SELF-MANAGEMENT AND ICT INTEGRATION AS CORRELATES OF LEARNERS' READINESS: ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE BASED CURRICULUM IN GREATER BUSHENYI, UGANDA

[1*]**Conrad M. Mubaraka**

Senior Lecturer, Computer Education, Kabale University

[2]**Florence Nampijja Kirabo**

Lecturer, Curriculum Studies, Kabale University

[3]**Pison Asiimwe**

Assistant Lecturer, Computer Education, Kabale University

ABSTRACT

Purpose of Study: The study aimed to assess self-management and ICT integration as correlates of the readiness of learners in the competence based curriculum (CBC). Emphasis was put on self-management and ICT integration as core correlates to learners' readiness in secondary schools in Uganda.

Problem Statement: Ugandan education system has been largely knowledge based where success of learning was based on grades. This was characterized by volumous notes and grading with competition. This prompted a dire need to revise the teaching and learning process in secondary schools in Uganda. The knowledge-based learning had paused severe repercussions where learners are vessels of concepts that don't have immediate application. The Ministry of Education then reverted to a competence-based curriculum (CBC) where learners construct their study environment; and teachers simply facilitate. Information and communication technologies (ICT) were positioned as a universal bridge and should be integrated in all subjects, besides being a stand-alone subject. Flares kept emerging from various stakeholders about learners' readiness to embrace the CBC; and this prompted the researchers to conduct this study.

Methodology: Using cross sectional survey design, 288 learners and 12 teachers in Greater Bushenyi were contacted using largely questionnaires and focus group discussions. Learners were selected form S1, S2 & S3 because they are direct beneficiaries of the CBC; together with the teachers of both arts and sciences. Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) Version 24 was used to analyze the data.

Result: The study found that self-management and ICT integration are strong drivers to learners' readiness in the CBC. The significance of ICT integration was evidenced across the board; while self-management slightly differed for S1 learners.

Recommendation: The study recommends that learners need teachers to give then time so that they discuss innovations and carry out projects that enhance their competence acquisition.

Keywords: *Competence based Curriculum, Readiness, ICT Integration, Self-Management*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to assess self-management and ICT integration as correlates of learner readiness in the competence based curriculum (CBC) in order to address gaps in existing research. Although previous studies have investigated competence based curriculum, limited attention has been given to self-management and ICT integration in learners' readiness and more so in developing countries like Uganda. This paper aims to build on earlier findings by focusing on self-management and ICT integration in the CBC. The study is guided by the research question: Is self-management and ICT integration core correlates to leaners' readiness in embracing the competence based curriculum in Uganda? The importance of this research lies in providing additional evidence on supporting a leaner to realize pay off of the competence based curriculum.

The role of education in the world has changed and the expectations of the learners allude to a need to equip them with knowledge, understanding, skills and values as demanded by the work places (Joachim A & Hashim, 2021; Nakabugo, Bisaso & Masembe, 2011). However, in many African countries and Uganda in particular secondary education has been delivered in knowledge based, content based, examination-oriented curriculum -learning is majorly measured in terms of how much one can recall (good grades are a yard stick). This practice has reported many schools aiming at scoring well at the expense of gaining skills useful in work place.

This kind of teaching and learning has produced graduates who have high retention of concepts and less skills which are required at job places. Many employers have blamed the old curriculum on the output, especially university graduates make in their companies. Moreso, the old curriculum does not emphasis generic skills like critical thinking, team work, communication and environment sensitivity among other skills. Such skills vividly apply in the job market (Linn, 2024; Sara, 2015).

The 4th sustainable development goal (SDG) insinuates that general education and specifically the curriculum that learners interact with can significantly provide an opportunity to align the education sector to SDG. The curriculum change that promotes equity and all inclusive gives education a leverage to support socio-economic transformation of society. Providing education which caters for a holistic child becomes a recipe for prosperity and national development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research has shown that effective implementation of the CBC requires a holistic preparation of a learner as one of the vital players but results remain inconsistent. Several studies have suggested self-regulated learning, ICT integration, family support and administrative support while others have reported the involvement of education system mechanisms of the country and policy frameworks. The majority of existing literature has focused on school facilities as key in the implementation of the CBC leaving the direct beneficiary of the curriculum underexplored. Recent studies have highlighted the need for further investigation into learner and teacher

readiness. This review summarizes key findings and identifies the main research gap addressed in this study.

Self-Management

Effective implementation of a CBC requires that learners are prepared and equipped to perform their part. In a CBC, learners are self-regulating and should therefore have the ability to acquire knowledge and behavior that lead to effective learning. According to Chorrojprasert, (2020:268), learner readiness is the "process in which learners are able to actively and effectively control and monitor their motivation, cognition and behaviors and successfully complete the target academic tasks". This is what Sema (2021) summarizes as the possession of conduct essential for active involvement in learning. The competence- based model is a student-centered approach which requires that learners are able to take charge of their learning (autonomy); believe in their ability to complete tasks (self-efficacy); can manage their own process of learning (self- directed learning); have defined learning strategies and intellectual character. A learner who possesses these qualities will "be capable of selecting, organizing and creating learning environments for themselves and even make plans to gain control over their academic success" as Chorrojprasert, (2020, 272) asserts.

To qualify them as ready to learn, learners have to prove that they are ready to put some effort and possess an enduring tendency to do so. This can be natural or acquired. They should exhibit certain dispositions such as: "a desire to learn, positive attitudes towards learning situations, a willingness to make the investment of time and effort necessary for learning, the ability to persevere, an understanding of the importance and value of learning".

Both Chorrojpraser (2020) and Sema (2021) opine that learner readiness to learn is multidimensional and it stretches to physical health, social emotional and academic circles. This means that it has to be supported by parents/ family. Sema (2021; 169) asserts that "parents contribute to children's' acquisition of cognitive, social, behavioral and emotional skills and to their school readiness that will facilitate their learning and school adaptation". This is true for a CBC. For learners to become very ready, they can't do it on their own. They need financial, emotional, self-care and emotional support from their parents. They need to be allowed opportunities for interaction with parents and peers; they need to be talked to by their parents and they need to be shown proper direction and sensitively role modeled by befitting persons in their communities. Indeed, Chorrojprasert (2020:268) is of the view that, "while we stay focused on whether or not the learners are acquiring the target knowledge and skills, we should intently put in some thoughts and efforts on the development of our students' learning competency and intellectual character, if not, to initiate and motivate them to become each an effective and self-regulated learner". Chorrojprasert is emphatic that learners have to be assisted to become ready to pursue the CBC. This assistance from all stake holders gives them opportunities for mental stimulation hence developing a motivation for learning and a direction for self-regulation.

Learner readiness in a CBC model also requires that "learners understand and recognize their success" (Souza, Byrne & Downey, 2013:4). This means that learners must learn to evaluate their own learning. They must possess knowledge of what they need to learn, how they will learn it, how they will know that they have learnt it. It is only then that they can have self-paced learning and can be self-directing.

ICT Integration

The sporadic proliferation of online social network services (SNSs) has adversely aroused new research questions. Rau, Gao and Ding (2008) found that there are significant differences in the intimacy levels of lurkers and posters both verbal and affective. The significant gender differences in perceived intimacy and posting behaviors allude to socio-cultural upbringing of learners to the effect that girl child is often marginalized. The CBC promotes generic skills such as communication, environment awareness, critical thinking among many. The learners who utilise online environments were found benefiting especially socially bonding with diverse experiences and cultures (Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin, 2010). In CBC learners are assigned projects and other tasks to work in groups. Each learner takes charge of his learning but combiningly help each other develop a competence (Moon, Jahng & Kim, 2011). Such collaborative learning has registered numerous significance such as effective instruction approach where learners develop personalized environment and has immediate applicability of concepts.

The intention of integrating ICT in all subjects in the CBC was to acquaint learners with modern means to learning with quality (Raza, Qazi, Umer & Khan, 2020). As ICT is brought on board learners gain life satisfaction because there is self-service and variety of experiences gained from fellow learners. The CBC in consideration here targeted teenagers of same age range and so peer interation of learners has a touching effect on learner motivation. Once learners are motivated, their learning outcomes become vivid and appealing (Hernández-Sellés, Muñoz-Carril & González-Sanmamed, 2019). The CBC dictates point to a need for a learner to be creative in formulating project work and work collaboratively with others. While projects apply outside class room, self-paced learning applies to both in class and outside environment. This subsequently stimulates deeper learning methodologies, especially now that a teacher is more of a facilitator (Cluett & Skene, 2007). The literature considered majorly high education institutions, developed countries used different sampling techniques and theoretical concepts from self-management and ICT integration in Uganda.

METHODOLOGY

The study used cross sectional survey design and considered both private and government aided secondary schools that have existed for at least five years (excluding COVID time) and licensed by Ministry of Education. Each district nominated two government and two private secondary schools with more than 30 networked computers. The study considered interacting with the selected learners of S.1, S.2 and S.3. A total of 288 learners were selected using stratified sampling technique; and purposively selected two arts and two science teachers from each school. Questionnaires with focus group discussion were used to collect data. Focus group discussions were administered on teachers to ascertain what learners provided in questionnaires. Statistical package for Social Scientists (SPSS) Version 22 was used to analyze the quantitative data. The inferential statistics included Chi Square, T-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) that helped in establishing any significant relationships and differences in various aspects of learning for S1, S2 and S3.

FINDINGS

The study considered learners as pivotal stakeholders in the CBC because he/she is the direct beneficiary. The following section presents statistics of learners as participated in this study. The study alluded that in the CBC, ICT integration is paramount and should support enhanced teaching and learning of all subjects. Learners ought to use ICT to do research so as to enhance their skills.

To effectively realize the outcome the learner should have self-management because the teacher only facilitates learning and the learner does most of the work. Thus, the study alluded that self-management is significantly related to ICT integration among learners of secondary schools in Uganda.

Table 1: Test for Significant Relationship

	Self-Management	ICT_Integration
Chi-Square(a,b)	113.895	200.899
df	12	8
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

Table 1 shows that the computed Chi-square coefficient is large enough to cause a relationship (Asymp. sig=0.000); therefore there is a significant relationship between self-management and ICT integration among learners of the CBC in secondary schools in Uganda. Most schools were found with adequate ICTs to help the learner do research as dictated in the CBC. This had a far reaching impact on the way learners searched for information and compare experiences elsewhere. The focus group discussion pointed to nomadic teaching practices currently experienced with, especially science teachers. ICT as one of the science subjects has teachers who teach in more than one school which has affected learner engagement and creativity. Learners have fewer encounters with ICT teachers due to teaching schedules of other subjects and teachers' in availability for consultation. The peculiar finding was that all learners are eager to use computers, so the self-drive in them supports their learning to some extent.

These findings were corroborated by Conrad and Eunice (2019), Chen and Xiano (2022) and Sagar (2021) who re iterated the role ICT plays as a drive to effective learning in the 21st Century. The CBC dictates that ICT be integrated in all subjects and so learners and teachers should be supported in effective use of ICT (Sagar, 2021; Joachim and Hashim, 2021; Nakabugo, Bisaso and Masembe, 2011; Baughman et.al, 2012). The study also established if there was a significant difference in self-management and ICT integration between government aided and private secondary schools in Uganda.

Table 2: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Type of School	50.630	266	.000	1.17228	1.1267	1.2179
Self-Management	123.079	266	.000	3.26851	3.2162	3.3208
ICT_Integration	165.387	266	.000	2.59497	2.5641	2.6259

Table 2 shows that the computed t statistics were large enough to cause a difference (Sig=0.000); therefore, there is significant difference in self-management and ICT integration among learners

of the CBC in secondary schools in Uganda between government and private secondary schools in Uganda. The results show that while government aided schools are equipped with computers and supporting technologies, management commitment to repair broken down accessories and teachers are not innovative enough to encourage optimal use of computers. As earlier reported, government ICT teachers are posted many and have less load. This prompts them to part time in other schools leaving learners unattended to adequately. In government schools, learners registered low motivation to learn despite having adequate facilities. The self-management would be actualized by teacher-learner encounter to spark innovation and creativity. On the other hand, most private secondary schools have invested in ICT infrastructure and are committed to keeping them function due to competition. A few had crippling infrastructure and so computer supported learning was a night mare. Spectacular to private schools was that ICT teachers are loaded and room is created to engage the learners to develop competitive projects. Learners in private schools were found to have relative higher self-management than government schools.

These finding are corroborated by Bucking and Deakin, (2012) who alluded to the need to consider transferable competences among learners. The learning habits are often influenced by social, administrative and cultural support which are recipe for stakeholder involvement at all stages of learning (Male et.al, 2020; Nordberg & Andre, 2020).

Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self-Management	Between Groups	.057	2	.029	.152	.009
	Within Groups	50.030	264	.190		
	Total	50.087	266			
ICT_Integration	Between Groups	.025	2	.012	.188	.068
	Within Groups	17.460	264	.066		
	Total	17.485	266			

The study alluded that there are significant differences in self-management and ICT integration among S1, S2 and S3 learners of selected secondary schools in Uganda. Table 3 shows that the computed F statistics were large enough to cause a difference (sig=0.009) for self-management; and too small(sig= 0.068) on ICT integration; therefore, there is a significant difference in self-management and; not in ICT integration among selected classes of learners of the CBC in secondary schools in Uganda.

The study discovered the way S1 manage their learning differs from S2 and S3. However S2 and S3 did not show much difference (Post_Hoc Sig=0.000) due to the exposure of competences each subject carries with. It was found that S1 still commanded mastery of primary school content and so were struggling to bridge the learning gap. The findings showed that all learners showed enthusiasm to use a computer for learning, especially online instructional material. It was spectacular with computers connected to the internet. These learners of teenage bracket were attracted to online content hence the vigor in using computers. It was found that most S1 learners

are new to the CBC so the way they practice self-management differs from S2 and S3 who are familiar with competences and projects.

This finding is in support with Sagar (2020) where online services are a recipe for self-management and once utilized optimally greatly enhances learning. Furthermore, as change bites learners need to be well prepared to adopt. Since technology has been cited pivotal in the 21st century education services, Olema et.al, (2021) and Chen and Xiano (2022) advise that as learners switch from content to competence learning institutions should be mindful of activities therein at all stages.

The researchers wanted to establish the magnitude of variance or influence self-management and ICT integration would make in learners' readiness in the CBC in selected schools in Greater Bushenyi. The following section presents multivariate results with regression analysis.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.079(a)	.710	.764	.4511

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-management, ICT integration

Table 4 shows an influence of a tune of 76.4% (Adjusted R Squared=0.764) of self-management, other factors and ICT integration on Learner readiness in selected secondary schools in Uganda. This means self-management, ICT integration and other factors influenced learner readiness by approximately 76.4%.

Table 5: ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.152	1	.32	13.930	.004(a)
	Residual	17.483	265	. 66		
	Total	17.485	266			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self_Management, ICT integration

b. Dependent Variable: Learner Readiness

Table 5 shows the identified 76.4% influence was significant enough to influence learner readiness.

Table 6: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.035	0.040		.516	.000
	Self_Management	0.366	0.066	0.311	.172	.000
	ICT Integration	0.778	0.067	0.566	.667	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Learner Readiness

Table 6 shows that constant (other factors) significantly influence learners' readiness. Moreso, results show that for every unit change in constant, learner readiness is enhanced by 3.5% (B=0.035, Sig=0.000). This means that although we earlier thought self-care management and ICT integration formed core of drivers for learner readiness, the study found there could be other factors peculiar to it. Also for every unit change in self-management learners' readiness is enhanced by 36.6% (B=0.366; Sig=0.000) which is a significant driver. Furthermore, for every unit change in ICT integration learners' readiness increases by 77.8% (B=0.778; Sig=0.000) which is an outstanding driver to learner readiness. This study also employed qualitative data collection especially focus group discussions of teachers. To supplement learners' opinions we also discussed with two teachers of science and arts from each of the selected classes.

The findings indicate that there are other factors that contribute to learner readiness in selected secondary schools in Uganda. The learners are ready to embrace but factors as identified and presented in the Qualitative data below, sometimes affect their optimal involvement. Cited factors include the leadership style of administrators, government support to schools, the ill preparedness of teachers among others. The findings are corroborated by Chorrojprasert (2020), Olemwa et.al, (2021) and University of Bufallo, (2021). The learner as the most placed beneficiary of the CBC must be considered at all angles of the implementation of the CBC (Amone, 2021).

However, much as data showed that learners had the interest in pursuing a CBC and that using their lens, they appeared ready, they were viewing this from one point of view, yet as both Sema (2021) and Chorrojprasert (2020) opine, learner readiness is multidimensional (physical health, social emotional and academic) and therefore needs different actors to be real. Traces of learner unreadiness arose from the fact that their support pillars (parents) in getting ready were not ready to support them to effectively pursue the CBC. However, at the time of this study, these attributes had not been developed in the learners. They could not ably articulate what they needed to learn (curriculum interpretation), how they were to learn it (pedagogy), how they were to know that they had learnt it (assessment) hence qualifying them as unready leaners.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the drivers for learner readiness in implementing the CBC and focused that self-management and ICT integration are vital in this cause. The results support the conclusion that the learners would be ready to embrace the CBC but some enablers still lack in the entire learning cycle. The study makes a contribution by addressing the gap identified in the literature. Limitations include reliance largely on questionnaires to learners, which should be considered when interpreting the results. Further research is needed to confirm these findings and explore

administrative support, collaborative learning and entire education system in Uganda in more details. We thus conclude that once the school administration, teachers and parents support the learning, many students are ready to acquire the competences stipulated in the CBC.

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