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## Parental Involvement in the Implementation of CBC in Primary Schools

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated challenges impeding parental involvement in implementing the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Tanga, Tanzania. Purposive sampling used to recruit six participants in interviews which were conducted in Kiswahili language. The obtained data were translated to English language and were analyzed by using thematic analysis. It was found that, despite of, recent improvements in PI, there have been persistent factors contribute to ineffective PI. The challenges includes; limited parental awareness, conflicting work schedules, economic constraints, perceived incompetence, and negligence. To enhance parental involvement, the study recommends that, with fee-free education initiatives, the government should consider both curricular and extracurricular programs which are the key to effective PI in CBC implementation. Beside, parents and school should consider the presence of dual responsibilities of parents in curriculum implementation.

**Keywords:** Competence Based Curriculum; Educational Matters; Educational Success; Parental Involvement

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### INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement (PI) in most Tanzanian educational institutions is elusive. Centralization of educational responsibilities to teachers has made PI in Tanzania to have little consideration (Makwinya and Komba, 2014; Kimaro, and Machumu, 2015). Alternatively, parents are less involved in the entire modalities initiated for effective PI to support educational matters and pupils' educational success. As the case, in most educational institution in Tanzania, there is a lower rate of volunteering, poor attendance in school meetings, and less parental follow up to pupils' academic matters (Nyembeke, 2017; Saware, 2020; and Ali, 2021). This implies that regardless of the significance of PI in the pupil's academic matters, success and curriculum implementation, in Tanzania PI receive little concentration from parents and school personnel

PI involves all practices or action performed by parents at home (Home- based PI) and school (School- based PI) for encouraging pupil's educational success (Machumu and Kimaro, 2015 and Hartas, 2015). Both, home based and school based PI are essential for academic engagement of pupils at home and school; curriculum implementation at home and school Curriculum development and implementation (Tuli and Tarekegne, 2019 and MoEST, 2019) and pupils academic performance(Olibie, 2014).

The history of PI in the context of Tanzania can be traced in the late of 1990's and early 2000s when the government of Tanzania was introducing decentralization by devolution in educational institutions (URT, 1995 and Nyembeke, 2017). To achieve effective PI in all academic institution, from early of 2000's parents were to be included in school committees which were responsible for allocation of suitable area for school construction; mobilization of other community members to participate in school construction; participating in formulation of plan and decision making (URT, Ibid and Nyembeke, 2017).

Currently parents hold dual responsibilities as actors of curriculum of implementation and as educational stakeholders. As the case, as actor parents have to be both involved directly and indirectly in Competence Based curriculum (CBC) (MoEST, 2019). Therefore they are equally accountable for curriculum implementation and academic performance of their individual child (Tuli and Tarekegne, 2019). Apart from supporting learning through direct and indirect cost, the roles of parents in supporting children schooling and curriculum implementation has extended to include; supporting learning at home and school; participating in school governance (school bodies); supporting activities (volunteering); attending in school organised parent- teacher meetings (weekly, monthly, and annually meeting); mediating child's school attendance and behavioural development; participating in self-help schemes (buying books, uniform, exercise books); ensuring effective sharing of information communication and encouraging schools to develop policies which could ensure effective community engagement in academic matters (MoEST, 2019).

On the other hand, as stakeholders, parents have to secure school resources, participate in school organized meetings, and support school initiated programs (MoEST, 2019). In this regard, PI in Tanzania is not static (Komba and Mwandaji, 2015). The induction of new modalities of PI in supporting education matters chiefly, in CBC implementation, offers a wider range for effective PI and enables almost all parents to be equally involved. Besides, through these modalities, parents and schools are expected to build active joint relationship for effective implementation of CBC. However, the extended modalities for effective PI is extending a persistent parental un involvement to both parents and school.

There have been various strategies employed to strengthening and ensuring effective inclusion of parents/ community in education matters. In 2019, MoEST stipulated that, schools are within the community therefore, schools, parents and community in general are inseparable. In this regards, parents of students who studying in different education levels are important actors of CI (MoEST, 2019). However, studies (Saware, 2020; Ali, 2021) conducted on CI shows that CBC implementation and students' academic performance in Tanzania tend to be affected by the means through which parents are involved. Kihumbwe (2015) cemented that, PI in student's academic matters

is still challenging in Tanzania. Therefore, the current study investigated challenges affecting parental involvement in the implementation of CBC in Tanga municipality.

## METHODS

The study employed case study design to study current issues on educational matters (parental involvement). The study employed purposive sampling in selecting parents of primary school pupils, pupils and primary school teachers in Tanga district. It had been researchers' choice to use purposive sampling to select parents, pupils and teachers for the reason that they could have suitable information on PI than any other individuals. Given that qualitative studies requires deep analysis of information by recruiting a small sample size, the researcher recruited six informants (Cresswell, 2009). Interviews were employed to collect suitable data from four primary school teachers and two parents. Bustling working schedule limited availability and enthusiasm of parents to participate in interviews. The collected data were translated to English, coded and analyzed by using thematic analysis. Finally the findings were presented by direct quoting the statements provided by informants during the interview.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Incompetence

Effective curriculum implementation requires, among other things, clarity of pedagogy and the exact roles of implementers (Gross, 197). The involvement of most parents whose children are studying in different education institution at different levels of education is affected by the incompetence that parents have (Lee and Bowen, 2006). In the light of the interviews conducted with parents, it was revealed that parent's ability to participate in the education matters of their children decreases as children are promoted from lower to upper classes. Parents whose children are studying in standards 5, 6 and 7 face difficulties in effectively assisting pupils in some homework, particularly that of mathematics and English. One of the participants noted that;

During that time, when she was in lower classes, I was able to make follow up on her studies. I could ask her questions based on what she had learnt; it was easy to realize whether she understood the particular subject/ concepts or not. Currently, she is in standard six, to me some of subjects/ concepts are difficult. (Therefore) I help her with questions that she is unable to do, and if I fail, then I tell her to go back to her teacher (Interview with P2, 2023).

Another said:

He (the student) may have questions to do at home (homework). When he faces a difficult question, he says, please, mom, help me to do this question. I am always unable to help him because the questions are in English, and I do not understand because I did not study in English-medium schools (interview with P1, 2023).

This indicates that the ability of parents to provide assistance with pupils' homework is limited by the level of skills and knowledge that parents have; therefore, this ability might decrease with an increase in the education level of the pupils. Moreover, parents face difficulty in providing assistance because they don't know how they can help students and they don't have enough information that could enable them to help pupils accomplish homework. More so, the

likelihood of parents being involved in the implementation of CBC decreases with the complexity of the language used in the given take-home assignments. To illustrate, the parents were found unable to help their child with homework because the homework was in English language. This finding are inconsistent to the findings of Nyembeke (2017), who found that parents are incapable of providing assistance to their children, particularly in taking assignments at home, because most parents are ignorant.

### **Negligence**

Presence of disregard among parents, teachers, and students. Negligence among parents depicts parents who do not care about their position on the implementation of CBC in primary school. It was revealed that this kind of parent disdains both school-based and home-based involvement. In the case of school-based involvement, these parents disregard the need to reinforce learning at school as they do not follow up on their child's school attendance, discipline, and academic progress. One of the participants framed that:

There are those (parents) who do not follow up; they (parents) do not know even the classroom that a child is studying in, and they (parents) also do not know even the teachers who teach their children (pupils) (interview with T4, 2023).

Moreover, these parents are neglecting some calls for meetings, and they do not have either routine face-to-face or phone-to-phone communication.

Sometimes the information we send is not delivered, and sometimes you may find the parents do not want to know what is in the letter that was sent to them; they may tell the child to keep it instead of reading it. Others won't pick up the phone or replying the text when you text or call them. Others may pick up the phone, and he or she may promise to respond to the provided information, but you may find the months pass without seeing him or her (interview with T 4, 2023).

On the other hand, in home-based involvement, these parents are careless about reinforcing learning at home, as they do not assist their child with their homework. They are even not reporting the academic progress of their children.

There are parents who are disregarding the importance of their follow-up on their child's academic progress. They won't blame, though their children have neither ability to read nor ability to write (interview with T1, 2023).

The prior information parents had on the meeting to be held made them negligent to attend the school meetings. One of the participants asserted that:

Parents also ignore "they say that what is discussed every day is the same (every day we are told to follow the child's academic performance, every day discipline, every day food contributions (Interview with T3, 2023).

On top of that, it was found that some parents are stubborn; they may attend the meeting for the sake of disrupting the meeting.

Some parents attend to disrupt the meeting, that is, and he says that here he is coming to disrupt, and if you take it for granted, he might record you, and he really goes to report it to social media. Sometimes, parents do not respond to the agreements made during the meeting; most of our agreements end when the meeting is over (interview with T1, 2023).

The findings from the interview indicate that most of the modalities initiated to support CBC implementation in primary schools are affected by the response that parents have towards the implementation of programs. At school meetings, parents and

teachers are expected to share various information about the academic progress of pupils and the school, establishing a collaborative and supportive relationship between school personnel and parents. Nevertheless, few parents are reported to have consistent attendance in the school parental meetings.

Besides, sufficient follow-up by both parents and teachers is paramount to a child's academic performance, discipline, and CBC implementation. However, most parents are reported to ignore their role in following their child's academic matters. To illustrate, some parents think their responsibilities end with providing basic school requirements. And teachers deserve much to fulfill the rest of their responsibilities (teaching, monitoring, and disciplining children).

### **Separation of Families**

Most young parents leave their children to be raised by their grandparents, who are economically unable. This limits their involvement in the programs initiated to support CBC implementation. One of the participants argued that:

My child (pupil) lives with her grandmother; I live on the second street, and I visit her to make follow up on her academic progress, although not often. Mostly, when I visit her, I find her notebooks kept aside, I always have to remind her have a self-study (interview with P2, 2023).

Some parents leave their children with their grandparents because they migrated to other region for economic activities. One of the participants asserted that;

Many children have been abandoned by their parents. Young people (parents) in our region leave their children, they travelling to Dar es Salaam to do their business. Perhaps a child lives with grandmother or grandfather, and you might find that she or he (grandparents) is not able to follow up on the child's educational matters. In some years, there were children here who were raising by themselves because their parents had abandoned them (interview with T3, 2023).

Other parents leave their children to be raised by their grandparents or siblings because of marriage. One of the informants stated that:

Some children are living with their grandparents. Their parents might be married, so these children grow up missing a lot of things. For children of this kind, it is not easy to involve his or her parents, as you know it is difficult for grandmother and the old man to participate fully (interview with T2, 2023).

The findings revealed that parental involvement, to some extent, is limited by the separation of families. Divorce, economic activities, and marriage were found to be prominent reasons for young parents to leave their children. The findings reveal that the grandparents to whom the children are handed over are too old to make sufficient follow-up. Also, the grandparents are economically insufficient to support CBC's supportive programs through donations for weekly and monthly exams.

### **Working Schedule**

Parents spend a considerable time in their working places, this limits their involvement in the implementation of CBC. Some parents get to work early in the morning and call up at night the time when a child has slept or tried to be engaged in studying. This limits both home based and school based parental involvement. In case of school based parents have a limited time to attend school meeting. One of the parents noted:



On average, we have four meetings per year; at the beginning of the term, at the middle of the term, last quarter of the term and at the end of the term. Being honest I may attend only two meetings; you know I have my occupational obligation, so sometimes I cannot postpone my schedule (interview with P2, 2023).

On the other hand, a bustling working schedule limits the opportunity of parents to be involved in home based CBC implementation as they have less or no time to take part in such home learning activities as helping children with home taking assignments. One of the participant said:

Time, due to my life activities, I don't have time to properly participate (in the implementation of CBC) when I am at home. Sometimes when I come to visit her she may ask for assistance, she may tell me that Father we have been given this question, I can reply to her that I will help you later. Often when I come back I find her slept (interview with P2, 2023).

Another informant cemented that:

To the larger extent parents in Tanga are too busy, sometimes you may give to the child a home work and you find the homework is not done because, parents don't care about it. They (Parents) left home early in the morning and they call up at night so they won't be involved in CBC implementation even for a single percent (interview with T4, 2023).

Some pupils are found to be delinquent and arrogant because their parents are too busy to the extent that they lack sufficient time to discipline their children. One of the participant framed:

Some parents leave their working places in the morning, and report in the evening. The time they (parents) leave their working place is the time a child has already left home for school, and the time they (parents) have to report in their work, probably is the time a child is in the class for afternoon session or on the way to home. (Therefore) They (parents) lack the opportunity to discipline their children. That's why we have immoral children (interview with T3, 2023).

The findings from the interview indicate that a bustling working schedule is the hindrance toward CBC implementation. To illustrate, busy parents were found to have less time to discipline their children, helping children with homework besides, participating schools organized CBC implantation programs. Possibly, most parents have inconsistent attendance in school parent meetings, pupils do not accomplish home taking assignments, and are delinquent due to the parent's bustling working schedule. This findings concur the findings of Antony-Newman (2019) who found that routine working schedule made parents incapable to focus on school activities or participate in the schooling of their children on a regular basis. More so, the findings adds to the findings of Powell and Sánchez (2012) who found that the substance abuse problem is a hindrance towards parents' involvement in the education activities of their children.

### **Economic constraints**

PI in the implementation of CBC is affected by financial constraints, lower-income parents and entrepreneurs devote so much time to their daily activities that they devote little attention to their roles in CBC implementation, particularly home-based involvement.

It is a life hardship. Sometimes other parents may say my responsibilities are to ensure that a child has all the requirements and yours are to ensure that you teach the child, teaching him/ her is not my responsibility (interview with T4, 2023).

Another informant asserted that:

Due to my life activities, I don't have time to properly participate in the implementation of CBC when I am at home. Sometimes I come to visit her; she may ask for assistance; she may tell me to tell Father we have been given this question; I can reply to her and I will help you later. Often, when I come back later, I find her asleep (interview with P1, 2023).

More so, financial constraints have limited the possibility for parents to volunteer in such school activities as fund-raising, providing their labor, and other projects initiated by the school.

Some parents are volunteering by following up on truancy and other responsibilities as UWAWA directs; however, most are complaining that they spend a lot of time on UWAWA's responsibilities without being paid. Economic hardship is a hindrance to parental volunteering (interview with T4, 2023).

More so, it limited the possibility of parents regularly attending school-parent meetings, as they were usually conducted during the days and hours when parents had to be in their working areas. Moreover, parents fail to provide a supportive environment for effective learning at home.

To be honest, I can attend two meetings of four; due to the movement of life (economic activities), I cannot manage to attend all of the (interview with P2, 2023).

On the other hand, the parents are unable to cover their children's transportation costs, so they must work, go, and return every day.

Sometimes she is walking; I'm unable to pay all the costs (donation of tests, food, and water bills). Of course, I give her the day if I have it, but if not, she is walking (interview with P1, 2023).

The findings reveal that parents are incapable of being fully involved in the implementation of CBC, both home-based and school-based, because their economic activities take a lot of my time. To exemplify this, some parents were found to report to their workplace early in the morning and call up late in the evening or at night. Moreover, economic hardship made most parents incapable of providing contributions to support school-based CBC supportive programs. These findings support the findings of Fisherman and Nickerson (2015), who found that economic factors as occupational obligations and economic hardship as among the impediments of PI in children's academic matters.

### **Awareness**

Parents barely understand their roles in the education of their children. For instance parents provide their children less time to rest after school every day. After having lunch, children have to perform domestic tasks (washing dishes, fetching water, and washing school uniforms) and engage in jobs to increase family income (TAMISEMI and MoEVT, 2011). Informants argued that a shortage of clear guidelines and sufficient information on how parents can undertake school- based and home- based parental involvement has resulted in camouflage among parents over what their precise roles are in implementing CBC. One parent framed that:

Parents' have low awareness on curriculum issues, so they fail to monitor and participate properly; because they don't understand how to participate, how to monitor, what to do, etc.; it is just like they bring their children here to grow up. Sometimes you may find the parent says " I am in the street (jobless) because education has not helped me, my teachers did everything to me but I failed. I do not think if education will help him (his children)". If this parent would have even a little awareness on the importance of education, they would have known the importance of following up (Interview with T3, 2023).

Another informant asserted that;

Some parents' have average understanding on the implementation of curriculum. The way we use to involve them in the implementation of curriculum is the way we rise their awareness (interview with T2, 2023).

Some parents believe that their involvement ends in the inspection of exercise books to find out whether a child has written or not, the assignment has been marked or not. One of the participants insisted that;

Only a few parents understand, that is, they do not understand because not all parents are educated. What they (the parent) cares about is that the student should be taught and understand, write and the exercise book are marked then (interview with T1, 2023).

Some parents believe that their roles in the implementation of CBC is to buy child's school requirements and helping a child with home works. It was unveiled that:

I participate through providing school needs to her on time. I buy her a notebook, uniforms, Also, I help her with questions that she is unable to do, and if I fail, then I tell her to go back to her teacher (interview with P2, 2023).

Another cemented that;

Sometimes other parents may say my responsibility is to ensure that the child is having all the requirements and yours is to ensure that you teach the child and he understands, teaching him is not my responsibility (interview with T4, 2023).

Some parents claimed to be involved by preparing a child before he goes to school and buying children School requirements.

I just monitor the child's performance and fulfill what the teachers asked to be bought for him (his needs), such as reading books and notebooks, and prepare him early to go to school (interview with P1, 2023).

The findings reveal that parents barely understand their precise position in the implementation of CBC. For instance, effective implementation of CBC requires implementers to be facilitators. However, parents provide assistance to the pupils, particularly in doing homework, parents are doing assignments for the pupils instead of facilitating and guiding pupils to do homework for themselves. In addition, parents understand that parental involvement is limited to self-helping schemes (buying the child's school requirements). In this regard, parents are not ignorant of their roles in the implementation of CBC; instead, they are narrowly aware of their exact roles in the implementation of CBC. These findings contrast with those of Nyembeke (2017), who discovered that parents are completely unaware of their roles in their children's education. The findings of this study adds to the findings of TAMISEMI and MoEVT (2010) who found that parents have less awareness on education matters as they use the



time they spend with children after school hours to engage children in domestic and economic activities.

### **Enthusiasm**

Parental involvement in the implementation of CBC in primary schools is affected by the willingness that parents and teachers have towards parental involvement, along with the efforts the children have towards education matters. On the side of pupils, the enthusiasm children have towards education matters to some extent and affects the involvement of parents in the home-based CBC implementation. Some children reported having less eagerness towards their academic career, a situation that turned back parents' motivation to participate in their child's education matters. One parent asserted that:

The readiness of a child herself means she cannot take an exercise book for her self-studies. This may be because she has not yet grown enough to understand the importance of education; therefore, it is difficult to remind her all the time, and as I have said, she is living with her grandmother. So I used to remind her on the day I came to visit her (interview with P2, 2023).

Another participant stressed that:

My participation somehow helps him have self-study at home because if I do not tell him to study, he could play all day (interview with P1, 2023).

On the side of school-based CBC implementation, some parents reported having less cooperation with the school personnel as they were not ready to be involved in the school-initiated programs. One of the participants reported that:

We are hesitating to involve parents in some volunteering programs because the parents are not ready to be involved. They sometimes report us on social media as we tell them to contribute to a certain ram. For instance, last year we encouraged parents to participate by contributing money for monthly exam programs, but some parents reported to social media unsatisfactorily that school X is forcing parents to pay money for their own programs (interview with T1, 2023).

On the other hand, it was reported that some parents are eager to follow up on the education progress, but some teachers are less collaborative. One of the informants stated that:

The challenge I face is that, for example, a child might come with incomplete work or notes. Whenever I ask him, he tells me that the teacher cleaned the board before I completed it. When you go to school to follow up, his teacher tells you that he didn't clean the board. Now I can't help my child find what he missed by not being able to complete writing. Sometimes, when you ask his teacher, he says your child is lazy, so I find it difficult to be effectively involved. I tell him to try hard, and the child always reacts well. It happens frequently, whenever you ask his teacher, there is only one reason: he always says that my child is lazy. That's why sometimes I am not interested (interview with P1, 2023).

For effective parental involvement, primary school personnel are responsible for building a collaborative partnership with parents by sharing their vision and policies with them. Parents are responsible for supporting the policies, vision, and initiated programs to strengthen CBC implementation (MoEST, Ibid). Divergently, the findings from the interview revealed that parents have less eagerness towards the CBC implementation and supporting programs planned by school ff. This situation affected

school plans, vision, and programs initiated to support CBC implementation. To exemplify, teachers hesitate to request contributions from parents for the initiated programs. This implies that the enthusiasm of parents discourages parental involvement in the implementation of CBC in primary schools. This finding supports the findings of Kayombo (2017), who found that most parents do not support the modalities initiated to support the academic progress of pupils and school in general.

On the other hand, it is almost all parents' expectation to have hard-studying children whose efforts might result in the best academic performance. Conversely, the children spent most of their time playing instead of studying hard. This lowers the parent's aspirations for their children and their participation in their child's education activities. These findings concur with the findings of Powell and Sánchez (2012), who found that parents' engagement in their child's education matters, among other things, depending on the aspirations parents have for their children.

### **Number of children within the family**

Some parents are eager to be involved in the education matters of their children; however, the number of children they have, particularly those who are studying in primary schools in Tanga, limits their participation in the implementation of CBC. One of the informants stated that:

It is possible that meetings in two or three different schools are held on the same day, making it difficult for a parent with children in those schools to attend every meeting (interview with T3, 2023).

The findings reveal that parents are incapable of attending school meetings, which are essential to their involvement in the implementation of CBC, because the parents have children who study at different primary schools. To illustrate the findings, parents have to attend one school meeting out of many hosted by the schools in which their children are studying. This number of children may affect parental participation in the implementation of CBC. This finding coheres with the findings of Nyembeke (2017), who found that most parents were able to support the academic matters of their children because they have few children who are studying.

However, reinforcing learning when a child is at school is an important modality of parental involvement, but there are parents who feel like they are not part of the child's education, particularly when a child is at school. One of the participants stated that:

Parents who are actively involved, assist their children with their academic demands, keep track of their attendance, and glance at child's notebooks to see if they have written or not (interview with T4, 2023).

However, it was found that only active parents are involved in reinforcement learning. This implies that PI is low in two senses: the first sense, in which few parents (active) are involved in the implementation of CBC, and the second sense, in which most parents are partially involved in the implementation of CBC as they take part in their responsibilities. The findings reveal that schools are doing their best to ensure that PI in the implementation of CBC is achieved at the highest level. To illustrate, teachers provide advice and share information on the students' academic performance whenever they are asked to do so.

## CONCLUSION

Generally, modalities to involve parents in implementation of CBC and education matters in general have considerably improved to ensure that parents of all status are involved. However, improvements made in modalities to involve parents are limited by such factors which could be sorted as parental factors and school factors. The factors are brought about by social and economic constraints. To ensure effective parental involvement school staff and government in general have to ensure that both social and economic constraints are solved. To illustrate with free education, the government could consider extracurricular programs (as weekly and monthly exams) and Uwawa. Moreover the school staff should strive to ensure a good relationship between parents and school staff to avoid hostile relationships and good perception and attitude toward parental involvement.

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