



From 8.4.4 to Competence Based Curriculum: Emerging Issues of Transition in Education in Kenya

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Abstract

The Educational system in Kenya has undergone significant transformation from the 8-4-4 system to Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). This shift presents emerging issues that affect both learners and teachers, as well as the society at large. Through an analysis of current literature, this paper examines key issues such as teacher training, assessment methods, and societal expectations. The study findings revealed that there is a significant association at 5% significance level between the variables of emerging issues and transition by the teachers' respondents ($\chi^2 = 157.072$, $df = 9$, $p = 0.00$). One of the challenges is the cost of implementing the new curriculum, which requires a lot of money to purchase resources and hire new teachers. Another challenge is the inadequate professional preparation of Kenyan teachers, who are not yet familiar with the approaches of CBC. The transition period will enable the government to develop adequate infrastructure for the new system. By addressing these challenges proactively, Kenya can ensure that its education system remains relevant and responsive to future needs.

Keywords: Competence based curriculum, emerging issues, transition, education in Kenya

1. Introduction

Kenya is a country deeply rooted in education, with a long history of implementing various educational systems to improve the quality of learning outcomes for its learners (Ngwacho, 2020). Over the past few years, Kenya has undergone significant changes in its education system as it transitions from the 8-4-4 curriculum to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) (Amutabi, 2019). The move towards CBC marks a major educational shift that promises to prepare learners for life beyond academic excellence. However, this transition has not been without challenges. As such, emerging issues need to be addressed if successful implementation and positive impacts on learners' learning outcomes are to be realized (Amunga, Were & Ashioya, 2020)

The 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya and the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) differ in several ways (Mugambi & Chepkonga, 2022). The 8-4-4 system focuses on

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content memorization and reproduction during examinations, while the CBC emphasizes knowledge and skills application through creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. The 8-4-4 system is examination-oriented, while the CBC is skills-oriented. The CBC allows learners to specialize in areas of interest, promoting inventions and innovations, while the 8-4-4 system is more rigid in content, learning time, and strategies (Akala, 2021).

The CBC is designed to connect the learner with the labour market through creative work and thinking for themselves, while the 8-4-4 system focuses on perfection (Namwambah, 2020). The teacher-learners interaction is limited in the 8-4-4 system, while in the CBC, the interaction is closer. The CBC is learner-based, while the 8-4-4 system is teacher-based. The CBC aims to balance formative and summative assessment, while the 8-4-4 system focuses more on summative assessment (Ndungu, 2021).

The CBC is more flexible, responsive, and supportive in embracing diverse learning needs and abilities, while the 8-4-4 system is more rigid (Kubai, Mwangi & Owiti, 2021). The CBC engages parents through empowerment and allows shared responsibility in all tiers and levels of basic education, while there is little parental engagement and support in the 8-4-4 system (Mauki, Kitur, Ireri & Ngala, 2020). The CBC breaks school monotony as learning years and levels are divided into slots, thus minimizing dropouts and truancy. At the same time, in the 8-4-4 system, learners take 8, 4, and 4 years in primary, secondary, and higher learning institutions, respectively, leading to boredom as similar concepts are taught (Gichuru et al., 2021).

The shift from the 8-4-4 system to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya has raised several concerns that require attention to ensure a successful implementation and positive learners' outcomes (Momanyi & Rop, 2020). The CBC aims to provide a more learner-centred approach, emphasizing skill development over rote memorization. However, its execution has been far from seamless, with challenges emerging at different levels of implementation. One critical issue is the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources necessary to effectively deliver the curriculum. Teachers need training on teaching using this new method effectively, but not enough skilled trainers are available in most regions (Wafubwa, 2021).

Furthermore, schools may not have sufficient materials, such as textbooks and other learning aids required by teachers to implement CBC effectively (Rupia, 2022). Another significant concern is the assessment process employed under this new curriculum. Continuous assessments based on skills acquisition throughout each academic term must replace final exams traditionally conducted at the end of every school year under 8-4-4 systems (Owuor, 2022). However, it remains unclear how these assessments will be designed and whether they can accurately measure learners' competencies -an essential aspect that needs clarification. Additionally, there has been limited involvement from stakeholders such as parents or community members in implementing CBC's curriculum

changes fully. This lack of participation reduces accountability while leaving room for mismanagement within educational institutions during implementation. The hypothesis of the study is as follows:

H₀₁: emerging issues has no significant influence on transition from 8.4.4 to CBC in education in Kenya.

2. Method

In conducting this research on the emerging issues of transition in education from 8.4.4 to CBC in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey design emphasizing on quantitative approach as compared to qualitative approach. The descriptive analysis approach was chosen for the present study because it seeks to gain insight into a phenomenon as a means of providing basic information in an area of study (Koul, 1993). The descriptive research design was adopted in the study based on the conceptual relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

The study was carried out in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Situated in the mid-west of Kenya's Rift Valley, some 330km Northwest of Nairobi, Uasin Gishu is a cosmopolitan county, covering an area of 3345.2 square kilometers. The study collected data from teachers from Uasin Gishu County using a variety of methods. A population sample included 497 teachers. The researcher used structured questionnaire to collect data. This included closed-ended questions. The respondent had enough time thus giving well thought answer.

The information collected was transcribed, analyzed, and triangulated with quantitative data. Data analysis involves interpretation, organization, and presentation of collected data so as to decrease the information collected from the field to be practical (Safa et al., 2016). Collected data was organised and edited to remove any inconsistencies, repetitions or errors that would have made analysis difficult. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics included mean and standard deviation. Also, Inferentially Chi-Square test was applied to get the association between the dependent variable caused by the influence of independent variables. The significance of each independent variable will be tested at a significance level of 5%.

3. Results

The study sought to establish emerging issues of transition from 8.4.4 to CBC in education in Kenya in Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the opinion of the teachers. The responses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Emerging Issues of Transition from 8.4.4 to CBC in Education in Kenya

Statement	Teachers		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Lack of resources (for example textbooks, computers, teachers)	497	3.87	0.536
Lack of training for teachers on the new curriculum	497	3.88	0.849
Inadequate infrastructure (for example classrooms, laboratories)	497	3.70	0.740
Negative attitude towards the new curriculum among teachers and parents	497	3.84	1.089
Confusion and uncertainty about the new curriculum	497	3.58	1.199
Parents' understanding of CBC	497	3.68	1.240

Table 1 above shows the teachers agreed that lack of resources (for example textbooks, computers, teachers) was one of the emerging issues in transition (Mean=3.87, Standard deviation = 0.536 respectively). The teachers in addition agreed that lack of training for teachers on the new curriculum (Mean=3.88, Standard deviation = 0.849 respectively). The teachers also agreed inadequate infrastructure (for example classrooms, laboratories) (Mean=3.70, Standard deviation = 0.740 respectively). The teachers agreed that there is negative attitude towards the new curriculum among teachers and parents (Mean=3.84, Standard deviation = 1.089 respectively). The teachers agreed that there is confusion and uncertainty about the new curriculum (Mean=3.58, Standard deviation = 1.199 respectively). In addition, teachers agreed that parents did not clearly understand CBC (Mean=3.68, Standard deviation = 1.240 respectively).

Table 2: Transition

Statement	Teachers		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev
The transition from 8-4-4 to CBC has been a long and drawn-out process	497	3.53	1.508
Transition has been hampered by a number of challenges, including a shortage of teachers, textbooks, and learning materials	497	3.74	1.087
Transition is now gaining momentum, with more and more schools implementing the CBC	497	3.61	1.057
The rate of transition could accelerate in the coming year	497	3.87	0.530

Table 2 above shows the transition from 8-4-4 to CBC has been a long and drawn-out process (Mean=3.53, Standard deviation = 1.508 respectively). The teachers also agreed that transition has been hampered by a number of challenges, including a shortage of teachers, textbooks, and learning materials (Mean=3.74, Standard deviation = 1.087 respectively). The teachers in addition agreed transition is now gaining momentum, with more and more schools implementing the CBC (Mean=3.61, Standard deviation = 1.057 respectively). Finally, the teachers agreed that the rate of transition could accelerate in the coming year (Mean=3.87, Standard deviation = 0.530 respectively).

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	157.072 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	134.909	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.761	1	.005
N of Valid Cases	497		

Table 3 shows the chi-square statistics used to examine the association between the emerging issues and transition from 8.4.4 to CBC Education in Kenya. There is a significant association at 5% significance level between the variables of emerging issues and transition by the teachers' respondents ($\chi^2 = 157.072$, $df = 9$, $p = 0.00$). Hence the null hypothesis that stated that; there is no statistically significant influence of emerging issues on transition from 8.4.4 to CBC Education in Kenya was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that there is statistically significant influence of emerging issues on transition from 8.4.4 to CBC Education in Kenya.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The transitional period in Kenya's education system from the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2003 to the revised Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2019 has presented emerging issues that require careful consideration and strategic solutions to ensure quality education for all. The study findings revealed that lack of resources (for example textbooks, computers, and teachers) was one of the emerging issues in transition from 8-4-4 to CBC. Further the findings reveal that there is lack of training for teachers on the new curriculum. Also, the findings reveal that there was inadequate

infrastructure (for example classrooms, laboratories) was still a challenge for the transition. In addition, the findings reveal that there is negative attitude towards the new curriculum among teachers and parents. On the other hand, the study revealed that there is confusion and uncertainty about the new curriculum. Finally, the parents did not clearly understand CBC. The findings above concur with Ohba and Malenya (2022) who found that the major challenges faced by transition to CBC were lack of clear educational policies for effective implementation of the CBC curriculum. Lack of validity and reliability of learners' scores. Lack of ICT infrastructure. Inadequate training of teachers on the use of CBC. Large class sizes. Inadequate learning facilities. Shortage of teachers. Negative attitude among stakeholders. Standardizing the mechanisms in which competencies or skills are assessed.

To address these challenges, stakeholders need to demonstrate an uncompromising commitment to excellence, provide adequate training for teachers, standardize the mechanisms for assessing competencies, and provide adequate learning facilities and infrastructure. Additionally, stakeholders need to work together to ensure the successful implementation of CBC (Tharaka, 2022). Transitioning between two different curricula requires systemic changes not just within schools but also across government agencies responsible for ensuring smooth progression between various levels of study. Therefore, developing effective strategies for managing this transition phase will be essential if stakeholders want learners' academic performance not adversely affected by disruptions caused by shifts from one curriculum model or another.

In conclusion, the transition from 8.4.4 to CBC has brought about various emerging issues in education in Kenya. There have been both positive and negative impacts of this shift on learners, teachers, and other stakeholders in the education sector. It is evident that while CBC has introduced learner-centered approaches that enhance creativity and critical thinking skills among learners, there are still challenges faced by teachers who lack adequate training resources. Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure remains a significant hindrance to effective implementation of CBC across all levels of education in Kenya. Thus, the government needs to invest more funds towards building educational facilities that will support teaching methodologies under CBC. Undoubtedly, much work remains to be done before the full potential benefits of CBC can be realized in Kenyan schools.

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Appendix. Questionnaires

Emerging issues

Question	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Lack of resources (for example textbooks, computers, teachers)					
2. Lack of training for teachers on the new curriculum					
3. Inadequate infrastructure (for example classrooms, laboratories)					
4. Negative attitude towards the new curriculum among teachers and parents					
5. Confusion and uncertainty about the new curriculum					
6. Parents' understanding of CBC					

Transition

Question	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. The transition from 8-4-4 to CBC has been a long and drawn-out process					
8. Transition has been hampered by a number of challenges, including a shortage of teachers, textbooks, and learning materials					
9. Transition is now gaining momentum, with more and more schools implementing the CBC					
10. The rate of transition could accelerate in the coming years					

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