



**TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PARENTAL SUPPORT FOR
COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BUNGOMA COUNTY, KENYA –
A REVIEW PAPER ON BUNGOMA WEST SUB-COUNTY**

**Simiyu Chililia Pius¹ⁱ,
Kisiang'ani Bahati²**

¹Dr.,

Bomet University College,
Kenya

²University of Nairobi,
Kenya

Abstract:

This review study sought to examine the 21st-century parental support for Competency-Based Curriculum in public primary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. It was specifically based in Bungoma West Sub-County. In recent years, there have been rapid changes in the education system in most countries of the world. This has witnessed and necessitated modern approaches in teaching, learning and school management (Susan Chepkonga *et al.*, 2012). Today, quality education is used as an indicator towards producing qualified human resources and economic development. To achieve this, schools require support and adequate learning resources in terms of ICT tools for digital literacy from parents who are the first teachers to the children (Hedges, H., 2022). Effective Competency-Based Curriculum requires adequate ICT tools. This will enable teachers to ensure that learners acquire the needed 21st-century skills. It is hoped that the findings of this paper, if implemented, will provide great insight into creating awareness on the role of the parents' support and their engagement in the education of their children, education policy improvement, and ICT to be fully taught at the grades in primary schools, establish challenges faced and recommend for the increase of the government capitation funds. There is a need for commitment from both the Central and County governments regarding the provision of ICT tools in our public primary schools for the smooth implementation of the CBC curriculum.

Keywords: parental support, competency-based curriculum, digital literacy

ⁱ Correspondence: email mainaelizabeth695@gmail.com, pisichi64@gmail.com, simiyup@buc.ac.ke

1. The Rationale of The Parental Support

Research shows that most parents are said to be the first child's most enduring tutors in their rich home environment, and their influence and support cannot be over-emphasized (Hedges, 2021). Primary education specifically empowers children with a variety of social-cultural foundations for life. The rich environment at home should be transferred to the school as parents combine with the school family to keep supporting the education of their children by equipping schools with resources such as digital literacy tools (Basic Education Act, 2013). The lack of such learning materials in our public schools means a lag in skilled, innovative manpower and, therefore, a poor foundation for children (MOEST, 2010).

This review paper was set to ascertain this situation in schools in terms of parental support towards equipping the schools with ICT integration materials in the implementation of the CBC curriculum, Bungoma West Sub-County. The new curriculum puts emphasis on the significance of developing skills and knowledge plus applications of competencies to real-life situations by the learners. CBC has significant attributes that focus on the achievement of the learning outcomes in terms of desired behavioral change. The study by Manduku, Kosgey and Sang (2006) in Wareng's district in Uasin Gishu County confirmed that few schools were using computers for record keeping and storage, timetabling, Secretarial work and management of administrative duties.

For many years, education in Bungoma West has seemingly remained poor in terms of the utilization of ICT tools. Most parents have complained in many forums (Education Report, 2016) about why their children are not learning computer skills. The poor learning situation in terms of digital literacy in most schools in this paper may likely be caused by low parental support, which may tend to demotivate both learners and teachers (Education Report, 2017). According to Garthe *et al.* (2015), research has established that parental involvement and support to schools tend to promote positive social-emotional, behavioral and academic development. This involvement shapes children's character and improves academic performance. Development and expansions in schools may be achieved when parents are willing to support schools in terms of infrastructural materials and finances. This parental support is associated with social and academic outcomes, which improves the learning and performance of children at school (Tooper, 2010).

According to the Education Report (2015), among the many challenges facing public primary schools in Bungoma West in terms of ICT integration is the seeming lack of adequate instructional resources and how to involve parents to support schools (Simiyu, 2018). Warm, good and lovely interactive relations between children, parents and teachers is a likelier enabler for children to like schools, work hard, behave well and increase their performance in examinations (Henderson & Map, 2002).

The poor parental home environment tends to hinder children's learning at school, given that parents are the pioneer teachers and role models (Sandra et al., 2022). Parent involvement and support at home and school are therefore mandatory for the child to learn well (Epstein, 2018). Research reveals that most parents tend to actively involve themselves at the early year's education (EYE) level but as the child progresses upwards to other grades, this support tends to dwindle (Shinn, 2002).

This paper, therefore, sought to ascertain parental involvement and support towards equipping public primary schools with ICT tools to facilitate CBC curriculum implementation. Digital literacy refers to having the skills to effectively use technology and the knowledge and skills to do so safely and responsibly (LCOM Team (2023)). It is literacy that broadly encompasses technology. The team emphasizes the importance of digital literacy for it to; support educational progress, increase online safety, understand digital responsibility, improve social opportunities, improve digital equity and support lifelong skills.

Digital literacy through online operations in ICT integration has been normalized in Kenya by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) by the Ministry of Education (MoE). ICT through digital literacy means being well-equipped to function efficiently in an environment wherein interactions go on online in accessing information through digital technologies. This is done by registering candidates through the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), maintaining teacher management through Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TAPAD), and the general Secretarial evaluation of progress and learning. However, in this review paper, the process has been hindered by a lack of computers. This is achieved with the support of the parents in this paper.

The major significance of ICT integration was felt during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most schools and many institutions were hit by the prolonged closure and restrictions on movement when KICD decided to offer digital online materials to children. (Gatar. Friday People Daily, 2020). To realize these operations in our schools, parents need to support public primary schools in terms of ICT Integration (Gakuu and Kidombo, 2010). This will enable the school fraternity to embrace ICT integration in their daily operations.

This study has established that vital ICT tools only exist in isolated public primary schools in Bungoma West. Although some low-educated parents may lack vision and commitment towards supporting schools, some may be ill-caring and irresponsible. Some may be deliberately off-loading the burden to teachers (Pelt, 2009). Moreover, ICT has become an answer to many educational challenges, apart from transforming pedagogical interactions in the classroom after eliminating physical global distance in the implementation of the CBC curriculum. It has further increased education opportunities in remote areas. Through e-learning, the scarcity of instructional materials has been solved. Through ICT integration, researchers and their learners can comfortably access new and current, up-to-date learning materials. Technology has become the only reliable solution when learning institutions are not on. In the 21st century, it has become a strong

platform for implementing the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya. Therefore, parents have a moral obligation to support schools and ensure the progress and success of their children through cordial interactions with teachers, school families and their pupils in class meetings. In this 21st century and beyond, education cannot do without technology globally. According to Wafula (Saturday Nation, June 27th, 2020), learning institutions may not close down due to keeping social distance as it was during COVID-19. This can only be possible if schools are well-equipped with digital literacy tools.

Worldwide, the education sector is experiencing some changes in instructional practices putting emphasis on the use of ICT in the classroom. (Simiyu *et al.*, 2019). ICT has to be infused into classroom pedagogy to enhance on the content delivery and quality of the learning. Through technology, higher-order skills and the ability to solve complex real-world challenges are worked upon with ease. Learning can be done anytime, anywhere, individually or in groups. Although some individual learners, even in homes and at school, have adapted to the use of ICT, these applications are still low and isolated due to lack of skills, knowledge in digital literacy, limited hardware and appropriate software in Bungoma County Schools. This was confirmed by the study done on the barriers to effective ICT integration in Mathematics in Vihiga district in Kenya by Wanjala, Chililia, Mwelesi and Amadalo (2016). To enhance the use of ICT tools in schools, the government of Kenya under Jubilee supplied laptops to public primary schools to usher Children into digital literacy as Kenya was to achieve Vision 2030 (The Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012). Integration of ICT across all levels of learning areas and education is envisaged to enhance 21st-century learning skills, among others. Pupils at the EYE level require plenty of relevant indoor and outdoor materials, which can easily be facilitated through ICT for hands-on experiences (Simiyu & Wanjala, 2020). Worse still, the few laptop computers supplied to schools by the government were vandalized and stolen in most schools, forcing the programme to fail.

Parental support for digital literacy for public primary schools in terms of ICT may enhance cordial communication relationships between teachers, parents and pupils through WhatsApp groups, emails and SMS. Through messages, parents will be periodically updated about children's achievements, progress, test grades and general discipline issues at school (Muchiri, 2014). These formats are rarely used due to limited computers and software (Mutisia, A. 2017), especially in Bugoma West Sub-county public primary schools due to a lack of support from parents. Technology has further revolutionized operations not only in education but in other sectors like engineering, the military, the business world, medicine and e-government operations (RoK, 2013). ICT components commonly used in schools include Telephone, Telex, Email, SMS, Fax, Print Media, Electronic Media, Computers and Projectors. Through technology in schools, the voluminous, tedious, and heavy workload may be maintained for school operations.

If parents fully support schools, pupils will learn ICT skills and knowledge hands-on early enough to be relevant globally as human capital for export in Kenya. Worse still,

this paper established that the young teachers who are computer literate from colleges are not using ICT tools because computers and other ICT tools are limited in public primary schools. This was observed in the research done by Wanjala (2013) in Kimilili Sub-county schools. If this scenario continues, the Bungoma child may soon be irrelevant regarding digital literacy and may not fit well in the digital global society and the job market. This review paper proposes that partnership programs should be initiated to work towards supporting schools with ICT tools (Epstein, 2008). To most parents, it is only the low learner achievement that always attracts them to get involved in the education of their children in Bungoma County. This trend should be reversed (Judah, 2015). Parents are the major educational stakeholders and, therefore, duty-bound to equip schools with learning materials. This support is rarely received, denying learners collaboration and the ability to exercise practical learning (Marcella *et al.*, 2016). Inadequate parental involvement and support in Bungoma West may be one of the reasons for the poor performance in the sub-county.

The contentious questions raised, therefore, are: Why are parents not supporting public primary schools in terms of digital literacy? Is it because school management and teachers have not taken steps to initiate attractive programs to bring parents on board? Is it because teachers are ill-prepared to initiate necessary strategies for parental-teacher relationships (Simiyu *et al.*, 2019)? Is it because parents want to run away from their responsibility or lack awareness of the significance of digital literacy? From the reviewed literature, most studies done in Bungoma County concentrated more on ICT integration and using teaching, mainly at secondary schools. No research known to researchers has been done in this area of parental involvement and engagement in supporting schools towards digital literacy in CBC implementation in public primary schools. It was out of this scenario that the review study reported in this paper set out to ascertain parental involvement in supporting public primary schools towards digital literacy in CBC implementation in Bungoma County, specifically in Bungoma West Sub-County.

2. The Way Forward

- The paper recommends that other donors should be brought on board to assist in equipping public primary schools with ICT tools and computer concepts to be taught to lower primary grades.
- School management and administration should engage parents in equipping schools with resources and other programmes. The Ministry of Education should increase the capitation for primary schools towards digital literacy.
- Parents should find this paper useful to effectively perform their role in equipping and supporting school programmes for quality teaching and learning.
- The findings will assist in policy formulation by both the National and County governments to fully equip public schools with digital literacy tools for the smooth implementation of the ongoing CBC in Kenya.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Dr. Simiyu Chililia Pius holds a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, with 10 years of experience in university teaching and is currently a full-time lecturer at the Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Management, Bomet University College, Kenya. He teaches curriculum studies, specifically pedagogy, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He has published and authored several books and research papers on education and social issues linked to academic education. His research interest has been centred on education-related issues, majorly on the application of ICTs and the use of technology in enhancing instruction in the classroom. He has presented several papers at international conferences.

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