and eventually improve the standards of early childhood education not only in Kenya but also other countries.

Recommendations for Improving ECDE Teacher Preparedness and Professional Development in the Context of CBC Adoption:

Based on the findings and implications of the study, several recommendations can be made to improve ECDE teacher preparedness and professional development for CBC adoption:

- i. **Strengthen Teacher Training Programs:** Upgrade the preservice and in-service teacher training programs to include also modules that cover the pillars of CBC, the pedagogical methods and assessment strategies which are suitable for ECDE environments.
- ii. **Provide Ongoing Professional Development:** CBC implementation is an ongoing process, therefore, offer continuous professional development such as workshops, seminars, and peer mentoring to enable ECDE teachers to effectively use CBC approach while adapting to effective educational trends.

- iii. Foster Collaboration and Networking: Engage ECDE teachers, educational institutions, and community stakeholders in collaboration to share knowledge, resources, and practices for embedded cooperation in seeking the best implementation.
- iv. Address Resource Constraints: Allocate enough resources that are financing, learning materials, and fitting structures to ECDE institutions to ensure affordability and quality education for all children.
- v. Supportive Policy Environment: You can advocate for supportive policies at the country and local levels that give emphasis to early childhood education, build professional skills among the teachers and distribute enough resources for the Start-up of CDF projects in the educational setting for children.
- vi. Research and Evaluation: Evaluate the influence of CBC on the training of ECDE teachers, their teaching methods, and the student outcomes through the use of rigorous research and evaluation studies regularly. Provide evidence-based policy and practice recommendations for policymakers based on the results.
- vii. These measures, if implemented, will help the actors in early childhood development sector to work as a team, with the purpose of boosting not only the readiness of ECDE teachers and their professional development but also the implementation of the new curriculum for early learning and the improvement of early childhood education in general in Kenya.

Conclusion

The research has therefore provided important knowledge pinpointing the preparedness of ECDE teachers for the competency-based curriculum underpinning the learning system in higher institutions educating in Kenya. Significant data reveal prospect and challenges within ECDE teachers being geared fit for CBC implementation. It therefore puts emphasis on customized professional developments, coordinated aspects and appropriate policies to spur readiness.

This study's contribution to field consists of identification of common threads and trends related to ECDE teacher preparedness and CBC adoptive practices; integrating and consolidating the existing pieces of evidence to navigate policy-making process, and; development of recommendations for enhancing teacher training courses, in-service training, and resource allocation practices. Through the study, the literature contextualizing it within the subject matter on reform of curriculum and teacher capability building, the findings are presented broadly, making the study to offer a comprehensive understanding of factors that influence teachers' preparedness in ECDE and also, to give actionable insights to the major players in the edu sector.

In conclusion, the preparedness of ECDE teachers should form a critical component in the implementation plans for CBC that will be anchored in Kenyan colleges and universities. The ECD teachers are significant in guiding the process of education the early years learners and largely establishing for the underpinning of lifelong learning. Through investing in the development ECDE, offering necessary and helpful support and the atmosphere of mutual

understanding and communication, as well as permanent progress, stakeholders, administrators and others will be able to provide the teachers with the knowledge, skills and the necessary resources to properly implement CBC and give the wonderful results for all children. As Kenya proceeds with its plan for education reforms, it will be crucial for the ECDE teacher readiness to be emphasized since it will contribute to a more equitable, inclusive and ready to the challenges of tomorrow education system.

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