Influence of Teachers' Preparedness on English Curriculum Implementation in Kenyan Schools

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Abstract

The Government of Kenya (GoK) touts teacher-preparedness as a critical factor that shows the equipping of a professional teacher for quality performance and satisfactory learner performance in national examinations. Despite the efforts by the GoK, there is a worrying trend of students completing school with reading and writing difficulties. The Kenya National Examinations Council (2020) contends students' poor performance in English for the past 5 years, falling short of the average mean of 50%. Descriptive research design was used. A sample of 44 principals, 88 teachers and 345 form three students across 50 public secondary schools in Kakamega North, were targeted. A questionnaire, interview schedule, classroom practice observation schedule, and focus group discussion guide were used to collect data. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically whereas quantitative data was presented through tables, percentages and frequencies. Chi-square test was performed to test hypothesis. Response rate was 79.5%. The findings indicated that majority (97.1%) of the teachers participated in coursebooks and other revision textbook in-service courses as per the changing trends in teaching of English whereas ICT workshops had low percentages, a gap pointing on teacher level of preparedness. The findings from principals indicated, teachers of English sometimes declined to take up ICT in-service trainings for fear of additional responsibilities in school. Findings from FGDs show, teachers were rated average by most students in terms of preparedness in material use in classrooms. On determining the extent to which teacher level of preparedness influence implementation of English curriculum in school, teachers' opinions had a Mean of 4.0000; Standard deviation of 3.08338; and Skewness of .397, indicating teacher level of preparedness has a high and strong positive influence on implementation of English curriculum in school if well checked and applied. The study established a significant relationship between teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum (p=0.007<0.05). Findings concur with KNEC (2020), contending students' poor performance in English as unsatisfying.

Keywords: teacher level of preparedness, implementation, English curriculum

1. Introduction

1.1 Contextualization of the Problem

With English as a universal language; playing a central role in a globalized digital world and an instructional tool providing students with listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, for meaningful and fulfilling lives (Onotere, Isama & Okpan, 2021), there is need for an acceptable teacher level of preparedness (UNESCO, 2020). English is used in every corner of the world as a medium to interact among people from different cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds. Tripura and Panda (2023); and Massri's (2020) study posits, since 2000 each country is striving for global standards by reflecting on teacher-preparedness approaches. Lynell (2019) argues, there are several factors which determine students' grades in examinations, but the teacher is the main facilitator. Hero (2020) reiterates Lynell's views stating, teacher-preparedness is key if English curriculum is to be successfully

implemented and students' performance improved. Xie and Cui's (2021) study also illuminates, teacher level of preparedness for technology and new methods, and positive attitude towards digital gadgets is inevitable for successful implementation of English curriculum in schools.

In Indonesia, Par's (2022) study opines, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought a profound impact on teaching of English; teachers of English have inevitably adapted and shifted to remote teaching utilizing technology, for instance, classroom practices of integrating the TPACK. However, there are still unanswered questions regarding teacher level of preparedness, in terms of orientations in skill acquisitions and in-service trainings, for effective integration of technologies, particularly in the teaching of English in order to prepare students to become empowered learners. A study by Ahmadi (2018) claims, Iran as a country touts English language as a significant tool that affects its international communication activities. Students utilize different parts of English language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing for their proficiency and communication. However, as much as the use of technology has become an important part of the English language learning process in and out of the classroom and that every English language class usually uses some form of technology to provide quality education, teachers are not that skillful users of the technology. The Iran government acknowledges, just providing access to technology is not adequate, but meaningful teacher professional development through workshops and in-service trainings to equip teachers of English with digital literacy competencies and skills.

Despite governments spending millions of money on teacher in-service trainings in ICT skills vis-à-vis engaging teachers in exploring discovery teaching methods and models for practical tactics to boost students' communicative competence, accomplishments have not been enough. Globally, MoE (2022) shows that in one way or the other, factors like students-teacher ratios, teacher absenteeism, peer influence, family socio-economic status and involvement impede students' performance, citing 93-150 million children with disability who are still left behind unable to read and write. UNESCO (2020) claims, there are 7775 million adults and 250 million children who are unable to read and write in English. In USA, Saefurrohman and Balinas (2016) show 66% of 4th graders and 22% of 8th graders with difficulties in reading and writing. In Asia, Massri (2020) illuminates, teachers of English are supported through workshops and in-service trainings on how to incorporate discovery teaching methods in the classroom activities. It is believed that literary activities such as storytelling, poetry recitation, debate, speaking, group activities and writing competition can enhance students' learning of English and improve performance. However, the problem of students' low performance in English still persists despite teachers of English having been supported through workshops, seminars and in-service trainings, which makes people to question teacher level of preparedness for successful implementation of English curriculum.

In Africa, UNESCO (2020) shows more than 90% of students complete school with reading and writing difficulties. In Nigeria, Onotere, Isama and Okpan (2021) and Akpan, Igwe and Kanno (2020) indicate, English language is the official language of communication used in basic schools, offices, business and skill acquisition. Hence, apart from making good grades in the subject, good communication skill in English language is needed by basic education students to make them become responsible and respectful global citizens. However, most Universal Basic Education (UBE) graduates are often unable to express themselves properly either orally or in writing. English Studies as currently titled, is a core subject at the Universal Basic Education (UBE) level in Nigeria. This problem is also revealed in a performance analysis of candidates in 2018 May/June West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) carried out by Olarewaju and Alabi (2018). The analysis showed that out of the 1,572,396 candidates that sat for the examination, 786,016 candidates representing 49.98% obtained credit and above in English Language. The problem revealed by this analysis is the unimpressive number of candidates that failed to have a credit pass in English. Olarewaju and Alabi's (2018) study therefore recommends that it is necessary to find out the influence of teacher level of preparedness on academic achievement of students in English, which cuts across the learning of all other subjects.

The Republic of Kenya (RoK) (2022) shows the government acknowledges quality education and results. In the financial year (FY) 2019/20 investment in education was Kshs. 94.3 billion whereas in FY 2020/21 the total allocation increased by 1.4% to Kshs. 95.6 billion. Heavy investments are put into teacher training through pre-and in-service courses meant to equip teachers with knowledge and skills for making sound judgment upon values, attitudes, materials, teaching methods, and classroom assessment; for quality delivery of content and meant to translate in students' quality performance in national examinations. It is indicated in MoE (2022) that teacher preparedness is a global issue that influences the implementation of classroom activities and students' performance in national examinations. Despite the GoK's heavy investments in teacher preparedness, the KNEC (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022) reports contend competency of teachers of English in classroom activities, associating it to students' poor performance in KCSE English examinations for the last 5 years which falls short of the average mean of 50%. Students' numerous mistakes in the three papers are cited. Locally, Kakamega North

Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Office (KNSQASO) (2019) contends students' poor performance in English in Kakamega North since 2015 to 2019 unlike in Kakamega East and Central Sub-Counties, yet all schools follow similar syllabus and teachers undergo uniform pre-and in-service courses. Kakamega North seems to have issues on teacher level of preparedness and teaching of English.

2. Statement of the Problem

The KNEC (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) KCSE examination reports contend, the overall performance in English has remained short of the average mean of 50%. The reports attribute students' poor performance in KCSE English examinations to lack of mastery of English language skills, inability in reading, analyzing or synthesizing information to write effective answers in an organized manner. The reports call for relentless effort from teachers. This worrisome trend attracts concerns from the GoK which spends approx. 27% of its national budget on education. Other key stakeholders also get concerned despite the concerted efforts by the GoK investing in education for quality results. Teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum in school becomes questionable. Kakamega North Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Office (KNSQASO) (2019) contends students' poor performance in English in Kakamega North since 2015 to 2019 unlike in Kakamega East and Central Sub-Counties, yet all schools follow similar syllabus and teachers undergo uniform pre-and in-service trainings. There is a link between teacher level of preparedness and curriculum implementation, revealed in students' performance. The challenge lies with teacher unpreparedness, a knowledge gap for investigation.

2.1 The Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of teacher level of preparedness on implementation of English curriculum in public secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County, Kenya.

2.2 Research Hypothesis

H_0: There is no significant relationship between teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum in public secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County, Kenya.

2.3 Significance of the Study

The study would be a tool of learning for the principals because they are involved in one way or another in setting strategies for successful implementation of English curriculum in schools. The principals would benefit on how to improve their ways of supporting teachers of English on classroom activities that positively influence student's performance in KCSE English examinations. The study provides insights to principals regarding the influence of teacher level of preparedness on implementation of English curriculum in schools. If well checked on, would improve students' performance in KCSE English examinations. It has provided detailed teacher classroom activities that require the role of principals in monitoring, controlling and evaluating for achievement of the desired results in English. The findings show principals components to observe in teacher classroom activities in order to come up with an effective implementation approach in teaching of English: lesson preparation, execution and evaluation and thereafter recommend teachers for in-service trainings.

It is hoped, the study findings would be useful to the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASO), reporting to the Ministry of Education (MOE) on teachers' performance gaps and provide support for workshops and in-service trainings. The QASO would further use the study to improve their in-service programmes for teachers of English with the aim of helping students to perform better in KCSE English examinations. Challenges principals and teachers of English face while carrying the implementation process in schools would also be brought to the attention of QASO and be addressed, particularly during the formulation of policies relating to effective curriculum implementation in schools.

Curriculum Support Officers would use the study to assess teacher level of preparedness in English in terms of teacher's orientations in skills acquisition, pre-and in-service trainings and would then use the findings to liaise with Sub-County Directors of Education on specific gaps touching on teacher ability in: operating of ICT devices; preparing professional documents; preparing students in acquisition of communicative competence; exposing students to emerging issues through all the language skills; demonstrating innovation and creativity in teaching; using of methods like role plays, discussions and debates; classroom management rules and procedures; marking and setting of the skills; content delivery; lesson organization; syllabus coverage; and nurturing positive attitudes in students. Sub-County Directors of Education would then liaise with County Directors of Education to inform MoE on areas that require attention during in-service trainings for teachers of English. The research would help MoE then plan in-service courses that would help teachers acquire new skills of improving students' performance.

It is hoped, findings in this study would benefit teachers of English who would get insights on comments and suggestions from KNEC, QASO, principals and students and take initiative to attend in-service trainings recommended for successful implementation of English curriculum in schools to improve students' performance. The study created an avenue through which teachers of English shared their experiences and suggestions, especially in the handling of the language skills in their classroom activities that determine in many ways the success of students in KCSE English examinations. The study contains vital data from KNEC and Kakamega North Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Office (KNSQASO) showing students' performance in KCSE English examinations for the years 2015-2019, which would be useful for comparison by teachers of English in public secondary schools in Kakamega North. By going through such significant data, teachers of English would agree that students' performance in KCSE English examinations for the five years (2015-2019) still falls short of the ideal mean of 100(50%), a worrisome trend calling for an investigation into teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum in schools. The study findings show teachers areas of difficulty and suggestions from KNEC (2017; 2018; 2019; 2021; and 2022) reports on how such areas can be better taught in the three papers (101/1; 101/2; 101/3), especially in writing imaginative compositions and essays based on set texts, to enhance students' language proficiency levels.

English is a compulsory subject at secondary school level and during selection of courses for admission into tertiary institutions, the student's KCSE score in English is one of the key determining factors into future career. Students would be keen to set targets of their performance in English as a result of consistent monitoring, guidance and evaluation by their teachers of English. This study would help students discover their areas of weaknesses in the three papers (101/1; 101/2; and 101/3). Students would benefit from quality teaching and learning of English when their teachers impress upon them quality classroom practices acquired from in-service trainings attended. When better results are received, many students would get opportunities for admission into tertiary institutions.

Finally, in this area of study, there are suggested areas for researchers to study in order enrich knowledge in this field. This would further improve quality of classroom activities during English lessons. Other researchers would be motivated to study the problem in other institutions that would add to the existing data in order to further improve the quality of education by providing students with plenty of practice in the three papers offered by KNEC in KCSE English examinations, for better results.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Teacher Orientations in Skills Acquisition and Its Effectiveness in Implementation of English Curriculum in School

In his study, "Teaching English as a 'second language' in Kenya and the United States: Convergences and divergences" Roy-Campbell (2014) touts English, one of the dominant world languages, spoken in five countries as the native language (Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand and the United States of America), also used as an official language in numerous other countries (former British colonies in Africa and Asia) where it is an imported language. Teaching of English in classrooms, therefore, requires teacher orientations on skills acquisition and continuous in-service trainings. A study by Russell, Rehana, Supat, Lovella, Myla, Almighty, Jupeth and Randy (2021) in Ventayen on "Language Teachers' Pedagogical Orientations in Integrating Technology in the Online Classroom: Its Effect on Students Motivation and Engagement" shows, implementation of English curricula is affected by technological advancements. The usage of technology in teaching of English is on the rise as a teaching tool. Unfortunately, not all teachers of English know how to utilize recent advances to improve learning in the classroom. Further, the study findings indicated that there is a significant relationship between the teachers' pedagogical orientations in integrating technology in the online classroom to students' motivation and engagement. Hence, the study's null hypothesis stating no significant relationship between pedagogical orientation and student motivation, was rejected with student-centered belief having (r value= 0.778, pvalue = 0.043), teacher preparation for computer utilization (r-value = 0.698, p value= 0.012), integration of computer in the classroom (r value= 0.723, p value= 0.011), and attitude towards computer utilization) r value= 0.863, p value= 0.023) are positively related to the student's level of engagement. This suggests that the teachers' belief in utilizing student-centered teaching to integrate technology in the language classroom, the higher the students are motivated and engaged in learning. In like manner, it was also revealed that teacher-centered belief (r value= -0.531, p value= 0.032) is negatively correlated to students motivation and engagement in online language learning, which signifies that teacher-directed learning such as the use of one-way directed learning is found not appealing to the motivating characteristics of the language students. This means that the higher the teacher adhered to teacher-centered beliefs, the lower the students' felt motivated and engaged. The reasons behind this finding are, when students are empowered to explore and learn language

lessons with the use of student-centered teaching strategies in online learning, the higher students manifest motivation and engagement. The study suggested more research in teachers' pedagogical orientations and implementation of English curriculum in school.

Crystal's (2012) study also indicates, globalization and technology keep up reforming English as an international tool of instruction and development in all aspects of our life which necessitates teacher orientations on skills acquisition to help them understand the paradigm shift so that they adapt pedagogical approaches that can help them implement English curriculum effectively. Crystal's (2012) study recommends for further research to establish extent to which teacher level of preparedness influence implementation of English curriculum in terms of orientations in skills acquisition and in-service courses since English merely serves as a tool for them in the delivery and acquisition of subject area knowledge which in turn helps students to acquire desired knowledge and skills for life. Karakaş' (2015) study on orientations towards English among English medium instruction students says, teachers need orientations to English for attitudinal change. Teachers' orientations in skills acquisition for teaching of English is imperative to discover the way the teachers perceive English as a subject, materials for use, preparation of professional documents, assessment methods, time allocated for syllabus coverage, and exploration of students' needs to achieve set goals. Saefurrohman and Balinas (2016) show, revision and reforms on English curriculum are inevitable from time to time in many countries worldwide, ranging from America to Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa, in order to meet the changing times and demands. However, as countries change their curricula as per the global trends and technological changes, the issue of teacher level of preparedness in terms of orientations in skill acquisition, pre-and in-service arise. The questions becomes, "To what extent would orientations in skill acquisition, pre-and in-service trainings on English curriculum implementation and reforms influence students' achievement in English as a subject?" Chen and Kent (2020) show, a teacher's confidence in teaching and comprehension of English content is influenced through prior interactions with others in trainings, which serve as the base for planned activity and classroom behavior. The study claims, students' assessment results are proof of the teacher's orientations on skills acquisition.

Matere, Nyakan and Kafwa's (2017) study assessed effect of teachers' organization of content on the learners' acquisition of linguistic skills among secondary school students in Bungoma County, Kenya. The study found that teacher-preparedness in teaching of English is informed by the level, content and methodology to be used in the classroom. This understanding of what constitutes language teaching and performance, which is associated with learners' achievement of linguistic skills. The study recommended that teachers need to adopt new strategies of assessing students. English is an essential subject in the core curriculum in Kenya. Being a compulsory subject and a means of instruction, there is need for teachers to perform well in the teaching of the subject matter. Such findings would be significant to teachers of English to re-evaluate their styles of teaching and improve on them. It may also assist curriculum planners and developers at Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) on need to organize in-service course for teachers of English in line with the revised English curriculum.

3.2 Teachers' Pre-and in-service Trainings and Implementation of English Curriculum

Darling-Hammond, Wei and Johnson (2012) show in "Teacher preparation and teacher learning Handbook of Education Policy Research" that education has increasingly become important to success of both individuals and nations. Growing evidence demonstrates that, among all educational resources, teachers' abilities are especially critical contributors to students' learning and consequently the success of a nation to advance in its economic, social and political spheres. Further, Darling-Hammond, Wei and Johnson (2012) claim that professionally, powerful teaching is very important and increasing in the contemporary society as a result of the steam of dynamic initiatives of human development and evolution. Due to these developments and evolutions of the 21st century, teachers would need to acquire additional knowledge and skills, through both pre-and in-service trainings, to be able to survive and be successful in curriculum implementation in school. Through pre-and in-service trainings, teachers may acquire knowledge and skills on core concepts to guide decisions and practice in classrooms, professionally (Darling-Hammond, 2012), specifically: knowledge of learners and how they learn and develop within social contexts, including knowledge of language development; understanding of curriculum content and goals, including the subject matter and skills to be taught in the light of disciplinary demands, student needs and the social purposes of education; and understanding of and skills for teaching, including content knowledge of specific subject, content pedagogical knowledge for teaching diverse learners, as these are informed by an understanding of assessment and of how to construct and manage a productive classroom.

Maboe, Smith, Banoobhai and Makgatho's (2018) study on implementing tablets to teach reading shows, teacher level of preparedness and English curriculum implementation is an area that has attracted many researchers in

the last ten years whose focus has been put on examining influence of workshops, seminars, and pre-and in-service trainings on teaching of English. Further, Maboe, Smith, Banoobhai and Makgatho (2018) say, there has been a growing interest amongst education policy-makers in devising policies aimed at empowering in-service trainings to improve students' performance in English. Therefore, the study recommends for more investigations to establish the relationship between teacher level of preparedness, especially during pre-and in-service trainings and students' performance in English regardless of socio-economic status in a range of schools in respective countries.

Au, Raphael and Mooney's (2008) study touts teacher in-service trainings, indicating that they are loaded with many benefits for teaching of English. It shows, exemplary teachers of English have a variety of methodologies at their fingertips, which were acquired from workshops and in-service trainings. They have been taught on when and how to apply and combine them. They are well-versed in the theory and rationale underpinning these methods and understand the complexity and developmental nature of their students. Findings from Au, Raphael and Mooney's (2008) study show, there is significant relationship between teachers' in-service trainings and implementation of English curriculum in school. There is need for more investigations to determine the influence of teacher level of preparedness, through in-service trainings, on teaching of English.

In Kenya, Kobia's (2022) study posits, the attainment Kenya Vision 2030 highly depends on teacher level of preparedness in teaching of English. Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2015 shows, training of teachers of English plays an important role in an educational system, since teachers of English are central to the implementation process. Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) (2021) argues that a well-designed and effectively implemented teacher training programme is the key element to the successful implementation. Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) (2021) attributes failure of intended students' learning outcomes mainly to ineffective teacher level of preparedness. For example, in Kenyan teacher training colleges, if teachers of English are not well equipped with approaches, materials and assessment practices to teach English then the major challenges facing teachers of English and students' poor performance, as far as it is concerned, can be traced back to their pre-and in-service trainings. A study by Macharia and Kimaita (2018) on "Influence of Teacher Factors on Implementation of English Curriculum in Public Primary Schools in Jarajilla Division, Garissa County, Kenya" shows, there is an important relationship between the approach to training in English teachers' colleges and how student teacher of English and beginning teacher of English teach in their classrooms. Additionally, Macharia and Kimaita (2018) tout pre-and in-service courses indicating, a well-designed and effectively implemented teacher training programmes equip teachers with skills to deal with emerging social, economic, cultural, political and scientific issues successful implementation of English curriculum in school. Imonje (2021) shows, teacher preparedness starts with pre-service training and all the prerequisite requirements. The in-service courses the teacher attends enhance the effectiveness of classroom teaching and equip the teacher with desired competencies and skills for creativity, innovativeness and improvisation of learning resources and ability to create a safer, conducive and secure environments which foster effective transfer and acquisition of knowledge in schools. According to MoE (2022), there is a significant relationship between teacher-preparedness and students' performance. Therefore, MoE (2022) regards teacher level of preparedness as an integration of all the requirements that constitute the making of a professional teacher. Studies by Mbithe (2014); Linet (2014); Nyale, Mwawasi and Muli (2018); Ochako, Okwako and Okoth (2019); and Kobia (2022) contend students' poor performance in English, making the GoK and general public doubt teacher level of preparedness. One can deduce that good training goes a long way in ensuring that teachers of English are well versed with skills of teaching, assessment and handling the attitudes which may influence students' results either positively or negatively.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This study anchors on Jean Piaget's (1896-1980) personal constructivism theory; principles, strengths, weaknesses and implications in teaching of English. Mvududu and Theil-Burgess' (2012) study "Constructivism in Practice", touts Jean Piaget (1896-1980) the proponent with ideas on child psychology and language learning. This theory has two principles, vital for teachers of English. First, "learners construct new understandings using what they already know about language". Second, "learning of language is active not passive". To Mvududu and Theil-Burgess (2012), the two principles have great implications to teaching of English. First, "teaching of English cannot be viewed as transmission of knowledge from the enlightened to unenlightened", learners previous experiences influence new knowledge they construct from new experiences. Second, "if learning is based on prior knowledge, teachers should provide amiable environment, exploiting inconsistencies between learners' current understandings and new experiences before them". Third, "if students must apply current understandings in new situations to build new knowledge, teacher competencies in material use and methods is

vital". Fourth, "if new knowledge is actively built, ample time is needed to allow students' reflection. Strengths of this theory are: it applies across diversity dimensions of students' abilities and skill-based methods. Weaknesses are inevitable, applying individualized methods like role play in classrooms with diverse entry behaviours is challenging. But Piaget's theory has great rewards to both students and teachers.

4. Methodology

Research methodology covers research design, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, validity, reliability, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

4.1 Research Design

Descriptive research design was used. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) say, descriptive survey design enables researchers gather qualitative and quantitative data from respondents, summarise, systematically perform cross tabulation and interpret data basing on each variable in relation to objectives of the study. In this study, descriptive survey design allowed collection of descriptive data regarding the characteristics of principals, teachers of English and students, and their opinions on the classroom practices, assessments, discovery teaching methods, conditions and experiences towards implementation of English curriculum in public secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County in a way to systematically solicit for factual information for decision-making. Therefore, the design allowed the researcher to determine the relationship between teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum in school. In addition, the design supports use of various methods of data collection. Therefore the researcher was able to utilize interview guide for principals, questionnaire for teachers of English, FGD guide for students and a classroom practice observation schedule to collect information from the participants. Use of the various research instruments in collecting data, enabled the researcher to collect detailed information. It also made it possible for the researcher to triangulate the findings.

4.2 Target Population

The study targeted 50 public secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County which comprised of 3484 participants involving 113 teachers of English, 50 principals and 3321 form three students. The 50 schools consisted 1 extra county, 8 county and 41 sub-county, comprising boys only (4), girls only (4) and mixed secondary schools (42) (KNSQASO, 2019).

4.3 Sample Size

A sample is a sub-group in a population used as a representative of the population, to derive inferences about the characteristics of that population for study purposes (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2019). All teachers of English, principals and form three students from 50 schools were used to determine the study sample. Cochran's formula (1963) of calculating sample size (Taherdoost, 2017) was used to compute schools, teachers and students' ideal sample sizes, given the desired level of precision, confidence level and an estimate of P (the estimated proportion of the attribute present in the population). Thus:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where: e = the desired level of precision (i.e. the margin of error); p = the (estimated) proportion of the population which has the attribute in question; q = is $1 - p$; and Z = a Z Table-value.

Cochran's formula was then adjusted to obtain the required sample size using:

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{(n_0 - 1)}{N}}$$

Where: n_0 = Cochran's sample size recommendation; N = the population size; and n = the new, adjusted sample size.

Orodho, Khatete and Mugiraneza (2016) suggest, typical levels of confidence to be used in research are: 95 percent (0.05: Z= 1.96) or 99 percent (0.01: Z=2.57), and 50% as an estimate of P. This study used 95% (0.05: Z= 1.96) level of confidence and 50% estimate of P to have samples with true population value within the margin of error (e) specified. The samples used in the main study were 44 schools, 88 teachers of English and

345 form three students from the target population of 50 schools, 113 teachers and 3321 form three students.

4.4 Sampling Techniques

Sampling allows researchers to study a workable number of cases from the large group to derive findings that are relevant to all members of the group (Matula, Kyalo, Mulwa & Gichuhi, 2018). The study employed simple random sampling to select participating schools. When selecting students, stratification was done basing on type of school to ensure the proportion of male and female students in the sample was the same as in population. Therefore, all the 50 schools were categorized as either Mixed Day School or Boys Day School or Girls Day School or Boys Boarding School or Girls Boarding School. Thus, the target population was fairly and equitably representative of entire spectrum of public secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County.

4.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The study used a questionnaire, interview guides, an FGD guide and a classroom practice observation schedule to collect data. Quantitative data was summarized using descriptive statistics, mainly Means, frequencies, variances, standard deviations and percentages were presented in tables for interpretation whereas the hypothesis was tested using the chi-square test. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically, and the data obtained was used to compliment and expound on the meaning of quantitative data from the questionnaires. The voices of the interviewees and FGD responses were captured in the analysis.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues of concern are informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and researcher's responsibility (Matula, Kyalo, Mulwa & Gichuhi, 2018). In this study, the researcher ensured informed consent. Participants were adequately informed about the purpose and procedures of the study. Besides, participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity, that is, their individual or personal lives would not be intruded in the course of research and therefore names were not allowed on questionnaires. To attain researcher's responsibility, the researcher upheld high levels of human dignity by making sure the instrument items gather only the information intended for the study. Also, research permit was sought and Sub-County Director of Education and principals informed before data collection process.

5. Findings of the Study

This survey aimed at understanding the influence of teacher level of preparedness on implementation of English curriculum in public secondary schools and for purposes of education policy makers and planners to make decisions concerning teacher professional development in terms of teacher orientations on skills acquisition and pre-and in-service trainings for appropriate pedagogies for quality results.

5.1 Teacher Participation in In-service Trainings on Material Use

Teachers were asked to show, with respect to their teaching experience, whether they participated in in-service trainings in using forms of teaching and learning materials mentioned. Findings indicated, majority of the teachers (97.1%) participated in coursebooks and other revision textbook in-service courses as per the changing trends in teaching of English as a subject while the participation in in-service trainings in digital devices had low percentages with the motion. The findings from principals who were interviewed show that teachers sometimes declined to take up ICT trainings due to fear of being given additional responsibilities.

5.2 Influence of Level of Preparedness in Material Use on Students' Results

Further, teachers who responded "Yes" were to show the influence the training in specific materials had on students' results. They were to rate using a scale: *4 –a large extent, 3-a moderate extent, 2-a small extent, and 1-none* on how they perceived the influence of materials used on students' results in national examinations in public secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County. This practice was measured by seven items for forms of materials teachers use often in teaching of English, where higher scores of 3.1 - 4 indicated large and strong influence, 2.1 - 3 indicated moderate influence, and below 2 scores indicated a small and weak influence on students' results. On the side of the principals and students, the practice was measured qualitatively, on the same variable, using data obtained from interviews and students' FGDs for purposes of triangulation. Teachers' rated the items in the questionnaires and findings indicated how teachers perceived the influence of teaching and learning materials in public secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County, Kenya. Items cited by teachers that were perceived to have a large and strong influence on students' results were projector, printer, scanner, and coursebooks and revision textbooks with a Mean of 3.0000; 3.1250; 3.0000; and 3.4638 giving standard deviations of .97980; .85019; .63246; and .60827 respectively. Overall, items had an average Mean of 2.9970 which indicates that if well used by teachers in classrooms, would produce above average scores in English as a

subject. One of the principal interviewed had this perspective on teacher preparedness and effectiveness on teaching and learning resources:

I strongly believe education is the engine of economic growth. However, we will not sustain the growth without effective teachers who have the required technological tools that help to motivate and engage students for quality results in national examinations.

Findings from students' FGDs show that teachers were rated average by most students in terms of preparedness in material use in English classrooms. Further, students argued that this in turn, only, produces average or below average results in KCSE English examinations.

5.3 Teacher Opinions on Influence of Preparedness on English Curriculum Implementation

Teachers were asked to present their opinions on the influence of teacher's level of preparedness on implementation of English curriculum in public secondary schools. Findings show that teachers indicated that preparedness helps the teacher to deliver content better (40.0%). This implies that majority of the teachers knew the importance of preparedness. The study findings are in line with UNESCO (2020) recommendations on the need for developing a comprehensive system to support the effective delivery of English curriculum in school. For successful curriculum implementation, teacher preparedness in content delivery is a critical part of promoting high expectations for students. Wandera (2019) says, in-service trainings provide teachers, particularly inexperienced teachers, with vital support in selecting the best methods to teach English and other assigned tasks. Further, teacher preparedness helps teachers to adopt ICTs and know steps to follow in how to use at individual level during classroom instruction.

5.4 Extent to Which Teacher Level of Preparedness Influence Implementation of English Curriculum

Pursuant to the foregoing, data with regard to the extent to which teacher level of preparedness influence teaching of English was analyzed and presented in Table 1. Higher scores of 4 to 5 indicate high and strong influence of teacher preparedness as a practice of checking successful implementation of English curriculum in school, whereas 3 to 3.99 scores indicate moderate, and below 3 scores indicate low and weak.

Table 1. Teachers' Means and Standard Deviations on Level of Preparedness

Teacher preparedness:	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Std. Error
Teacher preparedness and English Curriculum Implementation	70	4.0000	3.08338	.397	.287
Valid N (listwise)	70				

Findings from Table 1 show, if well embraced, teacher preparedness provides a good opportunity for learning English. Things just turn out as expected when teachers are prepared from designing lesson plans, execution and evaluation. Trial and error method during classroom session don't always produce useful knowledge, and the results may even be discouraging. Therefore, careful planning is needed to ensure that a controlled classroom yields clear, meaningful and quality results. Teacher preparedness would ensure that teachers help students to attain quality results with love, fairness and consistency, but not through coercion. Teachers' opinions indicated that the practice of preparedness would have a high and strong positive influence on implementation of English curriculum in school if well checked and applied (Mean = 4.0000; Std. Dev. = 3.08338; and Skewness = .397). These findings are in line with Padmadewi, Artini and Utami's (2020) study on teachers' readiness to promote 21st century skills in teaching English in Indonesia indicating, preparedness is used to accelerate teachers' quality and effectiveness in implementation of English curriculum in school. Paradigm shifts in English as a subject mean a radical shift also on the part of the teacher, where they have to be taken through such aspects as ICT integration, inquiry-based learning, and classroom assessment practices among many other practices.

5.5 Testing of Hypothesis

Chi-square test of association between teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum in school was performed to show the strength of the relationship at 95% level of confidence.

H_0: There is no significant relationship between teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum in public secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County, Kenya.

H_A: There is a significant relationship between teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum in public secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County, Kenya.

5.5.1 Relationship Between In-service Trainings in Materials and Influence on Students' Results

The relationship among the variables contained in the purpose of the study were analysed to establish the association between teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum in school.

Table 2. Chi-Square Test on In-service Trainings in Material Use and Influence on Students' Results in English

Relationship test	Value	df	$\chi^2_{critical}$	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Relationship between in-service trainings in materials and impact upon students' results	138.054	3	7.815	.008
N of Valid Cases	70			

Table 2 indicates that the P-value = .008. The calculated chi-square value ($\chi^2_{calculated}$) = 138.054 and is greater than critical value ($\chi^2_{critical}$) [0.05, 3] = 7.815. Null hypothesis was rejected. The results from analysis show that there is a significant relationship between teacher in-service trainings in form of materials used in teaching of English and impact upon students' results in schools.

Table 3. Chi-Square Test on Teacher Level of Preparedness and Implementation of English Curriculum

Relationship test	Value	df	$\chi^2_{critical}$	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.026[a]	8	15.507	.007
Likelihood Ratio	25.493	8		.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.795	1		.016
N of Valid Cases	70			

a. 14 cells (77.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .94.

Table 3 indicates that the P-value = .007. The calculated chi-square value ($\chi^2_{calculated}$) = 21.026 and is greater than critical value ($\chi^2_{critical}$) [0.05, 8] = 15.507. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted. The results from analysis show that there is a significant relationship between teacher level of preparedness and implementation of English curriculum in school. Padmadewi, Artini and Utami's (2020) study shows, teacher preparedness is used to accelerate teachers' quality and effectiveness in implementation of English curriculum in school. Migallos, Cabahug and Hipol (2020) show, teacher preparediness determines the extent to which teachers of English develop learning experiences that would facilitate achievement of the learning outcomes for the chosen contents. The study concludes, teachers who still lag behind on preparediness to promote new classroom practices as expected, need in-service trainings trainings to improve their competencies in ICT skills, materials and new methods. Dorgu (2015) shows, orientations on skill acquisition and in-service trainings equip teachers with a variety of teaching methods for use in classrooms. Findings from studies by Mbithe (2014); Linet (2014); Nyale, Mwawasi and Muli (2018); Ochako, Okwako and Okoth (2019); and Kobia (2022) show, teacher level of preparedness and teaching of English are correlated. Teacher willingness and capacity to learn new skills through trainings to act better, plays a great role in boosting students' results in English.

6. Conclusions

Students' poor performance in English as a subject underscores the need for relooking into the influence of

teacher level of ICT skills on implementation of English curriculum in schools and also participation in ICT training and attendance of conferences, which was not taken seriously in schools. Students' FGDs indicated, teachers of English needed adequate orientations on skills acquisition for improvisation and creativity as a remedy to improve performance. KNEC reports show, students' performance in English is still unsatisfying and there is need to check on teacher ICT skills, required in the teaching of English. The study findings would show key stakeholders that teacher skills and competencies; particularly in a specialized subject area is vital in measuring learner productivity which is realized in mean scores in national examinations. It has provided detailed teacher classroom activities that require the role of principals in monitoring, controlling and evaluating for achievement of the desired results in English. The Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) would use the study to assess teacher level of preparedness in English in terms of teacher's orientations in skills acquisition, pre-and in-service trainings and would then use the findings to liaise with Sub-County Directors of Education on specific gaps touching on teacher ability in: operating of ICT devices; preparing professional documents; preparing students in acquisition of communicative competence; exposing students to emerging issues through all the language skills; demonstrating innovation and creativity in teaching; using of methods like role plays, discussions and debates; classroom management rules and procedures; marking and setting of the skills; content delivery; lesson organization; syllabus coverage; and nurturing positive attitudes in students. Sub-County Directors of Education would then liaise with County Directors of Education to inform MoE on areas that require attention during in-service trainings to help teachers of English acquire new skills of improving students' performance. Vital data from KNEC and Kakamega North Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Office (KNSQASO) show students' performance in KCSE English examinations for the years 2015-2019. By going through such significant data, teachers would realize areas of difficulty and get suggestions from KNEC (2017; 2018; 2019; 2021; and 2022) reports on how such areas can be better taught in the three papers (101/1; 101/2; 101/3), especially in writing imaginative compositions and essays based on set texts to enhance students' language proficiency levels. When better results are received, many students would get opportunities for admission into tertiary institutions and become competitive in global job market. Finally, there are suggested areas for researchers to study in order enrich knowledge in this field.

7. Recommendations

Basing on the already stated findings and conclusion, the study recommended the following:

i. Teacher professional development to be intensified by ensuring that teachers recommended for in-service trainings or workshops to attend without failure for orientations on needed skills like ICT acquisition and be equipped with a variety of discovery teaching methods and materials to make them confident and competent in creativity and innovativeness activities in English classrooms to produce good results.

ii. The suggestions posed by principals, teachers and students as possible ways to improve students' performance in KCSE English examinations should be taken seriously by the MoE to be implemented in schools to enhance performance.

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