

## Teacher Preparedness in the Implementation of the Competence-Based Social Studies Learning Area in Junior Secondary Schools in Kenya

Dr. Jeremiah Mulinge Kawinzi (Ph.D.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School Of Education, Department of Department of Educational Administration and Planning, South Eastern Kenya University

### ARTICLE INFORMATION

#### Article history:

Published: May 2026

#### Keywords:

Teacher Preparedness  
 Competence-Based Curriculum  
 Social Studies Learning Area  
 Junior Secondary School

### ABSTRACT

Curriculum change and review are inevitable due to the need to keep the 21<sup>st</sup> learners aligned with the pertinent issues. Kenya is facing the dynamic shift in curriculum from the 8-4-4 system of education to the new system of education curriculum 2-6-3-3-3. The curriculum comes with a couple of challenges which the teachers and educators need to embrace. Social studies is a core learning area in junior secondary schools taught under the current competence-based education curriculum. The study sought to investigate the teacher preparedness in the implementation of the competence-based education system of education. A desktop research design was employed for this study which depended majorly on data from relevant sources related to Competence Based Education. The study majorly focused on teachers' preparedness in the learning area in terms of subject matters, Information Communication Technology and assessment modes. This study found out that junior secondary school teachers are aware of methodologies required in teaching of the competence-based education. However, very little number of these teachers apply the methodologies in teaching the content in Social Studies. This is because the methodologies are time consuming and may not be applied with 4 lessons in a week as allocated by the KICD. The study also concluded that there are very few teachers training in Social studies in junior secondary schools. This is contributed by the mode of recruitment done by the TSC of employing teachers based on the period of stay since graduation and not on balancing subject combination in junior secondary schools. The study also concluded that ICT integration. Moreover, many schools lack ICT tools to be utilized in teaching social studies. The study finally found that despite many teachers being aware of the CBE assessment methods, they do not use them since they are tedious and more involving taking much time. The study made the following recommendations drawn from the conclusions made: The ministry of education should make more effort to ensure in-service training for the junior secondary schools teachers. The government should avail the ICT tools in junior secondary schools to boost ICT integration in teaching and learning. The KICD should consider increasing time allocated in teaching Social Studies in junior secondary schools so as to accommodate the community interaction, projects, field work and academic trips. The government should instill internet connectivity to all junior secondary schools to facilitate ICT teaching. This will also enhance the teachers' preparedness to teach social studies. Teachers in junior secondary schools should be sensitized on the importance of quality assessment of learners and trained on how to make quality rubrics. The Teachers Service Commission should employ teachers based on the teaching area specialization and not based on the period of stay since graduation. The government should give money to schools to maintain the already existing ICT tools in primary schools where junior secondary schools are domiciled.

### 1. Introduction

Globally, education is seen as a means of attaining the possible changes in any given social and economic dynamics in line with Momanyi and rop, (2020) education need to be aligned with the societal emerging trends in order to address the current issues affecting the social, economic and political institutions. Global changes in the field of technology has called upon the need for the integration of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in teaching and learning so as to equip the 21<sup>st</sup> learner with the current skills needed in the labour market (Waweru 2018). Learn-based approach of learning need to be given priority in order to equip the learners with the necessary skills. According to Sifuna and Obonyo (2019) a Competence Based Education is necessary since it develops and nurtures the relevant skills that learners need to be able to compete favorably well in the labour market.

A study in North Zone Peninsular of Malaysia by Jamilah and Siti (2020) on teacher competence in readiness to implement the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in transforming teaching and learning in public secondary schools asserted that there is a robust and positive correlation between teachers competence preparedness in teaching Social Studies and the 21<sup>st</sup> century among teachers. The study also reviewed that the teachers and educators competences in Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) is a significant contributor of the implementation of the CBE particularly in the teaching of the Social studies.

In Multan District in Pakistan, a comparative study was conducted by Nasim, Ali, Javed and Bahoo (2022) in public schools using quantitative survey on perceived teaching competences and found out that the implementation of the competence education largely relied on the integration of the ICT.

In Ghana, Kporyi and Ariko (2021) conducted a study on pedagogical competences of teachers on students' academic performance in junior schools in Ashaiman Municipality. The study found out that there was a significant correlation between teachers' competences and students' academic performance.

Rwehumbiza (2018) did a study on preparedness and implementation of integrated science in public secondary schools in Bukoba District in Tanzania. The study findings revealed that many schools had inadequate resources and soft wares to enable the integration of ICT in teaching the integrated science and the learners were demotivated as well as teachers because of rampant shortage of the teaching resources in form of ICT.

In Kenya, the competence base education was introduced in the year 2015 at the pre-primary schools and two years later it was rolled out at the primary level in the year 2017. Several studies conducted in the past revealed unpreparedness of the teachers in implementing this curriculum. Majorly, in social studies, in both primary and junior schools, many teachers seem not to have had enough preparation to teach this learning area, examine it and the pedagogies of teaching. Prior studies reviewed that many teachers lacked knowledge in subject matter, in-service training, and assessment methods (Nsengimana 2021). Since inception of the CBE, nine years down the line, studies done by (Mwang'ombe, 2021) indicates that there is still a big gap and between what CBE advocate and what is actually being implemented.

### *1.1 Teachers' subject matter content.*

A teacher plays a pivotal role in the implementation of any curriculum. The success of curriculum implementation majorly relies on the adequate well trained teachers Kyule (2017). The teachers are the main implementers of any curriculum and the success of failure of any school curriculum is squarely based on the teachers' effort (Aslam et al. 2016).

In order for the learners to acquire the necessary skill, knowledge and attitude, schools implementing the competence based education need compete educators. According to Chemutai (2020) a competent teacher is the one who is acquainted with learning area content mastery, ability to communicate as well as positive impact on the learners. In Teachers' qualification is given more weight in the developed countries such as Luxembourg where a teacher is subjected to a state examination to ascertain the competences of a teacher in the teaching areas. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization pressed ahead and sponsored a conference in Tanzania a conference was held to equip teachers knowledge and skills of using the available resources to improvise the teaching resources in implementing the competence Based Education in Africa (UNESCO, 2006). A study conducted by Chonjo, (2018) in Tanzania revealed that the implementation of the Competence Based Education was stagnant due to lack of competent teachers. With the implementation of the CBE Social Studies was made compulsory in Kenya leading to the government to employ unqualified teachers to teach Social Studies (Recha, Kyule, and Nkatha, 2024).

### *1.2 Teacher preparedness in the integration of Information Communication Technology*

In line with the ministry of information communication and Technology, ICT need to be integrated in education and training system in order to prepare teachers and learner to compete favorably well in the current world of technology (Cha et al., 2020). It is therefore necessary for the teachers to be equipped with the knowledge in ICT to enable them integrate in teaching of social studies. Ejinkeonye and Usoroh, (2016), ICT is a set of instruments for producing, storing, processing, distributing and exchanging data. According to Kofo and Mercy, (2018), ICT integration is learner-centered. The ICT has tools which help in the facilitation of ICT integration in teaching and learning. These tools includes the use of cellphones, internet, storage devices such as floppy diskettes, DVDs, flash disks, CD ROM, scanner hardware, local networking and video conferencing. Most of the schools do not have ICT tools which can be used in teaching Social Studies. Study done by Muchiri, Rosana & Kiio, 2022 in Kirinyanga County in Kenya reviewed that only 39percent of the teachers use ICT teaching. This is because many teachers don't have knowledge on how to use ICT in teaching.

In the developed countries such as United Kingdom, the government spends 2.5 billion in every financial year to finance ICT integration in teaching and learning (Lawrence and Tar 2018). This is guided by the belief that traditional teaching does not enable learners meet the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. According to Akpabio and Ogiriki (2017) governments in Africa have tried to achieve ICT integration but this have never been achieved in many schools due to lack of technical know-how for the teachers and lack of effective internet connectivity.

According to Nyaboke et al. (2021), in Kenya, many teachers do lack knowledge of ICT integration in teaching social studies in many schools. Since the inset of CBE teaching of Social Studies requires knowledge of ICT to enable and prepare the learners for future career related to technology.

### *1.3 Teacher Preparedness in Mode of Assessment in the CBE*

Assessment is key in teaching and learning as it helps the teacher to ascertain whether the desired teaching and learning objectives have been achieved. Assessment also play a major role of providing the feedback of teaching and learning. It is very crucial for assessing the learners after a given period of time since it gives the feedback as to whether the learners are understanding the taught concepts. Assessment enables the teacher to make judgement as to continue with the syllabus or repeat where the learners did not understand. Further assessment helps the teacher to ascertain whether the set objectives have been achieved. The assessment has been in place in from of summative at the end of each course and was administered by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). At the end of primary school in standard eight, learners were examined using the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) while at the end of secondary education students were subjected to the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) still administered by the KNEC. KCSE grade ranged from A to E. The grade determined the next level of tertiary education. The

ranking of the students based on the performance was highly given weight leading to examination irregularities according to Kaviti (2018)

Formative assessment is given weight in CBE unlike in the 8:4:4 system of education. In CBE assessment in form of Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) and the progressive record is maintained in the KNEC data base which determines the final score at the end of grade nine (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development 2020). In the CBE ranking of schools and learners according to their performance is discouraged in order to avoid examination malpractices. Social studies being a compulsory learning area, teachers are burdened with task of assessing, uploading the progressive results in the KNEC website. Social Studies entails classwork, field projects and CATs. It is therefore of paramount importance to assess the Social Studies teachers' level of preparedness in assessing the learners in the CBE.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

- How are the Social Studies teachers prepared in terms of knowledge of the subject matter content of the Social Studies learning area at junior secondary school in Kenya?
- How are Social Studies teachers prepared for the integration of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching Social Studies at junior secondary school in Kenya?
- How are Social Studies teachers prepared to use mode of the assessment in the competency-based Social Studies at junior secondary school in Kenya?

## 2. Research Methodology

The study adopted a desktop research design. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development documents on CBE which include the necessity of assessment report presented by the presidential national steering committee were used as sources of literature. The literature review was also sourced from information gathered from peer-reviewed journals from various authors related to Social studies competence based education in junior school. The data collected from various relevant sources was analyzed quantitatively.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Teachers' Subject Matter Content

The findings on teacher preparedness in terms of knowledge of subject matter content of Social Studies Learning area in junior schools in Kenya were collected from the previous research studies and other relevant government documents. The gathered information was analyzed in the following main areas: teachers' knowledge in social studies teaching methods, the extent of in-service training of teachers on the implementation of social studies in CBE implementation and mastery of content in social studies by the teachers.

On the teachers' knowledge in Social Studies teaching methods, the study revealed that many teachers are aware of the stipulated teaching methodologies of Social Studies in junior schools (MoE), 2021. These methodologies includes using projects, field work academic trips and classroom teaching. However, the literature reviewed that most of the teachers rarely use these said methodologies in teaching of social studies. This is due to the little number of 4 lessons per week allocated by KICD for teaching of social studies in junior schools (KICD 2017). Therefore this limited time was found that could not accommodate the practicals, field work and field trips.

The study further found that in terms of in service training, most teachers were not exposed to in-service training to equip them with the necessary teaching methodologies in social studies. For instance, a study by Muchiri, 2021 revealed that 87 percent of the teachers had not received in-service training on the teaching methodologies need in the implementation of the CBE. This means that Social studies teachers lack adequate know-how of guiding the learners in acquiring the necessary competences this learning area (Ouma et al., 2021).

A review of literature related on teachers' mastery of subject area contented showed that about 97% of the teachers in junior schools have little mastery of the subject content (Okeyo and Moku, 2023). This is because most of the social studies teachers were trained to teach History and government in senior secondary schools. The teachers were deployed to teach social studies in junior schools and hence challenges of mastery of content of the learning area. Moreover, the government has failed to employ trained teachers to handle the social studies and hence the learning area is being taught by teachers who were trained in other learning areas at the university. The practice of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) employing teachers on the basis of length of stay since graduation and not the need of the teachers has denied the junior schools adequate social studies teachers. Additionally, the competence based education is designed in a way to enable the learners to interact with the community outside the classroom and inclusion of the Key Inquiry Questions (KIQs) to guide learners and specific core competences which learners should acquire in different strands in learning areas (KICD 2024). This is different from the 8:4:4 system which involved list of topics, sub-topics, notes writing which was implemented effectively in classroom learning environment. This study found out that teachers in junior schools have little knowledge of teaching the newly introduced competence based social studies curriculum.

### 3.2 Teacher Preparedness in the Integration of Information Communication Technology in the teaching of the Social Studies in junior secondary school

In line with the KICD (2017) and the ministry of education [MoE] (2021) the teaching in the competence based education requires active use of ICT devices in order to enable the learners master the core competencies. The social studies teachers are required to actively make use of the ICT tools in teaching. The findings of this study revealed that most teachers teaching Social Studies are very much aware of the ICT tools to be used in teaching in junior schools. These ICT tools include the computers, cellphones, tablets, projectors, floppy diskettes, routers and DVDs. A study by Muchiri, Rosana & Kiio (2022) in Kirinyaga County in Kenya revealed that 61% do not use ICT devices in teaching. Moreover, most primary where junior schools are domiciled lack the ICT

devices and in schools where they exist they are poorly maintained and cannot be used in teaching (Karani, 2023). The study also found that very few teachers or non-have received ICT training of training on ICT integration in teaching (Karani, Miriam & Ng'eno, 2022). This led to teachers failing in guiding the learners from sourcing information from the internet and storing of information using computers.

### 3.3 Teacher preparedness in carrying out the mode of assessment in the competency based Social Studies learning area.

On assessment, the study found out that large number of junior school teachers are able to administer summative and formative evaluation to learners and are able to maintain progressive assessment records for summative reporting. However, the Social Studies teachers find it tedious and time consuming to implement the competence based assessment as compared to assessment in the 8:4:4 system of education. With the competence based education a teacher is required to keep tracking the learner competencies throughout the learning process (Momanyi & Rop, 2020). The study also found out that large number of teachers in junior schools have inadequate knowledge in making rubrics in Social Studies. This could be attributed to lack of in-service training on making rubrics. For instance, in recording whether the learner has met expectations, approached expectations or exceeded expectations as indicated in the junior secondary school Social Studies learning area curriculum designs (Ministry of Education [MoE] 2021; Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development 2023; Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2024).

## 4. Conclusions

This study found out that junior secondary school teachers are aware of methodologies required in teaching of the competence based education. However, very little number of these teachers apply the methodologies in teaching the content in Social Studies. This is because the methodologies are time consuming and may not be applied with 4 lessons in a week as allocated by the KICD. The study also concluded that there are very few teachers training in Social studies in junior secondary schools. This is contributed by the mode of recruitment done by the TSC of employing teachers based on the period of stay since gradation and not on balancing subject combination in junior secondary schools. The study also concluded that ICT integration. Moreover, many schools lack ICT tools to be utilized in teaching social studies. The study finally found that despite many teachers being aware of the CBE assessment methods, they do not use them since they are tedious and more involving taking much time.

## 5. Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations drawn from the conclusions made:

- The ministry of education should make more effort to ensure in-service training for the junior schools teachers.
- The government should avail the ICT tools in junior schools to boost ICT integration in teaching and learning.
- The KICD should consider increasing time allocated in teaching Social Studies in junior secondary schools so as to accommodate the community interaction, projects, field work and academic trips.
- The government should instill internet connectivity to all junior secondary schools to facilitate ICT teaching. This will also enhance the teachers' preparedness to teach social studies.
- Teachers in junior secondary schools should be sensitized on the importance of quality assessment of learners and trained on how to make quality rubrics.
- The Teachers Service Commission should employ teachers based on the teaching area specialization and not based on the period of stay since graduation.
- The government should give money to schools to maintain the already existing ICT tools in primary schools where junior secondary schools are domiciled.

## References

- [1] Akpabio, Effiong, and Ivy Bubaraye Ogiriki. 2017. 'Teachers Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Teaching English Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State'. *Equatorial Journal of Education and Curriculum Studies* 2(2):28–3.
- [2] Chemutai, Irene. 2020. 'Influence of School Based Factors on Students' KCSE Performance in Kiswahili in Public Mixed Day Secondary Schools in Nyamira North Sub-County, Kenya'. PhD Thesis, Kisii University.
- [3] Chonjo, Peter N. 2018. 'The Quality of Education in Tanzanian Primary Schools: An Assessment of Physical Facilities and Teaching Learning Materials'. *Utafiti Journal* 1(1).
- [4] Ejinkeonye, Uju Bridget, and Comfort I. Usoroh. 2016. 'Enhancing the Utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) among Home Economics Lecturers in South Eastern Nigeria.' *Journal of Education and Practice* 7(9):34–39.
- [5] Jamilah, S. and Siti, N. I. (2022). Teacher competencies and 21st century skills in transformation schools 2025 (TS2025). *Universal Journal of Education Research*, 8(8), 3536-3544
- [6] Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. 2017. 'Basic Education Framework'.
- [7] Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. 2023. 'Junior Secondary Schools Agriculture and Nutrition Curriculum Designs'.
- [8] Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. 2024. 'Junior Secondary Schools Agriculture and Nutrition Curriculum Designs'.
- [9] KICD. 2016. 'A Needs Assessment Report On Curriculum Change'.
- [10] KICD. 2020. 'Report on Competency Based Curriculum Activities Presented to: The National Steering Committee'.
- [11] Kofo, Soetan Aderonke, and Ominuta Itohan Mercy. 2018. 'Gender Influence on Undergraduates

- [20] 'information Literacy Skills in the Use of Internet Resources for Learning in Kwara State, Nigeria'. *MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences* 6(3):12–19.
- [21] Kporyi, E., and Arko, A. (2021). Pedagogical Competence of Teachers and Students' Academic
- [22] Achievement in Junior High Schools in Ashaiman, Ghana. *Innovare Journal of Education*. 9(3), 2547-5528. DOI:<https://dx.doi.org/10.22159/ijoe.2021v9i3.41313>
- [23] Lawrence, Japhet E., and Usman A. Tar. 2018. 'Factors That Influence Teachers' Adoption and
- [24] Integration of ICT in Teaching/Learning Process'. *Educational Media International* 55(1):79–105.
- [25] Ministry of Education [MoE]. 2021. 'Junior Secondary School Curriculum Designs'.
- [26] Muchiri, Moses, Samsom Rosana, and Ngungui Kiiio. 2022. 'Geographical Teachers' Pedagogical
- [27] Preparedness for the Implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum in Public Secondary Schools in Kirinyanga County, Kenya.' *Journal of Education Research* 12(1):33–40. doi: 10.9790/7388-1201033340.
- [28] Momanyi, John M., and Peter K. Rop. 2020. 'Teacher Preparedness for the Implementation of
- [29] Competency Based Curriculum in Kenya: A Survey of Early Grade Primary School Teachers' in Bomet East Sub-County'. *The Cradle of Knowledge: African Journal of Educational and Social Science Research* 7(1):10–15.
- [30] Mwang'ombe, Alice. 2021. 'Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya: Teachers
- [31] Understanding and Skills, Reality on the Ground, Successes...' Tanzania.
- [32] Nasim, F., Ali, H., Javed, M. L. and Bohoo, R. (2022). A comparative study of the perceived
- [33] Teaching competencies at different school levels. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 10(2), 702-710.
- [34] Nsengimana, Venuste. 2021. 'Implementation of Competence-Based Curriculum in Rwanda'.
- [35] *Rwandan Journal of Education* 5(1):129–38.
- [36] Rwehumbiza, A. M (2018). Preparedness and implementation of compulsory science curriculum
- [37] in secondary schools in Bukoba District Council, Tanzania. Unpublished M. Ed Thesis, Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
- [38] Recha, Robert, Miriam Kyule, and Lydia Nkatha. 2024. 'The Relationship Between Selected
- [39] School Farm Factors and The Acquisition of Agricultural Skills Among Secondary School Students in Malava Sub-County, Kakamega County, Kenya'. *International Journal of Education, Technology and Science* 4(1):1718–35.
- [40] Sifuna, D. N., and M. M. Obonyo. 2019. 'Competency Based Curriculum in Primary Schools in
- [41] Kenya-Prospects and Challenges of Implementation'. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa* 3(7):39–50.
- [42] United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2006. 'International Science and
- [43] Technology'. *Environmental Education Newsletter* 230:150–61.