

The Unmet Expectations, Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum: The Case of Mudzi District Schools

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Abstract: Back grounded by the fast-track implementation, the present study is geared to reveal aspects dealing with an interrogation of the unmet expectations and challenges schools face and opportunities available in implementing the competency-based curriculum in Mudzi District. The need of this study was born out of the concern over prevalent questions raised against the progression of the education system on implementing the competency-based curriculum. Three thematic areas were pursued and these are the (1) unmet expectations, (2) challenges and (3) opportunities in implementing the competency-based curriculum (CBC). Selected teachers and heads from both primary and secondary sectors in Mudzi District constituted the sample for the study. A validated questionnaire with three sections and a set of interview questions constructed by the researchers formed the main instruments of the study. Data generated were subjected to statistical analysis. The findings revealed the most frequently occurring expectations, challenges and opportunities in implementing the competency-based curriculum. Based on the results obtained from the study, expectations which were not achieved from the implementation of the CBC include on-going in-service training, assessment strategies, effective curriculum implementation strategies, and alignment of the CBC implementation with CBC pillars. Challenges faced included inadequate in-service training programmes, lack of adequate support, shortage of resources, heavy workloads, lack of professional development programmes, lack of clear CBC policies, poor understanding of assessment methods, and lack of teacher motivation. Opportunities inclined in implementing the CBC for educators include self-advancement, self-advancement packages, self-development, and flexibility on Manpower development policies whilst learners are laid open to development of self-employment capabilities, employment creation capabilities, problem-solving abilities, critical thinking development, and self-reliance.

Keywords: Competency-Based Curriculum, Unmet expectations, Challenges, Opportunities, Curriculum implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Schools require well-designed and well-supported curricula to achieve their educational vision and aims. These aims usually include academic excellence, fulfilling the potential of every learner and nurturing the competencies since learners need to succeed in higher education, the world of work and to lead fulfilled lives (Molapo, 2016). Taking into consideration its five pillars which include the legal and regulatory framework, teacher capacity development programme, teacher professional standards, infrastructural development and the centre for educational research, innovation and development; the competency-based curriculum has been left idle in regard to lack of teacher education and training in respect of the need to adapt to the relevant teaching and learning methodologies to support the development of skills, knowledge, values, attitudes and dispositions, and the national identity as expected by the objectives of the curriculum framework. There have been high expectations in escalating teacher upgrading programmes from Diploma holding statuses to first education degree professionals (Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015-2022). According to the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (CFPSE, 2015-2022), teacher capacity development programme was supposed to be a continuing necessity for the satisfactory implementation of the curriculum. However, practically it did not happen to be a continuing programme as earlier highlighted. This imaged to be the root cause of lack of teaching and learning

methodologies relevant in promoting learner achievement on the part of the classroom practitioners. CFPSE (2015-2022) emphasizes on the harmonization of the competency-based curriculum with the provisions of the national constitution of the land. The focus here was on the renovation of Ministry regulations and statutory instruments governing all manner of aspects in education (CFPSE, 2015-2022). However, little has been done to enforce the Ministry regulations and statutory instruments particularly in line with the promotion of the upgrading of teachers considering the time the curriculum was rolled out versus the level of education most Ordinary level teachers still have. We should not be speaking of Diploma holding teachers at such a level at this age.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the unmet expectations in the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in Mudzi District schools?
2. What challenges are being faced by educators in implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum in Mudzi District schools?
3. What opportunities are available to both educators and learners including Curriculum developers in implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwe?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Rogan and Grayson's (2003) theory of curriculum implementation was used to guide this study. This theory has three constructs namely 'the profile of implementation, capacity to support innovation, and support from outside agencies.' Rogan and Grayson (2003) posit that implementation is often neglected as the emphasis falls on the adoption of the changes.

3.1. Profile of Implementation

The construct 'profile of implementation' refers to what transpires in the classroom in relation to curriculum implementation. It offers numerous alternatives that curriculum planners at school level can follow to determine where they are, to discover their strengths and to make progress basing on their strengths (Rogan and Grayson 2003 in Molapo, 2016). In this way, they have the choice to select a route to follow in working towards meaningful implementation of the new curriculum within the context and capacity of their schools. Therefore, the implementation of the new curriculum becomes a long-term, on-going process where teachers determine the beginning of the implementation and the pace at which they are prepared to go (Rogan and Grayson, 2003 in Molapo, 2016). This is in line with the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022) which seeks to renovate the Ministry regulations and statutory instruments governing all manner of aspects in education to suit and harmonize the competency-based curriculum implementation with modern demands of successful curriculum enactment. According to CFPSE (2015-2022), schools have to follow the phases of development and progression of the learning process taking into consideration the locally available human, financial and material resources. CFPSE (2015-2022) further highlights the levels of curriculum implementation and emphasis at each level. At infant level, the emphasis is on the development of language, literacy and numeracy skills whereas the emphasis at junior school is on the development of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEAM) disciplines. At secondary school level (Form 1 to 4), learners explore a broad based curriculum in which they acquire the necessary competency from different learning areas. A modular approach is adopted in meeting the general education goals in the first wave of the seven-year reform programme (CFPSE, 2015-2022). Furthermore, the learning areas in the competency-based curriculum are further divided into five pathways, namely STEAM, Visual and Performing Arts, Humanities and Languages, Design and Technology, and Commercial. This classification of learning areas gives the curriculum planners some chance to select a route to follow in working towards meaningful implementation of the competency-based curriculum within the context and capacity of their schools as coined by Rogan and Grayson (2003). Consequently, Rogan and Grayson's theory of curriculum implementation augers well with what transpired in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in Zimbabwe, Mudzi District in particular, as highlighted in the 'profile of implementation' construct. However, should it have been properly done, it should have allowed different members of the school community to take up part in drawing up a plan to implement change in a manner that is suitable and practicable within the context and culture of particular schools (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991).

3.2. Capacity to Support Innovation

From Rogan and Grayson's (2003) curriculum implementation theory, capacity to support innovation refers to an attempt to understand the aspects that either support or hamper the implementation of new ideas and practices in a school setting. This construct assumes that the extent to which schools are capable of implementing a particular innovation will never be the same (Molapo, 2016). This construct is further divided into four sub-constructs: physical resources, teacher factors, learner factors, and the school ethos, ecology and management. Physical resources are assets including basic buildings and textbooks, among others. Teacher factors incorporates teacher qualifications, their background, training and level of confidence, and their commitment to teaching. Learner factors include a supportive home environment and learners' proficiency in the language of instruction, while the school ecology and management pertains to the commitment by everybody to make the school work and the strong leadership role of the principal. These factors present a clear picture of the school's capacity to innovate (Molapo, 2016). For the purposes of this study, innovation refers to the implementation of curriculum change with specific reference to the implementation of the competency-based curriculum. Thus, capacity to support innovation, according to CFPSE (2015-2022), is in line with the five pillars of the competency-based curriculum framework which include the legal and regulatory framework; teacher capacity development; teacher professional standards; infrastructure development; and the centre for educational research, innovation and development. For a school to have conducive environment which support curriculum implementation, there should be legal and regulatory framework to harmonize it with the provisions of the national constitution, renovation of ministry regulations and statutory instruments that govern all manner of aspects in education. Also, teacher capacity development programme is regarded as a continuing necessity for the satisfactory implementation of the curriculum framework. It consists of a suite of programmes anchored on upgrading teachers from Diploma-holding statuses to first education degree professionals accompanied by administrative and financial management holiday in-service courses (CFPSE, 2015-2022). Teacher professional standards aim to bring teachers in line with other professions where there are agreed standards governing the conduct and governance of the profession. The teaching professional council would superintend over the professionalized sector as an upholder and gatekeeper for standards. This is in line with Rogan and Grayson's (2003) theory which emphasizes teacher qualifications, their background, training and level of confidence, and their commitment to teaching as professionals governed by conduct and professionalism. Infrastructure development and centre for education, research, innovation and development (CERID) emphasize improvement in infrastructure for teaching and learning as crucial to the creation of a suitable environment for teacher and learner achievement, and the research into the impact of innovation and adaptation of new ideas to maximize teaching and learning, respectively. Thus, capacity to support innovation and the pillars of the curriculum framework augment one another in creating a conducive teaching and learning environment which promote curriculum implementation.

3.3. Support from Outside Agencies

In this study, outside agencies are defined as organizations or partners outside the school that work together with the school to support innovation such as other government departments other than education fraternity, donors, Non-Governmental Organizations and teacher unions (Molapo, 2016). The focus of this construct is on the design of the support rather than the effect. It deals with the levels of support and pressure various organizations exert on the school to facilitate change. The type of support given may either be material or non-material. Material support include physical resources, whereas non-material support is usually provided in the form of the professional development of educators (Rogan and Grayson, 2003). Professional development of educators is further divided into two sub-themes namely in-service training, and extent and duration of the support. In-service training emphasizes on the implementation of change rather than just providing information and a greater sense of teacher ownership of the process (Molapo, 2016).

The curriculum implementation theory is relevant to this study because the three major constructs of the theory can direct the identification of the relevant data. In other words, the three constructs were used together with the three themes of this research to highlight expectations when implementing the

competency-based curriculum, challenges being faced during the implementation process, as well as opportunities emanating from the implementation process.

The diagram below is an illustration of the theory of curriculum implementation according to Rogan and Grayson (2003)

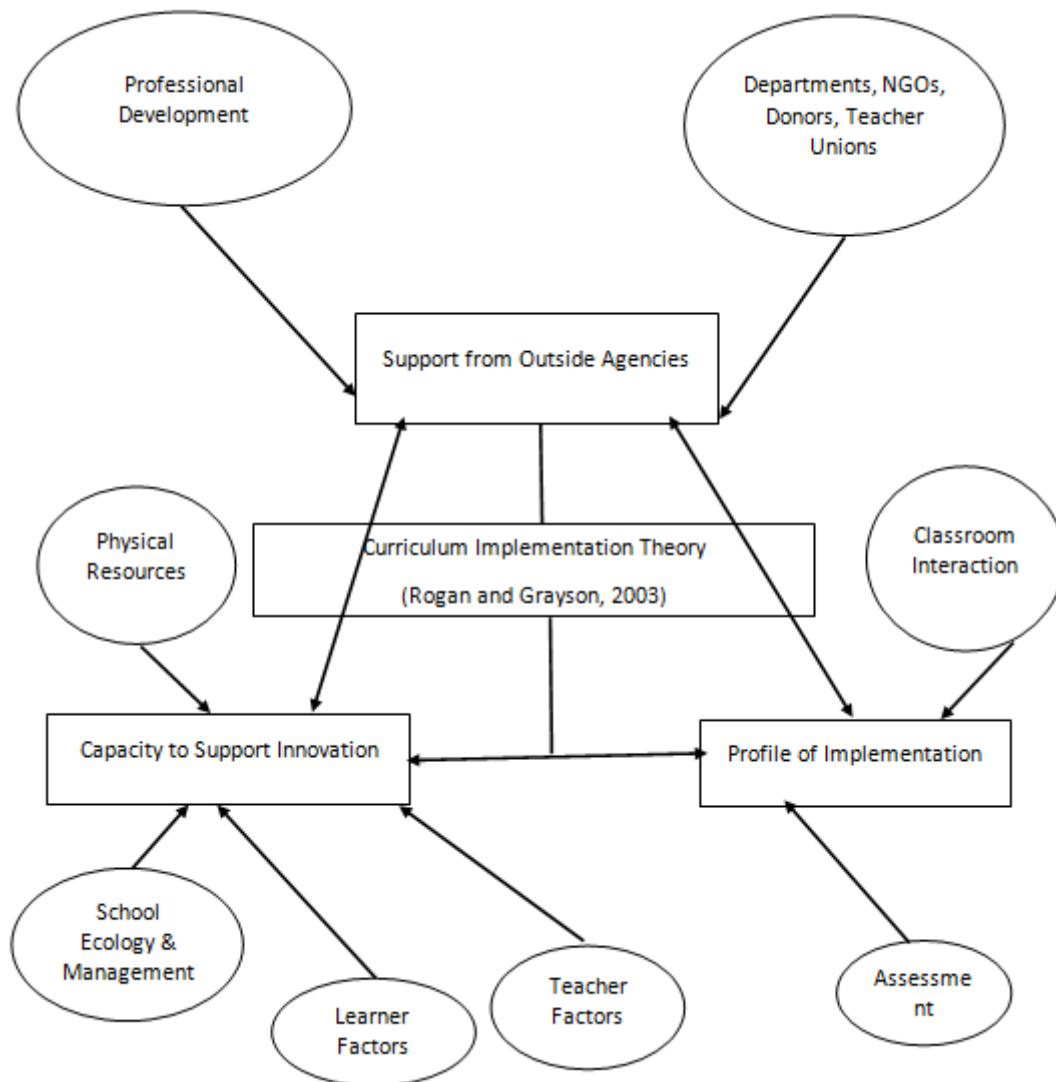


Figure 1.1. Rogan and Grayson's (2003) theory of curriculum implementation

4. GATHERING THE FIREWOOD

This literature review focuses on the expectations when implementing the curriculum, the major challenges that schools face, and the opportunities, therein, in implementing the competency-based curriculum, as discussed in international and national sources. The literature review includes journals, books, research papers and reports, theses, government publications, and official documents.

Major challenges experienced in curriculum change implementation include but not limited to; lack of human, physical and financial resources; inadequate training of educators; inadequate involvement of educators in the curriculum development process; lack of professional development for educators; poor understanding of reforms, and timeframes and teachers' workload (Molapo, 2016).

In an effort to build conceptual consistency, the three constructs identified in the theoretical framework namely: (1) Profile of implementation, (2) Capacity to support innovation, and (3) Support from outside agencies, are used to group the above themes. However, the themes and theory constructs overlap due to their interwoven nature.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

5.1. Profile of Implementation

This construct houses the theme “poor involvement of educators in the curriculum development process: top-down approach”. According to Beswick (2009), a top-down approach has been used for most curricula innovations in Africa and other parts of the world through coercive power or unilateral administrative decisions. In many countries including Zimbabwe, a top-down approach has been adopted because ‘experts’ believe that they have the technical knowledge to devise, develop and implement relevant and objective curricula (Senge, 1990). If educators are rarely involved in curriculum development, they resist and fail to commit to the implementation of curriculum reforms (Oloruntegbe, 2011). Consequently, educators perceive curriculum reforms as imposed mandates by those external to the classroom setting.

5.2. Capacity to Support Innovation

This hypothesis merges the themes ‘poor resources, inadequate training of educators and poor understanding of reforms’.

5.3. Poor Resources: Human, Physical and Financial

Curriculum implementation is a difficult process that necessitates an investigation into the contextual and cultural constraints embedded in the school (Fullan, 2007). Curriculum implementation places additional demands and expectations on educators and schools while the support and resources allocated to them are not sufficient for their needs (Flores, 2004). Fullan (2007) further argues that such insufficiency of resources limits educators’ capacity to implement the competency-based curriculum.

5.4. Inadequate Training of Educators

According to Flores (2004), teacher training and education programmes do not respond adequately to the changing nature of teaching. Most teacher-training is offered as short-term programmes involving several hours or days of workshops with limited follow-up activities (Park and Sung, 2013). On the contrary, Cheung and Wong (2012) argue that although adequate training should be offered to educators by having them attend professional training, they feel that it is not the quantity of professional development programmes that matters, but rather the quality of such programmes in helping educators to address the challenges they come across.

Park and Sung (2013) aver that if educators are asked to change the core of their practice, they should be provided with on-going in-service training to cope with the problems and difficulties encountered in the implementation process.

5.5. Poor Understanding of Reforms

Fullan (2007) asserts that for a curriculum to make sense to educators, it should address the variety of challenges that educators face and acknowledge the everyday realities of curriculum implementation. Without this a push-pull process, with outsiders pushing and educators resisting, will come about. Cheung and Wong (2012) reveal a number of common challenges that hinder the implementation of curricular reforms, including teachers’ heavy workloads, learning diversity in class, and teachers’ inadequate understanding of the reform. Above all, Blignaut (2007) argues that the knowledge, belief, and perceptions of educators play a vital role in understanding the reforms.

5.6. Support from Outside Agencies

This paradigm incorporates the themes ‘lack of professional development for educators, and time frame and educators’ workload’.

5.7. Lack of Professional Development for Educators

The changing nature of teaching requires that educators be professionals and proactive so that they can respond adequately to the increasing, ambiguous and complex educational settings in which they are expected to carry out tasks that they have never done before such as new assessment systems, the design and implementation of curricular projects at school level (Flores, 2004).

In this study of teachers' perceptions of recent curriculum reforms in Korea, Park and Sung (2013) contend that the improvement of teacher professional development is vital for effective implementation of curricular innovation. Professional development activities are often planned to initiate changes in teachers' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions with the supposition that such changes will lead to specific vicissitudes in their classroom behaviors and practices that will consequently result in better student learning. Conversely, Penuel, et al (2007) argue that such activities are commonly criticized for being too short and offering limited follow-up activities to teachers when teaching begins. Thus, Fullan (2007) avers that the implementation of the new curriculum should be an ongoing process during which educators learn, unlearn and relearn the curriculum. This implies that educators must be given enough support to cope with the difficulties of implementing a new curriculum.

5.8. Timeframes and Educators' Workload

From Park and Sung (2013)'s work, teachers' limited understanding of the views behind the curriculum reforms can be related to their workload. In their study of the nationwide Senior Secondary Schools curriculum reform in the four selected provinces of Guangdong, Shandong, Hainan and Ningxia in China in 2004, Lee and Yin (2011) found that the Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) curriculum reform obliged teachers to use new teaching methods in lesson delivery. This has an implication on teachers to move from the comfort zone of their professional practices and embrace the uncertainties of the reform. Getting used to new methods of teaching demanded more time to adjust, creating heavy workloads, which made the implementation of reforms too stressful and tiring for educators. The use of textbooks became demanding, worrisome and a contributing aspect to educators' loss of control in teaching. According to Cheung and Wong (2012), the growing recurrent meetings and professional development training also add to the teachers' heavy workloads. Teachers perceive curriculum reform as extra work and demonstrate poor motivation to implement it (Park and Sung, 2013).

6. EXPECTATIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

The competency-based curriculum in Zimbabwe was introduced in a bid to prepare learners for future challenges in the rapidly changing world (MoPSE, 2017). One of the aims of the 2017 revised Zimbabwean curriculum is to produce self-motivated learners, confident and productive individuals, holistic, independent learners with the values, skills and knowledge to enable them to succeed in school and in life (Zulu, 2015). One might be forgiven to conclude that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe had read the Zimbabwean economy quite correctly following the observation made by the World Bank that although youths in Zimbabwe make up two thirds of the country's working age population, youth unemployment remains a big challenge. This has been attributed to lack of appropriate kind of education, training and effective vocational guidance that is in line with industrial needs (World Bank, 2017). Thus, it is the vision of the Zimbabwean education sector that through the competency-based curriculum, learners will be expected to acquire three critical educational elements namely, worthwhile skills, appropriate attitudes and applicable knowledge which make up competencies. Competencies are abilities critical to the performance of specific tasks. A competency-based curriculum seeks to develop higher order thinking which includes all the four higher levels of Bloom Taxonomy namely; application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Therefore, teachers are required to take a creative or innovative approach when teaching (MoGE, 2013). In addition, "a competency-based curriculum requires teachers to have clarity of focus, reflective designing, setting higher expectations for all learners" (MoGE, 2013:4). The competency-based curriculum emphasizes the various approaches adopted in learning such as active learning, field trips, role play, debates, demonstration, question and answer techniques and teacher exposition among others. This enables the education system to churn learners who are holistic, creative, innovative, analytical and cooperative in their communities and the nation at large (MoGE, 2013). According to Rutayuga (2010), such a shift has pedagogical implications including a transposition from assessing a set of learning content to assessing each learning outcome. In concurrence to Rutayuga (2010), Wood (2001) insists that the move towards a competency-based rather than content-based curriculum necessitates learner-centred teaching and learning. This system and structure of learning capacitates learners to be creative, relevant in the society, independent, job creating capabilities, and above all, to be fairly and fruitfully assessed throughout their entire learning course.

7. OPPORTUNITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

The expanded access to learning opportunities, for the potential beneficiaries, beyond the traditional way of delivered school instruction, sustains an educational approach focused on competencies as a result of the integrative learning experiences, bounding skills, abilities and knowledge in combinations used for efficient task performance (Johns et al, 2002). According to Weddell (2006), the subjects' interaction with the complexity of real-world situations, in terms of an efficient task performance, sustains the necessity of transferable, context-free structures known as key competencies, core skills, foundation skills and essential skills. Competency-based curriculum emphasizes on the outcomes of learning related to the changing need of beneficiaries, in a complex structure of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors that sustain learners' effective performance in relation to a task or a problem-solving situation in the real world. Houghton et al, (2001) aver that competency-based curriculum initiatives focus on metacognitive self-awareness in an experiential learning perspective that sustains the transfer of learning outside the classroom.

7.1. Specific Traits and Spaces for Intervention

Having an intention to improve the process of developing teachers' competencies, the new Romanian law on education stipulates a new pathway for the initial teacher training: a two-year master programme followed by a year of practical in-service training in an educational institution (Molapo, 2016). The order outlines the legal framework for the initial teacher training through a master programme specifying the conditions for its organization. Worthy of note for our analysis is the set of competencies to be developed during the master studies: (1) Ability to transfer procedures from the scientific specialist domain acquired during the undergraduate studies to a relevant methodology for the corresponding school subject matter; (2) Ability to identify problems faced by learners in the teaching-learning assessment process and to design possible solutions; (3) Ability to develop research projects in the class/school for the improvement of teaching process and for metacognitive competencies development; (4) Ability to communicate research/teaching experiences to different partners within educational community; (5) Ability to engage in activities for the promotion of teaching practices and experiences having a social and an ethical impact in a mono and a transdisciplinary perspective (Kleickmann et al, 2012).

7.2. Improvement of Teacher Training Programmes

The revitalization of teacher education must have the extension of the teachers' responsibilities focused on the connections built between the curriculum and the learner during the instructional delivery (Gatlin, 2009). This type of approach fundamentally changes the teacher responsibilities to a facilitator oriented on proficiency (Patrick et al, 2010). The initial teacher training programme oriented on competency-based curriculum must be also accompanied by an upgrading of the teaching force through continuous professional development programmes (Ward, 1985). Teacher training process must consider competency-based curriculum both as a developmental context of professional skills and as an integrative principle of strategies oriented on the elaboration, planning, implementation and evaluation of learning experiences offered to potential beneficiaries. Competency-based curriculum focuses on developing key competencies necessary for the successful participation in social life, skills in processing information, solving problems, critical thinking, possessing native and foreign languages, systemic thinking, life-long learning competence, and it values experiential learning, integrated and problem-based curricula, among others (Forzani, 2009).

A possible teacher's profile viewed in CBC perspective encompasses the ability to design learning experiences taking into account the compatibility between the learner needs and the educational offer, related to efficient task performing in real situations; having a critical approach to reality; helping learners to transfer outcomes of learning outside the classroom; using the technology in alternative ways and having an extended cultural competence; stimulating active forms of learning; sustaining the collaborative work of learners; involved as a partner in the process of emotion regulation; ability to perform action research; effective classroom management skills; designing effective learning opportunities; having effective communication skills; using the maximum potential of learning opportunities; thinking in alternatives; and having a skill-oriented approach to learning among other things (Stronge, 2011).

Thus, we suggest some directions of action in the process of teacher training programmes improvement, related to the meanings of the CBC: rethinking teaching competencies; building training programmes in a perspective of the integrated learning experiences; linking theory and practice in a genuine way; developing a curricula based on the cognitive view of learning; bounding the theoretical psycho-pedagogical and scientific specialized training with the in-service training process for a coherent pathway of professional development in the teaching career; and broadening the approach on theoretical and practical training in a transdisciplinary view (Molapo, 2016).

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

8.1. Research Design

A descriptive survey mode of design was used in carrying out this research. Descriptive survey involves administering a set of questions, often in form of written questionnaire, to a number of individuals (Frankel & Wallen, 2000). Habitually, descriptive survey describes and specifies the nature of the problem as at hand, it reports things as they are. Kumar (2005) avers that the descriptive survey design stabs to designate diagnostically a situation, problem, and phenomenon or provides information about a matter. In this case, researchers did not manipulate data as it was collected in and under unpretentious settings. The research, consequently, sought to answer the research interrogations, as upstretched by the investigators on the unmet expectations, challenges and opportunities in implementing the competency-based curriculum in Mudzi District schools.

8.2. Population and Sampling

The study was carried out in Mudzi District schools of which the 104 schools in the District were grouped in clusters. As such, there are 10 clusters from which 5 clusters were randomly selected. Furthermore, a single school from each of the 5 selected clusters was purposively chosen and 1 school head and 2 teachers per school were selected as a sample. A sample is a selection of members from a particular population (Sekeran, 1992). In statistical terms, Sekeran (1992) opines that a population is considered to be any group of people, events or things that are of interest to the researchers and that they wish to investigate.

8.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was done using questionnaire and interview guides designed for school heads and teachers, both male and female. The instruments in question were administered, in person to heads and teachers. The researchers explained the purpose and guidelines to respondents on how to complete the questionnaires. Proclamation of privacy of the given information was aptly given.

A deduction of the existence of three thematic areas: the unmet expectations, challenges and opportunities in implementing the competency-based curriculum was used in arranging, reviewing and analysing the collected data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). All said and done, the researchers got the chance to explore the sensitive and highly emotional issues relating to the research title.

8.4. Research Findings

Unmet Expectations

Data collected pointed out on-going in-service training in competency-based curriculum as one of the unmet expectations in the implementation of the curriculum reform. 80% of school heads and 70% of teachers cited lack of on-going in-service training programmes as their major concern on unfulfilled promises before and during the inception of the competency-based curriculum implementation. As the researchers were conducting a questionnaire with one of the school heads in the district, the respondent said, "We are now about to complete the third year of rolling out the competency-based curriculum, surprisingly our teachers, us included, were only trained for about three days to master, regurgitate and conduct this lengthy implementation programme for such a highly demanding curriculum." This clearly indicated the gap that the national authorities had created in offering the most needed and relevant in-serving training of both leaders and educators.

100% of heads and 80% of teachers' respondents revealed strategies for assessment of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes as another important element of the unmet expectations in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum. Of all the expected assessment strategies

including the rubrics, performance based assessment, portfolios, learner self-assessment, peer assessment, learner response system, learner profile, and learner-teacher assessment; none of them has yet to be put into use going into the fourth year of the competency-based curriculum implementation. 60% of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire indicated ignorance of most of the assessment strategies being coined in one of the policy documents for the CBC implementation.

Strategies for effective curriculum implementation recorded 60% of heads and 90% of teachers' respondents as among the top priorities for the unmet expectations in the implementation of the CBC in the District. In order to transform the education system, structural and systematic reforms such as implementation of the new MoPSE structure, staffing and capacity development of CDTS, teacher capacity development programme, resource mobilization and creation of synergies, as well as establishing a participatory structure for curriculum review are indispensable. However, none of them were seriously considered. Four school heads penned closely similar words as follows, "There were promises for resource mobilization and creation of synergies in order to promote mustering of adequate resources for the implementation of the CBC and sensitization of education partners on the requirements of the CBC implementation, but right now the process seems to be hanging on the wire and resources are troubling our institutions to come by."

Finally, some pillars of the curriculum framework constitute the unmet expectations in the implementation of the CBC. 80% of heads and 70% of teachers' respondents were of the opinion that infrastructure development, teacher professional standards, teacher capacity development programme, and the legal and regulatory framework complicate the implementation of the CBC due to their unfinished state. The renovation of Ministry regulations and statutory instruments is lagging behind derailing relevant progress in the implementation process.

9. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

On the challenges being faced in implementing the CBC in schools, 100% of heads and 70% of teachers' respondents pointed out inadequate in-service training in CBC implementation as one of the major constraints. They indicated that the Ministry only rolled out a three-day staggered workshop for all educators in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum. 30% of the teachers and 100% of heads revealed that another three-day cluster based workshop on syllabus interpretation was conducted. According to the respondents, this was way beyond their expectations in terms of training in implementing the so-called new curriculum.

Another challenge as highlighted by 100% of heads and 80% of teachers was lack of adequate support from both the Ministry and outside agencies. One of the heads revealed that "The Ministry is not forthcoming to our rescue in such difficult times, not even the NGOs, it is very challenging for school administrators to cope with the pressure and the demands of this new dispensation." Similar sentiments were uttered by 40% of the teachers when asked about receiving any form of assistance from the Ministry, District or outside agencies. They all indicated that none of these departments except for the district office were obliging.

90% of teachers and 80% of school heads indicated that unavailability of resources was another challenge in implementing the CBC in schools. One head said "There are no CBC textbooks, not enough educators, not even adequate finances to forge things, it's quite some challenge." One teacher reiterated that "The shortage of teachers is forcing us to teach subjects which we are not trained to teach, and having learners more than 60 in a single class with all the demands of assessment in Agriculture, what if all subjects were formatively assessed?" Another teacher had this to say, "I don't have even a single CBC textbook and the area has no network coverage, worse still, no internet connectivity is available but the situation demands me to Google and download relevant information that is in-line with the CBC."

Heavy workloads for educators gained popularity from the respondents as 100% of teachers and 80% of heads point out that not less than 60 learners are found in a class as a result of the massive shortage of educators in schools. One teacher from a certain primary school under study revealed that "I am taking on a class with more than 60 learners and all the newly introduced learning areas some of which I have no knowledge about." All the three selected secondary school educators hinted that, they are teaching not less than two subjects each and they have classes from form 1-4 in all of these

subjects. "I am supposed to do all the administrative work including supervision, but I also teach two subjects from form 1-4. Above all, I am a class teacher," responded a certain head. When asked why that head teaches two subjects at a secondary school whilst there is administrative work at the person's disposal, the respondent cited the massive shortage of educators as the major blow.

On lack of clear CBC policies and lack of professional development programmes, 60% of heads and 70% of teachers were in agreement. They indicated that the Ministry did not amend the Manpower Development Policy which in their view, should have reverted to its consideration of offering the Manpower Development Leave to promote teacher professional development. "The abandonment of the previous Manpower development policy halted educators from self-advancement," said one head. Another teacher indicated that, "The abolition of self-advancement packages is one of the reasons why I am finding it unnecessary to spend my hard earned money in advancing my education"

Poor understanding of assessment methods attracted a pool of responses with 60% of heads and 80% of teachers in concurrence. They indicated that the assessment methods were not clearly brought to their attention during the brief in-service training programmes offered. "We were not properly trained on assessment methodologies, they simply stated that we will be using formative and summative assessment and nothing more."

Finally, 100% of both heads and teachers highlighted lack of motivation as one of the disastrous elements derailing the implementation of CBC. "We are demoralized; how do they expect us to deliver. Our leaders seem not to know the relevance of teacher motivation in learner achievement," said one teacher respondent.

10. OPPORTUNITIES IN IMPLEMENTING THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

Among the notable opportunities presented to educators through the implementation of the CBC are self-advancement, self-development, self-advancement packages, and flexibility of Manpower Development policies. 60% of heads and 70% of teachers' respondents revealed the availability of an opportune time for self-advancement as the CBC is being rolled out. "There is great an opportune time for self-advancement given that one of the major priorities for the CBC is to avail a suite of programmes anchored on upgrading teachers from Diploma-holding statuses to first Education degree professionals" said one the teacher respondent.

Self-advancement is associated with self-advancement packages where degreed professionals are upgraded and rewarded with a higher wage as opposed to the Diploma holding professionals. However, 80% of heads and 90% of teachers highlighted unavailability of upgrading system for some years now. "I advanced myself from Diploma holding to first Education degree holder some two years back, but I am yet to be upgraded. I still belong to the D1 grade, a grade for beginners and Diploma holders" responded one teacher at school A.

80% of the heads together with 90% of teachers' respondents revealed skills-development as another opportunity in implementing the CBC. "Modern lesson delivery skills, skills assessment development, and evaluation of learner performance are among a host of opportunities educators have in properly implementing the CBC. These were not there in the old curriculum."

20% of heads and 40% of teachers revealed the availability of flexible Manpower Development policies following the implementation of the CBC on their questionnaires. However, 80% of the heads and 60% of the teachers highlighted unavailability of such an opportunity in implementing the CBC. "I expected the Ministry to flex its muscles and relaunch the Manpower Development leave to empower teacher capacity development in-line with the CBC policies," one teacher said.

A number of opportunities presented to learners in implementing the CBC were also raised. 100% of both heads and teachers' respondents point out the development of self-employment capabilities in learners as perfectly fitting opportunities emanating from implementing the CBC. They also equally highlighted the broadening of opportunities for self-reliance in implementing the CBC on learners. Three heads echoed one another as they said "Learners are fortunate enough to broaden self-reliance and self-employment from skills obtained in the CBC." Another teacher wrote, "Noble, what a curriculum, learners are blessed to have this one as they are presented with opportunities to be employers and rely on their creativity and ability to fruitfully utilize their talents."

Conclusively, development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills are other opportunities learners have in the implementation of the CBC. 80% of heads and 70% of teachers revealed the availability of development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills from going the CBC way on part of the learners.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The verdicts of this exploration are symptomatic of an inundation of unmet expectations in the implementation of the CBC. These range from on-going in-service training, assessment strategies, effective curriculum implementation strategies, to alignment of the CBC implementation with the CBC pillars. Challenges presented in implementing the CBC include, but not limited to inadequate in-service training programmes, lack of adequate support, shortage of resources, heavy workloads, lack of professional development programmes, lack of clear CBC policies, poor understanding of assessment methods, and lack of teacher motivation. Opportunities in implementing the CBC for educators include self-advancement, skills-development, self-advancement packages, and flexibility of Manpower Development policies whilst learners are subjected to development of self-employment capabilities, employment creation capabilities, problem-solving abilities, critical thinking development, and self-reliance.

Educational Leadership and Management in relation to Policy Making may turn to altering or refining or soothing policies with the ensuing inklings meant to effectively promote the implementation of CBC:

- a) Electrification of peripheral rural schools to enhance meaningful implementation of the CBC.
- b) Downward review of teacher-pupil ratio to enable proper and accurate formative assessment, talent identification and development.
- c) Provision of adequate teaching and learning resources from CBC textbooks, financial and human resources in schools equitably.
- d) Adequate funding of the mother Ministry related and unbudgeted for programmes fitted into the school timetables.
- e) Rolling out of on-going in-service training programmes to promote proper and adequate understanding of the needs and demands of the CBC.
- f) Adequately staffing marginalized and disadvantaged schools with proper monitoring of the staffing situations in all schools.
- g) Construction of adequate 21st century classrooms in all schools to enable the proper implementation of the CBC.
- h) Ensuring proper motivational strategies including adequate remuneration of educators to promote high standards of professionalism and teacher performance.
- i) Installation of internet services and ICT learning gadgets in all schools in the country.
- j) Adjustment and realignment of all policies with the CBC requirements inclusive of the Manpower Development policy.

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