

A phenomenological investigation of how junior secondary school teachers in Trans-Nzoia County support learner self-reliance through the competency-based curriculum (CBC) in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how teachers in junior secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya, promote learner self-reliance within the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The study is informed by the critical pedagogy proposed by Paulo Freire, which emphasizes the importance of dialogue, reflection, and action as essential aspects of education that help build independence among learners. This research employs a hermeneutic phenomenological research design, targeting junior secondary school teachers in public schools of Trans-Nzoia County. To gain a rich account of the experiences of five teachers, these teachers were purposively selected to participate in in-depth, unstructured interviews. Braun and Clarke's 6-step thematic analysis was covered in the data analysis. It included familiarization with data coding, identifying themes, reviewing and naming themes, and interpreting the results. Important data can be observed, especially that teachers have encountered significant changes, such as large class sizes, resource shortages, and inadequate training. However, most of them have found a coping mechanism in the form of project-based learning, peer teaching, and utilizing community resources to foster autonomy among their students. Research shows that self-reliance in the CBC framework means constant support of teachers, institutional commitment, and the enthusiastic participation of the community. Suggestions provided include specific teacher training and a lower student-to-teacher ratio, as well as increased collaboration among schools, parents, and local communities to help develop self-reliant learners.

Keywords: Autonomy, Competency-Based Curriculum, Critical Pedagogy, Education Reform, Phenomenology, Trans-Nzoia County, Teacher Training

I. INTRODUCTION

The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya represents a significant shift in the country's curriculum, aiming to equip students with the skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century. At the heart of this reform is the concept of self-reliance, which enables learners to make decisions, solve problems, and take action independently. Self-reliance is not merely one of the fundamental goals of the CBC but a core competency that is supposed to be fostered in all subjects and activities (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. [KICD], 2017). This transformation rejects the old method of passing on knowledge, instead adopting a new approach that involves teaching students through a learning process, rather than simply imparting knowledge. According to the CBC framework, self-reliance is viewed as a vital life skill that students must develop to ensure they achieve academic success and personal growth. The task of teachers in junior secondary schools has now become to create learning experiences that foster independence, critical thinking, and problem-solving. This change in teaching mode requires teachers to employ emerging, student-centred methods, meaning that students now assume a greater role in managing their education with minimal input (Ngatia et al., 2021). Despite this obvious policy trend, there has been little research into the practical application of these changes and the extent to which teacher independence is taught in classrooms.

Teachers in Trans-Nzoia County, like those in most other parts of Kenya, face numerous obstacles in implementing the principles of CBC. Such obstacles include large classes, under-resourcing, and the overemphasis on summative tests that do not accurately reflect the curriculum's features. Additionally, there are cultural norms of discipline and classroom power that may not align with the CBC model, which emphasizes discussion-based and learner-centered education. The demands raised by the CBC and what is synonymous with reality in the classrooms of many teachers do not quite align, according to many teachers (Ngeno, 2023). Moreover, self-reliance as a successful concept in the CBC cannot be attributed solely to educational reforms, but rather is viewed in the broader context of social and cultural factors as well. The path a learner chooses for their education depends on various factors, including family support, community heritage, and socioeconomic status (Emmy & Thinguri, 2025). To be self-sustaining, teachers

require adequate pedagogical skills and knowledge, as well as cultural understanding that will connect with the experiences of their students. The study will focus on how the teachers of Trans-Nzoia County junior secondary schools manage them and help foster self-reliance within the CBC context. This research will examine the methods teachers use, the challenges they face, and how they adapt the curriculum to suit their students, based on interviews with the researched teachers. The results will contribute to the current debate on the actual practice of CBC in Kenya and provide informative suggestions to educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers on how to further facilitate self-reliant learners in the Kenyan environment.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya marks a significant shift in educational philosophy, where the focus in education has shifted towards learner-centred teaching and skills development, emphasizing self-reliance, critical thinking, and problem-solving. CBC focuses on producing self-reliant learners, although there is a lack of knowledge on the effective degree to which this goal is being achieved in reality, especially in rural counties and deprived environments, as in the case of Trans-Nzoia County. Although the directives recommend it, teachers still find it very difficult to make students self-reliant due to reasons such as large class sizes, a lack of resources, and cultural norms of discipline and power. In Trans-Nzoia County, teachers face the challenge of balancing the learner-centred focus of the CBC with the long-standing, exam-oriented education system, which remains the prevailing mode in many schools. Furthermore, there is a lack of proper teacher training and support, which makes implementing self-reliance strategies in the classroom a challenging situation. The challenges do not allow CBC to fully achieve its goals, and they restrict the development of self-reliant learners. It is thus vital to determine how educators in this part of the country are coping with these issues, as well as how educators are redesigning their teaching to promote learner agency as dictated by the goals of CBC.

1.2 Research Objective

To examine ways in which junior secondary teachers in Trans-Nzoia County can assist in building self-reliance among learners with the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is theoretically justified within the context of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, which provides a basis for viewing the aspect of making learners self-reliant through teacher guidance. Pedagogy, according to Freire, as developed in his masterpiece *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, suggests that teaching and learning should proceed through dialogue and mutual recognition between teachers and students. Freire asserted that learning is not a mechanical process of transmitting knowledge from the teacher to the learner, but rather viewed it as an interactive process in which students play an active role in constructing their knowledge. This idea of conscientization, which involves assisting learners to understand and respond to the social, political, and economic forces that dominate their lives, aligns well with the visions of the CBC, with an articulate focus on critical thinking development, problem-solving, and self-reliance as key competencies (Freire, 1970). On his theory, Freire emphasises the transformation of teachers being the only voice in the classroom to learning facilitators. It demands that teachers cede the role of power and allow learners to be the centre of control, assuming responsibility for their learning through cooperative groups, personal reflection, and problem-solving. The focus on learner-centred instruction aligns with the CBC's emphasis on fostering self-reliance, as educators have the responsibility of creating conditions where learners can take charge of their educational processes, requiring minimal or no intervention. Teachers should formulate learning activities that promote independence, critical thinking, decision-making, and ownership of tasks and relationships with others (Freire, 1970). Moreover, the thoughts presented by Freire, especially, apply in a Kenyan setting where teacher-learner relationships have always been an upheaval. In this environment, teachers need to adopt a new way of thinking, one that prioritizes student voice and cooperation as the most valuable strategies, rather than relying on authority and a top-down approach. Through the incorporation of Freire's critical pedagogy, this research paper has recognized that teachers should play a dual role, advising and enabling students to become independent citizens who can operate effectively in complex societal settings (Shor, 1992). In summary, the Freirean pedagogical theoretical framework offers a powerful conceptualization of how to view the role of teachers in catalyzing self-reliance, as envisaged in the CBC system.

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review will examine the current body of research on the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya, particularly those issues related to developing self-reliant learners. The primary objective of CBC, introduced in Kenya, is to produce not only academically competent individuals but also learners who can think critically and solve their problems independently (KICD, 2017). Nevertheless, several surveys have indicated that teachers are finding it

very hard to introduce this fully, especially in resource-starved areas such as Trans-Nzoia County. The shortage of sufficient resources in most schools is one of the major issues with the adoption of CBC. The aspect of rural teachers is associated with crowded classrooms, a lack of teaching resources, and inadequate teacher training, all of which significantly hinder their ability to establish student-centered classrooms (Ngeno, 2023). The emphasis on traditional or archaic forms of teaching, such as rote learning or passive learning, is contradictory to the CBC approach of active learning and participatory learning. According to researchers (Isaboke et al., 2021; Cheruiyot, 2024), although teachers are broadly supportive of the CBC goals, a large number of them express frustration with their readiness to deliver it due to limited resources and opportunities to prepare professionally. Such disparity in teacher training creates incoherence in the utilization of CBC principles, especially in the aspect of instilling self-reliance among learners. In addition to the resource issues, research has also highlighted the conflict between the expectations of the CBC and the customary cultural requirements of education in Kenya. As an illustration, a hierarchical system of classrooms has long been observed in Kenyan classrooms, whereby teachers are regarded as the supreme authority, and students are expected to take notes and comply with directions without questioning. This conventional method contrasts directly with the learner-centered approach that the CBC uses, where learners are encouraged to invest effort into the study process and become its owners (Kagoire et al., 2024). As noted by Bunduki (2017), such schools create conditions in which teachers are not always able to innovate and introduce new approaches, especially when the community regards passing exams and achieving good academic results as the primary goal, rather than promoting critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Cheruiyot, 2024).

Despite these difficulties, various studies highlight the importance of institutional support and teacher autonomy in the successful implementation of CBC. Learner-centered practices are more likely to be introduced when a school offers teachers the possibility to engage in continuous professional development, mentorship, and collaboration (Muktar et al., 2022). It is rather self-explanatory that when teachers are continuously trained in student-centered approaches and when school leadership provides full support in implementing them, they are far more likely to incorporate these methods into their teaching practice. As an example, Kagoire et al. (2024) found that leaders with a culture of innovation in their schools were better able to cultivate environments that encouraged learner autonomy, as teachers felt free to test new approaches to teaching. Additionally, the community of parents and local leaders plays a vital role in supporting the development of self-reliant learners. Emmy and Thinguri (2024) emphasized that parents are more likely to appreciate independent learning at home when they understand and agree with the goals of the CBC. Community engagement plays a critical role in breaking down societal resistance, which often prioritizes exam achievement over comprehensive learning. Schools where parents discuss the benefits of self-reliance and engage in educational activities foster an environment that is conducive to achieving the CBC goals. Despite such identified barriers, the empirical literature highlights the flexibility of teachers who creatively respond to the challenges they encounter. Educators have also developed creative solutions to utilize local materials and community resources, and involve students in learning through hands-on activities, which aligns with the approach of the CBC, emphasizing practical, hands-on education (Kubai, 2023). For example, in Trans-Nzoia County, teachers have resorted to pedagogical resilience by utilizing locally available materials, such as clay and fibers, to educate in science and the arts due to resource constraints. These strategies not only make learning beneficial but also foster the development of self-reliant learners who can adapt to their environments (KICD, 2017).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design, adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to understand the experiences and perceptions of junior secondary school teachers in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya, regarding the implementation of self-reliance within the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The phenomenological approach was selected because it facilitated a profound comprehension of how teachers could make meaning of their life worlds and how they understood the possibilities and created challenges associated with developing self-independence within the CBC framework. This study found the hermeneutic approach especially helpful because it allowed for exploring the personal reflection and practices of teachers within their social and cultural environments, where they work. The method aimed to gather in-depth explanations of the lives of teachers in a practical scenario.

3.2 Target Population

In this study, the target population consisted of junior high school educators in public schools in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. Trans-Nzoia County was selected due to its special circumstances and conditions, such as being under-resourced, compounded by large classes and rural infrastructure. The challenges presented by the county provided a perfect setting to analyze how the CBC principles, specifically those relevant to the question of self-reliance, are being implemented in a setting where traditional educational practices still prevail. The sample of teachers who participated

in the study played a direct role in implementing the CBC. It was expected to teach using learner-centered teaching techniques, which aimed to develop autonomous, critical thinkers and problem-solving skills in students.

3.3 Sampling Method

The study employed a purposive sampling approach to select participants. This type of non-random sampling was relevant since it enabled the direct choice of participants who were directly involved in the study of the phenomenon, in this case, the implementation of self-reliance within the CBC framework. The purposive sample would select teachers who could provide detailed information and useful data to suit the research goals. It also enabled the researcher to concentrate on teachers who have had extensive experience and knowledge of the issues and strategies involved in enhancing self-reliance.

3.4 Sample Size and Justification

The study covered a total of five junior secondary school teachers in county-owned schools in Trans-Nzoia County. The group of five participants was chosen to balance the richness of the data and the ease of managing the group. A small sample size was considered suitable in qualitative research, as the researcher was able to facilitate in-depth, semi-structured interviews that provided thorough information on the teachers' experiences. Qualitative research is primarily focused on describing lived experiences, and researchers do not aim to generalize their findings to a vast population. The five teachers involved were suitable, insofar as they constituted a reasonable sample size that was diverse enough to provide relevant information within the study time and resource limits. Moreover, all the selected teachers were also experienced in teaching within the framework of the CBC, and they were able to offer valuable insights into the implementation process. Although the small statistical sample diminishes the extent to which the conclusions can be generalized, it enables a thorough understanding of the particular complexities associated with the profession of teaching in Trans-Nzoia County.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were employed to gather data, providing flexibility in collecting details about the participants' experiences. Semi-structured interviews are primarily used in qualitative research, as they permit the researcher to investigate specific issues while also allowing participants to express themselves in their own words. Some of the main themes included in the interviews were: Teachers' understanding of self-reliance within the context of CBC. Strategies employed by teachers to promote self-reliance in students. Challenges faced by teachers in fostering self-reliance and how they adapt to these challenges. The role of institutional and community support in the successful implementation of CBC. Every interview lasted an average of 45 minutes to one hour, during which participants were given adequate time to share their story. They recorded the interviews using a recording device with the participants' consent and transcribed them verbatim, ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the data.

3.6 Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) employed a six-step thematic analysis process to analyze the data, a method accepted by qualitative researchers for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns in the data as a rigorous and systematic process. The process began with familiarization with the data, where the researcher transcribed the audio records and carefully reviewed the transcripts to gain a general understanding of the data. This was then followed by initial coding, in which important sections of the data were coded according to their relevance to the research questions. During the step of searching for themes, the theme codes were combined into larger themes, which were based on the repetitive patterns in the data, particularly in areas such as self-reliance, teaching practices, and the problems that teachers encounter. The reviewing of themes step was conducted to ensure that the identified themes accurately reflected the data and corresponded to the research questions. There was also refinement and combining of themes where necessary. During the step of defining and naming the themes, the themes were clearly defined and named to indicate their essence and meaning. Lastly, during the report's writing, the findings were organized in line with the themes, and a narrative was developed to convey the analysis's outcome. The study's results were subsequently linked to the conceptual background and the literature to provide a comprehensive context for the findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the rights and wellbeing of the participants. The following ethical considerations were made: *Informed Consent*: Prior to participating in the study, each teacher was informed of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and that they would be at liberty to withdraw at any time without consequence. All the participants signed and are included in informed consent. *Confidentiality*: All personal details and interview data were treated as confidential to conceal the identities of the participants. The interviewees were assigned pseudonyms, and all identifying data were removed from the interview records. *Right to*

Withdraw: Participants were given the right to withdraw from the study, which would exclude their data from the analysis in the event of withdrawal.

IV.FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 How Well Teachers Understand Self-Reliance

There was a commonality of meaning regarding self-reliance among the teachers in this study, with the majority adopting the view that self-reliance entailed the capacity of students to determine goals, resolve problems, and conduct their learning as independent individuals. This knowledge can be aligned with the goals of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), which not only aims to produce learners who are academically knowledgeable but also able to flourish in various real-life situations. One teacher clearly articulated this notion:

Self-reliance entails the idea that students can take care of themselves and manage their learning. This is a quality that describes self-reliance. It is no longer in preparing them to take exams but preparing them to face the world that is ahead of them."

This indicates that self-reliance is viewed as a vital life skill, rather than a scholarly competitive advantage. According to the teachers in the study, instilling independence in learners is crucial to ensure they can cope in a world characterized by high rates of unemployment, poverty, and social insecurity. One of the teachers remarked:

"In school, students need to be taught to be self-reliant not only but also in their lives. Their world is evolving at a rapid pace, and they must be able to think and act on their own in order to thrive."

These results align with the opinion of Ngatia et al. (2021), who State that Competency-Based Curriculum is not only about academic results but also about preparing students to face the challenges life can offer them. According to them, CBC ought not only to develop cognitive abilities, but also emotional, social, and practical ones. Teachers emphasized that possessing these qualities is essential for becoming self-reliant, as they enable students to navigate challenging life events. However, simultaneously, there was a belief that self-reliance is an ideal to be pursued, but attaining self-reliance is not an easy task. Teachers emphasized that it was time to change the current system of education, which has always been rooted in rote learning and lecturing. Ngeno (2023) explain that the successful introduction of CBC requires teachers to shift away from being knowledge transfer agents to becoming facilitators of the learning process. Teachers in this study were very enthusiastic about assuming this new role, but identified several obstacles they faced. One of the teachers said:

"We know how crucial self-reliance is, but we cannot make it practical. We continue to be trapped in a system where students get rewarded to learn by rote rather than critically or problem-solving."

This spirit is in sympathy with the conflict between the CBC's purpose and the systems set up in the education system. Teachers believed it was essential to teach students to think critically. However, they were nonetheless frustrated that the system itself pays more attention to exams and content-based tests, rather than building practical competencies. This conflict aligns with KICD (2017), which indicates that the education system needs to adapt to the principles of CBC. Teachers are drawn between traditional schooling, which posits that education is primarily academic, with the goal of success in tests, and the newer, more inclusive education promoted by the CBC.

4.2 Strategies to Help Learners become more Self-Reliant

Educators engaged their students through various techniques, the most commonly used being project-based learning, peer teaching, group work, and leadership assignments, as a way of instilling self-reliance among their learners. Such strategies align with the CBC's idea of providing student-centered learning, in other words, learning processes that enable students to take ownership of their learning. Educators observed that project-based learning enabled students to take ownership of their education, something the traditional system could not achieve. After a teacher explained:

"When I give group projects, I leave students to choose who will take what role in the group. This enables them to develop ownership of the task and acquire skills leading to leadership. They are taught how to work as a team, get organized, and learn to solve a problem collectively."

Project-based learning is regarded as an effective means of fostering self-reliance, as it provides students with the incentive to participate in authentic activities that involve critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. This method aligns with the principles of critical pedagogy, as defined by Freire (1970), who believed in and advocated for active and participatory education, as opposed to passive and prescriptive education. Teachers in this study pointed out that by empowering students with choices about their learning activities, they were not only enhancing self-reliance but also allowing students to develop important life skills that would sustain them even after leaving the learning facilities. Teachers also applied the concept of peer teaching to drive independence. There were regular calls for students to work in pairs or small groups, with more confident students helping their peers understand the concepts. One teacher noted:

"Peer teaching has worked very well in enabling students to become masters of their learning. It enables students to educate each other and gives them confidence. It also assists the students, who may be failing to understand other students, due to the relaxed atmosphere"

The approach is consistent with the studies conducted by Ngatia et al. (2021), who emphasize the necessity of collaboration and the significance of peer learning in promoting student autonomy. Teachers in this paper discovered that when students were empowered by being given leadership roles, either through planning group activities or assisting their peers, they gained a sense of responsibility and motivation for their learning. As one teacher shared:

“Giving leadership responsibilities, such as leading discussions or classroom tasks, will make the students more responsible and confident in general. This makes them experience some interest in their learning, and it comes about because they are motivated to perform a role in the classroom.”

Although these strategies proved effective, implementing them was not very smooth. The resources were also a significant determinant of how far these strategies could be implemented. Teachers in more-resourced schools could provide more experiential learning opportunities to schoolchildren (e.g., hands-on projects and activities), whereas teachers in under-resourced schools had to use a creative approach to make learning exciting with space-limited resources. One teacher shared:

“Our school lacks the resources that other schools have. So, we do what we can with what we have on hand, such as local materials in arts and science. We train pupils on how to utilize the surrounding environment to create learning tools. You cannot expect them to do it easily, but it allows them to relate it to their lives in learning.”

This demonstrates pedagogical resilience, as teachers respond to the problems they face by utilizing locally available resources, as confirmed by the work of Isaboke et al. (2021). These authors emphasize the need to adapt teaching practices to all available resources in efforts towards becoming self-reliant. In Trans-Nzoia County, the teachers demonstrated extraordinary resourcefulness in interacting with students and encouraging self-reliance by utilizing local resources.

4.3 Obstacles to Achieving Self-Reliance

The major obstacles to creating self-reliance that teachers identified included large class sizes, insufficient materials, inadequate funding, and an excessive focus on exams. A critical problem was the large classes, as the teachers were unable to spend time individually with each student, thereby weakening their ability to promote independent learning. One teacher explained:

“With a classroom of 60 students, one could not offer attention to all students in order to promote independence. Most students are dependent on teachers since they lack sufficient time to practice things on their own.”

This finding is consistent with Muktar et al. (2022), whose study revealed that the size of classes and the workload of teachers significantly contribute to the quality of learning in CBC settings. Teachers asserted that the curriculum allowed for independence to be achieved. However, there was a practical limitation to this independence due to the large number of students in the classroom environment. Only a few felt that gap in training; additionally, the teachers needed to be self-reliant and impart this aspect to the students. Early workshops on CBC were typically abstract and did not address the need for adapting teaching to the learner-centered approach required in CBC (Cheruiyot, 2024). One teacher remarked:

“We were trained on CBC, but the training was not adequate. We were informed about the goals; however, no specific instructions were provided on how to accomplish them in the classroom. We also make it up as we go on.”

This observation aligns with Ngeno (2023), who noted that Kenyan teachers tend to express a lack of preparation to implement CBC due to a lack of professional development. Inadequate and direct training did not help teachers gain a proper understanding of the process of making students self-reliant. In addition, parental role was a sword with two sides. Although the benefits of parental involvement are observed, some teachers noted that parents were so heavily involved in their children's academic work that this hindered their efforts to help them become self-sufficient. One teacher shared:

“The parents sometimes end up doing their children's homework or even slip in their work that their pupils did not complete. This will work against the self-sufficiency initiative.”

This illustrates how societal expectations influence education, as Emmy and Thinguri (2024) concluded that when parents prioritize exam performance over skill-building, including critical thinking and independence, it may negatively impact the aims of CBC.

4.4 Institutional and Community Support

Finally, institutional and neighborhood support were identified as crucial for effective CBC deployments and building self-reliance. Teachers in the schools with high leadership indicated that they felt more supported in their efforts to employ learner-centered strategies. One teacher noted:

“It makes a massive difference when the headteacher helps things like mentorship and when the teachers are persuaded to experiment. The teachers are empowered and open to trying out new teaching mechanisms.”

This corresponds to the findings by Kagoire et al. (2024), who discovered that school leadership is a key factor in the effectiveness of CBC, as it fosters innovative conditions and teacher autonomy. Those teachers in schools where an active support mechanism was in place felt more confident in handling CBC and encouraging self-reliance. Additionally, community participation was perceived as vital in supporting the objectives of the CBC. Teachers who engaged parents with their children in a learning process found that it had enabled them to consolidate the relationship between the school and the home, which in turn facilitated the students' self-reliance. One teacher shared:

We hold regular parent meetings to discuss with them the benefits of being self-reliant. The more the parents are aware of the curriculum design, the higher the chances they show their children to practice independence at home.”

The given finding aligns with Kubai's (2023) work, which emphasizes the importance of parent and community engagement in supporting student learning, particularly in rural and under-resourced regions.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how teachers in junior secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya, can foster learner self-reliance using the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The results show that teachers tend to interpret self-reliance as the capability of students to be responsible for their learning, generate options, and resolve issues independently. This knowledge aligns with the goals of the CBC, where education encompasses not only the development of academic knowledge but also critical thinking, problem-solving, and independence. Nevertheless, teachers struggle to fully embrace the ideals of CBC fully, despite being committed to developing self-sufficiency in instruction. The effectiveness of CBC in ensuring the self-reliance of learners is hindered by factors such as overcrowded classrooms, limited facilities, and inadequate opportunities for professional development. There is also tension between the motives of the CBC and the current educational culture, stemming from societal expectations and historical educational practices that prioritize exams over skill development. However, the teachers within Trans-Nzoia County have been resilient and creative in adapting to the challenges. Strategies that they have employed to promote student autonomy include project-based learning, peer teaching, and offering leadership positions.

Additionally, the efforts of school leadership and community participation, particularly parental involvement, have played a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of self-reliance initiatives under the CBC. The study finds that although there has been an improvement in the implementation of the CBC in Trans-Nzoia County, there are still major impediments that must be overcome to ensure the achievement of the curriculum's goals. Students require a more supportive environment in schools and the wider community to develop self-reliance.

5.2 Recommendations

To successfully facilitate self-reliance in learners using the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Trans-Nzoia County, several critical recommendations must be addressed. First, teachers should be professionally prepared to maintain a high level of understanding of CBC; therefore, they should engage in ongoing professional development. Practical teacher education that connects theory with practice in the classroom is essential for teachers, as it should aim to promote independence among students. Additionally, downsizing classes should be encouraged, as small classes would make it easier to individualize attention, allowing teachers to find ways to assist their learners in becoming self-reliant. Schools should also receive sufficient resources, such as teaching materials and technology, to conduct practical learning, which is the highlight of CBC. Moreover, parental engagement is crucial in reinforcing the objectives of CBC. To match parents' focus on having their children develop skills, rather than just performing well academically, schools should play an active role in workshops and meetings with parents to reinforce their expectations. Effective school leadership is also essential, with supportive school leadership establishing an atmosphere where teachers find the confidence to innovate and adopt learner-centered approaches. Finally, the procedure for measuring self-reliance needs to be clarified, and specific instructions on how students can be rated according to their ability to think critically, make decisions, and solve problems should be provided. All of these recommendations are meant to establish more favorable conditions within which the CBC is likely to succeed in Trans-Nzoia County.

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