



Original Research Article

Rethinking the implementation of the revised history curriculum: teachers' and learners' preparedness in selected public secondary schools in Khomas region, Namibia

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: May 2020
Accepted: May 2021

Keywords:

Curriculum review,
Implementation
process,
teachers' and
learners'
preparedness,
secondary school
history curriculum,
Namibia

ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to determine the preparedness of both teachers and learners in implementing the revised History curriculum in secondary schools (grade 8-12) since the introduction of the revised curriculum in 2017. Jess, Carse, and Keay (2016) discovered that teachers must be prepared and trained in order to accomplish the objectives of a curriculum; the authors' attention was on the curriculum-development process and the educator's role. Teachers are familiar with classroom circumstances and may be able to identify gaps and implement changes and enhancements that will assist students in achieving the desired results. Furthermore, teachers must be able to provide developmentally appropriate learning challenges that are connected with curricular requirements. The focus of training and professional development must be on teaching students how to appropriately interpret the curriculum so that their needs are met through suitable instructional approaches. Allowing teachers main engagement in curriculum development and the process of alignment as it relates to identifying student needs and then instructing accordingly, as recommended by Jess et al. (2016), is one method to assist this situation. Learners are also a crucial component in curriculum implementation. While teachers are the ones who decide what happens in the classroom, it is the learners who decide what is actually communicated and adopted from the official curriculum. Unprepared teachers and learners are impediment to the effectively implementation of curriculum processes. The lack of preparedness among teachers, as well as their attitudes and morale, has a negative impact on the implementation of the curriculum therefore, proper training should be provided to teachers in order to prepare them in all aspects of the curriculum in order to enhance their ability to deliver and implement the curriculum effectively. The study recommends that teachers need have proper training before they implement the new or revised curriculum. It is also recommended that NIED in collaboration with the ministry of education be holding regular training and workshops for teachers and to have a follow-up system in place to ensure that the trainings are effective. This will aid teachers in understanding the varied expectations of the new curriculum as well as staying current or abreast to current curricular changes.

1. Introduction

There has been some criticism of the curriculum drafters' lack of consultation with instructors and the curriculum implementers (teachers as the most agent of curriculum implementation). There has been a high failure rate in Social sciences subjects specifically History and in particular, Khomas region since the introduction of the revised curriculum. History is one of the compulsory subjects in grade 8 and 9 and despites learners having done the introductory in these grades, they still fail it in grade

10-12. It is against this background that this study investigated perceived causes and problems of curriculum implementation in Khomas region, leading to poor results. This study sought to establish that if the curricula were properly implemented, there would be an improvement. When and if a curriculum is successfully implemented, it leads to improved results and thus there is a need for countries to make sure curriculum is implemented effectively after some changes or reforms. The educational system is being realigned to suit the demands of Namibia's

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Vision 2030, a long-term national goal ([National Institute for Educational Development, 2013](#)).

2. Reviews and the context of Namibian curriculum

The National Curriculum for Basic Education (2016) replaces the curriculum for basic education of 2010 to ensure the continuity of the foundation of the Namibian Basic education and “Education for all of 1993 that was found and put into practice by the ministry of education as from 1993. In addition to this, the government directives had tasked the directives from the ministry of education in 2011 to hold a conference in order to review the curriculum for basic education and address the challenges and the needs of the Namibian society.

The outcome of the conference includes the reviewing of the curriculum to the challenges and needs of the Namibian society, reducing the number of subjects in the junior secondary phase, expanding the subjects on higher level in the senior secondary phase, and reintroducing technical and vocational subjects in the school curriculum. As a result of the conference held by the ministry of education’s directives in 2011, the following reviews or changes were made concerning the secondary phase of education.

Junior Secondary Grade 8 and 9

According to The National Curriculum for Basic Education (2016), the junior secondary phase extends the learners’ knowledge and skills, strengthens their values and attitudes, and prepares them for continued studies. This phase provides learners with the opportunity to explore a wider range of subjects to enable them to make informed subject choices for future career opportunities. It is more challenging, and a greater body of knowledge is covered to develop a higher level of understanding and skills. The curriculum becomes more diversified and a degree of choice is introduced. In this phase, the medium of learning continues to be English and learners continue to take English and another language, Physical Science, Life Science, Geography, History and Mathematics.

In addition, learners take any two of the following elective pre-vocational subjects: Agricultural Science, Accounting, Office Practice, Entrepreneurship, Computer Studies, Design and Technology, Visual Arts, Integrated Performing Arts, Home Economics, Fashion and Fabrics, Hospitality, Technical Drawing, and Technical Studies A or B or C. Technical pre-vocational subjects will be offered in schools with both academic and pre-vocational streams. There will be a reading period and together with a reading period, the following support subjects are also offered in this phase: Arts, Life Skills, Physical Education, Religious and Moral Education, and information and

communication. The junior secondary phase, which consists of Grade 8 and 9, will require learners to write junior secondary semi-external examinations at the end of Grade 9 which is similar to the previous Grade 10. This means the examination will be set and moderated nationally but marked in the regions by the subject teachers from the respective schools.

Senior Secondary: Grades 10-12

The senior secondary phase extends the learners’ knowledge and skills, strengthens their values and attitudes, and prepares them for continued studies and young adult life. It is therefore during this phase that the 'learning to learn' skill area must be consolidated so that learners will continue in lifelong learning ([The National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2016](#)).

This phase is sub- divided into two parts, the Grades 10-11 and grade 12 NSSCAS

Grade 10-11

All learners take three promotional core subjects, three promotional elective subjects and four support subjects. Natural sciences are divided into the subjects Biology, Agricultural Science, Physics and Chemistry, and Social Sciences into the subjects Geography, History and Development Studies. Pre-vocational subjects include Accounting, Office Practice, Entrepreneurship, Business Studies, Economics, Computer Studies, Design and Technology, Art and Design, Integrated Performing Arts, Home Economics, Fashion and Fabrics, Hospitality, Health and Social Care, Woodwork, Metalwork and Welding, Building Studies, and Motor Mechanics. In addition, a reading period and the following support subjects are offered: Arts, Life Skills, Physical Education, and Information and Communication. Therefore, the junior secondary phase will consist of seven compulsory promotional subjects, elective subjects and support subject’s national examination for the Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary (NSSCO) level is written at the end of Grade 11. Grade 11 is the first exit point from basic education and some learners will start an independent young adult life, enter non-formal education, seek employment, or create their own employment. Learners will have an internationally recognised certificate which gives them access to further education and training, which includes tertiary education institutions with an NQF Level 3 entry requirement.

Grade 12 NSCASS

The main purpose of Grade 12 is to prepare learners for higher education. Much greater demands are made on the learners with regard to their cognitive, personal

and social development, specifically in terms of academic achievement. They must take greater responsibility for their own learning and consolidate good work ethics and practices (The National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2016). On completion of Grade 12, learners will have an internationally recognised certificate known as the Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Advanced Subsidiary (NSSCAS) level which gives them access to higher education institutions with NQF level 4 entry requirements, or to the job market. Grade 12 learners take three to five promotional elective subjects and two support subjects. One of the elective subjects must be a language. At the end of Grade 12, learners take the NSSCAS level examination.

3. Review of the literature

3.1 Teacher's and learner's preparedness in History Curriculum implementation

According to Kombe (2017), understanding the two concepts teacher and preparation is required in order to completely comprehend teacher preparedness. A teacher is someone who assists others in gaining information, skills, or values, whereas preparation is the act or process of getting something or someone ready for something. As a result, teacher readiness is the act of preparing a teacher for a specific task (Oliver et al. 2021). To prepare a teacher, he or she must participate in a number of activities that will enable him or her to assist others in acquiring information and/or other skills. As a result, in order for teaching to be effective, a teacher must receive proper and extensive training to ensure that they are aware of when and how to use various teaching methods (Oliver et al. 2021).

Suyanto (2017) reported that school preparation for implementing the C13 curriculum was low in their study in Indonesia. First, ineffective training and socialization are to blame for the low readiness. Five-day training is insufficient to ensure that teachers, principals, and supervisors are familiar with the C13 curriculum's ideas and application. The scarcity of learners and teacher books also contributes to the schools' insufficient preparation to apply the C13. Curriculum implementation relies heavily on learning materials such as books (Suyanto, 2017).

Lack of pedagogical understanding on how to infuse the features of the curriculum in instruction was the biggest obstacle that prevented the implementation of the curriculum, in their research of Zimbabwe teachers (Zhuwale & Shumba, 2017). Handwe and Mpofu (2017) conducted a study on teacher preparedness to apply a newly established grade three curriculum in Zimbabwe, with the goal of examining primary school teachers' ability in developing lesson plans related to

the new curriculum. The findings revealed that teachers' training was insufficient to meet their demands in terms of developing successful lesson plans. According to the findings, the Ministry of Education should implement short courses to bridge teachers' knowledge gaps on the curriculum. This means that when curricular changes necessitate alternative components of lesson plans, teachers must be instructed on how to create them.

Muleya and Mbewe (2018), on the other hand, found that teachers in Zambia were well-prepared to apply the 2013 updated Business Studies curriculum in their study. According to the survey, teachers were properly prepared in terms of subject combination, with 81% having a mix of Commerce, Office Management, and Principles of Accounts but no entrepreneurial component. The study found that, with the exception of a few head teachers, teachers were prepared for the implementation of the revised Business Studies curriculum, that teaching and learning resources, refresher courses, and CPD's were insufficient for effective implementation of the Business Studies curriculum. This made it easier for Zambia's Business Studies Curriculum to be implemented smoothly.

In contrast to the previous study, Oliver et al (2021) revealed that the goal was to determine secondary school teachers' readiness to execute the new Zambia Education Curriculum Framework of 2013 in the Kabwe District of Zambia's Central Province. The study found that even after the updated curriculum was commissioned in 2013, schools still lacked teaching tools with which to apply the revised curriculum. Furthermore, some teachers continued to use traditional teaching methods, making it difficult for them to fully comprehend the demands of the updated curriculum of 2013. Based on the findings, the study suggests that policymakers and implementers consult more frequently during the development and/or updating of curriculum.

In their study on teacher preparedness in the implementation of the integrated Business Studies curriculum in Kenyan public secondary schools (Jerotich, Kurgat, and Kimutai, 2017). According to the study, Business Studies teachers were trained in the old curriculum's orientation to teach Accounting, Economics, or Commerce as separate subjects, with the majority being trained to teach Economics rather than Business Studies as an integrated subject, and about a third of the teachers being untrained. According to the findings, they experienced numerous obstacles in implementing the Business Studies program, which resulted in the curriculum's failure. The lack of preparedness among teachers, as well as their attitudes and morale, has a negative impact on the implementation of the Business Studies curriculum in Kenya's secondary schools. Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should hire more professionally

prepared Business Studies teachers and hold more in-service training courses.

[Sabola \(2017\)](#) investigated how well Malawian teachers have been trained to implement a new elementary school curriculum. Due to a lack of training and materials to teach the new elementary school curriculum, this study discovered that the curriculum was only partially implemented in schools. Similarly, [Paulo \(2014\)](#) discovered that teacher training influences their ability to integrate competency-based curriculum in Tanzanian secondary schools. Pre-service instructors were not given appropriate training in new evaluation procedures or how to design lesson plans, as required by the CBC. As a result, they stuck to the old ways of teaching and testing.

In confirmation of Paulo's findings, [Komba and Mwandangi \(2015\)](#) found the same results in their Tanzanian investigation (2014). Their research found that the majority of the teachers who took part in the study had no idea what the competence-based curriculum's goals were. Furthermore, the majority of the assessed lesson plans (78 percent) did not match the characteristics of a competence-based lesson plan. Furthermore, the observed teachers' involvement of pupils in classroom activities was, on the whole, relatively low. Regular training for in-service teachers should be conducted, in order to enable them to gain up-to-date teaching abilities as necessary by the changes in school curricula.

In a study conducted in Nairobi, Kenya, [Isaboke, Mweru and Wambiri \(2021\)](#) discovered a statistically significant association between teachers' level of CBC training and their capacity to apply the curriculum in public pre-primary schools in Nairobi City County. The majority of public pre-primary school teachers had not received any training on how to execute the curriculum. Even those who had been trained lacked adequate knowledge and abilities in a variety of areas that were supposed to be included in the curriculum. As a result, it might be determined that the teachers were not sufficiently equipped to implement the curriculum, necessitating additional training.

4. Research methodologies

The study was qualitative in nature and employed an interpretivism paradigm and a case study research design. The study had drawn its population from circuit 2 of Khomas region. Only three schools out of 8 schools from Immanuel Shifidi cluster centre that are offering Social sciences field of study were selected to be part of the study. Purposeful sampling was used to select teachers who have implemented the revised History curriculum and also with 2 years and above experience in teaching the History subject. The participants consisted of 3 principals, 10 teachers and 8 learners. Data was collected using face to face interviews, non-

participating observation and document analysis. Data collected was analysed using thematic analysis.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Workshop

The study revealed that teachers were expected to attend workshops in order to prepare for the implementation of the updated history curriculum, but that the majority of them did not because just a few teachers were chosen to attend the workshop. In literature, [Alsubaie \(2016\)](#) indicated that in order to contribute to the formulation of curriculum, teachers require professional development training and workshops. Hence the ineffective implementation of the history curriculum emanates from lack of workshops.

5.2 Insufficient information on lessons plans

The study revealed that teachers were not adhering to the requirements outlined in the new curriculum's authorized lesson plan structure. In literature, the same was noted in a study conducted by [Handwe and Mpfu \(2017\)](#) examined primary school teachers' ability in developing lesson plans related to the new curriculum in Zimbabwe. The findings revealed that teachers' training was insufficient to meet their demands in terms of developing successful lesson plans. Similarly, [Komba and Mwandangi \(2015\)](#) in Tanzania reported that the majority of the assessed lesson plans (78 percent) did not match the characteristics of a competence-based lesson plan. This shows the unpreparedness of some teachers in the implementation of the revised curriculums, as a result this has a great effect on the outcomes of learners in the history subject. This also implies that when curricular changes necessitate alternative components of lesson plans, teachers must be instructed on how to create them.

5.3 Insufficient In-service training

The study revealed that participants in the study never received training on how to implement the updated history curriculum. Those who received training complained that there was not enough time for them to learn because the course was only a few days long. In literature, [Sabola \(2017\)](#) in Malawi discovered that due to a lack of training and materials to teach the new elementary school curriculum, the new curriculum was only partially implemented in schools. [Isaboke et al. \(2021\)](#) reported that the majority of public pre-primary school teachers had not received any training on how to execute the curriculum. Even those who had been trained lacked adequate knowledge and abilities in a

variety of areas that were supposed to be included in the curriculum. The results of Sabola (2017) and Isaboke et al. (2021) match the current study findings. Paulo (2014) discovered that teacher training influences their ability to integrate competency-based curriculum in Tanzanian secondary schools. Komba and Mwandanji (2015) suggested that regular training for in-service teachers should be conducted, in order to enable them to gain up-to-date teaching abilities as necessary by the changes in school curricula.

5.4 Use of old teaching methods

The study revealed some teachers have found it difficult to transition to the new curriculum, which requires different teaching methods. In literature, it was noted that in order for teaching to be effective, a teacher must receive proper and extensive training to ensure that they are aware of when and how to use various teaching methods (Oliver et al. 2021). As result the study findings revealed that teachers continued to use traditional teaching methods, making it difficult for them to fully comprehend the demands of the updated curriculum of 2013 (Oliver et al. 2021). In the same sentiment, Paulo (2014) in a study in Tanzania revealed that teachers were not given appropriate training in new evaluation procedures or how to design lesson plans, as required by the CBC. As a result, they stuck to the old ways of teaching and testing. The use of traditional methods in teaching has an effect on the curriculum implementation hence the need to adopt recommended teaching and assessment methods as proposed in the revised history curriculum for it to be effective.

6. Recommendations

Findings of the investigations made suggest that teachers should make an effort to collaborate with other history teachers in the Region. The collaboration forums are intended to aid them in sharing subject knowledge and assisting one another in teaching diverse historical themes and topics as this will help them in implementing the curriculum more effectively. The school administration should seek funding from various companies in Namibia to help create libraries, purchase textbooks for students, and teacher's books. They should not rely solely on the government, but rather seek out other options that will aid in the improvement of schools and the simple implementation of curriculums. Schools should implement staff development programs to provide teachers with the information and skills they need to teach successfully and meet the goals of the new curriculums. NIED should also hold regular training and workshops in various circuits and have a follow-up

system in place to ensure that the trainings are effective. This will aid teachers in understanding the varied expectations of the new curriculum as well as staying current on curricular revisions. NIED should establish numerous committees for various disciplines that focus on the Khomas region as a whole while evaluating teachers' delivery of historical lessons. NIED should train all the subject advisory teachers for the implementation of the revised curriculum.

7. Conclusion

The use of specific resources offered in a curriculum to deliver education and assessment is referred to as curriculum implementation (Nevenglosky, Cale, Aguilar, 2018). As the most significant step of the curriculum development process, the implementation process necessitates the readiness of all stakeholders, particularly teachers (the most important agent), learners, and principals. When implementing curriculum, particularly newly revised curriculum, an educator must be able to assess it so that early problems can be identified. Determining what problems a teacher encounters during curriculum implementation can have a positive impact on curriculum success (Karakus 2021a). As a result, a teacher should be able to understand and implement curriculum effectively. The greater a teacher understands with curriculum, the more effectively she or he can develop, design, and administer it. If curriculum innovation compels teachers to assume new roles, Muleya and Mbewe (2018) claim that they typically lack confidence in their own expertise, identity, and classroom mastery. According to Kafu (2010), more training is needed for teachers to be able to deal with new obstacles in the implementation of new curriculum innovations. In order to contribute to the formulation of curriculum and implement curriculum effectively, teachers require professional development training and seminars. Findings for this study have revealed that teachers did not attend History workshops and thus this made them not be prepared for the implementations of the revised History curriculum. This had impacted the learning of learners as they lost the value of being taught by experienced teachers due to lack of in-service training. The study recommends that there must be available and ongoing support services, such as the provision of appropriate and adequate teaching/learning materials and the establishment of local centres where educational personnel can gather in seminars and workshops to discuss and enhance the new curricula. As long as the Government particularly the Ministry of Education is not meeting the teachers demands in having more workshops training of the teachers, the situation will deteriorate.

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