

Research Article

Teachers' Perception on Implementing the Revised Lower Secondary Curriculum in Selected Schools in Uganda: A Focus on Emerging Issues and Coping Strategies

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Abstract: This study explored teachers' perception on the implementation of Competency-based Curriculum (CBC) in lower secondary schools in Uganda that was rolled out in 2020. The shift from the Knowledge-Based Curriculum (KBC) to CBC caused a cultural shock to those who had been nurtured in a purely teacher-centred curriculum! Teachers got challenged over their authority and autonomy in the delivery of instruction. Discussion was centred on teachers' readiness to implement; pedagogical competences to plan, facilitate and assess CBC. In this phenomenological study, data was collected from 12 randomly selected secondary schools in urban, semi-urban and rural areas of Uganda. The population comprised teachers of Lower Secondary, Directors of Studies and Headteachers. Data was analyzed qualitatively through codes and themes and reported thematically, backed with verbatim quotations and statements from participants. Majority of the teachers were struggling with gaps in planning and content delivery, CBC stimulated hands-on-learning, teachers' preparedness was considerably low due to lack of prior training, ICT integration was still an uphill task, majority of teachers were still stuck to traditional methodologies. CBC is too demanding and ambitious! NCDC should, therefore, design retooling packages for continuous capacity building, schools should promote peer mentorship, collaboration and Network initiatives.

Keywords: perception; curriculum-change; revised lower secondary curriculum; competency-based curriculum

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1. Introduction

All countries across the globe, are competitively journeying towards the direction of Quality Education. The only difference is the fact that some countries are definitely ahead of their counterparts. For the 193 member countries under the United Nations, this arrangement is anchored on the preparation for sustainable development 2030 Agenda (UNESCO, 2014). Promoting quality education worldwide is an important goal which cannot be underestimated in as far as improving lives of people is concerned (Chinapah et al., 2013). It is through quality education that knowledge and skills in the workforce can be acquired to break the cycle of poverty and live desirably. Among other countries which are globally considered to accord first priority to quality education is Finland, in that, access to high quality education by all children is their cardinal target, coupled with provision of desirable working conditions to the teachers (Federick, 2020). In an initiative to borrow a leaf, Japan, Canada, South Korea and Singapore are also competitively meaning well in terms of quality education provisions to their citizens.

Similarly, a country like South Africa which used to be characterized with crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teachers, has also since 1994, exerted a

lot of weight on quality education with a focus on a national qualification framework, focusing on improving the teaching of Mathematics, and Science as well as the promotion of food, nutrition programs to poor secondary schools, alongside South Africa's number one priority to promote Early Childhood Development (Department of Education, 2010).

According to Uwezo (2017), Tanzania has also recently come up with a lot of concern to raise the standards of science subjects, particularly in their junior secondary schools, after being challenged by the results of the Uwezo annual reports in the previous five years ago. In Uganda, the ongoing transformation to achieve quality education is also in line with the fulfillment of Uganda Vision 2040 and SDG number 4, target 4c (MoES, 2019). Uganda has finally revised the lower secondary school curriculum into competency-based, targeting skills that are sought by employers and which unlock the students' world of work. The RLSC in Uganda focuses on four key learning outcomes, namely; Self-assured individuals, Patriotic citizens, Lifelong learners and Positive contributors to society (NCDC, 2019). Given that in the promotion of quality education, teachers play a pivotal role because they are always at the steering. As a result, Uganda has for that matter, come up with a significant paradigm-shift to aggressively revise the lowest qualification of a teacher to a Bachelor's Degree, come 2029 (MoES, 2019).

1.1 Contextual background

National Curriculum Development Centre (2019) makes reference to UNESCO Education Strategy (2014-2021) whose advocacy is for a humanistic and holistic vision of education as a fundamental human right that is essential to personal and socio-economic development. The recommendation of UNESCO is therefore, to promote societies that are just, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable by 2030. Relatedly, the Uganda Vision 2040 aims to transform Uganda into a modern and prosperous nation. However, the NDP recognises the existing weaknesses in education, including the low efficiency and variable quality at the secondary level and yet, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 advocates for inclusive and quality education. Consequently, a review was conducted on the lower secondary curriculum in Uganda, basing on the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2017 -2020 (MoES, 2017) which set out strategies to improve the quality and relevance of secondary education in Uganda.

As a result, the review focused on: producing a secondary school graduate who has the competences that are required in the 21st century; promoting values and attitudes; effective learning and acquisition of skills in order to reduce unemployment among school graduates. The review also aimed at reducing the content overload and contact hours in the classroom so as to create time for research, project work; talent development and creativity; allowing for emerging fields of knowledge across all learning areas and doing away with outdated information, and changing the trend of concentration from the cognitive domain to holistic development (NCDC, 2019). Consequently, the current reviewed lower secondary school curriculum in Uganda focuses on specific learning outcomes which include making the graduates lifelong learners, positive contributors to society through practical and production skills, responsible and patriotic citizens (MoES, 2019).

In the CBC content, emphasis is on what a learner can do instead of what a learner is required to merely know. It is therefore, the ability of the learner to translate knowledge into action through practical means. The focus is on problem-solving, critical thinking and creative thinking skills which are generated through practical activities such as drawing, writing, grouping, measuring, playing situational games, conducting projects, participating in co-curricular activities and taking turns.

1.2 Conceptual Background

In this study, the RLSC from subject-based into a learner-centred curriculum (NCDC, 2019) is being referred to as CBC. A CBC emphasizes what learners are expected to do rather than what they are expected to know in order to be competitive in the job market (Tumuheise et al., 2023). Competency-Based Curriculum Pedagogy (CBCP) therefore, refers to the level of pedagogical experience or knowledge or competence employed by a teacher in implementing the CBC. Pedagogical competences refer to the minimum professional standards, often specified by law, which should raise a person in fulfilling a particular role of the teaching profession (Suciu & Mata, 2011).

In the study conducted by (Wambi, 2021), pedagogical competences encompass various aspects, including the teacher's methodological knowledge (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) utilized to effectively deliver subject matter to students. This includes, but not limited to, engaging learners in lessons, employing positive reinforcement, implementing appropriate groupings,

facilitating participatory plenary sessions, organizing task-oriented activities, fostering productive discussions, and providing constructive feedback to students. Additionally, pedagogical competencies encompass classroom management skills such as maintaining control over the class, demonstrating awareness of students' needs, mastering students' names, offering individualized support, and addressing the requirements of special needs learners. Communication skills are also considered, encompassing elements such as audibility, voice modulation, facial expressions, eye contact, body language, comprehension, interpretation, articulation, and fluency (Suciu & Mata, 2011).

Moreover, within a CBC framework, pedagogy extends to the utilization of a diverse array of approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques conducive to the learning needs of young learners. These may include eclectic approaches, phonic methods, oral drills, listening and speaking activities, visual recognition methods, teacher-led demonstrations, collaborative learning activities, situational games, panel discussions, expert interviews, dialogues, guided discovery exercises, storytelling, think-pair-share activities, role-playing, and dramatization (Wambi, 2021). It is emphasized that the pedagogical competence recommended in a CBC should prioritize placing the learner at the core of the learning process, thus emphasizing learner-centered methodologies (Hartini et al., 2018).

In a related development, in Kenya, Owala (2021) makes special reference to (Mulenga & Malambo, 2019) who observe that, the fast and complex changing world coupled with dynamic technological advancements and great need for skilled manpower in the labour market within an ever-growing world economy has brought new challenges and new requirements in the education sector, thence, the need for a CBC.

In addition, Competency-Based Assessment typically adopts a Scenario-Based approach, which is a prevalent trend among systems implementing CBC. It calls for continuous assessment which requires a lot of time of the teacher to learners in the spirit of individual assistance. The most crucial challenge for example, in Kenya is large class sizes which complicate the aspect of individual assistance and follow up to individual learners. In this same direction, in the study of Owala (2021) it was reported, large class sizes, which are classes that have more than the optimum number recommended by government which pose a challenge to the implementation of the CBC in Kenya and arise due to the policies of provision of access to education and free primary education/free secondary education. In the CBC, there is focus on each individual learner and if the learners are many it is very difficult to have individualised attention to the learners (Amunga et al., 2020). With these high enrolments coupled with understaffing in schools, the teachers find it difficult to teach classes which at times they handle alone and teach all the nine subjects in a class; a situation which consequently make scenario-based continuous assessment difficult. The gap between the study which was conducted in Kenya and this current one in Uganda is that this study goes ahead to address coping strategies to emerging issues.

1.3 Theoretical Background

Vygotsky's Social Constructivism theory was adopted to underpin this study. This theory was found relevant to the study of CBC on grounds that learners are not passive recipients of knowledge but construct their own knowledge and the teacher is but a facilitator (Tumuheise et al., 2023). The theory places the learner at the centre of learning and the teacher (facilitator) provides assistance and guidance as the learner takes an active position in the creation and practical application of knowledge. Based on the concept that learners are creators of new knowledge, the theory exerts its weight on the idea that learning takes place through social interaction and the assistance of others [peers] is critical. The relationship between Social Constructivism theory and this study is that NCDC in Uganda reviewed the teacher-centred curriculum into CBC focusing on the idea that the teacher's role is not to be a monopoly of knowledge but to help learners construct and build their own knowledge, oversee the learning process, mediate, prompt, help and create a collaborative environment for meaningful learning.

Aims and Research Questions

The study was aimed at establishing teachers' preparedness in implementing the RLSC. Three Research questions were employed to guide the study as follows:

- (1). To what extent is the CBC implemented in the lower secondary classes in the schools under study?
- (2). What CBC implementation methodologies are employed in the lower secondary classes?
- (3). What Challenges are associated with assessment of CBC?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Implementation of CBC in lower secondary classes

Implementation of a CBC is not a new undertaking in the world because many countries are already in their advanced stages of the same initiative globally. For example, Finland is already at the pitch of implementing the 21st century competences in all schools and teacher education departments through a well-designed national core curriculum at both local and national level (Tiago, 2023). What seems to make a unique difference in Uganda is that the implementers (teachers) of the CBC in countries like Finland, Japan, Germany, Singapore, China and Canada are given number one priority and attention in terms of facilitation and recognition. The major gap in Tiago (2023)'s assertions is that teachers' experience in the implementation of the CBC in Finland is not reported on, thereby, making it imperative to conduct this study in the context of Uganda to explore the perception of the teachers who are implementing the revised lower secondary (competency-based) curriculum.

Relatedly, Nigeria puts much weight on the Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) whose curriculum development is based on occupational standards. In Nigeria, the major concern is to solve the challenge of skills mismatch. On that note, before curriculum is developed, institutions/bodies concerned with its design and development first consult with industry and the business world to put into serious consideration the cause to the prevailing unemployment as a public outcry which must be addressed. Under that arrangement, a specification lays down the Level, Quality and Scope of the performance that must be achieved by the learner. The Standards set out in the Learning Unit Specification must also reflect national standards of achievement which ought to be appropriate to the target group (Ayonmike et al., 2014).

Additionally, Nigeria's deliberate adoption of CBET system is an initiative to respond to the challenge of youth unemployment and an effort that would improve quality and relevance of Technical and Vocational Education because of the numerous benefits. Furthermore, CBET is believed to enable employees not only to increase their knowledge and skills at the workplace but also to gain nationally accredited certificates for workplace-based learning (Ayonmike et al., 2014; Deissinger & Hellwig, 2011). The only gap however, the entire arrangement of CBET in Nigeria is silent about teachers' perception, thereby, making this current study very necessary particularly in Uganda at such a time when the implementation of CBC is at its pitch.

In a related development, Kenya's approach to the implementation of a CBC was unique in that special arrangements were made by Kenyan government to provide utmost support to their teachers. The Kenyan government in close partnership with Finland, the University of Helsinki and the University of Nairobi under the coordination of Professor Seija Karpinnen from the faculty of educational sciences, at the University of Helsinki was employed to train the teachers of Kenya on the implementation of the CBC and application of the learner-centred approach (Karpinnen & Wanjala, 2020). The gap identified in Kenya's arrangement however, is that teachers' perception on the implementation of the CBC is not clearly shared, also, the study was conducted in Kenya, hence, making this current study deemed necessary in Uganda's context in the lower secondary classes.

2.2 CBC implementation Methodologies in lower secondary classes

Otukile-Mongwaketse (2018) conducted a related study on selected secondary schools in Botswana and his study findings reported majority of the teachers using teacher-centred methods of teaching. In his explanation, Otukile-Mongwaketse commented that the teacher-centred approach is sometimes paraphrased to be the "Sage on the Stage" style because the teacher is considered as the champion who ensures that concepts flow from a more knowledgeable to either the ignorant or less knowledgeable individual. For that matter, therefore, since the learners are at the receiving end, the arrangement is always through direct instruction. This kind of arrangement places the learners to be perceived as, "empty vessels!" The learners' major role is listening in and absorbing information as much as possible. The teacher-centred approach encourages the mentality of 'Jug-mag' in that the teacher is considered to be the jug to fill the small mugs! However, in the context of Uganda, NCDC (2019) recommended the Learner-centred methodologies to be employed in the implementation of the CBC, thereby, making this study relevant.

Nevertheless, the same study reported that for a few teachers who employed the learner-centred pedagogy, learners proved to be the primary, unique and central agents of learning. Consequently, the learning engagements were very lively, interactive and productive as

opposed to teacher-centred methodologies and mindsets which tended to view learners as passive recipients of knowledge. In summary, the gaps in Otukile-Mongwaketse's study however, were based on the fact that it was conducted in Botswana and the study findings do not clearly indicate that teachers were implementing a CBC, hence, making this current study imperative in the Ugandan context.

Furthermore, a similar arrangement is also in Nigeria's CBET almost the way it is in Botswana but what makes a difference from the arrangement of CBC in Uganda is that in Nigeria, specific methods of teaching are specified and teachers are deliberately trained on how to employ those methods in the implantation of the CBET. The specified methods of teaching and learning include; Discussion method, Small Group method, Problem-solving method and Research method among those that are key and the implementers (teachers) first undergo special training to gain the required pedagogical experience as a way of building their capacity (Anane, 2013).

2.3 Challenges associated with assessment of a CBC

In a study on the successes and challenges of implementing the CBC in Kenya, Owala (2021) asserts that Kenya implemented the CBC in 2016 to help her citizens obtain appropriate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through education with a focus on providing learners with the ability to obtain, improve and use knowledge, values and attitudes which would then lead to the use of skills acquired (Mulenga & Malambo, 2019). However, inadequate learning and teaching materials as well as inadequate quality textbooks were identified as very serious impasses affecting the implementation of the CBC in Kenya. In agreement, (Akala, 2021) emphasizes that there have been gaps during the preparations of books and also delays in the publication of books and sometimes it is not easy to get particular books for a certain class and this has worked negatively on the implementation of this curriculum as it frustrates both learners and teachers who are in dire need for such materials. The main gap in Owala's (2021) study is that his study was in the Kenyan system whose implementation of CBC runs from ECCE to advanced levels of learning whereas, in Uganda, it currently ends at lower secondary classes, thence, making this study relevant.

Similarly, in an effort to ensure quality education in the secondary schools of Rwanda, the government facilitated the paradigm shift from the knowledge-Based Curriculum (KBC) to the CBC since 2016. The major challenge reported however, was that after a period of time, it was discovered that much as the CBC was reported to be desirable in terms of practicability, well organized with well-designed learning activities, the CBC in Rwanda is still overloaded just like the former KBC, a situation which poses a challenge to the implementers (Ndihokubwayo & Habiyaremye, 2018). The identified gap in the study was that it was conducted in the context of Rwanda not in the context of secondary schools in Uganda as per the arrangement of this current study, hence, making this study imperative.

In a related development, following the growing public outcry regarding the pseudo-baked graduates from primary teachers' colleges in Uganda, a deliberate study was conducted to establish the cause. Teacher Educators in primary teachers' colleges were investigated and results indicated that majority were stuck to the traditional methods of teaching contrary to the methods recommended in the implementation of the Primary Teacher Education Curriculum (Wambi, 2021; Kagoda & Ezati, 2013). The gap in Kagoda and Ezati's (2013) study was that it was carried out on tutors not teachers of lower secondary classes, thence, making this current study necessary.

Teachers have failed to acknowledge that the CBC is easier to implement than the KBC. Relatedly, (Mabonga, 2021) conducted a study almost similar to that of Kagoda and Ezati. In Mabonga's study on thematic curriculum which is also competency-based in the lower primary classes of Uganda, issues of methodologies, were reported on that teachers referred to CBC as tiresome and problematic in terms of preparation and instructional materials' development! That kind of attitude grossly affects their efforts towards implementing the intended curriculum. What they have not known yet, is that the CBC is much easier than the KBC in terms of implementation, since CBC places a learner at the centre of the learning arena. They are still interested in old approaches, and some prefer to retain the same teaching materials from previous years rather than adopting them to the new methodologies. What makes a difference between Mabonga's research study from this current one is that whereas that of Mabonga was in primary section and specifically on thematic curriculum, this study is on the RLSC, thus, making this study relevant.

3. Materials and Methods

The study adopted a Phenomenological research design with qualitative data collection methods and analysis. Phenomenological research designs are useful in understanding a phenomenon's universal nature by exploring the views of those who have experienced it. In addition, it illuminates the specific to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a given situation (Moustakas, 1994). In other words, with phenomenological studies, lived experience is critical (Smith, 2017).

Table 1. Composition of participants, sampling techniques and methods

No	Category	Number (N)	Sampling technique	Data Collection method		
1.	Headteacher	12	Purposive	Key Informant interviews		
2.	Directors of Studies	12	Purposive	Focus (Zoom)	Group	Discussion
3.	Teachers	48	Random Sampling	Focus (Blended)	Group	Discussion
Total		72				

Source: (Primary Data, July, 2023)

As indicated in Table 1, a total sample of 72 participants were selected to include; 12 headteachers, 12 Directors of Studies and 48 teachers from all the participating secondary schools. Headteachers and Directors of studies were purposively selected whereas, teachers were randomly sampled. Informant Interviews were used to gather information from headteachers whereas focus group discussions (FGDs) were employed to collect information from both Directors of Studies and Teachers.

Data for this study was drawn from both school administrators (head teachers and directors of studies) and teachers who had been in -service for a minimum of five years. Teachers with five years working experience were preferred for this study because they had facilitated learning in both curricula (KBC and CBC). Specifically, they had at least facilitated KBC for two years prior to Uganda's roll out of the CBC in lower secondary education. Headteachers were purposively selected because they possessed the right attributes that qualified them to provide relevant information on the problem under investigation since they were the topmost supervisors and chief finance officers who sanction budgets/ requisitions as regards resources needed for successful implementation of innovations at school level.

Consequently, Headteachers being busy people who could not be easily found in one place at a time, informant interviews were found convenient to apply and obtain the required information from them. On that note, 12 interview schedules were organized for the Headteachers. In addition, Directors of studies were also purposively selected because of their direct involvement in the management of academic affairs in schools. They supervise heads of department and subject teachers in their respective schools in Uganda. We therefore, needed to get their perception in adopting CBC in Uganda's secondary schools. They were considered key in successful adoption of innovations. We, therefore, needed to allow them share their experiences in adopting CBC in Uganda's secondary schools.

Consequently, 12 Directors of Studies, therefore, were selected to provide firsthand information about the topic under study, give their account of what teachers and secondary schools go through as they adopt and adjust to the CBC requirements in Uganda. Given that teachers were many in number, it was prudent to select them using systematic random sampling by use of the departmental lists in order to increase opportunities for their participation and also avoid bias. Consequently, 48 subject teachers were selected to participate in the study by the help of departmental lists which helped in the inclusion for different subject areas to be taken care of. Given that most teachers possessed smart phones, it was convenient to employ an on-line interaction in form of FGD because their schools were clustered in catchments of rural, semi-urban and urban respectively, therefore, the FGDs also followed that arrangement accordingly in order to generate relevant data from the participants. FGDs also saved on time and unnecessary expenses in terms of transport and other costs. Care was taken to ensure subject representation from humanities, sciences and vocational departments.

In addition, in the selection of schools also, careful consideration was put on urban, semi-urban and rural for purposes of balancing opportunities for obtaining participants' data regarding their experience and perception as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. Selection of participants according to location of the participating schools

S/n	Schools by location	No. of Headteachers & their school pseudo IDs					No. of Directors of studies & their school pseudo IDs					No. of teachers & their school pseudo IDs					Total
01	Urban	4	A	B	C	D	4	A	B	C	D	12	A	B	C	D	
02	Semi-urban	4	A	B	C	D	4	A	B	C	D	12	A	B	C	D	
03	Rural	4	A	B	C	D	4	A	B	C	D	12	A	B	C	D	
	Grand total	12					12					48					72

Source: Primary Data, July 2023

Miles and Heberman (1994), posit that valid analysis is immensely aided by data displays that are focused enough to permit viewing a full data set in one location and are systematically arranged around the research question. In this study, the transcribed data were organized based on the research questions which made it easier to identify words and phrases that frequently emerged from the responses to each question by participants. These recurring ideas were later translated into themes that link participants with their settings during the analysis.

In all situations during the study, ethical issues were addressed by seeking consent from the participants before data collection and protecting the identity of institutions and participants by use of pseudonyms. To further increase the validity of the data, immediate feedback was received from participants after approving their transcribed interview reports.

4. Results

The results of the study were also presented following the specific objects and research questions respectively:

4.1 Implementation of CBC in lower secondary classes

The first specific objective aimed at establishing the extent to which teachers of lower secondary classes implemented the CBC in the selected schools. For purposes of generating responses from the subject teachers, the following research question was posed, “To what extent are you implementing the RLSC in your school?”

Following the frequently provided responses from the Headteachers, from a general perspective, majority indicated that the CBC was being implemented in their schools but to a smaller extent contrary to the expectations of the ministry of education and Sports as well as that of the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), given the time it had existed since it was rolled out nationally in 2020. Data from the Headteachers, therefore, implied that the current situation on ground could not meet national expectations! Through the researchers’ direct interaction with the Headteachers, on that matter, it was discovered that CBC implementation is undergoing a lot of back and forth in the lower secondary classes. Generally, by the time this study was conducted, majority of the schools were still struggling to measure to the expected level of implementation of the CBC by the desired national standards.

During further interactions at individual level, a headteacher from school ‘B’ (see Table 2) in a semi-urban location explained that one teacher from a popular school was invited to support the staff, particularly on how to handle the science related subjects which required a lot of practical experiments. Fortunately, the facilitator turned up and provided the expected support. For the rest of the subject areas, the school encouraged the subject teachers to read the available documents from the NCDC and try to interpret them as they teach. In the subsequent engagements with the same Headteacher, more pertinent information was provided as indicated in the following quotation:

...for subjects like Biology, Physics, Agriculture and Chemistry which demand much practical work we are encouraging the teachers and learners to improvise. We also sometimes request parents to make some contributions to purchase the chemicals and other equipment to ensure that the practical work as specified in the syllabi is conducted depending on the response from the parents. The arts related subjects which also demand a lot of instructional materials teachers and learners are advised to utilize the local environment as much as possible... (Informant interview with a, Headteacher of school B in a semi-urban location, July, 2023).

Basing on the verbatim statement of the Headteacher from school B, it implied that the

implementation of the RLSC turned out to be dependent on the creativity of the Headteacher, teachers, learners and support from the parents as opposed to the general assumption of the nation.

Without ignoring the perception of the minority, the researchers discovered that the only schools which were somehow comfortable with the implementation of the CBC, were mainly those that charged parents/guardians/students very high tuition. The general claim was that CBC was so demanding that the financial weight had to rest and be balanced on both the school and the concerned stakeholders for improved facilitation and consequently, expected better results. In one of the informant interview sessions, a Headteacher from school D in the urban reported (see Table 2) as quoted:

...some stakeholders always complain that our school charges high tuition and some parents think it is a deliberate effort to punish them, which is not true. What actually compels us to make such demands is the nature of the CBC. If proper implementation is to be realized, adequate facilitation is indeed inevitable most especially on the side of the sciences and vocational subject learning areas including human resources...(Informant interview with a Headteacher from school D, July, 2023).

Following the verbatim statement of the participant, it was very clear that for one to make meaning of the CBC, it was not easy to escape high charges of tuition as the saying goes, 'value for money!' The dilemma, therefore, would remain with those who could not afford to measure to the expectations of such schools and yet, the desire for quality education through proper implementation of the CBC remains a serious demand across the country. This situation was also beginning to water-down the intentions of Universal Secondary Education.

Further still, it was also reported by another Headteacher (see school A in a rural location in Table 2) that for learners with special education needs, practical work of subjects like Biology, Physics and Chemistry (sciences) could not happen, therefore, an alternative in form of General Science is provided for in the RLSC. That is an indication that much as science subjects with practical work may be considered difficult to SNE learners, to a greater extent, in general science, there are specific science related concepts that such learners may not miss on unlike in the former traditional subject-centred curriculum. Such arrangements make the RLSC to be democratic and highly objective in nature. Furthermore, the provision for the electives at both lower secondary and higher secondary level also make the RLSC more flexible to a greater extent than ever before. The RLSC provides a specific grouping of learning areas from which students both at lower secondary and higher secondary level are always able to select their elective subjects.

In a related development, the researchers engaged with Directors of Studies who were considered to be at the frontline of implementing the CBC in the schools under study. The intention was to establish the extent to which the CBC was being implemented in the lower secondary classes. During a FGD session on zoom, the Directors of Studies (DoS) shared a lot of their experience and firsthand information. Majority of the DoS reported that instructions from NCDC to learners in senior 1 & 2, directed them to select only two (2) subjects from the grouping of Electives and add onto the eleven (11) compulsory subjects to make a total of thirteen (13) subjects. In addition, for learners with Special Needs Education, the option to Biology, Physics and Chemistry was General Science because of their inability to do certain practical experiments.

In the subsequent interactions with DoS, it was also reported that among the compulsory subjects in Senior One and Two (S.1 & S.2), a lot of struggle was frequently reported by teachers and learners around science subjects (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Agriculture) and Kiswahili Language in terms of facilities, equipment and competent human resource. In addition, among the elective subjects, Foreign Languages, Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Technology were the least selected by students. This same dilemma was also applicable to learners in Senior three and four (S.3 & S.4). In probing the participants further, it was revealed that such subjects were too demanding in terms of logistics and above all, finding a competent human resource to appropriately handle was also yet another uphill task.

Additionally, NCDC, still instructed learners in senior 3 & 4 to select either two (2) or three (3) subjects from the grouping of Electives and add onto the seven (7) compulsory subjects to make a total of either Nine (9) or Ten (10) subjects. In addition, for learners with Special Needs Education, the option to Biology, Physics and Chemistry was General Science because of their inability to do certain practical experiments to the expectations.

Consequently, during further interactions with the same DoS it was reported that much as learners were supposed to be given freedom to make individual choices for the electives,

individual schools could always limit their freedom depending on the availability of the subject specialized teachers and space occupied by the school coupled with facilities and equipment. One of the Directors of Studies from school A in a rural location (see Table 2) described what was done at their school as indicated in the following quotation:

... it is not practically possible to allow learners make choices of the elective subjects as they feel like, the way it is instructed by the NCDC because if it were done that way, it would turn out to be very expensive for the school. For example, our school is private and it is very costly to pay teachers and yet, even under the circumstance where only one or two learners select a specific elective subject, a hired teacher demands full pay because the amount of time is spent according to the recommended time-table dictated upon by the ministry of education and Sports (MoES). In addition, we cannot allow our students to select elective subjects which are very expensive in terms of space, equipment and facilities, e.g. Agriculture, ICT etc. due to the financial burden associated with such subjects... (FGD session with a Director of Studies from school A (private rural setting), July, 2023)

Following the information in the quotation, it implies that much as NCDC in conjunction with the ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) would have loved the CBC to be implemented uniformly, the conditions at individual school level dictate what is practically possible and what is not, thereby, causing a lot of disparities in the implementation of the CBC to an extent contrary to what is expected at national level.

Similarly, during another zoom FGD session with teachers, a lot of experience was shared purposely to establish the extent to which the RLSC was being implemented in the lower secondary classes in their schools. During the zoom FGD session, teachers shared a lot of shocking experiences regarding science and other practical learning areas. From the general point of view of the teachers, majority reported that the extent to which CBC was being implemented in their schools could not even measure to 50% of what was desired by national standards and expectations! In expressing some of their individual perceptions during the subsequent interactions with the researchers, a submission was made by one of the teachers as indicated in the following quotation captured during a zoom session:

...for ICT, our school is located in a place where electricity is a real dream! Our Headteacher took an initiative to purchase a small solar panel for the sake of those students who had wished to offer ICT but it was stolen the night of the very evening it was installed before the school could start using it! In addition, for subjects like Biology, Chemistry and Physics, our Headteacher took an initiative to negotiate with one of the 'well to do' schools in town to allow our students in a rotational arrangement on specific days to go and use their science laboratories on conditions of paying some little money always contributed by some parents. Unfortunately, not all parents are willing to pay and some of them are totally unable to pay...! (Informant interview session with a teacher from school C in a rural location, July 2023)

The results based on information obtained from the teachers as indicated in the foregoing quotation is very worrying in that for learners whose parents fail to contribute towards the arrangement of conducting experiments of the practical subjects, are totally at a loss! Unfortunately, those practical subjects that require a lot of experiments are compulsory!

Data obtained from Headteachers who headed schools located in the urban areas shared a general perception indicating that CBC was being implemented to an extent much greater than the ones from semi-urban and rural locations. A Headteacher from a school located in the urban (see Table 2) was interviewed on the advantages of the CBC over the traditional subject-based curriculum and the following individual perception was shared as quoted:

...in my personal opinion, a CBC promotes Hands-on-learning, makes a teacher to be more of a facilitator than a monopoly imparter of knowledge, it promotes the application of participatory methods of teaching and learning, it encourages continuous assessment on what a learner can do other than what they merely know, it promotes collaborative and co-operative learning, it is activity-based in nature, it reduces on the pressure of unnecessary competition among learners because it is not all about positions in class but how much and how well an individual learner can perform and achieve in terms of learning attainment. CBC respects individual differences among learners; it takes care of the highly gifted and the time-takers. CBC places the learner at the centre of the learning arena unlike the traditional content-based curriculum which is anchored on the mentality of 'master and novice.' CBC also encourages the use of the local environment and participation of the different stakeholders in contributing to learning. It promotes Active Teaching and Learning (ATL) unlike the traditional-content-based curriculum which treats learners as passive receivers of knowledge... (Informant interview session with a Headteacher from school D in an urban location, July 2023).

Following the statement in the foregoing quotation, the participant shared a personal

perception about CBC in terms of advantages over the traditional subject-based curriculum, giving an impression that for those who were positive to the change, CBC was already providing appropriate answers to the call of Hands-on-learning that the country; Uganda had been in dire need of over the past decades.

4.2 Methodologies employed in the implementation of the RLSC

Through an interaction with a group of teachers during a FGD session, the second research question was posed to them, ‘What methodologies are employed in the implementation of the CBC in the lower secondary school classes?’ In response, teachers started with what was expected of them by national standards. Generally, teachers shared that the new CBC demands for a shift from ‘knowledge transmission mode to a more ‘active-learning’ approach in which learners are challenged to think for themselves, draw conclusions, solve problems and make their own judgments, the recommended approach is learner-centred with a variety of participatory methods and techniques of teaching. On a further analysis of the RLSC, it was discovered that the recommended methods for implementing the ongoing CBC in Uganda included but not limited to: Story telling, Debate, Small Group Discussion, Role Play, Demonstration, Simulation, Dramatization, Research, Excursion, Field trips, Observation, Guided Discovery, Brainstorming, Inquiry, Expert interview (NCDC, 2020).

In addition to the ideal situation of methods recommended by NCDC in the implementation of CBC, data obtained from the teachers indicated mixed feelings about the use of learner-centred methodologies. Almost 60% of the teachers claimed to be using learner-centred methodologies whereas, 40% confessed that given the nature of overcrowded classes coupled with limited time for the nature of activities, teacher-centered methodologies were many times found convenient in implementing the CBC in the schools under study.

For purposes of cross-validation of data, researchers engaged with a Headteacher of school D (see Table 2) located in a semi-urban area to share an experience on the common methods employed by teachers of lower secondary classes in the implementation of the revised curriculum, the participant shared a perception as indicated in the following quotation:

...to be sincere, much as the RLSC is competency-based in nature and it requires learner-centred methodologies, the truth on ground is that teachers are still stuck to the traditional methods of content delivery which they think are convenient, e.g. the commonest being Lecture. Instead of talking in terms of lessons, teachers refer to them as lecturers. When you enter any of the lower secondary classes, the seating arrangement of the learners alone is enough to give you an impression that the most obvious method of teaching-learning is automatically, lecture, question and answer coupled with ‘chalk and talk’...(Informant interview session with a Headteacher from school D in a semi-urban location, July 2023)

Basing on the shared experience of the Headteacher in the foregoing quotation, it is very clear that the ongoing implementation of the RLSC is not being treated in commensurate with the specified pedagogy as recommended in the official curriculum documents from the NCDC. That kind of situation leaves a lot of questions to be desired.

Furthermore, Directors of Studies were engaged on the issue of methodologies and majority reported that teachers were using learner-centred methodologies in implementing the CBC. Consequently, as the discussion went on, a Director of Studies from school C located in the urban (see Table 2) in a FGD session shared a perception which was quoted verbatim:

...following the nature of proposed content and activities specified in the CBC documents, teachers are compelled to employ learner-centered methods of teaching. In addition, for those teachers who have tested the use of learner-centered methodologies, their testimonies are very positive, testifying that such methods are very convenient and so much involving ...(FGD session with a Director of Studies from school C, in July, 2023).

Data obtained from one of the Directors of Studies as indicated in the quotation was positive about the use of learner-centered methods of teaching as an approach being used in implementing the CBC in the schools under study by the time this research was conducted. However, the information sounded like more as an assumption than the reality on ground because it somehow contradicted with data from some of the teachers and Headteachers who shared information about the prevalent use of traditional teacher-centered methods of teaching which were still in existence and in use by some teachers.

Generally, on the positive side, participants who reported to have engaged with learner-centered methodologies in implementing the CBC in the schools under study, estimated at a rate of 5 out of 10, in terms of enhancing student’s critical thinking skills, creative thinking, practical skills’ development and problem-solving skills in comparison with the formerly

revised traditional KBC. At the same time, majority of the teachers perceived the key benefits associated with the use of learner-centered methodologies in the direction of yielding high opportunities of transfer of knowledge and skills to real-life situations, enhancing Active Teaching and Learning (ATL), promoting Hands-on-learning, enriching teachers' and learners' research skills, promoting co-operative learning, peer support, team spirit, promotion of future career opportunities and employable skills. In addition, CBC was perceived as being so engaging to students compared to the formerly revised traditional KBC.

4.3 Challenges associated with assessment in a CBC

In an initiative to generate responses from the participants, a question was posed during a FGD schedule, 'as a subject teacher, how do you perceive your level of preparedness and pedagogical competences as you handle assessment in a CBC?' During the discussion, the researchers kept probing the participants to share a lot of their lived experiences in handling assessment in their specific learning areas and their coping strategies to the ongoing emerging issues which arise during the implementation of CBC. Among the frequently shared experiences majority reported inadequate training provided to subject teachers on scenario-based assessment, difficulty in accessing appropriate resources to assess practical skills most especially in the physical science subjects (Physics, Chemistry & Biology), coupled with assessment of generic skills. As the discussion intensified, one of the teachers from school B (see Table 2) in a FGD session made a statement as quoted:

...the scenario-based assessment which is encouraged in the RLSC is very unclear not only to some of us who conduct it but also to the learners who are assessed and the parents who always demand feedback about the performance of their children. Learners and parents are more interested in marks and scores than descriptive statements. The competition among learners in terms of position in class has gone low as a result of employing the new approach of scenario-based assessment on the performance of learners in lower secondary classes...(FGD schedule with teachers of lower secondary in schedule B, July, 2023).

In view of the verbatim statement made by one of the teachers as quoted above, it is very clear that appreciating the approach of scenario-based assessment which is emphasized in the revised lower secondary CBC is still an uphill venture. Unfortunately, the teachers who would be the ones to stand in for its advocacy, don't show adequate preparedness and readiness to market it to other stakeholders, a situation which leaves the new approach of scenario-based assessment in a real dilemma.

In another development, the researchers continued to interact with teachers of schedule D in schools located in a semi-urban setting to find out their views on issues of Assessment. The researchers begun with moments of comparison of the old traditional subject-based with the revised CBC and how the two match and or differ in terms of assessment. Teachers shared a lot of experience since majority of them had been in the teaching profession for at least not less than five years. Among the ideas shared on assessment, some of them aired out statements which the researchers captured verbatim as indicated in the following quotations:

...assessing Critical Thinking is very challenging because it has a subjective nature and it therefore, possesses a difficult nature of determining a standardized instrument that can accurately be used to measure to reflect an individual's ability to analyze, evaluate and synthesize information as required! In addition, assessing Project Work is also still a hurdle! First and foremost, it is cumbersome to assess all aspects of a given project work comprehensively because of the diversity of skills displayed by learners in the different projects. As if that is not enough, some learners obtain external assistance, thus making the authenticity of the assessment results very tricky... (FGD schedule with teachers of lower secondary in schedule D, July, 2023).

Following the shared experience with teachers on challenges associated with assessment in the CBC of lower secondary, the researchers deemed it necessary to explore different Coping Strategies, the same teachers suggested the following Coping Strategies:- Designing diverse assessment methods, incorporating real-world scenarios in the learning experiences, ensuring clarity in the assessment criteria, providing retooling mechanisms for teachers and examiners for purposes of determining consistence in evaluation etc.

Similarly, the Directors of Studies from rural secondary schools were also interacted with in one of the FGD sessions to provide views on competency-based assessment and had the following to say as quoted:

...given the large classes in most secondary schools, assessment of project work is always challenging. In addition, Project work is at the same time very expensive especially with complex projects in terms of finance and time. In addition, continuous evaluation on the overall ability of learners as demanded by the competence-based assessment is too challenging to implement. It

is also cumbersome for teachers to choose projects with tasks which reflect real-world scenarios. This is what influences authentic assessment. Furthermore, untrained assessors and examiners (teachers) coupled with limited resources and inadequate clear guidelines also compromise the effectiveness of assessment of project work...(FGD schedule with Directors of Studies of lower secondary in rural areas, July, 2023).

Basing on the challenges aired out by the Directors of Studies, a number of coping strategies were shared which included:- the need to develop clear rubrics that outline the expected competences, designing specific CPDs training packages and retooling mechanisms to build the capacity of examiners (teachers), encourage collaboration and team-work for shared responsibility in Assessment, design assessment tools that are real-world responsive, design formative assessment instruments that can be used to track ongoing progress, identify gaps and provide timely feedback. More still, document evidence of competency-based development overtime, showcasing on a holistic view of individual student's abilities.

Majority of the participants from a draw-back point of view reported that teachers' level of preparedness was considerably low as regards effective implementation of the RLSC most especially in schools located in the rural setting. In addition, CBC deprived teachers of their full authority and autonomy during the instructional process. At the same time, CBC was reported to be too demanding in terms of instructional materials and time for preparation before and during the instructional process. Since it demands individual closeness to learners, CBC was challenged by overcrowded/large classes which practically made teachers' initiative to provide individual assistance to learners an uphill task. Furthermore, issues of inadequate funding and delayed release of grants by government coupled with inadequate staffing due to unnecessarily prolonged wage bill, putting the implementation process of CBC to a standstill were reported by mainly school administrators during the informant interview sessions.

Additionally, issues of inadequate support supervision to the implementers and poor monitoring mechanisms coupled with failure to follow up those who implement CBC at class level, inadequate retooling opportunities to teachers and other key stakeholders as well as inadequate provision of relevant instructional resources to the implementing schools were also reported as yet other crucial challenges. At the same time, failure to provide a national platform for teachers (implementers) and other stakeholders to share their implementation experience, pseudo training and poor orientation arrangements to the implementers (teachers), as well as minimal opportunities for the involvement and participation of key stakeholders, e.g. parents and community members in the implementation of the RLSC were also frequently reported. Finally, majority of the participants commented that the expectations and objectives of NCDC regarding the learning outcomes of the RLSC were too ambitious and unrealistic given the underfunding of schools by government.

Perceived Coping Strategies to the immersing issues during the implementation of the CBC in the schools under study:

Majority of the participants shared their coping strategies as follows:- Administering scenario-based assessment activities to pairs and small groups of learners instead of to individuals due to large classes and time constraints was reported as one of the workable coping strategies in the schools where the study was conducted. In addition, for stakeholders who found it hard to appreciate the narrative /descriptive learners' assessment feedback, a provision for scores and teachers' remarks were indicated on the student's report card or assessment report. Additionally, joint preparation to develop relevant instructional materials, construct schemes of work, lesson notes and preparation of lesson plans by teachers. At the same time, initiatives were made in borrowing and returning materials that were found at certain schools but missing at others. More still, majority of the teachers reported that team-teaching was found to be a powerful arrangement in which teachers built their confidence and support to one another. Finally, collaborating with schools that possessed well equipped science and ICT laboratories to provide opportunities to learners whose schools missed such facilities was practiced as a coping strategy through local arrangements and mutual basis. Consequently, the same coping strategy was found true with space, facilities and equipment for Physical Education lessons.

Perceived Lessons Learnt basing on the implementation of the CBC:

Majority of the Headteachers shared a general experience on CBC that; What students were able to do was always found better than what they were able to know and memorise, Team-work, networking, collaboration and peer support were indicative of successful implementation of the RLSC. In addition, Scaled-down CPDs, seminars, workshops and conferences at subject-area, departmental and school-based levels were observed as crucial

aspects in retooling teachers' capacity to effective implementation of the RLSC. Furthermore, teacher's competence and expertise in a specific subject area coupled with positive attitude had a strong bearing on effective implementation of the RLSC. Generally, Bottom-Top coping strategies to curriculum implementation in CBC emerging issues were crucial and more applicable than the Top-Bottom strategies.

5. Discussion

The findings of the study were discussed in this section following the specific objectives as indicated in the subsequent paragraphs.

5.1 Implementation of CBC in lower secondary classes

According to the key findings, it was established that due to the inadequate training of teachers, the RLSC implementation had gaps in that whereas, some teachers (implementers) had been fairly empowered to confidently and ably implement the revised RLSC, some teachers were not able to access proper training on how to go about its implementation! In other words, some teachers were struggling! In such situations, some schools took the initiative to hire experts to provide support to their teachers along local arrangements. On the contrary, what makes a unique difference is that the implementers (teachers) of the CBC in countries like Finland, Japan, Germany, Singapore, China and Canada are given number one priority and attention in terms of training and facilitation (Tiago, 2023). As a matter of fact, it is possible to observe that the implementation of the curriculum depends on how much attention is given by those in top management to the implementers. The implication is that in Uganda, the implementers (teachers) are not given first priority. In addition, the implementation of the RLSC is not uniformly done. It is also possible to imagine that the entire process of curriculum design and development may be very successful but may unfortunately get finally strangled and it collapses into the hands of the implementers (teacher) whose orientation or induction on the change is inadequate!

By policy, all schools in Uganda whether public or private, the RLSC is supposed to be implemented. No single secondary school under whatever circumstance is supposed to continue with the former traditional KBC. However, on ground, the truth of the matter is that whereas CBC's implementation is assumed to be at its pitch in all schools, the study findings reported a good number of existing struggling schools and teachers who were found with mixed feelings and serious implementation gaps. The extent to which such schools were performing was very low. The situation reported in this study is very contrary to what takes place in countries like Finland where CBC is already at the pitch of its implementation in commensurate with the 21st century competences in all schools and teacher education departments through a well-designed national core curriculum at both local and national level (Tiago, 2023), making the gap between Uganda's system and that of Finland very wide, a scenario which may be attributed to the degree of attention accorded to curriculum by the state.

5.2 Methodologies employed in the implementation of the RLSC

Much as Ministry of Education recommends learner-centred methods of teaching in the implementation of the RLSC which include: - Story telling, Debate, Small Group Discussion, Role Play, Demonstration, Simulation, Dramatization, Research, Excursion, Field trips, Observation, Guided Discovery, Brainstorming, Inquiry, Expert interview (NCDC, 2020), majority of the teachers in the schools under study reported that such methods were time consuming, most especially in dealing with large classes. This gives an impression that majority of teachers are still stuck on employing the traditional methods of teaching which deprive the learners of their power of authority and ownership of the subject-matter according to the tenets of the RLSC (NCDC, 2020). The findings of this study are very similar to what Kagoda and Ezati (2013) reported on the area of pedagogy which was also consequently reported on by regarding teachers getting stuck to traditional methods of content delivery. It is therefore, possible to attribute such teachers' practice to either attitude or training but more on training (Mabonga, 2021).

Relatedly, a related study was conducted by Otukile-Mongwaketse (2018), on selected secondary schools in Botswana and his study findings reported majority of the teachers using teacher-centred methods of teaching. In his explanation, Otukile-Mongwaketse commented that the teacher-centred approach is sometimes paraphrased to be the "Sage on the Stage" style because the teacher is considered as the champion who ensures that concepts flow from a more knowledgeable to either the ignorant or less knowledgeable individual(s). Similarly, in

Uganda, since majority of the current teachers were nurtured in a purely KBC implemented through teacher-centred approaches, a lot of training and patience may be required to achieve the expected outcomes of the CBC in lower secondary classes. On that note, therefore, concerted effort is required to ensure success of the ongoing paradigm shift in terms of teachers applying the desired pedagogy.

5.3 Challenges associated with assessment in a competence-based curriculum

Among the frequently captured responses of teachers regarding challenges, the point of unpreparedness by teachers due to ill training and pseudo-orientation sessions on the RLSC implementation were reported by majority as the most crucial issue among others. As a matter of fact, some teachers were candid enough to report that whenever they got stuck with the new scenario-based assessment mode, they ended up getting back to the assessment mode of the formerly revised traditional KBC. Just like the situation was reported about CBC in Kenya, teachers in Uganda and particularly in schools where this study was conducted also attributed their difficulties in dealing with the scenario-based assessment to large classes (Owala, 2021, Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2019). Those who conducted this study wondered why some teachers could boast over successful implementation of the RLSC whereas others kept lamenting over the same!

In a competitive situation, individuals always feel good to be rated in comparison with others. Following such a fixed mindset, majority of the teachers, learners and other stakeholders were still so much used to the kind of assessment results which indicated real scores in terms of marks and or percentages coupled with positions in terms of actual performance indicating the first and last position in class, an arrangement that the assessment mode in CBC is opposed to.

General Observation

This study revealed that teachers are the cornerstone of a vibrant and sound education system and their; competencies, work ethics, motivation, expertise are key in guaranteeing quality of learner outcomes. We learned that, educational reforms in any educational system are a continuous process as witnessed from studies conducted in Finland, China, Brazil, Netherlands, Ireland, Norway and Singapore. It is worth noting that, educational systems are living systems, whose internal and external environments are constantly changing and hence, inducing the new demands for reforms in order to have the sector remain competitive and guarantee the desired outcomes. It has emerged that there is a paradigm shift in educational systems with the emergence of digital dynamics from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning, and accordingly the roles of teachers are increasingly shifting from instructions to coaching, facilitating and mentoring. The new roles of teachers require new skills, attitudes and incentives to succeed. The Paradigm shift in education is very critical in Uganda as well; hence the need to rethink on how we train, recruit, deploy and maintain motivated teachers in the education system remains a matter of fact and urgency.

5.4 Recommendations

1. MoES, NCDC and School Managers should provide for adequate training of teachers, an arrangement which is very crucial since they are the key implementers of the curriculum.
2. Resource allocation: Government and School Proprietors should allocate adequate resources including text books, teaching materials, technology equipment/facilities, and infrastructure, to support the implementation of the curriculum. Lack of resources can hinder effective implementation, so it's essential to identify and address resource gaps. This is a very serious responsibility in which even various partners in development should be attracted to provide a supporting arm.
3. Collaboration and support networks: Encouraging collaboration among teachers, both within the school and across different schools, to share experiences, resources and best practices related to the curriculum implementation. Establish support networks, such as mentorship programmes or online forum. This can be spearheaded by school managers and teachers themselves.
4. Flexibility and adaptability: acknowledging that the implementation process may encounter unforeseen challenges and setbacks. Foster a culture of flexibility and modification as necessary. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and make improvements based on feedback and evidence. This is the work of MoES in conjunction with NCDC.
5. Parents and community involvement: School managers and administrators should endeavor to involve and engage parents and the wider community in the curriculum

implementation process. To communicate and engage with parents regularly, keeping them informed about the curriculum changes and clearly defining their roles in supporting their children's education. Seek community partnerships and collaborations to enhance student learning opportunities outside the classroom.

6. Monitoring and evaluation: Ministry officials, Directorate of Education Standards officials together with School Inspectors at various levels should establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the progress of curriculum implementation. They should regularly assess student learning outcomes, gather feedback from teachers and students, and use the data to make informed decisions and improvement.

7. Emotional support: to recognize that the implementation of a new curriculum can be stressful for teachers and students. School administrators and senior staff should provide emotional support to teachers and students, most especially, the junior staff through counselling services, mentoring programs, to help manage stress and build resilience as well as positive attitude among the participating individuals.

8. Celebrate success: School managers and top administrators, should always recognize and celebrate the achievements and milestones of students and teachers throughout the curriculum implementation process. They should also acknowledge the efforts of teachers, students and other stakeholders, and highlight success stories to sustain motivation and enthusiasm.

9. Another recommendation is to ensure that Headteachers and Directors of Studies should encourage subject teachers in their areas of specialization to keep on making corrections of some errors made by the writers and publishers in some of the reference materials. This ensures continuous use of those materials as teachers need them in the teaching-learning process.

6. Conclusions

Since one of the main findings of this study was that majority of the teachers implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in the lower secondary classes in Uganda missed adequate orientation and induction on the current curriculum, it is therefore, hereby concluded that teachers' preparedness is considerably low. On that note therefore, the extent to which CBC is implemented in the lower secondary classes is below the desired national standards and expectations.

In addition, it was also found out that whereas almost half (50%) of the teachers employed learner-centred methods of teaching, it is hereby concluded that another half of the entire population of the teachers is still stuck to the traditional teacher-centred methodologies as opposed to the approaches recommended for the implementation of the CBC.

Furthermore, another main finding of this study indicated that CBC was reported to be too demanding in terms of facilities, equipment, space and human resources. It was also found out that majority of the schools under study were compelled to charge high tuition in order to meet the high demands of the curriculum. It is therefore, hereby concluded that the expenses associated with the implementation of the CBC may consequently challenge the arrangements of Universal Secondary Education, the only opportunity for the financially crippled citizens.

Research Agenda

Other areas which may seriously require further research include:

- (i). Influence of Stakeholders' participation and implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum in selected secondary schools in Uganda.
- (ii). Assessing effectiveness of instructional materials on implementation of CBC in selected secondary schools in Uganda.

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