

# Teacher Preparedness in the Implementation of the Integrated Business Studies Curriculum in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this paper was to assess teacher preparedness in the implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum in public secondary schools in Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to: find out the level of pre-service training of the Business Studies teachers implementing the integrated Business Studies curriculum and to find out the extent of in-service training of the Business Studies teachers implementing the integrated Business Studies curriculum. This study was based on the ideas and concepts of curriculum theorists; Gross *et al.*, (1971), Tyler, (1949), Fullan (1982) and Shiundu and Omulando (1992), who noted that, for successful curriculum implementation, the degree of success depends on the extent to which several factors would be considered. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The study took a census inquiry and thus purposively collected data from all the Business Studies teachers and head teachers of all the public secondary schools in Nandi North Sub-County. Questionnaires for Business Studies teachers and interview schedule for head teachers were used to collect data. Validity of the research tools was determined by having experienced supervisors in the School of Education, Moi University who checked the questionnaires and the interview schedule, while reliability of the research instruments was established by a pilot study. Analysis of data was done using descriptive statistical techniques. The findings of this study revealed that Business Studies teachers were trained in the orientation of the old curriculum to teach Accounting, Economics or Commerce as separate subjects with majority having been trained to teach Economics and not Business Studies as an integrated subject while about a third of the teachers were untrained. Furthermore the study found out that majority 52 (71%) of the Business Studies teachers had never received any in-service training such as seminars and workshops. This study recommends that, there is need for Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to hire more professionally trained Business Studies teachers and organize more in-service training courses. Teacher training institutions should offer relevant training program in all areas of the integrated Business Studies subject. It is hoped that the findings from this study will be utilized by the Ministry of Education and other education stakeholders in order to come up with strategies that should be put in place to enhance the implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum in Kenyan secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Business Studies, curriculum, implementation, integrated, preparedness

## 1. Introduction

The vocationalisation of the education and training became the cornerstone of the 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya. At the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the National Needs Assessment Survey (NNAS) which was carried out in 1999 brought about reorganization of education and training curriculums at all levels. In the area of secondary school Business Studies curriculum, the teaching of Business Studies embraced the integrated approach which brought together all major areas of Business Education as one subject called Business Studies. The main aim of the integration was to reduce the workload for both teachers and pupils. It is important to note that before the 2002 curriculum revision, the approved subjects for the first two years of secondary education (form one and form two) was Business Education and in form three, areas of specialization were introduced. There were four distinct areas of specialization which were provided at that time. They were Accounting, Commerce, Economics and Typing with Office Practice. Business Studies is therefore a new curriculum innovation now offered from form one to form four and at the end of the fourth year students sit for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in the integrated subject. This new secondary school Business Studies curriculum was implemented from January 2003.

This study was based on the ideas and concepts of curriculum theorists; Gross *et al.*, (1971), Tyler, (1949), Fullan (1982) and Shiundu and Omulando (1992). These curriculum theorists noted that the degree of success of a curriculum implementation depends on the scope to which several factors would be considered. The factors outlined by the curriculum theorists include the extent to which members of the school organization possess the capabilities and competencies needed to carry out the process of curriculum implementation, availability of resources, provision of management support and clarity and awareness of the objectives of the innovation, the attitudes of the implementers, recipients and other stakeholders. Oluoch (1982) emphasizes the need to design educational programme for teachers involved in the implementation of new curriculum. Dalton (1988) contends that reforms can be good but their implementation may be inhibited by the way they are delivered. Good performance of students in examinations requires proper implementation of the curriculum.

Thus, any factor that affects effective curriculum implementation is of concern to educationists and other stakeholders. Awoniyi (1982) says that the best teaching resource is still the teacher. Although many teachers may be familiar with the new and emerging trends in curriculum changes, they may not effectively implement the new curriculum innovation and therefore may not attain desirable learning outcomes. Kafu (2010) observes that there is need for further training so that teachers are able to cope up with new challenges in the implementation of new curriculum innovations. The question then is: how are Business Studies teachers prepared in the implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum in public secondary schools in Kenya?

## 2. Pre-service Training of Teachers

Pre-service training of teachers refers to teacher preparation for the teaching job before they are employed for that job. Hugh (1982) argues that implementation of curriculum change and the continuation of the new approaches in schools depend not only on the retraining of teachers but also on knowledge, skills and attitudes fostered during initial training of teachers. Hugh (1982) further observes that pre-service education of teachers, which is supposed to facilitate curriculum implementations, is, in most countries, riddled with problems. According to Hugh (1982), colleges and their teacher preparation curricula may be remote from the realities of school and the curriculum. Consequently, student teachers are prepared for what should be rather than what is. College curricula are monstrously overloaded often with academic content some of which is of doubtful value to the teacher in his real classroom environment. The study of educational theory may be too academic and irrelevant and thus ignoring local problems and realities on the ground. Links between colleges, curriculum development and pre-service programmes may be a good deal less close than they should be (Hugh, 1982).

The Kenyan government has made every effort to meet the growing demand for teachers at all levels. The non-government bodies have continued to sponsor teacher training in private colleges in Kenya. Since 1990, new teachers' colleges in Kenya have been established. Similarly schools of Education have been established in nearly all the public as well as private universities. These universities and colleges have embarked on an extensive staff development programs to satisfy their teaching work force (UNESCO, 2010). The Kenya government also recognized the importance of technical education (Republic of Kenya, 2007). It is for this reason that the country recently spend at least 25 million dollars with the assistance of the Netherlands government to buy modern equipments to train teachers in 13 new Polytechnics and technical training institutions where each province is expected to have at least one polytechnic (Nganga, 2010). These institutions require well trained teachers to handle the subjects being offered.

Teacher education programmes are planned to cater for all levels of education and training (including special education). Pre-service teacher training is very crucial because teacher education is expected to develop communication skills, professional knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable teachers to identify teaching and learning needs of the learners and thus become effective curriculum implementors (UNESCO, 2010). The preparation of teachers of Business Studies in the pre-service colleges and universities has not been satisfactory. The current new Business Studies curriculum has the integration of the elements of Economics, Accounting, Commerce and Office Practice as one subject. Most of the teachers of Business Studies were not initially prepared in their pre-service training for the new integrated approach. Initially Business Studies teachers were trained to handle Economics, Accounting, Commerce or Office Practice with another non- Business Studies subject. For example, in 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Kenyatta University, which has for a long time been the center of excellence in teacher training, was training teachers of Business Studies with two teaching-subjects combinations such as Business Studies/Economics, Economics/Geography, Mathematics/Economics and Business Studies/ Geography among other combinations. However, the introduction of the integrated approach to Business Studies presented new challenge to these graduates. Some of these graduates could not handle effectively some content areas of the new curriculum (for instance Accounting). Currently some universities in Kenya have not developed Business Studies education programme to handle all the areas of Business Studies. Moi University now offers a Business Studies Education programme which equips the students in all areas of Business Studies. However, this new Business Studies Education programme was recently introduced long after the introduction of the Business Studies as an integrated subject in 2002.

Furthermore, since the introduction of the integrated approach in the teaching of Business Studies in Kenyan secondary school curriculum, some graduate teachers especially those with Business Studies/Economics combination of teaching subject were rejected by the TSC. Business Studies/Economics were considered as one teaching subject and the graduates of this combination were required to enhance their teacher professionalism by going back to their former universities and college to take a second teaching subject.

It is also notable that the teaching profession in Kenya has been attracting a number of untrained graduate teachers since independence (UNESCO, 2010). These teachers lack professionalism and especially in the art of implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum. Most of the untrained teachers of Business Studies are currently using teaching as a stepping stone to other careers of their choice. The majority of

these untrained teachers are not effective implementers of the new Business Studies curriculum. Their lack of preparedness, their attitude and morale impact negatively on the implementation of the Business Studies curriculum at the secondary school level in Kenya.

Pre-service teacher training institutions are expected to develop strategies of intensification of teachers' education. Mukwa (2007) suggested strategies for strengthening teachers' education in Kenya. Mukwa (2007) proposes that teacher trainers should combine and apply information and communication technology (ICT) in their pedagogical practices. Applications of technologies in microteaching and teaching practices can be cost-effective and cost-efficient if information and communication technology (ICT) are employed. Mukwa's (2007) paper also notes that evaluation approaches, both formative and summative, should be applied in all the stages of the implementation and appropriate feedback made available to all stakeholders.

The staffing norm in public secondary schools is based on the Curriculum-Based Establishment (CBE) that takes into account the subjects taught and the teaching requirements. The school teaching load on average 45 periods of 40 minutes each per week, and the average teaching workload for a classroom teacher is 25 lessons per week (UNESCO, 2010). The need to maintain a real world focus in the teaching of Business Studies is necessitated by the fact that the Business Studies Curriculum is vocational and practically orientated training (Ottewill and Macfarlane, 2003). This study sought to assess the preparedness of Business Studies teachers in the implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum in Kenyan secondary schools.

### **3. In-service Training of Teachers**

In-service training covers those activities directed towards remedies of perceived lack of skill understanding. It is an on-going process that promotes professionalism and personal growth for teachers (Daresh and Playko, 1995). In-service education is necessary and appropriate when people need special training to correct deficits in their skills. It takes place anytime, either as full time or part time, during the professional life of a teacher (Namunga and Otunga, 2012). Daresh and Playko (1995) give useful guidelines about in-service education. They claim that in-service education should ensure that programmes are directed towards local needs of the participants and that the participants are fully involved and encouraged to identify their needs and areas of re-training.

Teachers need regular in-service opportunities within the educational system to enhance their teaching methodology. They need to equip themselves with new forms of knowledge, new teaching methods and Strategies, purpose and scope of a new curriculum. Because teacher in-service training programs must reach their intended audience, they should be accessibly scheduled for teachers who are curriculum implementers. It is expected that the teachers should receive their first professional support from the head teachers of their respective schools and again from the inspectorate personnel who support the teachers through supervisory visits as well as organizing refresher courses, especially when new curriculum innovations are being introduced. The local-level Teacher Advisory Centers (TAC), staffed with the more experienced teachers, have served as valuable resource centers where teachers meet to update themselves on the latest of preparing teaching materials (UNESCO, 2010).

Shiundu and Omulando (1992) notes that in-servicing of teachers greatly improves the quality of curriculum implementation. Hugh (1982) says that the tried and tested way of introducing a new curriculum is by offering a series of specially organized in-service programmes for teachers. Hugh (1982) further maintains that when teachers are afforded this opportunity, they are in-serviced and the extent of such in-servicing varying greatly from one day, one evening, one weekend to longer residential courses depending on the availability of resources such as money and manpower.

Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) observe that in-service programmes that work have resulted from collaborative efforts and have addressed the needs of those who are to be affected by the new curricula. Effective in-service training has the necessary flexibility to respond to the changing needs of the staff. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) further argue that not all details of in-service training can be planned prior to implementation, and all problems and concerns cannot be anticipated. In-service training therefore prepares teachers for their role in curriculum implementation. This study sought to assess the preparedness of Business Studies teachers to implement the integrated Business Studies curriculum in Kenyan secondary schools.

### **4. Statement of the Problem**

Business Studies, as a subject, has undergone several curriculum changes in the recent past. These have come as a result to make it relevant to the changing needs of the society and in an attempt to improve the quality of the learning outcomes. The reviewed 2002 Business Studies curriculum for secondary school cycle was intended to be an improvement of the 1984/85 which was syllabus introduced at the beginning of the 8-4-4 system of education. The review after the NNAS of 1999 gave birth to the present integrated Business Studies curriculum in which Commerce, Accounting, Office Practice and Economics elements of the subject matter were integrated to be taught as one single subject renamed Business Studies.

In the past, teachers have been trained to teach one of these subjects; Economics, Accounting,

Commerce or perhaps with a combination of other non-business subjects. Business Studies, is considered a living subject. It is a practical subject. As a result one would expect high enrolment and also desirable performance of the subject in the KCSE. However, this has not been the case as indicated by the reports from Nandi North District Education Officers (DEO) office as shown in table 1 below.

**Table 1. Enrolment and Mean Score per Subject (Technical & Vocational) 2009-2011**

S/no	Subject	2009		2010		2011	
		Entry	Mean Score	Entry	Mean Score	Entry	Mean Score
1	Business Studies	741	5.8069	697	5.4062	715	6.4559
2	Home Science	29	6.8167	43	8.5893	56	6.7624
3	Agriculture	965	6.8627	1021	5.8072	1322	6.4953
4	Computer	4	3.5001	3	6.7501	5	9.7002
		1739		1764		2098	

Source: District Education Office (Kabiyet)

Table 1 above shows that in the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 the District's mean score for Business Studies in KCSE results were 5.8069, 5.4062, and 6.2059 respectively. Enrolment too oscillated at 741, 697 and 715 respectively. Comparing Technical and Vocational subjects, the performance in Business Studies is relatively lower than the mean score in KCSE results of both Home Science and Agriculture. The enrolment in Business Studies was lower compared to candidates enrolled in Agriculture. The low performance, as well as the low enrolment in comparable terms of Technical and Vocational subjects compelled the researcher to undertake this study. The main purpose of this paper was to assess teacher preparedness in the implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum in public secondary schools in Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to:

- (i) Find out the level of pre-service training of the Business Studies teachers implementing the integrated Business Studies curriculum.
- (ii) Find out the extent of in-service training of the Business Studies teachers implementing the integrated Business Studies curriculum.

## 5. Limitation of the Study

The location of Nandi North Sub-County may limit the generalizability of the findings to other Sub-counties but is useful for exemplification and the beginning of a serious discussion. Although this data was supported through interviews of the head teachers, the data relied on Business Studies teacher's self-reported data. The findings may not reflect what actually happens in the classroom because observation of the real classroom settings was not carried out. The study was limited to the teaching of Business Studies in Kenyan secondary schools. Quality implementation might have been affected by factors, some of which may be outside the school context because this study studied school conditions only. Many factors contribute to curriculum implementation but this study limited itself to teacher preparedness in the implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum in public secondary schools in Kenya.

## 6. Methods

This study employed descriptive survey research design. The survey design was adopted because the population studied could not be observed and described directly. In addition, this design was also useful because it is less expensive and appropriate given time and money constraints. The study was conducted in Nandi North Sub-County of Nandi County, Kenya. The Sub-County has recorded rapid increase in the number of secondary schools in the last two decades and also increased student enrollment in the recent years. The target population for this study comprised of all the public secondary schools, all the principals of these secondary and all the Business Studies teachers of all these public secondary schools in Nandi North Sub-County, Kenya. This study therefore targeted all the fifty six (56) public secondary school headteachers and eighty five (85) Business Studies teachers who were then serving in these fifty six public secondary schools. The study population was small and the researcher opted for a census inquiry and thus purposively collected data from all the fifty six secondary schools, all the Business Studies teachers and headteachers of all the fifty six public secondary schools in Nandi North Sub-County, Kenya. However there were 73 (84.9%) Business Studies teachers who successfully filled the teachers' questionnaire and 50 (89.3%) headteachers who were successfully interviewed. The data collected from the fifty headteachers and seventy three Business Studies teachers was presented and analyzed according to the research objectives.

The instruments of data collection were questionnaires for the Business Studies teachers and interview schedule for the secondary school principals. Interview schedule provided the researcher with greater opportunity to describe the purpose of the study (Stone and Harns 1984). A questionnaire facilitates quick and easy derivation of information within a short time (Borg and Gall, 1983). Validity of the research tools was determined by having experienced supervisors in the School of Education, Moi University, who checked the

questionnaires to evaluate the exactness of the items contained in the various instruments. In view of their suggestions, the tools were revised and refined accordingly to achieve validity.

Reliability of research instruments was achieved through a pilot study in the neighbouring Nandi Central Sub-County of Nandi County, Kenya. At the piloting stage, questionnaires were administered to fourteen Business Studies teachers and ten headteachers were interviewed. The results were analyzed and Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of 0.65 was obtained, this showed a positive correlation. Using the pilot study, the tools were refined. The respondents were made aware of the aim of the study, confidentiality of the information was assured and that all the respondents remained anonymous. Data collected in this study was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

## 7. Results and Discussion

Results and discussion of the findings of this study have been done according to the objectives of the study namely; to find out the level of pre-service training of the Business Studies teachers implementing the integrated Business Studies curriculum and to find out the extent of in-service training of the Business Studies teachers implementing the integrated Business Studies curriculum.

### 7.1 Pre-service Training of Business Studies Teachers

Teachers' professional qualifications (Pre-service training) were considered in this study. Business Studies teachers were asked to indicate their highest level of professional qualification. The results are shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2. Pre-service training of Business Studies Teachers.**

Academic/ Professional Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Master of Education (M. Ed.)	2	3%
Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.)	40	55%
Diploma in secondary Education (Dip. Ed.)	7	9%
Untrained Teacher	24	33%
Total	73	100%

As shown in table 2 above, only 2 (3%) of the teachers indicated that they had a Master of Education degree as their highest qualification, 7 (9%) of the teachers had diploma in secondary education, majority 40 (55%) of the teachers had Bachelor of Education degree. Furthermore, table 2 above reveals that untrained teachers were 24 (33%). These are teachers who had qualification such as Bachelor of Business Management degrees, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and others had just form four qualification. Although more than half of the teachers who were teaching Business Studies were trained, nearly a third of them were not professionally trained. The Presence of such a large number of untrained teachers teaching the subject raises the question of the preparedness of Business Studies teachers to implement the integrated Business Studies curriculum in Kenyan secondary schools. From the literature reviewed, Kafu (2010) notes that, instructional process is efficient when teachers are prepared with relevant competencies to facilitate them become accustomed to the new trends in education and implement the process of planning for instruction to these trends.

The findings of this study also revealed that Business Studies teachers were trained to teach Accounting, Economics and Commerce as separate subjects with majority having been trained to teach Economics and not Business Studies as an integrated subject. Hugh (1982) argues that, pre-service education which is supposed to facilitate curriculum implementation is in most countries faces a challenge with problems which include curricula being isolated from the realities of the school curriculum. It is worth noting that a good number of teachers, who were teaching Business Studies in Nandi North Sub-County, were not trained to teach Business Studies as an integrated subject. They were rather trained in the old curriculum style. Business Studies as an integrated subject, is the latest curriculum innovation which was implemented for the first time in Kenya in 2003. Business Studies, as an integrated subject comprises elements of the various areas of Economics, Accounting, Commerce and Office Practice. A teacher trained to handle one area of this integrated subject may not competently teach other areas of the integrated Business Studies curriculum. More specifically, teachers who were trained to teach Economics and Geography in their pre-service training may not teach Accounting effectively. A large number of Business Studies teachers were trained in the orientation of the old Business Studies curriculum which offered Economics, Accounting, Commerce or Typing with Office Practice as separate subject. This scenario presents a challenge to teachers in the implementation of the new integrated Business Studies curriculum.

### 7.2 In-service Training of Business Studies Teachers

This study investigated Business Studies teachers' in-service training. Business Studies teachers were asked to indicate in-service training they had received specifically on the teaching of Business Studies. Results are shown in table 3 below.

**Table 3. In-service Training of Business Studies Teachers**

In-Service Training	Number of teachers	Percentage
Seminars	8	11%
Workshops	13	18%
None	52	71%
Total	73	100%

As indicated in table 3 above, the study found out that majority 52 (71%) of Business Studies had not received any form of in-service training such as seminars and workshops. However, 13 (18%) of the teachers indicated that they had attended workshops and another 8 (11%) of the teachers said that they had attended seminars. The findings therefore revealed that most of Business Studies teachers in schools in Nandi North Sub-County, Kenya had not been in-serviced. This presents a major challenge especially in the implementation of the newly integrated Business Studies curriculum as a new curriculum innovation. A new curriculum innovation, such as the integrated Business Studies curriculum, should have been followed by intensive and continuous re-training of teachers through in-service programs.

In-service training ought to be an on-going process which promotes professional growth of the serving teachers. Continuous capacity building is necessary for effective implementation of a curriculum. Furthermore, in-servicing of teachers helps to acquaint them with the latest innovations and especially on the latest developments in the instructional technology and thus making them better teachers- better curriculum implementers. Ornstein and Hunkins, (2004) notes that, teachers influence students' learning outcomes and thus better teachers foster better learning outcomes. The fact that this study revealed that majority of teachers serving in Nandi North Sub-County, Kenya, schools had never been in-serviced implies that effective implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum may have had serious challenges.

## 8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Emanating from the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Business Studies is an integrated subject with content on various areas in Economics, Accounting, and Commerce. The study revealed that while Business Studies is an integrated subject, Business Studies teachers were trained to handle one area of this integrated subject. Most Business Studies teachers were trained in the old teacher training program as separate subjects to teach Accounting, Economics or Commerce. From the literature reviewed, it may be argued that pre-service education is faced with problems which include pre-service teacher training program being remote from the realities of the present curriculum in Kenyan secondary schools. The study found out that majority of the Business Studies teachers had never received any in-service training such as seminars and workshops. In-service training is a continuous competence building exercise which helps to accustom the practicing teachers with the latest innovations in the teaching of the subject. In-service training promotes professional growth necessary for effective curriculum implementation. This, therefore, means that inadequate in-service programs impacted negatively on the effective implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum in Kenyan secondary schools.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that Universities and teacher training colleges should offer relevant training programs in all areas of the subject so that teachers can effectively implement the integrated Business Studies curriculum. Furthermore teachers should receive continuous in-service training to equip them with the latest competencies necessary in the implementation of Business studies curriculum. Ministry of Education and the School Management Board should continuously provide technical advice, supervision and motivation of teachers so as to facilitate effective implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum.

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