

Business Studies and Its Challenges in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate the administrative challenges faced by head teachers, challenges faced by teachers and students in the implementation of IBSC. Research Development and Diffusion Model was employed. The findings were: no classrooms designated for IBSC, KNEC and KICD syllabus are not in harmony, time allocated to teach IBSC is not adequate, abstract and wide IBSC content and difficult language in the text books. Study concluded that time allocated for teaching IBSC was inadequate, inadequate teaching/learning resources, inadequate physical facilities, KNEC and K.I.C.D syllabuses are not in harmony, and IBSC is wide and abstract. IBSC syllabus is not completed on time. IBSC should be reviewed especially the accounting part.

Keywords: Integrated business studies Curriculum (IBSC), Challenges.

Introduction

Education is an important aspect of economic development. When citizens of a country are educated that is a key to social, economic and political stability (Ojiambo, 2009). The main purpose of education is to transmit wisdom and knowledge from one generation to another, this prepares young people to be members of the society, maintain it and develop it. Education also has positive influence on population, health nutrition and also increases value and efficiency for labor (Kising'u, 2012). The unemployment problems facing the country can best be addressed through equipping the young people with skills that can lead to self-employment, the curriculum therefore should equip the learners with skills and more so entrepreneurial skills and this therefore indicates the importance of business education in the school curriculum. The integrated business study which was earlier referred to as Business education was introduced into public high Schools in the U.S.A by tax payer's demand during last part of nineteenth century. Parents insisted that public schools should provide Business education; otherwise they would take their children to private business colleges. Many district schools introduced Business education courses, shorthand, typewriting and book keeping. Since then Business education has been undergoing scrutiny and transformation (Popham et al, 1975).

In Nigeria Business Studies in Junior Secondary School curriculum, came about as a means of laying the foundation for national technological and economic advancement, as articulated in the National Policy on Education (Federal Ministry of

Education, 1981). The designers of the Business Studies curriculum apparently considered that, in line with the current Nigerian vocational curriculum philosophy (National Board for Technical Education, 1984), the obvious way to develop a curriculum that would give a broad introduction to the field of business was to do away with the traditionally compartmentalized single subjects. Consequently, five such subjects (book-keeping, commerce, office practice, shorthand and typewriting) were brought together as units of a new subject to be called 'Business Studies' (Ekpenyong 2006). The curriculum aimed at giving students knowledge and skills that should enable them to adapt to changes in office technology and develop a broad understanding of business activities, the structure and functions of business institutions and their inter-relationships. In Kenya a number of education commissions and education committees have been put in place to review the education system in Kenya. The commissions have seen the business studies evolve to its current status in the Kenyan education system. 'Fraser Report (1909) on Education recommended introduction of industrial education in schools as a means of providing skills to native laborers and artisans in large numbers for various purposes. During the colonial period, the colonial government opened a number of industrial schools in areas not effectively served by missionaries, some of the courses offered included carpentry, agriculture typing and blacksmithing (Kising'u, 2012), typing and office practice is a constituent of business studies currently.

After second world war there was general belief among Kenyans that vocational education relegated natives to manual workers for colonialists and therefore academic education was gaining predominance over Industrial Education (Bagonko, 1992). The curriculum was oriented towards white-collar jobs in the new independent state, neglecting practical skills. Eventually many school leavers lacked enough skills to serve the society (Kising'u, 2012). The lack of skills called for the incorporation of practical oriented subjects into formal education, this was seen as a way of equipping learners with basic knowledge and skills for self employment (Republic of Kenya, 1976). The introduction of secondary Business Education programme was based on the results of the 1965 manpower survey and its aim was to produce highly skilled manpower required for the growing commercial enterprises in the country (Onywoki 2011). Specifically, the project was aimed at introducing business education subjects in selected general secondary schools in Kenya, for example accounting, shorthand and typing with office practice and commerce. Because of the success of the project, there were about 120 secondary schools teaching business education in Kenya by 1980s (Oluoch, 1982). The MacKay report of 1981 laid the foundation for the 8-4-4 system of education. The aim for this system of education was to replace the academic form of education system with an education system that could equip learners with technical skills that could make them gain self employment after school (Kising'u 2012).

Implementation of the Mackay commission report led to the introduction of business education at the secondary school level. The secondary school business education comprised of Accounting, commerce, Economics and office practice. Each of these subjects was taught and examined separately at the secondary schools, it

therefore meant that each of the subjects was taught by different teachers and also allocated its own time on the school timetable, this therefore called for more teachers and more teaching and learning resources for effective implementation. The curriculum faced challenges due to constraints of resources which led to its reorganization. The report on the inquiry into the education system in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 1999) led to the reorganization of the Kenya education curriculum. Individual business subject areas were fused into a broad field called business studies. IBSC consists of concepts from accounting, commerce, economics, office practice and entrepreneurship education (KNEC, 2007). The rationale was to reduce the overloaded 8-4-4 curriculum, reduce cost of implementation, and make the curriculum more relevant to the needs of the society. The key issues behind the integration of the business subjects i.e. Accounting, Commerce, Economics and office practice was mainly to allow for a broader coverage of subject matter and the elimination of excessive and factual details, to save time on the school time table because instead of allocating four lessons, with IBSC it would be only one lesson. Integration was also considered to enable learners see the relationship among the subject clearly Shiundu and Omulando (1992). Through integration the number of teachers required to teach the subject also reduced and this was a relief to the side of government as it had to employ few teachers to implement the integrated curriculum.

According to Shiundu and Omulando (1992), integration of subjects emphasizes the relationship between various curriculum areas in an attempt to interrelate content or learning experiences in order to enable students perceive a unity of knowledge. Anuda (2000) asserts that by integrating the aspects of these disciplines, overlaps and costs have greatly been reduced. Business studies aims to provide the learner with opportunities to acquire basic business knowledge, skills and positive attitude for development of self and nation, being a dynamic subject it takes into account the need to address contemporary issues, trends in business and current economic issues in society (K.I.E, 2007). The content in the Business Studies syllabus incorporates the acquisition of both academic and practical skills that may help the students to become self employed after completing form four. Accounting, Commerce, Economics, Entrepreneurship and office practice are distinct subjects of study and have intrinsic values for the learners and teachers. Therefore, the distinctiveness of each discipline of study has to be preserved (Onywoki 2011). Integration of these subjects thus waters down the distinct nature of each. With the move toward integration, the number of teaching hours was affected. The drastic reduction in the number of lessons for the new syllabus and directive that Accounting, Commerce, Economics, Entrepreneurship education and office practice be taught as one subject had certain implications in the teaching and learning of the integrated curriculum, to begin with when IBSC was introduced due to inadequate planning, most schools found that they could not introduce the new curriculum as they lacked basic resources including teachers qualified to teach this integrated curriculum (Kilemi 2002), some of the content was also abstract, teaching and learning resources were also inadequate. Due to the abstract nature of the content it was reviewed in 2007 (K.I.E, 2007).

The revision was prompted by the findings of curriculum monitoring in 2004 and 2005, the syllabus was found to be overloaded and the content from the constituent disciplines had not been well integrated (K.I.E, 2007), this was posing challenges to the teachers in the implementation process. Despite the importance of this subject, less efforts has been made to ensure success in its delivery to student in secondary schools and consequently use it in real life after school for self employment. The curriculum also suffers setbacks for being an elective subject whereby students prefer doing other subjects. This study aimed at identifying the challenges facing the implementation of integrated business studies curriculum in kirinyaga west district with a view of making recommendations on how to overcome those challenges.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design for the study was descriptive survey. A survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaires to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2009). Descriptive survey research design allow researcher to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification (Orodho, 2002). Large population that cannot be studied through direct observation can best be studied through descriptive survey (Borg & Gall, 1989). The research design was found suitable for the study because the design can easily be used to collect data from headteachers, teachers and students without influencing them and in a relatively short period of time.

Research Instruments

The main tools for data collection in this study were questionnaires and interview guides. Questionnaires: According to (Orodho 2009) a questionnaire is an instrument used to gather data, which allow measurement for or against a particular view point. Questionnaires were used to collect data in this study because they have the ability to collect a large amount of information in a reasonably quick space of time as noted by (Orodho 2009). They collected information from the heads of department, teachers and students. Interview Schedules: Interviews were used to collect information from the principals. The interview schedule contained information on challenges in administration of IBSC, management of IBSC teachers and students' personnel and challenges in management of physical facilities used in teaching business studies and suggested solutions to those challenges.

Findings and Discussion

Administrative Challenges Facing Head Teachers in the Implementation of IBSC

The findings on challenges regarding curriculum and instruction were identified as follows: inadequate time allocated for teaching IBSC was the major challenge as all the six (100%) headteachers interviewed indicated time is not enough for teaching the subject as the current three lessons in form one and two and four lessons in form three and four

are not enough since most of the IBSC teachers do not complete the syllabus on time and this affects the performance of the subject negatively. One of the headteachers responded as follows “time is not enough especially to inform two classes due to length of the subject and therefore more time should be created to enable the teachers to complete the syllabus as scheduled”. Another headteacher said that “This subject requires more time to enable the teachers complete the syllabus on time and have time for revision”. Inadequate teaching aids was mentioned by five headteachers (83%) a respondent said that “the school is an upcoming day school and there is shortage of funds to buy a lot of teaching aids for IBSC”. Teaching aids are very important when teaching because they help the students to understand the content properly, but as was found out most day schools do not have teaching aids for business studies, the teachers are left to use textbooks only for teaching, this greatly affects the performance of the subject. Inadequate IBSC textbooks is the other challenge noted by the headteachers, it was identified by four (67%) of the headteachers interviewed, One of the headteachers said that “textbooks is a challenge as the number of students taking the subject keeps on increasing and some of the textbooks get lost in previous years”.

IBSC being a selective subject is like it is neglected, the schools do not buy many textbooks as compared to other subjects, therefore shortage of books is experienced and as the headteachers reported the books may be lost by the students in previous years. Mutembei (2012) notes that the headteachers experience challenges in financial management, mainly lack of enough funds which hinders effective curriculum implementation as they are unable to buy enough resource materials to be used in implementing the curriculum. The day schools have a challenge as far as funds are concerned and therefore the little funds that are available may not be enough to buy enough textbooks for the students. One of the headteachers said that “the schools have financial problems because even most of the parents who take their students in the day secondary schools are low income earners, therefore even paying the little fees they are required to pay is a challenge”. The findings regarding challenges on the shortage of IBSC staff was that teachers are not enough as noted by four (67%) of the headteachers interviewed, a headteacher said that “there being no T.S.C teacher in the school the challenge is finances to pay for the B.O.M teacher” another headteacher said that “the school has one IBSC teacher employed by the B.O.M” and also a third headteacher said that the “IBSC subject was understaffed”. From the responses of these headteachers the inference is that the subject is understaffed, and when an elective subject is understaffed in this manner the school may opt to do away with it and offer the optional subject with a teacher, it is therefore critical and the government should employ more IBSC teachers to salvage the curriculum.

Waweru (2004), in her research on administrative challenges facing headteachers, identify various challenges that face the teachers as they implement the curriculum which include: understaffing which is worsened by over enrollment in the classes especially with the declaration of free education policy by the government. When the free day secondary education programme was introduced the enrolment in form one was very high, the government did not employ more teachers to take the increased workload as more

students meant more workload and therefore many schools remained understaffed, this becomes a challenge to the headteachers as they have to look for teachers to employ to bridge the gap, this therefore calls for them to cough more in terms of paying salaries which is a challenge to them. Meeting deadlines is also a challenge in the implementation of IBSC as noted by four of the headteachers (67%). Most IBSC teachers do not meet deadlines particularly in submitting schemes of work, records of work and mark lists as noted by most of the headteachers, a headteacher said that “teachers take time to submit professional documents particularly the scheme of work”. Another headteacher said that “the IBSC teachers do not submit the professional documents until they are reminded to do so”. This therefore is a challenge as it interferes with the proper planning and administration of the curriculum because if most of the deadlines are not met, then the entire programme may be affected.

According to Owuor (2010) increased enrollment increase the number of classes to be taught by the teachers, this leads to increased work load for the teachers, with the increased work load teachers are stressed to meet marking and other instructional deadlines and lack of motivation among other challenges. As observed by Owuor increased workload may be contributing to teachers not meeting deadlines and therefore unless the shortage of teachers is addressed then, this may remain as a challenge for some time to the headteachers. Regarding challenges that involve physical facilities four of the headteachers (67%) indicated that there are no specific classrooms meant for IBSC and therefore as cited by one of the headteachers said that “classrooms are a challenge due to few physical facilities to the extent of making a makeshift class to cater for block lessons and due to lack of enough desks and chairs IBSC students keep on moving with chairs from one class to the other hence time wasting”. This is mostly experienced in day schools which are upcoming whereby there are no enough classrooms and there is no laboratory that can be used to teach the blocked lessons, such lessons are taught in any available room or even outside.

Olembo et al (1992) observes that headteachers face challenges resulting from factors such as inadequate physical facilities in the school, poor communication patterns in the school, inadequate time to perform his/her tasks. Inadequate physical facilities therefore have been a challenge in the implementation of IBSC especially in day secondary schools which do not have enough physical facilities because they are not well established. Teacher absenteeism is common both from the school and from attending the lessons as indicated by (17%) of the findings, as per absence of teachers a respondent was of the opinion that “IBSC teachers are only absent from school with permission while others lacked the commitment to teach the subject”. IBSC may be absent but when they come to school they cover the work that was missed, this may not interfere with implementation of the curriculum, but for those teachers who lack the commitment to teach it may be a lee way to escape from attending the lessons, this therefore will mean that the lost lessons will not be covered and thus interferes with the proper implementation of the curriculum, it thus becomes a challenge for the headteachers to follow those teachers to ensure that they cover their missed lessons.

Challenges Facing Teachers in the Implementation of IBSC

Challenges' regarding time allocated for teaching IBSC was identified as the major challenge as all the teachers (100%) indicated that time for teaching IBSC is not enough, this is also in line with what the headteachers said. One of the respondents noted that "time is not adequate since the subject is detailed and requires a lot of explanation and thus more time should be added for teaching the subject". Currently the IBSC has been allocated three lessons in form one and form two classes while in form three and four it has been allocated four lessons. Teachers felt that this time is not enough and it's therefore very hard to complete the syllabus within the stipulated time and thus this time should be increased to enable teachers complete the syllabus as scheduled.

Regarding teaching and learning resources, 67% of the respondents were of the opinion that IBSC teaching /learning resources are inadequate thus posing a challenge in the implementation of the subject this includes both the textbooks and the teaching aids for IBSC, this concurs with what the headteachers said as they also identified inadequate teaching and learning resources as a challenge in the implementation of IBSC. Mbitio (2013) on challenges facing the teachers and students in the process of teaching and learning Kiswahili in public secondary schools in Kiambu District revealed that teachers lacked adequate teaching resources, few schools that in-service their teachers and many teachers were overworked. When the teaching and learning resources are inadequate this may interfere with proper implementation of the curriculum and its therefore a challenge to the teachers. IBSC planning entails the preparation of schemes of work and lesson planning, Kisirikoi et al (2008) asserts that teachers need to be prepared or oriented to enable them interpret the curriculum accurately, and implement it effectively, 50% of the respondents indicated that preparing schemes of work is tedious and time consuming, teachers also indicated that they do not prepare lesson plans as most of what should appear in the lesson plans is what is in the teachers notes.

One of the respondents gave the following response "time for preparation is inadequate due to high workload and for the lesson plans it's difficult to prepare them every lesson". Regarding the management of IBSC class, 50% of the respondents indicated that the IBSC class is big with over fifty students and therefore there is a lot of distraction that comes from the students when the teacher is teaching especially in form one and two and therefore a challenge because it interferes with proper curriculum delivery. According to Owuor (2010) big classes do not allow for individualized attention to the pupils, it leads to overcrowding in the classrooms which make learning uncomfortable. A respondent noted that "form one and two classes for IBSC are big while form three and four the class is small and manageable". This is because IBSC is a selective subject and therefore at form three and form four the subject is done by few students compared to form one and two. Another 33% of the respondents indicated that they do not have the KNEC syllabus and also the KNEC and K.I.C.D syllabuses are not in harmony, such that KNEC examines some items which are not in the K.I.C.D syllabus thus a challenge. The issue of the syllabus is very important when it comes to the implementation of the curriculum, therefore the schools that do not have these syllabuses

experience real challenge, because the teachers may even teach, the content that is outdated or that should not be taught, it's therefore the duty of the principals to buy those syllabuses for the teachers for effective implementation of the curriculum.

Regarding instructing the IBSC students 17% of the findings indicated that assignments given to students are not done within the stipulated period and therefore a challenge to the implementation of IBSC. Nkantana (2013) established that the major challenges among students as failure to do assignments, which has led to students' failure in examinations thus negatively influencing school academic performance. Regarding class discipline only 17% indicated that discipline was a challenge in the implementation of IBSC. Discipline comes before success therefore if the students are well disciplined implementation of the curriculum will be very successful, but if the students are not disciplined this may affect the implementation of the curriculum.

Challenges Facing Students in the Learning of IBSC

The challenges facing students in the learning of IBSC were categorized as curriculum related challenges, teacher related challenges, student related and resources related challenges. From the table above, the curriculum related challenges are the abstractness of the IBSC content, the broad IBSC syllabus and the graphs drawn on the IBSC textbooks which are not clear to the students. Teacher related challenges are teachers being absent or late for IBSC classes and poor curriculum delivery by the teachers. The student related challenges are the students not being able to do personal studies and inadequate supplementary resources. These challenges are discussed below in details. Regarding the curriculum related challenges the findings were that 67% indicated that the IBSC is abstract to the students, especially the accounting part of the syllabus, 60% indicated that the content is wide particularly in form two and form three classes thus not covered within the time allocated and 53% indicated that the graphs drawn on the textbooks are not clear and therefore it's a challenge in the implementation of IBSC. Owuor (2010) notes the inability to fully implement the curriculum is due to its bloated nature. A respondent indicated that "some topics are too broad with difficult terms to be easily understood and also drawings are confusing", this poses as a challenge to the IBSC students.

The teacher related challenges in the implementation of IBSC are absence of IBSC teachers for lessons which is common as indicated by 47% of the findings where the IBSC teachers are said to be absent from classes. A respondent noted that "sometimes a teacher can miss a lesson and the next time he/she attends the lesson he/she teaches very fast to cover the work of the previous lesson, such that some students may not understand." The other teacher related challenge facing the students is poor curriculum delivery by the teachers, 37% of the findings indicate that students do not understand the content properly because some topics are hard and the teachers do not simplify those topics to the level of the student for easy understanding. Most of the students in the day school have a problem with the English language because they come from the rural areas, therefore they may not properly understand the English spoken by the teacher this makes

the understanding of the content difficult and it's therefore a challenge to them. The student related challenge is the failure of the IBSC student to do personal studies in the subject whether at school or back at home. Findings indicate that 33% do not study on their own due to distraction from other students like noise making, inadequate text books and lack of parental supports like failure to buy paraffin for lighting at home.

According to Waweru (2004) lack of support from parents is a challenge to the learners, general lack of interest in education or school by the pupils, indiscipline and truancy. Personal studies boost the performance of a student in a subject therefore, the parents should give their children the necessary support, by providing the basics like food, clothes and also provide for paraffin that is used for lighting to enable the student study at home especially if there is no electricity, if the parents do not play their roles properly then it becomes very challenging for the students in their process of learning. The resources related challenge is the inadequate supplementary books as indicated by 27% of the findings. Supplementary books are those books that can supplement the course books, the school may buy such books or the parents, but due to financial constraints the school or the parent may not afford to buy, the student is therefore left to borrow from the students who have such textbooks, who can either lend the textbook or not, this therefore becomes a challenge to accessing such a supplementary book. According to 27% of the findings teachers do not complete the syllabus on time, or the teachers may be too fast to complete the syllabus to an extent that the students do not understand the content properly. When the syllabus is not completed on time then it means that the student performance in the subject will be affected when it comes to the summative evaluation, and since evaluation is part of curriculum implementation, then the teachers not completing the syllabus on time is a challenge to the students.

Conclusion

Integrated Business Studies Curriculum is suffering in its implementation due to inadequate time allocated for teaching the subject, insufficient teaching/learning resources, absence of teachers and inadequate physical facilities in day secondary schools in Kirinyaga West District. The curriculum is also suffering setback in its implementation in that schemes of work are not prepared on time and most teachers do not prepare lesson plans, disharmony of KNEC and KICD syllabuses which are also missing in some schools, large form ones and two classes. Students do not do class assignments as required by their teachers. IBSC is wide and abstract. Lack of proper understanding of the content by the learners is a challenge to the learners, students do not carry out personal studies well due to inadequate textbooks and supplementary books and the IBSC syllabus is not completed on time to allow students to have enough time for revision.

Recommendations

This study recommends that:

- Time allocated for teaching IBSC should be increased with one lesson to enable the completion of the syllabus on time because it's broad.

- IBSC should be allocated more funds at the school level to enable the purchase of more textbooks and teaching aids.
- The government should employ more IBSC teachers in Kirinyaga West District and also the entire country.
- IBSC should be reviewed because it is wide and abstract to the learners especially the accounting part.
- The IBSC book publishers should simplify the graphs used in the textbooks for easy understanding by the students.
- Teacher cooperation should be embraced to enhance team work for effective implementation of IBSC.
- IBSC teachers should advise the students the supplementary books that they should buy.
- IBSC teachers to avoid skipping topics to assist students in learning those topics.
- The IBSC teachers should be taken for in service courses to improve on curriculum delivery and update them on emerging issues

Suggestions for Further Research

This study recommends further research be done on the impact of IBSC on establishment and existence of small scale businesses in Kirinyaga West District or in any other part of the country.

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Table 1: Table showing the challenges facing IBSC teachers

<i>Challenges facing teachers in the implementation of IBSC</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Time allocated for teaching IBSC is not enough	6	100
Inadequate teaching and learning resources	4	67
Preparing Schemes of work and lesson plans is tedious and time consuming	3	50
Big class sizes with over fifty students	3	50
There is no K.I.C.D and KNEC syllabus	2	33
Class assignments for IBSC not completed or done on the stipulated time	1	17
Poor IBSC class discipline	1	17

Table 2: Table showing challenges faced by IBSC student

<i>Challenges facing IBSC students</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
The IBSC is abstract and not easily understood	20	67
The IBSC is broad to be covered within the time allocated	18	60
Graphs on the textbooks not clear	16	53
Teachers being absent or late for IBSC lessons	14	47
Poor curriculum delivery by the teachers	11	37
Students not doing personal studies in IBSC	10	33
Inadequate supplementary books for IBSC	8	27
IBSC syllabus is not completed on time	8	27