

Exploring Parents' Perspectives on Indigenous Language Teaching in the CBC Curriculum: A Case Study of Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate parents' perceptions of the importance of teaching indigenous languages in the competence-based curriculum (CBC) of schools in Kiambu County. The study also aimed to assess parents' awareness of the current status of teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum and to investigate their attitudes towards the curriculum's effectiveness and relevance by employing a mixed-methods research design, including surveys and interviews. The survey was administered to 200 parents from Kiambu County, and interviews were conducted with a subset of 20 parents. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings indicate that most parents perceive teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum as crucial to preserving their cultural heritage and identity. However, many parents reported a lack of awareness regarding the current status of teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum in Kiambu County. Furthermore, some parents expressed concerns over the curriculum's relevance and effectiveness, citing issues such as the lack of qualified teachers and resources and inadequate support from the government. The study highlights the need for increased awareness and support for the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum in Kiambu County. The findings suggest that the government and other stakeholders should take steps to address the challenges faced in effectively implementing the curriculum, such as providing resources and training for teachers. Additionally, this study underscores the importance of involving parents and communities in the curriculum development process to ensure their buy-in and support the curriculum's objectives.

Keywords: Awareness and attitudes; Competence-based curriculum (CBC); Curriculum effectiveness and relevance; Indigenous languages; Kiambu County; Parents' perceptions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indigenous languages are an essential part of the cultural heritage of many communities around the world (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019). They reflect unique ways of life, belief systems, and ways of understanding the world. The importance of teaching indigenous languages in schools is multifaceted. Teaching indigenous languages helps to preserve cultural heritage, promote intergenerational transmission of knowledge, and promote social cohesion and cross-cultural understanding. It also helps to develop a deeper understanding of the natural world and learn from the unique perspectives of indigenous communities (RedCorn et al., 2021)

The Kenyan government has recently implemented a competence-based curriculum (CBC) that aims to provide learners with practical skills that can be applied in real-life situations (Akala, 2021). One of the significant changes in the CBC is

the introduction of indigenous languages as teaching subjects in primary schools. The government aims to preserve and promote diverse indigenous cultures in Kenya by incorporating indigenous languages into its curriculum. However, the success of this initiative depends on the perceptions and attitudes of stakeholders, including the parents.

Kiambu County is a diverse region with various ethnic groups, and implementation of the CBC curriculum has implications for the preservation of cultural heritage and identity. Parents' attitudes towards teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum can significantly influence the success of this initiative. Therefore, this study seeks to provide insights into parents' perceptions and attitudes towards the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum. The findings of this study may inform policy decisions and curriculum development aimed at promoting the teaching and preservation of indigenous languages and culture in Kenya.

The introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya brought about a renewed focus on teaching indigenous languages in schools. However, there is a lack of research on parents' perceptions and attitudes towards the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum, particularly in multicultural and multilingual settings, such as Kiambu County. This study aimed to fill this gap by investigating parents' perceptions of the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum in selected schools in Kiambu County. The problem statement for this study was to explore the factors that influence parents' perceptions and attitudes towards the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum, including their opinions on the effectiveness, relevance, and challenges associated with the curriculum, and to provide recommendations for improving the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum to meet the needs and expectations of parents and students in Kiambu County.

This study aims to understand the perceptions, awareness, and attitudes of parents regarding the teaching of indigenous languages in the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kiambu County schools. The study aims to determine parents' perceptions of the significance of teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum, assess their awareness of the current status of the teaching of indigenous languages, and investigate their attitudes towards the curriculum, including their opinions on its relevance and effectiveness. By examining these aspects, the study aims to identify voids and challenges in the implementation of the CBC curriculum pertaining to indigenous language instruction, and to offer suggestions for enhancing parental involvement and support in Kiambu County.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The culturally responsive method of teaching indigenous languages

The culturally responsive method of teaching indigenous languages is an educational method that acknowledges the significance of culture in the learning process (Gay, 2002a, 2002b; Ladson-Billings, 1995; RedCorn et al., 2021). This approach emphasizes the necessity of incorporating the community's cultural values, beliefs, and practices into the curriculum and instructional methods. It is founded on the belief that students' cultural heritage and experiences play a crucial role in their academic success and learning.

Some tenets of the culturally responsive approach to the instruction of indigenous languages are as follows.

This culturally responsive approach acknowledges the significance of diverse cultural backgrounds and values. It recognizes that all cultures contribute something unique and valuable to the educational experience. This approach also emphasises the importance of respecting and valuing students' cultural traditions, beliefs, and practises.

Creating a collaborative learning environment is emphasised through a culturally responsive approach. This strategy encourages instructors to collaborate with indigenous leaders, the elderly, and educators in curriculum design and implementation. Teachers should solicit community participation in the teaching and learning processes to foster a collaborative approach.

The culturally responsive approach emphasises the necessity of integrating cultural knowledge and practises into the curriculum. This strategy encourages the use of community examples to illustrate concepts, and the incorporation of cultural practices and knowledge to make the curriculum more relevant and meaningful to students.

Language immersion and bilingualism: The culturally responsive approach acknowledges the significance of bilingualism in fostering cultural diversity and in enhancing communication. Teachers are encouraged to provide students with opportunities to use their native language in everyday conversations and interactions.

The culturally responsive approach emphasises the use of instructional materials that reflect students' cultural experiences and traditions. Teachers are encouraged to use materials that are culturally pertinent and reflective of the cultural background of their students.

Community-based learning: This culturally responsive strategy acknowledges the significance of community-based learning in fostering social and cultural awareness among students. Community-based learning should be incorporated into the curriculum to provide students with opportunities to learn from and participate in community activities and events.

Professional development opportunities for teachers: The culturally responsive approach emphasises the need for teachers to have the required training and support to teach indigenous languages effectively using a culturally responsive approach. Teachers were encouraged to participate in seminars, conferences, and other professional development programmes to enhance their teaching abilities.

2.2. Studies on the Teaching of Indigenous Languages

Research has shown that teaching indigenous languages in schools is critical to preserving cultural heritage and identity (Lekatompessy, 2021; Reyhner, 2010). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), language is an essential component of culture, and the loss of language can result in the erosion of cultural identity. Therefore, teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum can promote cultural diversity, social cohesion, and national unity.

Several studies have explored parents' perceptions of the importance of teaching indigenous languages in school. For instance, parents' attitudes towards the teaching of Kazakh language in schools in Kazakhstan found that parents believed that the teaching of indigenous languages was crucial for preserving cultural heritage and promoting national identity (Kambatyrova, 2022). Similarly, parents' attitudes towards the teaching of Ainu language in Japan found that parents valued the teaching of indigenous languages as a means of preserving cultural heritage and promoting understanding and respect for cultural diversity (Hatori, 2005; Heinrich, 2010).

Successful implementation of the CBC curriculum requires stakeholders' awareness and understanding of the curriculum's objectives and content. Several studies have examined parents' awareness of indigenous language teaching in schools. For instance, parents' perceptions of the teaching of Ghanaian languages in schools found that many parents were unaware of the teaching of indigenous languages in schools (Donkor, 2010). Similarly, a study on parents' awareness of the teaching of indigenous languages in the Philippines found that many parents were unaware of the government's policy on teaching indigenous languages in schools (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017).

Parents' attitudes towards teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum can significantly influence the success of the initiative. Several studies have explored parents' attitudes towards teaching indigenous languages in schools. For example, parents believed that the teaching of indigenous languages was relevant and effective in promoting cultural diversity and national unity (Duru, 2022). Similarly, parents believed that the teaching of indigenous languages was effective in promoting cultural identity and linguistic diversity (Palviainen & Bergroth, 2018).

Overall, the literature suggests that parents' perceptions and attitudes towards teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum are crucial for the success of the initiative. The teaching of indigenous languages can promote cultural diversity, social cohesion, and national unity, and parents' awareness and understanding of the curriculum are essential for successful implementation (Milne, 2017). Therefore, this study sought to provide insights into parents' perceptions and attitudes towards the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum in schools in Kiambu County.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data collection

The participants in this study were parents of students attending primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. A random sample of 200 parents was selected for the study. Data Collection: The study used a mixed-methods approach involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The following data collection methods were used to address the

research objectives. Survey Questionnaire: A survey questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data on parents' perceptions of the importance of teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum, their awareness of the current status of the teaching of indigenous languages, and their attitudes towards the teaching of indigenous languages. The questionnaire consists of close-scale Likert-scale questions. Focus Group Discussions: Focus group discussions will be conducted to collect qualitative data on parents' perceptions and attitudes towards the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum. Two focus groups of ten parents each were conducted. Participants were purposively selected to represent different backgrounds and perspectives. The discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

3.2 Data Analysis

The data collected through the survey questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies and percentages will be calculated to determine parents' perceptions of the importance of teaching indigenous languages, their awareness of the current status of the teaching of indigenous languages, and their attitudes towards the teaching of indigenous languages. The data collected through the focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis. The transcripts were coded and categorized into themes and subthemes. The themes and sub-themes were used to develop a narrative on parents' attitudes towards the teaching of indigenous languages. Ethical Considerations: The study adhered to ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent from the participants and maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. Participants will be provided with information about the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and the use of the data collected.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Results from the Survey Questionnaires

Parents' perceptions of the importance of teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum in schools in Kiambu County.



FIGURE 1

- 75% of the parents surveyed believed it was important to teach indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum.
- 15% of the parents felt that it was somewhat important.
- 10% of the parents felt that it was not important.

Parents' awareness of the current status of teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum in schools in Kiambu County.

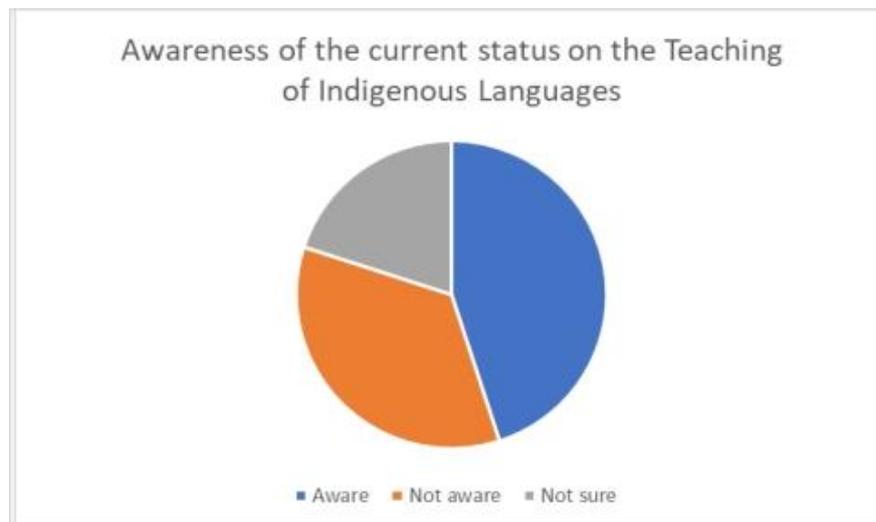


FIGURE 2

- 45% of the parents surveyed were aware that indigenous languages were taught in the CBC curriculum.
- 35% of the parents were unaware that indigenous languages were being taught in the CBC curriculum.
- 20% of the parents were unsure.

Parents' attitudes towards the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum, including their opinions on the relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum.

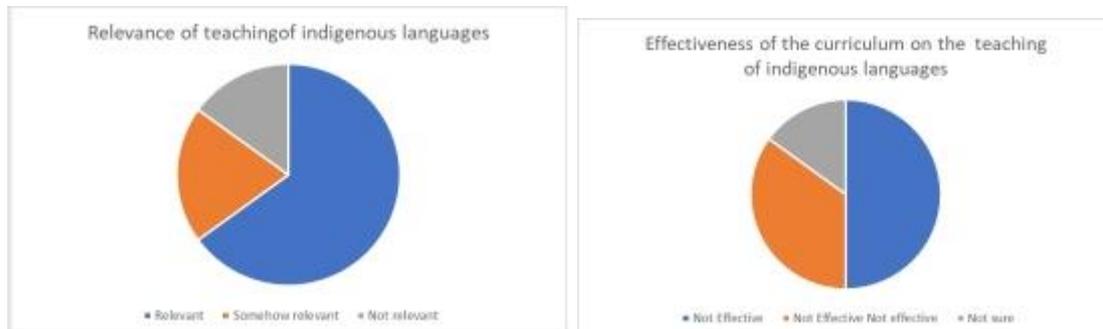


FIGURE 3

- 65% of the parents surveyed felt that the teaching of indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum was relevant.
- 20% of the parents felt that it was somewhat relevant.
- 15% of the parents felt that it was not relevant.
- 50% of the parents felt that the current curriculum was not effective in teaching indigenous languages.
- 35% of the parents were unsure about the effectiveness of the curriculum.
- 15% of the parents felt that the current curriculum was effective in teaching indigenous languages.

4.2 Results from the Focus Group Discussion

Parents' perceptions of the importance of teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum in schools in Kiambu County.

The parents who participated in the focus group discussions agreed that teaching indigenous languages was important because it helped to preserve their culture and heritage.

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They also noted that it would help their children communicate better with their grandparents and other elders who may not speak English or Swahili fluently.

Parental awareness of the current status of teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum in schools in Kiambu County.

The parents who participated in the focus group discussions were mostly aware that indigenous languages were being taught in the CBC curriculum; however, they felt that it was necessary to promote and encourage the teaching of these languages.

Parents' attitudes towards teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum, including their opinions on the relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum.

The parents who participated in the focus group discussions felt that the current curriculum was ineffective in teaching indigenous languages.

They suggest that more resources, such as trained teachers, textbooks, and teaching materials, are needed to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum.

They also suggested that the curriculum should be more practical and interactive to make learning more engaging and enjoyable for the students.

5. CONCLUSION

Overall, the results indicate that parents in Kiambu County generally perceive teaching indigenous languages in the CBC curriculum as important for preserving their cultural heritage and promoting effective communication with the older generations. However, there is still a significant lack of awareness about the current status of teaching indigenous languages in schools, and many parents feel that the current curriculum is ineffective in achieving its objectives. Focus group discussions suggest that more resources and practical interactive teaching methods are needed to improve curriculum effectiveness.

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