

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF NYERERE'S PHILOSOPHY OF  
EDUCATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO  
COMPETENCY BASED CURRICULUM IN TRANZOIA COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Award of Doctor  
of Philosophy Degree in Philosophy of Education of Masinde Muliro University of  
Science and Technology**

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award in any other University.

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## CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, a research proposal entitled; “**A Phenomenological investigation of Nyerere’s philosophy of education for self-reliance and its implications to competency Based Curriculum in Tranzoia County, Kenya**”

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated with deep love and appreciation to my family. Their unwavering support, encouragement, and sacrifices provided the foundation upon which this academic journey was built. To my parents, who instilled in me the values of hard work, perseverance, and faith, I owe my deepest gratitude. To my spouse and children, whose patience, understanding, and constant motivation gave me the strength to pursue and complete this study, I am forever indebted.

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## **Abstract**

The impact of global technological advancements is transforming education systems across Africa, with many countries, including Kenya, striving to align with global standards of economic development and knowledge. As a response, Kenya transitioned from the 8-4-4 system to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) with the aim of fostering skills and self-reliance among learners. This study investigated the extent to which Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance could influence the Competency-Based Curriculum in Kenya. The study employed three objectives namely, to explore the lived experiences of junior secondary school teachers in fostering self-reliance among learners within the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) ,to critically analyze the extent to which the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) reflects the principles of Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance and to assess the likelihood of achieving self-reliance among learners in the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya through a philosophical analysis. The study adopted a constructivist theory and employed an interpretive phenomenological design. Three philosophical methods conceptual analysis, critical method, and phenomenological method were utilized. Junior secondary school teachers in Trans Nzoia County formed the study's target population, with a purposive sample of five teachers selected based on the principles of hermeneutic phenomenological research, emphasizing depth over breadth. Primary data were collected through unstructured phenomenological interviews, while secondary data were sourced from scholarly articles, policy documents, textbooks, theses, and credible internet sources. Data was analysed thematically using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and document analysis. Findings revealed that while the CBC shares aspirations with Nyerere's philosophy, including learner-centeredness and practical skills development, there were notable gaps in implementation. Teachers reported that although CBC intended to foster independence and critical thinking, practical classroom experiences remained largely examination-driven and teacher-centred. Moreover, while CBC promoted individual competencies, it fell short in integrating communal values and collective responsibility central to Nyerere's vision. The study concluded that although CBC had the potential to advance self-reliance among learners, successful realization of this goal required addressing systemic barriers such as inadequate resources, inconsistent teacher training, and the need for stronger community engagement. The study thus provided crucial insights for curriculum designers, policy makers, and educators to align CBC more closely with the foundational ideals of education for self-reliance. The study recommends teacher training programs on CBC implementation, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) ought to redesign CBC curriculum models to incorporate the intended incorporation of communal values, social responsibility, and work-based learning experiences as outline by Nyerere and to facilitate the implementation of CBC objectives, the government ought to develop a national policy framework of resource mobilization, infrastructure development and community participation in education

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CBC- Competence Based Curriculum

GOK- Government of Kenya

KIE- Kenya Institute of Education

IPA- interpretive phenomenological analysis

USA- United States of America

NACOSTI- National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

RTM- Representational Theory of Mind

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINATIONS OF TERMS**

**Competence based curriculum-** a system of education that emphasizes on what learners are expected to do rather than focusing mainly on what they are expected to know. It focuses on acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be applied by learners. Puts weight on learner's unique talents and abilities rather than focusing wholly on academics and examination performance.

**Core competencies-** a set of intellectual, personal, social and emotional proficiencies that all learners need in order to engage in deep lifelong learning and self-reliance.

**Constructivism-** is a theory of learning that says learners construct knowledge rather than just passively take in information as they communicate with each other, share their feelings, knowledge and experiences to come up with new knowledge and innovations.

**Conceptual analysis-** consists primarily of breaking down concepts into their constituent parts in order to gain knowledge or better understanding of a particular philosophical issue in which the concept is involved.

**Graduate-** a person who has successfully completed a given level of study in school, college or university.

**Phenomenological investigation-** is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand and describe the essence of phenomena.

**Nyerere's Philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance;** An educational ideology that emphasizes practical learning, community service, moral development, critical thinking, and nation-building through education.

**Self-reliance-** is the quality of depending on oneself instead of relying on others. It is the ability to independently choose and execute a course of action that results in what the individual desires.

**Ujamaa-** (Familihood) is a socialist belief that Julius Nyerere used as a basis for his economic, social and political policies in Tanzania. It asserts that the community or a group of people have what is called the spirit of the community which binds them together.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter delves into the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, and justification of the study, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, the limitation and delimitation of the study.

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

Education is considered as a process that is requisite for the actualization of the aim for self-reliance globally (Ambaa, 2015). Upon attainment of independence by many African countries, the first governments resolved for programs that would actualize eliminating poverty, disease, and ignorance (Wanjohi, 2011a). As Wanjohi (2011a) observes Kenyan government at independence opted to introduce a new curriculum that would lead to the alleviation of poverty disease, and ignorance. Education was looked upon as the process that would necessitate the aspirations. An educated society is likely to be more self-reliant, independent and liberated than a less educated society. It is therefore prudent that the process of education should incline it's recipients to the attainment of self-reliance.

Self-reliance is defined by Maluleka (2021) as the economic, social and political ability of an individual, community or a country to meet their essential needs which includes but not limited to water, food, education, shelter, security among others. The process of education therefore needs to propagate skills, knowledge, and values that increase the propensity of individuals to attain their essential needs. If through acquisition of education, the social, political, and economical situations of individuals in any society enables them

to sufficiently cater for their essential needs then such an education is assumed to be leading to the attainment of self-reliance. The opposite is true if the contrary happens.

Very many definitions of education have been propounded by scholars. In the history of scholarship some scholars have defined education as the process of transmitting as society's knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to another (Maira, Vengi & K'Odhiambo, 2017). On the other hand, some scholars have looked at education as a process by which individual's experiences are constantly reconstructed (Ibanga, 2016). The two approaches to the definition of education reflect the perennial debate whose roots can be traced in the Ancient Greek philosophy. Whereas transmission of knowledge, skills and values inclines towards idealism where reality is construed to be a mental construct connected to ideas (Ameriks, 2000). Constant reconstruction of experiences bends towards the philosophy of realism, the thesis that existence of a thing is independent of the mind (Hale & Wright, 2017). Therefore, any system of education should be cognizant of the two conceptions of education that might lead to varied conceptions of self-reliance.

This philosophical study reflects on the contributions of Julius Nyerere to the development of the philosophy of education for self-reliance. Julius Kambarage Nyerere was the founder president of the republic of Tanganyika which later on merged with Zanzibar to establish the modern day republic of Tanzania. Nyerere was honoured with the title "Mwalimu" to signify his compassion to the development of education. Before he became the president of Tanzania Nyerere was a secondary school teacher. Nyerere studied Education at Makerere University College before proceeding to Edinburgh, in Britain where he studied Economics and History (Kassam, 1983).

It is believed that at Edinburgh Nyerere conceptualized the concept of Socialism which he later associated to African communal living. Nyerere argued that upon introduction of Western education to African many people associated education that education to civilization an assumption that Nyerere did not concede to. He viewed Western education differently stating that Western education was opposed to the African way of living and that it was only being imposed on Africans to achieve the objectives of the colonialist. He believed that Western education was alienating Africans from their own values and thus reinforcing western values.(Mbogoma, 2018)

Julius Nyerere being the founding father of Tanzania was such a leader who philosophized much into the form of education that was relevant for his country. His philosophies basically emphasized on education for self-reliance; adult education and lifelong learning; and education for liberation (Yussuf, 1995). This study utilizes analysis as a philosophical methodology to delve into Nyerere's educational philosophy of African socialism *Ujamaa*, (which means brotherhood) that espouses liberation, service, self-reliance and life-long learning in the light of the contemporary education provided in Africa. Key to this study is self-reliance and how Nyerere's reflections on education can be imported into the Kenya's competence based curriculum to enable attainment of self-reliance in Kenya.

It could be deduced from Nyerere's concept of education for self-reliance that education inherited from the colonialists had three major weaknesses (Nasongo & Musungu, 2009). Firstly, education was elitist in nature such that it was designed to meet the interests and needs of a very small proportion of citizens and thus fails to produce an egalitarian society. Secondly, the education has a tendency of uprooting its recipients from their native societies thus creating no link between them and the society. Thirdly, education tends to

emphasize on what Nyerere termed as *book-knowledge or the diploma-syndrome* where education only stresses on knowledge acquired through theory and not life experiences. Lastly, Nyerere notes the inability of the education to combine school learning with work. For African nations to dislodge themselves from the vicious cycle of poverty, they had to adopt a system of education that is relevant to African contemporary problems (Nyerere, 1967). The colonial education emphasized much on elitist and book education while ignoring or in most cases criticizing negatively the informal traditional education (Nyerere, 1987). Learners were instilled with egocentric perspectives and payback to the community was discouraged; education tended to emphasize on white collar jobs at the expense of blue collar jobs that is requisite to industrialization, (Nasongo & Musungu, 2009). The challenges posed by the elitist systems of education led to African educational theorists among them Nyerere to philosophize and guide on what type of education was needed for Africa. Among his proposal was the need to combine practical work with academic work for learners (Nyerere, 1967). This study sought to examine the extent to which Nyerere's postulations cohere with the philosophies of the competence based curriculum in Kenya.

The history of educational reforms in Kenya is as rich as the social, economic, and political experience in the country. During the colonial period, several reforms were initiated to ensure that the education offered corresponded to the objective of ensuring that Africans attain the education to enable them serve subordinate roles to the Europeans (Maluleka, 2021). Immediately after independence a commission was instituted to probe and advice on the best treatment to be done to education to ensure that all Kenyans achieved the desired literacy levels (Wanjohi, 2011a). Having identified that poverty, disease, and

ignorance were the factors curtailing Kenya's aims towards development, an educational systems of 7-4-3-2 was instituted to aid the development agenda (Wanjohi, 2011a). In what could be identified as the first efforts to achieve self-reliance, the Geography and History syllabuses were revised to include aspects that reflected Kenyan realities. This served the purpose of assuring Africans that indeed there existed systems in the country that were equally important and should be included in the knowledge systems propagated to learners (Maluleka, 2021).

In 1965, the sessional paper number 10 titled, *African socialism and its application to development in Kenya*, formed the basis upon which social, economic, and political policies were to be formulated. With the inclination of Sessional Paper number 10 to a capitalistic economy than African socialism as its title claimed, there arose economic and political policies that would influence the attainment of self-reliance to a great extent (K'Olale, 1992). The policy of *Harambee* (all pool together) as the driving force of African socialism in Kenya was still abused thereby causing dependence rather than self-reliance. Unemployment became a reality as evidenced by the Ndegwa commission of 1972. Education was therefore not equipping the learners with the skills required for the job market. This prompted a review of the education system in 1976 which was never implemented until in 1982 when the presidential working party report recommended change from the 7-4-2-3 systems of education to 8-4-4 system (G.o.K, 1984).

The core objective of the 8-4-4 system was self-reliance (Murungi, et al., 2019). Education was to have vocational subjects that would equip learners with the skills at all levels that would make them self-employable. The 8-4-4 system of education involved self-sufficiency and productivity of graduates at each cycle of education (Inyenga, et al, 2021).

Self-sufficiency and productivity was to be witnessed in areas such as commerce, agriculture, industry and scientific innovations. Actualization of the same depended much more on how the curriculum of the 8-4-4 system was to be implemented.

Implementation of the 8-4-4 suffered a lot in the late 1980s through to the 1990s when the structural adjustment programs instituted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommended for cost-sharing in education (Mackatiani, 2017). The cost-sharing policy made the need to provide pre-vocational and technical education expensive for the poor parents who could not raise the resources to support the educational programs. Also due to cost-sharing, the implementation of the 8-4-4 system became expensive especially on training of human resources and provision of technical materials required (Wanjohi, 2011a). Due to challenges attributed to the cost of implementing and also accessing education, many vital elements of the 8-4-4 system were left out (Murungi, et al., 2019). For instance not all secondary schools provided technical subjects and at primary school levels, many learners dropped out of school because of costs (Maira, 2017). The events posed a blow to the 8-4-4 systems as being incapable of alleviating poverty, disease and ignorance.

Besides costs of implementation on the side of the government and access for the consumers of education with regard to 8-4-4 system of education scholars also found out that the 8-4-4 curriculum is highly theoretical thereby not sufficiently developing the learner skills and competence (Kaviti, 2018). Pedagogical approaches employed in the implementation of the 8-4-4 were also not spared of criticism as they were found to be teacher-centered thereby rigid and authoritarian. As Inyenga et al. (2021) observes, the 8-4-4 system of education has made some quantitative progress in bringing down the

percentage levels of illiteracy with the introduction of the primary and subsidized secondary education (Wanjohi, 2011a).

In as much as the 8-4-4 curriculum has necessitated improvement in the levels of literacy in Kenya, the qualitative weakness evident erases much of the quantitative achievements. For instance a study conducted by Uwezo (2016) depicted very low reading and numeracy skills among lower grade learners and some even in upper primary classes. These qualitative weaknesses have always influenced the urge to reform the education system and the curriculum. There has always been a consistent call to align the Kenyan education to local and international instruments for instance the universal declaration on human rights.

In 2008 the Kenyan Institute of Education KIE published a report in which several weaknesses of the 8-4-4 were highlighted. Firstly, KIE argued that the system overemphasizes academic qualification which has rendered education exam oriented (Kaviti, 2018). Secondly, there is an overload in the curriculum with learners required to acquire knowledge and skills from a wide range of disciplines which limits specialization and talent discovery (Kaviti, 2018). Thirdly, KIE reported that many teachers did not obtain sufficient training necessary for the effective implementation of the curriculum. Lastly, even though 8-4-4 was initiated with an aim of enhancing acquisition of practical skills, lack of school infrastructure and equipment necessary for practical education denied learners acquisition of practical skills (Murungi, et al., 2019). The panacea to the discussed shortcomings of the 8-4-4 system of education was a change of the 8-4-4 curriculum to one that would not dwell on acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values but one that would focus on their application.

Thus in 2017 an overhaul of the Kenyan system of 32 years began with an aim of gradually shifting from the 8-4-4 system to the Competency-Based Curriculum of the system 2-6-6-3. The push factor of the Competency-Based Curriculum is, lack of congruency between knowledge, skills and values acquired through formal education and the labour market

Argument for Competency-Based Curriculum is founded on the understanding that whereas 8-4-4 system is based on norm-referenced assessment and evaluation, the Competency-Based Curriculum system is based on criterion-referenced assessment which enables generation of information necessary for giving scores to learners understanding, competencies, skills and behaviours (Inyenga, et al., 2021). Many scholars of education prefer the competency-based curriculum because it determines understanding by learners through the ability of such learners to apply the acquired knowledge, values, and skills in real life situations.

The curriculum based on competencies can be traced back in 1990s when a comparative and comprehensive research was done in USA (Inyenga, et al., 2021). The study focused majorly on the effectiveness of teacher-guided but learner managed projects in the learners' local environment. The findings of the study proved that the learners who had participated in the student managed project performed significantly better in the standardized tests in sciences, languages and mathematics compared to non-participants (Inyenga, et al., 2021). These findings indicated that there is better understanding among learners in project based approaches where learners conducted projects with the teachers' guidance which helps them to construct their own knowledge. It is such findings that have influenced greatly the approval of adoption of CBC by many education scholars in Kenya.

In Kenya, the dispensation to migrate from 8-4-4 system of education has dawned and the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum is already in effect. The government has showed commitment in the implementation of the same through structural changes despite criticism from scholars and stakeholders. The criticism is not about the effectiveness of the Competency-Based Curriculum but about preparedness of the country in the implementation of the same. Some scholars express fears that the predicament that befall 8-4-4 systems of education could yet catch up with the implementation of the competency-based curriculum.

There are three notable issues that affect the 8-4-4 system of education that the scholars fear could still affect the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (Matere, 2014). First, the implementation of the 8-4-4 was more political than it was academic. Secondly it was implemented without proper planning on how weaknesses arising could be tackled. Thirdly the cost of implementing 8-4-4 system of education in its original version was expensive yet there was no guarantee of where the resources for the same would be obtained. Interestingly it is the three issues that scholars have emphasized on as pertains the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (Matere, 2024)

Education for self-reliance still remains an aim of Kenyan education. 8-4-4 system of education was resolved for on belief that it could lead to self-reliance as an aim of education. However, quantitative analysis in terms of unemployment levels, dependency ratio, and underemployment is an indication of how 8-4-4 failed. Qualitative analysis on the other hand indicates no congruence between content acquired in formal education and the job market. However, considering the arguments on how the government failed to implement the 8-4-4 system in its truest form. This study spares criticism of 8-4-4 as a

system of education and only observes that self-reliance as an aim of education is yet to be attained despite an increase in the literacy levels in Kenya.

Implementers and several scholars have seconded the competency-based curriculum as the panacea to the attainment of self-reliance. However, if the fears of those critical to the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum was something worth considering then the CBC equally could still succumb to the predicament that befell 8-4-4. Nevertheless it is imperative that the aim of education for self-reliance is attained. The competencies attained by learners should necessarily render them self-reliant. Equally, at a national level, the country should also be self-reliant such that it can provide basic essential necessities required of good overall social welfare.

The driving force and ultimate goal of competency based curriculum is the transfer of knowledge from knowledge attainment to knowledge application. The competency based curriculum is depicted by approachability to a continually changing world of work focusing on both procedure and result. Procedure refers to experience and undertakings within academic affairs. The result is the consequence of this experiences and undertakings (Willy, 2018). Competencies are intrinsic qualities an individual possesses, which blend skills, knowledge and capacity. Competences specify how a particular individual carries out the significant skills they have acquired. The designers of the competency based curriculum educational program anticipated that upon completion of the learning period, each particular learner is expected to achieve core competencies which include communication and collaboration self-efficacy, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy and learning to learn (Nyakangi, 2018).

Julius Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance emphasizes a holistic approach to education that integrates community commitment, practical work orientation, learner-centered methods, and the development of self-esteem and critical thinking. Nyerere envisioned an education system that prepared students to be self-sufficient, confident, and cooperative individuals who contribute meaningfully to their communities. His philosophy advocated for education that is not merely examination-oriented but focused on the comprehensive development of learners, ensuring they complete each educational cycle with maturity and readiness to face real-world challenges.

In contrast, Kenya's current Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) aims to shift away from traditional rote learning and examination-focused education towards a more skills-oriented approach. The CBC emphasizes the development of competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. However, despite these progressive goals, there are notable gaps in the implementation of the CBC that hinder its alignment with Nyerere's philosophy.

Firstly, while the CBC aims to be learner-centered, practical implementation often remains teacher-centered, failing to fully engage students in active, interest-driven learning. Additionally, the CBC's focus on individual competencies may overlook the broader social responsibility and community engagement that Nyerere deemed essential. Moreover, despite the CBC's intent to reduce the emphasis on examinations, assessment practices still heavily influence teaching and learning, perpetuating an exam-centric culture (Nasong'o & Musungu, 2009)

Furthermore, the practical, work-oriented skills central to Nyerere's philosophy are not fully integrated into the CBC, leaving a gap in preparing students for self-reliance and local economic participation. The age-appropriateness of learners entering the CBC system also poses a challenge, as some students may start school either too early or too late, affecting their maturity and ability to benefit from the curriculum fully.

This study aims to analyze these gaps by examining how Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance aligns with the CBC, exploring junior secondary school teachers' perceptions of the CBC's role in fostering self-reliance, critiquing the extent to which the CBC reflects Nyerere's philosophy, and assessing the potential of achieving self-reliance through the CBC by applying constructivist principles. By addressing these areas, the study seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of the CBC in realizing Nyerere's educational ideals and suggest possible improvements to bridge the gaps

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Stakeholders in education in Kenya from the onset of independence have been pre-occupied with formulation of policies that would salvage Kenya from deteriorating levels of economic, social and political development. Poverty, unemployment, brain drain, corruption, terrorism, negative ethnicity, insecurity, among other social vices have rendered educational reforms in Kenya ineffective. In these efforts less attention has been focused to Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance. According to Nyerere education is supposed to be practical and work oriented to provide real solutions to societal need. It is therefore prudent that Nyerere's philosophy is sufficiently analysed to understand its philosophical underpinnings.

Self-reliance has eluded Kenya as unemployment cases and dependence ratio both at individual and national levels have soared. It is therefore imperative that education in Kenya is examined with the aim of determining why self-reliance has become such elusive. The right question would thus remain; is the competency-based curriculum the system that would actualize what has eluded the 7-4-2-3 and 8-4-4 systems of education? This study seeks to analyse the philosophical underpinnings of the competence based curriculum to determine the extent to which it can lead to the attainment of self-reliance.

The concept of education and that of self-reliance in the competency-based curriculum system of education should necessarily be congruent to increase the propensity of the attainment of the aim of education for self-reliance. If the concept of education and that of self-reliance are in conflict then the attainment of the latter is in jeopardy. Self-reliance should be holistic and not just focus on one educational pillar. It is therefore vital that Kenya as a country having rolled a new curriculum of education focus efforts on how education could increase the chances of attainment of self-reliance economically, socially and politically.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which Nyerere's Philosophy of education for self-reliance can influence the philosophical groundings of competence based curriculum in Kenya to enable attainment of self-reliance in Kenya through the process of education.

#### **1.4 Research objectives**

- i. To explore the lived experiences of junior secondary school teachers in fostering self-reliance among learners within the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).
- ii. To critically analyse the extent to which the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) reflects the principles of Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance.
- iii. To assess the likelihood of achieving self-reliance among learners in the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya through a philosophical analysis.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

- i. How do junior secondary school teachers perceive and experience the process of fostering self-reliance among their learners within the Competency-Based Curriculum?
- ii. To what extent does the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) reflect the principles of Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance?
- iii. What is the likelihood of achieving self-reliance through the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya when assessed through a philosophical analysis?

#### **1.6 Justification of the study**

The necessity of this study is informed by the rising demand to critically challenge indigenous and post-colonial educational philosophies in Africa and their applicability in the current curricular reforms. The philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) by Julius Nyerere, which focused on the functional, practical, and community-oriented education, provides good lessons in the current process of the Competency-Based

Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya. Given the fact that CBC aims at fostering skills, values, and competencies in response to the needs of the society, the lived experiences and principles that Nyerere based his ESR on present a special chance to inform, enrich, and localize the educational reforms in Kenya into an African philosophical context. Additionally, since the discussion of the effectiveness and cultural relevance of the CBC has been widely discussed, this phenomenological study will play a role in the educational policy by linking the past ideals of African education with the current curriculum innovations that can promote self-reliance, creativity, and sustainable development.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

This study is important as it offers curriculum developers, educationalists, and implementers a philosophical and practical understanding of self-reliance, especially as espoused by Julius Nyerere. This paper provides a critical understanding of Nyerere's philosophy in relation to Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and how it can help education systems to shift from exam-based education to skills, independence, and community-oriented learners. It emphasizes the principles of independence that are crucial for the individual and society, including responsibility, creativity, problem-solving skills, and decision-making. In this way, the philosophical framework prepares the stakeholders to rethink the curriculum and instructional practices that focus on the acquisition of knowledge and competencies in real-life situations.

In addition, the study informs Competency-Based Curriculum implementers on how the theoretical framework of CBC is in sync or out of phase with the principle of self-reliance. Through the analysis of the teachers' narratives and attitudes, the study reveals the

pragmatic issues and shortcomings of the CBC approach, including the continued focus on examinations, the weak incorporation of the community, and the lack of emphasis on the acquisition of work-related competencies. These findings offer a research-based analysis that can be used to guide the training of teachers, distribution of resources, and the creation of assessment frameworks that foster the development of self-directed, critical thinkers who are equipped to thrive in Kenya's socio-economic environment. In this respect, the study has implications for education beyond the immediate need for reform, as it supports the achievement of national objectives of economic development, social integration, and political stability. The attainment of self-sufficiency at the individual level means that the society is more self-reliant, which is crucial for Kenya's development. The recommendations of the study are therefore useful for the current and future educational development as they provide a philosophical and practical guide for the CBC to not only teach knowledge but also to produce a generation capable of sustaining the local and global challenges. In this regard, this study contributes to the literature on how African nations can apply indigenous philosophies such as Nyerere's to improve education practice.

### **1.8 Limitations of the study**

- i. The study used phenomenological approach, and thus it mainly depended on subjective interpretations and lived experiences of the participants for Self-Reliance as explained by Nyerere and its applicability to Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya. This dependence restricted the generalizability of the results to broader educational situations than those who directly took part in the research.

- ii. The research encountered difficulties in obtaining primary sources and first hand archival records of the educational philosophy of Nyerere particularly in Kenyan institutions. This shortcoming restricted the researcher to use secondary literature and oral accounts as the primary sources, which could have influenced the completeness of the historical background.
  
- iii. The study employed unstructured interviews and guided discussions as the most significant means of data collection due to the different levels of literacy and the knowledge of phenomenological inquiry among the participants. This restriction perhaps limited the richness and variety of data that would have been collected by use of reflective journals, written accounts, or focus groups.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the study**

Issues within the study that the researcher has control over are referred to as delimitations. The study was restricted to education. It was further narrowed down to philosophy of education as a discipline. The study was confined to the egalitarian and utilitarian aspect of education. It will focus on increasing the learners, educators and policy makers' concept of self-reliance and how the competence-based curriculum addresses the whole issue of self-reliance.

### **1.10 Assumption of the study**

The study assumes that the conceptual analysis of Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance and competence-based curriculum provides sufficient data to determine if the CBC system of education will enable attainment of self-reliance Kenya.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This section reviewed literature relevant for this study. The reviewed literature was done objectively. Furthermore, the theoretical framework that was used in this study was also discussed in detail.

#### **2.1 Nyerere's Philosophy of Education in Relation to the Competency-Based Curriculum**

In the history of academia, analysis of concepts is important as it helps in clearing any confusion that may be associated with a particular concept. Self-reliance as a theory is complex because it is made up of two components, namely 'self' and 'reliance.' The term 'self' is a noun that has a relative meaning depending on the ontological stance one takes (Sorabji, 2008). Before defining self-reliance, it is crucial to define the term 'self.' On the other hand, 'reliance' is a noun that is gotten from the verb 'rely' which means to depend on someone or something. The idea of 'self' has been a subject of discussion among scholars, philosophers, and researchers, and therefore, there are different approaches to defining it. One of the major research gaps that have been identified is the absence of a clear understanding of the ontological and practical meanings of the term 'self' and how these meanings can be applied to the current educational paradigms including the CBC.

##### **2.1.1 Ontological Conception of 'Self'**

Smith (2012) defined 'self' as the ability to acknowledge oneself and others in a given social context, which provides people with their place in society. In his rational

psychology or philosophy of mind, Plato differentiated human beings from other animals by identifying three parts: appetitive, spirited, and rational (Lorenz, 2019). The appetitive part is the biological aspect of human beings, the spirited part is the social aspect, and the rational part is the political aspect (Bobonich, 2019). Plato has described the 'self' in terms of three parts, which makes up the tripartite model.

According to Plato's philosophy of mind, the 'self' can be described in both objective and subjective terms. The 'self' is both constructed and objective in the sense that people can assert their self-identity, but their identity can be seen by others in a social context. This duality of the self means that self-reliance is a concept that has to be viewed from both the individual and societal perspectives.

The concept of 'self' as a subjective experience is well explained in the *Meditations on First Philosophy* by Descartes. In the Cartesian perspective, the act of thinking the thought 'I am' is sufficient to prove the existence of the mind (Smith, 2012). The Cartesian conception of the 'self' is one of the most famous philosophical conceptions and is based on the first-person attributes. Descartes' view is more self-centered and self-satisfactory, which is more individualistic in nature. However, there is a lack of research on how this individualistic approach to self-sufficiency can be integrated with collective social systems such as CBC that focuses on community advancement.

Gallagher (2000) noted that the minimal 'self' is based on the immunity principle, which means that when the speaker uses the first-person pronoun 'I', they cannot be wrong about the referent. This minimal 'self' is based on phenomenology, which means that the experiences of the person are the most vibrant part of the personality. The gap here is the

conflict between this minimal self and the social self which is important in educational contexts such as in CBC.

The structural definition of 'self,' in contrast, focuses on the role of an individual in a given social context. In this regard, the 'self' is divided into macrocosmic and microcosmic categories. The macrocosmic is the social context in which a person operates, while the microcosmic is the interaction of the person with the context. This conception of the self is well captured in Julius Nyerere's philosophy of Ujamaa which is a central concept in African philosophies such as Ubuntu.

In the light of the above, this paper aims at analyzing Ujamaa as propagated by Nyerere with a view of understanding the rationale behind this philosophy of bringing about a society where people are equal and have equal chances and rights and cannot be exploited. This should be in social, economic and political activities so that everyone becomes an economic man and there is collective self reliance at the societal level. Although the concept of societal independence is evident in Nyerere's Ujamaa, the missing link is how this collective self-reliance complements individualism in the CBC system. The independence must start from the individual level and then progress to the societal level. Education should therefore equip knowledge, values and skills that will enable the society to be independent. The question, therefore, lies in how these goals are achieved within the framework of the CBC, which is centered on learner achievement of such objectives as autonomy.

In conclusion, there is a rich philosophical foundation for the notion of 'self,' but there are still some gaps in translating these theories into the practical implementation of

educational policies such as CBC in relation to the development of individual and collective self-sufficiency. Future studies could explore how these philosophical concepts can be applied and incorporated into the CBC to improve its efficiency in the realization of Nyerere's vision of education self-reliance.

### **2.1.2 Epistemological Conception of 'Reliance'**

It is a fact that every individual or society that existed in the past required knowledge, skills, and values to survive. It was, therefore, the knowledge, skills, and values of an individual or society that defined their lifestyle. Knowledge, skills, and values were closely related, with the latter two being the derivatives of the former. To support this argument, knowledge can be defined as personal, procedural, or propositional (Maira, 2019). Personal knowledge was a derivative of the first-person claim of "I," where a claim attributed knowledge to the claimant. This kind of knowledge was arrived at through thinking, such that the claim *cogito ego sum* was of a personal nature. Personal knowledge started with the assertion of 'self,' where one could separate from a group. In this case, justification for personal knowledge was based on the belief in the claim to knowledge by the individual. When an individual could rely on their claim for knowledge to the extent that they could make decisions based on it, then it was correct to say that such an individual was self-reliant.

Procedural knowledge was the knowledge of acquaintance from which skills were derived according to Burgin (2016). It was what was commonly referred to as "know-how." When people had skills that they could apply to improve their social, economic, and political status, it was said that they were capable of performing such tasks. Last but not the least, propositional knowledge was what derived values (Kazen, 2015). The attitude that a

subject formed towards an object was propositional in nature. It was a relational kind of knowledge that referred to the relationship between a subject and an object. Personal, procedural, and propositional knowledge defined the skills and values that supported an individual and the society. The three forms of knowledge made an individual or society rely on “self” in some way or the other. Such an individual or society was considered to be self-sufficient. While the ontological conception of ‘self’ was confined to the minimalist notion of ‘self,’ the epistemological conception of ‘self’ employed both the minimalist and the narrative notions of ‘self’ to explain how a ‘self’ could be posited to exist. Thus, ‘self’ could be microcosmic or macrocosmic; both needed knowledge, skills, and values to perpetuate themselves. If this was the case, self-reliance could be considered as present.

The concept of ‘self-reliance’ in epistemological terms may be too broad in this context because it does not take into consideration how different societies or individuals build knowledge and values that may not necessarily be in line with the conventional definition of self-reliance.

It is also possible to expand on how cultural, socio-economic, or historical factors influence the perception and achievement of self-reliance. For instance, how does the educational system or the society in different parts of the world shape the epistemological understanding of self-reliance?

Other areas that could be explored include the part played by emotional intelligence and social relations in the formation of self-sufficiency since they are central to how people or cultures define their ability to act autonomously.

### **2.1.3 Imperatives of the Concept of Self-Reliance**

The discussion in the preceding section outlined two perspectives from which self-reliance should be defined. On one hand, self-reliance was defined as the ability of an individual in a society to fend for himself or herself especially in the economic, social and political aspects. On the other hand, self-reliance could mean the capacity of people to rely on their own knowledge and judgment. Before going further in the description of these dimensions, it was important to point out that confidence in oneself was the foundation of self-sufficiency. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1883) was an American philosopher and a transcendentalist who defined self-reliance as trusting in one's current abilities, ideas, and strength. From these descriptions, there were certain imperatives that were evident as having supported self-reliance. Of all the imperatives, four of them could be considered as the most representative of all the other factors: attitudes, responsibility, creativity, and autonomy (Murungi et al., 2019).

The discussion fails to explore the external factors that influence self-reliance to a certain level. However, internal factors such as trust and personal knowledge are core to self-reliance, external factors such as access to resources, education, and socio-political environments also have a significant influence on self-reliance.

It is difficult to distinguish between self-reliance as an individual attribute and self-reliance as a characteristic of society or a community. Although people can be independent, the independence of a society can be quite different from the independence of its members depending on the level of interdependence.

The involvement of systematic factors like government policies, economic factors, or social protection in either supporting or discouraging self-reliance has not been investigated.

#### **2.1.4 Responsibility**

According to the Oxford Learners Dictionary (2010), responsibility is defined as the state of being in charge of an activity or being held accountable for something or someone as a result of one's position or employment. Having discussed attitudes and noted that positive attitudes towards oneself maximize the potential for self-reliance, it is important to also show that with the call to action, to possess or care, self-reliance becomes achievable. There must be a duty by an individual to be responsible and be in charge of their wants, which may be primary, secondary, or social. Similarly, society must be compelled to manage the social, economic, and political demands of the people without reference to factors that are extraneous to the social, economic, and political context of the society in question.

In Plato's tripartite theory of the soul, the rational, spirited, and appetitive elements are always in conflict and this leads to the responsibility of each element to the soul. It is therefore clear that responsibility is existentially inherent in the soul of man, and that every man, as well as every society, has a part to play in the welfare of the individual and the society respectively. Thus, responsibility is intertwined with 'self' at the individual and societal levels. As it is rightly said that a responsible person or society is more likely to be a productive one than an irresponsible one. Education through its theories and practices should make people to be self-responsible and therefore make a responsible society which in most cases is self-reliant.

The concept of responsibility requires further elaboration in terms of how social institutions promote or discourage responsibility.

A further analysis of how social responsibility leads to self-sufficiency in the broader sense, including social, economic, and political aspects.

A closer look at how responsibility relates to other aspects such as education and economic systems in promoting or hindering self-reliance.

### **2.1. 5 Creativity**

Creativity is a product of knowledge and skills. Creativity is the use of skills and knowledge to create a valuable substance. Thus, creativity is defined as a process that results in the creation of a new and valuable object (Gielen, 2013). What is formed can be either a tangible commodity, such as a new computer model, or an intangible service, such as a new scientific or social theory (Jeffery, 2005). There are several processes that are believed to cause creativity and by watching these processes, observers are likely to become more creative. These are preparation, incubation, intuition, illumination, and verification (Gielen, 2013).

Based on Plato's division of the soul into three parts, people are always in a dilemma as to how the parts of the soul can work for the benefit of the whole person. This internal conflict results in human issues that may affect the external environment, leading to positive or negative attitudes. To address these issues, preparation is the best medicine. An individual has to direct his or her attention towards the problem and try to look at it from different angles. After the problem has been analyzed to the last drop, the internalization process, which is referred to as incubation takes place (Jeffery, 2005). This

involves thinking about the problem in the mind without any physical or observable movement. If incubation is successful, it results in intuition, which confirms that the problem has been grasped and a potential solution can be found. Following this, the insight (illumination) emerges from the preconscious to the conscious level of the mind. However, this insight does not automatically mean that it is a new solution unless it is proven. Verification is the last step where the idea is checked for its practicality and relevance to the problem. People and societies are trapped in numerous issues due to the ontological structure of the world and people. These are problem-solving searches, and anyone who is able to solve his/her problems is regarded as an independent person. The explanation of creativity requires going further into how the environment (society, education, or resources) affects the creativity of individuals and societies. The connection between creativity and self-employment could be discussed in more detail, especially in terms of how societies with higher levels of creativity are better prepared to deal with socio-economic issues.

### **2.1.6 Autonomy**

Autonomy, like self-reliance, can be described from two angles. Firstly, it can be used to describe the state or the power of self-governance, or the lack of internal regulation. Secondly, from the Kantian ethical theory, autonomy means the ability of a person to act in a moral way and not be bound by the desires. In general, autonomy is the ability of individuals or society to make decisions without being compelled to do so by others. In moral philosophy, especially in Kantian moral theory, being a subject to the moral law is autonomy. The categorical imperatives of Kant are as follows: autonomy in three broad themes.

First, Kant defines autonomy as the freedom of the agents to make decisions on their own without any influence from other people. Secondly, lack of interference does not mean lack of influence, and this is why Kant goes on to say that autonomy means making decisions after having thought about it through one's own reason. Finally, Kant argues that autonomy is a moral right that enables individuals or groups to make utilitarian choices. It is thus correct to note that an autonomous individual or society is self-sufficient because there is no reliance and control from other sources. From these decisions, it can be noted that for any individual or society to claim self-reliance, they must satisfy the four imperatives that serve as the tenets of self-reliance. The individual or society must have a positive attitude towards 'self'. This positive attitude should result in self responsibility. The ability to solve one's problems should then foster creativity, in the individual and in the group. These three tenets would improve the confidence needed to guarantee the independence by the individual or society. It is for this reason that educational theories and practices should foster the development of the imperatives of self-reliance at the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. More research is required to understand how autonomy is built in practice in society, especially in the context of education that encourages people to think and act on their own. It is possible to better understand how social, economic, and political factors promote or hinder autonomy by examining the concept in more detail.

### **2.3 The Extent to Which Competency-Based Curriculum Reflects Nyerere's Philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance**

Self-reliance, as envisaged by Julius Nyerere, is the capacity of individuals and communities to depend on their own efforts, knowledge, and resources to meet their

economic, social, and political needs without undue reliance on external aid. It emphasizes an education system that is practical, work-oriented, and grounded in the realities of the local environment, aimed at producing individuals who are not only self-sufficient but also committed to the collective good of their society. Nyerere viewed self-reliance as both an individual and communal virtue rooted in dignity of labor, critical thinking, creativity, and social responsibility, forming a cornerstone of his broader philosophy of Ujamaa and African socialism.

The driving force and the ultimate purpose of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) was the transition from knowledge acquisition to knowledge application. The CBC was described as an approach that would respond to the dynamic nature of the world of work, in terms of process and outcome. In this case, procedure was defined as the experience and undertakings in the academic affairs while result was defined as the outcome of the experience and undertakings (Willy, 2018). Competencies were inherent attributes of an individual that encompassed skills, knowledge, and capacity. Competencies described how an individual applied the major skills that he or she possessed. The designers of the CBC program expected that at the end of the learning period, the learner would have attained the following competencies; communication, collaboration, self-efficacy, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, and learning to learn (Nyakangi, 2018).

This is in line with Nyerere's education philosophy of self-reliance that embraced commitment to community, work ethos, learner centeredness and no examination obsession. Nyerere also believed that children should go to school when they are able to and complete each cycle with the ability to fend for themselves. He stated that education

should be holistic, and learners should be able to gain self-esteem, confidence, cooperation, and critical thinking skills to foster inquiring minds.

### **2.3.1 Views on the Aim of Education for Self-Reliance**

In addition to sociological and historical research on self-reliance in education, there is a lack of philosophical research on the subject. This paper sought to examine how the Competency-Based Curriculum that is being implemented in Kenya could help in the achievement of the aim of education for self-reliance, an aim that the 8-4-4 system of education that was being phased out failed to achieve. In the philosophical study on self-reliance in education, it was necessary to look at the different conceptions of ‘self’ and how each imperative of the concept impacted on the achievement of self-reliance in education. Furthermore, the study sought to show how the process of education, as a theory and practice, can result in self-sufficiency at the individual and societal levels. In the study *Analysis of the Kenyan 8-4-4 System of Education in Relation to the Aims of Education for Self-Reliance*, Ambaa (2005) noted two broad areas of education that impacted on self-reliance: forms of knowledge and teaching-learning processes. Ambaa (2015) established the forms of knowledge in the 8-4-4 system as physical science, human science, religion, and history. These forms of knowledge were also divided into primary and secondary school levels. In primary education, forms of knowledge comprised of English, Home Science, Physical Education, Agriculture, Kiswahili, Business Education, Mathematics, History, Science, Art and Craft, Civics, Music, Geography, and Religious Education. In secondary education, forms of knowledge were Mathematics, Humanities, Languages, Sciences, and Technical. These knowledge forms were deemed necessary for the improvement of individual and societal autonomy.

Ambaa's (2015) study was important because it identified the forms of knowledge that impacted on skills and values that could be acquired by the recipients of the 8-4-4 system of education. The study expanded on how the subjects in the 8-4-4 system were structured to facilitate the achievement of self-sufficiency at the individual and societal levels.

Ambaa (2015) explained how each of the forms of knowledge could enable one to become an employer through self-employment and gain ready to work skills. However, while Ambaa (2015) presented relevant questions on how self-reliance could be achieved through education and the types of knowledge, the study failed to offer a philosophical way of showing how these subjects could lead to self-reliance. It did not clarify whether the 'self' referred to was the subjective 'self' or the objective 'self.' Inasmuch as the study did not philosophically establish whether the knowledge forms included the development of the imperatives of self-reliance among learners, the study was not grounded enough to offer a rational prescription on how self-reliance could be achieved through the process of education.

In terms of pedagogy, Ambaa noted one general concern: the examination regime that characterized the Kenyan education system. This was clear that the educational process, by means of pedagogical procedures, was designed to help learners to pass their exams. However, exams were not the goal of the education process but a tool to attain a particular goal. An education system that was based on exams was not directed towards its intended objectives. Although Ambaa (2015) established that pedagogical procedures were a factor that affected self-reliance, the study did not outline procedures that would enhance self-reliance. Ambaa only complained about the need for various heuristic strategies in teaching and learning without providing any recommendations.

This study was able to address the gaps left by Ambaa's (2015) study by identifying the forms of knowledge and pedagogical procedures that lead to self-reliance. The study sought to establish how knowledge content and teaching methods could be enhanced to promote self-reliance among the learners and how Nyerere's philosophy could be used to inform the development of an education system that promotes self-reliance. To fill the gaps in Ambaa's study, the philosophical framework of how the curriculum, pedagogy, and educational philosophy could be implemented to achieve the intended goals of self-reliance was established.

#### **2.4 Theoretical framework**

According to Ochola & Roux (2010), the structure that supports the theory of any research work constitutes a theoretical framework. This makes the theoretical framework the bedrock upon which any given study is anchored. This study is underpinned on constructivism as an educational theory that grounds self-reliance.

Constructivism is an educational theory that postulates that learners acquire knowledge and understanding through social discourse and experiences that enable them to integrate new information with that which is already inherent them (Steffe & Gale, 2012). Thus individuals do not just acquire knowledge and understanding by passively perceiving through a direct process of educators transmitting it to them but rather construct their own understanding and knowledge through interaction of what they know and what they don't.

The constructivist theory is associated to the Swiss Developmental Psychologist Jean Piaget's (1896-1980) theory of Cognitive Development (Bjorklund, 2018). Piaget focused on how humans make meaning in relation to the interaction between their experiences and

their ideas. He identified processes of assimilation and accommodation as key elements in interaction since individuals construct new knowledge from experiences (Bjorklund, 2018).

When individuals assimilate new information they incorporate it into already existing framework without changing it (Nola & Irzik, 2006). This occurs when experiences by individual learners are collinear to their inherent representations of the world. However, it may occur also as a result of the learners' rigidity to change their internal wrong representation of reality thus aligning them to wrong perceptions of reality (Nola & Irzik, 2006). Assimilation is thus only constructive when the aligning of knowledge and understanding taking place is premised on reality from an objective sense.

Accommodation on the other hand is characterised by learners aligning their internal constructions to their phenomenological experiences (Nola & Irzik, 2006). It is an acceptance that trials, errors, and failures are the best mechanisms through which knowledge and understanding is acquired (Nola & Irzik, 2006). Therefore, cumulative existential experiences form a pool from which learners can enrich their understanding of reality. Accommodation is thus a more complex process whereby when an individual discovers that their concept of a thing is in conflict with reality they subjugate their understanding to the more objective and conventional understanding of the thing.

The two systems of knowledge development as dictated by constructivism import constructive pedagogic approaches that reinforce active learning as opposed to passive learning. The approaches reinforce the role played by learners in the learning and teaching experiences as being vital and greater determinant of knowledge acquisition. The role of

educators in constructivism is that of facilitators who facilitate learning and not teachers (Tobias & Duffy, 2009). Thus, the facilitator aids the learners to arrive at their independent understanding of concepts. Another pedagogical approach characteristic of constructivism is collaboration. Through collaboration with others learners are able to arrive at knowledge and understanding that they wouldn't arrive at when working alone.

Constructivism as a theory anchors this study which analyses competence-based curriculum in Kenya. The CBC in Kenya imports ontological and epistemological perspectives of constructivism as it emphasizes the position of an individual learner thus being learner centered. The content of the curriculum and pedagogical approaches in CBC are also constructive as the position of the learner, the teaching and learning experiences is vital. The constructive ontological and epistemological perspectives as imported by CBC are in line with Nyerere's observations of what education for self-reliance should focus on. Constructivism as a theory in education would thus address Nyerere's concerns that education should be relevant to the society, serve the society, solve problems of the society, and be work oriented.

It thus holds that constructivism and self-reliance are convertible such that self-reliance imports its ontological and epistemological foundations from constructivism. Proponents of self-reliance, argue that the primary purpose of any educational activity should be the aim to make individuals self-reliant (Murungi, 2019). Having discussed attitudes, responsibility, creativity, and autonomy as the most basic imperatives of self-reliance, educational theories and practices should aim at maximizing in shaping positively the imperatives of self-reliance stated herein which in turn guarantee the attainment of self-reliance. Inherent self-reliance as described by the tenet of autonomy and responsibility is

a negation of dependence while reinforcing independency. The theory of self-reliance is relevant to this study considering the transition period that Kenyan education system is experiencing currently. With the shift from 8-4-4 system of education to 2-6-6-3 also referred to as the competency-based curriculum it is vital that CBC is analyzed to understand the extent to which it will maximize the attainment of self-reliance.

The two perspectives of self-reliance that emanate from the ontological conception of 'self' establish theoretical conceptions of self-reliance that are vital to the study the conceptions are vivid in Waldo Ralph Emerson and Julius Nyerere (Liang, 2014). Whereas, Emerson stresses much on the subjective conception of 'self' and thus self-reliance, Nyerere emphasizes objective conception of 'self' and thus opining a concept of self-reliance that inclines towards objectivity. The study gyrates around whether self-reliance should lead to a totally independent person that is free from any external influence and who seeks egocentric ends or an independent person whom by virtue of their independency creates an independent society.

Emerson seems to be advocating for the first argument of self-reliance where one is totally independent of any external influence at personal level (Kouassi, 2015). Three assumptions are postulated to justify Emerson theory of self-reliance. To begin with, independency of thought is what constitutes an individual's right (Liang, 2014). Meaning that individuals should be granted liberty to express their thoughts freely without hindrances. It is believed that for one to be creative then they should be allowed to exploit their mental capacities without influence from external agents. This study relies on self-reliance as a theory because it emphasizes independence of thought. Secondly, genuine freedom can only be guaranteed if there is maximum independence of thought (Liang,

2014). Lastly, protection of independency of thought is requisite (Liang, 2014). Considering the existence of autocratic social organizations, self-reliance should be the efforts that individuals employ to protect their independency of thought. This study thus relies on self-reliance because it seeks to protect the independence of thought from autocratic control.

Nyerere's assumptions on the other hand are collinear to the argument of an independent person created by an independent society. His argument is of a symbiotic form of self-reliance between an individual and the society. Nyerere's first assumption is that education should seek to develop open mind in each individual (Otunnu, 2012). Second, self-reliance should involve an individual possessing the ability to learn from others (Otunnu, 2012). Lastly, self-reliance should entail satisfaction of individuals in their societal positions and roles utilising their abilities to better the societal well-being (Otunnu, 2012). This study thus employs self-reliance based on the assumptions postulated by Nyerere. Education for self-reliance should enable recipients of the education to be open-minded, possess the ability to self-learn and also learn from others and lastly, have confidence in whichever positions they hold in the society while using the very positions for the betterment of the society.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the research design, research paradigm, research method, Location of the study , sample size , data collection procedure, methods of data collection, data explication, validity , reliability and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2 Research design

The study adopted an interpretive phenomenological approach. As noted by Gorgi (2009), the term ‘interpretive’ is used to mean the explication of the narrative data that the participants had regarding the phenomenon of interest. It also highlighted how the researcher approached and developed the narrative data. The participants provided the qualitative data in the form of narratives, informal discourse, and personal observations of their daily lives. Interpretive phenomenology was developed by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (Reiners, 2012). According to Husserl, individuals are intentionally related to everything else in the world (Vagle, 2014). Interpretive phenomenology was used to understand the meaning of an individual’s experiences or to find meaning in their daily life. This research explored the experiences of teachers teaching grade six learners, the strategies they employed in implementing the CBC and the meaning of self-sufficiency in as much as the curriculum.

Interpretive phenomenology involved bracketing. Bracketing was the putting aside of all assumptions in order to focus on the essence of an individual’s existence (Vagle, 2014). It was also an interpretive, open, flexible, and responsive process, which enabled the

researcher to immerse and dwell reflexively in the phenomenon of interest (Vagle, 2014). The design focused on the understanding of human life situations in order to define archetypes (Wojnar & Swanson & Schonwald, 1988). In phenomenological research, essence was defined as the general human constructs that are derived from the phenomenon of lived-experience.

### **3.3 Paradigm**

The term paradigm was derived from the Greek word Paradeigma and the Latin word paradama which means pattern or model (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). It was a way of thinking or an act of bowing to a particular opinion. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), a research paradigm is a fundamental framework of assumptions that underpin action, which reflects the researcher's world view. The world view is the way of thinking, the paradigm, the epistemology or the ontology that underpins the meaning or the interpretation of the research data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This study was conducted under the interpretive paradigm. Interpretivism and constructivism aimed at understanding the social world of experience from the perspective of the actors (Schwandt, 1994). Interpretation was therefore needed to make sense of this world of meaning. In constructivism/interpretivism, realities were viewed as multiple, abstract mental constructs that were social and experiential, and situated and contextual (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

In this regard, the research adopted the assumptions advanced by Vagle (2014) which posited that there is a meaningful relation between the subject and the rest of the world as opposed to the object. The epistemological assumption of the study was that knowledge was acquired through experience. This meant that experience was the fundamental source

of knowledge's meaning. To achieve this, the researcher and the participants co-constructed knowledge. This was in agreement with Racher and Robinson (2003) who argued that constructions are evoked and developed and knowledge is constructed through the interaction between the investigator and the respondents.

The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge on self-reliance based on the experiences of the teachers who are implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Lived experiences were the manner in which people existed in relation to a phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon under analysis was independence in the context of Nyerere's philosophy. The study aimed at determining the perception of teachers on the graduates of grade six after the implementation of the first six years of the Competency-Based Curriculum. The study sought to know whether these students were capable of standing on their own and compete in the society.

Monti and Tinggen (1999) noted that the interpretive paradigm was based on ontological assumptions that reality is complex, integrated, and contextual. The study was qualitative in nature and therefore centered on the participants' perceptions and feelings. This paper embraced multiple ways of knowing to reveal the knowledge that is inherent in human experience. The epistemology of the study was that reality was considered as constructed indirectly and was therefore considered as relativist. This means that people gave their own meaning to events; thus, there were different meanings to one event. Interpretive methods shared characteristics such as extended interaction with participants, the researcher's active participation, emergent approaches, and negotiated results. To ensure the interpretivism paradigm was achieved in this study, the researcher was in touch

with the participants throughout the study and they were referred to as co-researchers. This approach made it possible to provide meaningful interpretation of the phenomena. The findings of the study were discussed with the co-researchers to ensure that the data was not misrepresented.

### **3.4 Research Method**

The study majorly employed phenomenological hermeneutic method as the main method of data collection and synthesis. It is important to note that the phenomenological hermeneutic method is not an empirical science but a human science where the object is constituted through the medium of the subject and its relation (Dowling, 2007). Since the study is philosophical in nature, other philosophical approaches like philosophical analysis were incorporated in the study to enhance the philosophical aspects of analysis and critique (Sheffield, 2004).

#### **3.4.1 Phenomenological Hermeneutic Method**

The phenomenological hermeneutic method was derived from two methods, which are phenomenology and hermeneutics. Phenomenology, which is a form of hermeneutics that means the telling of phenomena from the first person, entails a person telling a story, for instance, being a victim of hunger. These are known as lived experiences. Hermeneutics, on the other hand, is a process of interpretation, similar to the interpretation of religious texts. The term phenomenology is derived from the Greek word *phenomenon* which means ‘things appearing to view’ or ‘showing itself flaring up’ (Farrell, 2020). It is concerned with the phenomena or things as they are perceived by other people. For instance, the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) as seen by a teacher who is conversant with the 8-

4-4 system of education in Kenya. The goal of phenomenology is the return to concrete, which is expressed by the phrase *Zu den Sachen* (Back to the things themselves). 'Back to the things themselves' means that the phenomenologist is interested in all the experiences of the world of things as a way of interpreting the world. They dismiss the idea that objective positivist research approach is the most appropriate research paradigm (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Therefore, the phenomenon under study was not quantified or described based on the reality that is generally recognized. Instead, an attempt was made to understand how the participants constructed their daily reality (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Phenomenology comprises of transcendental, existential and hermeneutic philosophies of phenomenology where transcendental is associated with the ability to go outside the experience like going outside to view the world from above (Cilesiz, 2010), existential philosophy of phenomenology which describes the experience and hermeneutic phenomenology which focuses on the interpretation of the experience rather than description (Yuksel & Yiridim, 2015).

Phenomenology as an inductive qualitative research method has its origin from the twentieth century phenomenologist Edmund Husserl's descriptive phenomenology and Martin Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) was a German mathematician who developed the phenomenology movement. He stated that phenomenology put aside all assumptions concerning consciousness and concentrated on the significance of experience (Reiners, 2012). When used in the context of individual experience, it referred to the individual's view, cognition, creativity, and feeling about the phenomenon. Husserl termed this intentionality.

Intentionality is one of the key features of phenomenology and is associated with consciousness. In the context of Aristotelian philosophy, intention is defined as the direction of the mind towards the object (Mustakas, 2012). It is not a passive process, for example, going to the library to read as opposed to reading a billboard while driving. This means that the orientation of the mind is always towards the object and the object is in the mind in an intentional manner.

In this study, the experience of self-reliance after achieving a certain circle in the CBC system of education was explored. This paper aimed at investigating the teacher's experience in addressing this phenomenon with the help of Nyerere's philosophy. The ways in which the teacher managed the new system of education were perceived as purposeful in shaping self-reliant individuals. Their perceptions, thoughts, emotions, or imaginations were considered the lived experiences.

Phenomenological research is different from other qualitative research approaches because it aims at describing the phenomenon as it is experienced by the participant (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Phenomenologists are more interested in the direct description of a phenomenon than in explaining why people live their lives in the manner they do. For instance, a phenomenological study on hunger survivors would involve an understanding of what it means to be a hunger victim and how the survivor perceives the world. Phenomenological research aims at describing the phenomenon, not the number of hungry people or the definition of hunger.

As mentioned above, phenomenologists believe that the way people experience the world of the everyday is a proper way of understanding the world. They are, therefore, concerned

with the analytical and interpretive processes of phenomena in the everyday world of the people. The phenomenological term for this is the “lifeworld” (Creswell, 2013). The question that guides phenomenological research is: What is given to us as persons? However, phenomenology as a method of philosophical inquiry cannot be enough for educational research because it involves interpretation of experiences without analysis. Therefore, the phenomenological hermeneutic method is needed, which is described below.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was a student of Husserl and while he endorsed the phrase *Zu den Sachen* (to the things themselves), he did not share Husserl’s focus on description over understanding. Heidegger dismissed epistemology, the theory of knowledge, and embraced ontology, the science of being (Dowling, 2017). He was concerned with how people’s experiences are studied and proposed a research approach grounded on an ontological perspective that experience is hermeneutical. Heidegger advanced interpretive phenomenology by building on hermeneutics, the philosophy of interpretations (Creswell, 1994).

Hermeneutics goes beyond the description or the essence of the experience and looks for meanings that are hidden in the events of life (Reiners, 2012). The question that was of most concern to Heidegger was: What is being? He was concerned with the phenomenology of human existence and experience and did not think that bracketing was required because hermeneutics is grounded in the *priori*. Heidegger has argued that it is not possible to deny the experiences that one has concerning the phenomena of interest. For instance, in this study, it is impossible for the researcher to dismiss experiences concerning the attainment of self-reliance since the researcher has been a teacher right

from the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum. Heidegger came up with the hermeneutic circle whereby understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon is arrived at through knowledge and experience. Because of this, the people involved in this study were referred to as co-researchers. This was in agreement with Mustakas (1994) who argued that the phenomenon is best captured from the perspective of the research participants and therefore should be referred to as co-researchers.

It is important to note that language is an important component of the hermeneutic phenomenological method. This method of interpretation is a theory that views language and dialogue as ontological and as a means of engaging with the lifeworld in a perceptive and hermeneutic manner (Suddick et al., 2020). This means that the researcher can only make meaning from lived experiences through language. The participants' words and the way they express themselves assist in distilling the research. This will be done by using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). This method will be used in Objective One: to examine the experiences of teachers in the promotion of independence among their learners.

### **3.4.2 Philosophical Analysis**

Philosophical issues were analyzed by dissecting them. It involved the ability to grasp the basic concepts, related concepts and how they are connected (Foley, 1996). According to Russell, as quoted by Noodins (2018), reality was always analysable; it could always be reduced to constituents or relations. Critical analysis was, therefore, described as the intellectually purposeful and skillful use of knowledge, involving the identification, organization, interpretation, transformation and/or evaluation of data acquired through

observation, experience, personal contemplation, reasoning or communication for the purpose of making decisions and/or forming opinions.

In this study, philosophical analysis was employed in two ways. First, it was integrated into the study to review and discuss literature relevant to the research. Secondly, the method was used to address the second objective of the study, which examined the extent to which the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) embodied Nyerere's philosophy for self-reliance and the third objective that sought to determine the possibility of attaining self-reliance in the CBC in Kenya.

Philosophical analysis generally involved activities such as agreeing with, acceding to, defending, or confirming a particular point of view; proposing a new point of view; conceding that an existing point of view had certain merits but needed qualification in certain respects; reformulating an existing point of view or statement to offer a better explanation; dismissing a point of view on the grounds of its inadequacy, irrelevance, or incoherence; rejecting, rebutting, or refuting another's arguments on reasoned grounds; and reconciling two positions that seemed at variance by appealing to a higher or deeper principle.

### **3.4 Sources of Data Collection**

The study used unstructured phenomenological interviews as the method of data collection because of the suitability of this method in phenomenology as described by Vagle (2014). From the participants' accounts of the phenomenon under study, the researcher was able to identify the invariant structures or the nature of the phenomenon. The secondary data was obtained from journals, newspapers and books.

### **3.5 Study Location**

The study was conducted in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya, and the study was guided by phenomenological research approach where the phenomenon of interest determines the research approach, participants and the study context (Hycner, 1999). In phenomenology, it is crucial to involve participants who have real-life experiences that are closely related to the phenomenon of study, which in this case is the practical application of Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance in the Kenyan Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

Trans-Nzoia County was selected because it has a variety of educational settings, ranging from rural, peri-urban, and urban areas, which makes it possible to capture how the principles of self-reliance are understood and practiced in different schooling contexts. Also, Trans-Nzoia's active implementation of the CBC offers a real-life context to analyze the challenges, adjustments, and similarities between Nyerere's educational ideology and the current competency-based changes.

### **3.6 Target Population**

The study focused on teachers, particularly those who teach grade six learners.

### **3.7 Sampling and Sample Size**

#### **3.7.1 Sampling Procedure**

The study used purposive sampling because people who are chosen to participate in phenomenological studies should have profound and relevant experiences of the phenomenon under study (Cresswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). According to Creswell (2007), the purposeful sampling strategy was used because the researcher could

understand the phenomenon through purposively selecting participants. The researcher could then determine whether the participants had something important and relevant to say about the phenomenon of interest. The researcher also noted that according to Creswell (2007), a phenomenological framework is best conducted on a relatively homogeneous population.

For this reason, a purposive sample of two teachers from selected schools was used in this study, teachers who handled grade six learners.

### **3.7.2 Sample Size**

The study intended to select ten participants however, data saturation reached at the fifth participants. The justification for this number is in line with phenomenological research. In phenomenological study there is no definitive answer to the question of how many participants are needed in phenomenological studies because the number of participants depends on the in-depth information (Baker, 2012). Nicholls (2009) stated that phenomenological studies may involve as few as five participants which is in tandem with this study. Rawat (2014), supports that it is common to conduct in-depth interviews with “four or five respondents which agrees with this study.” Some authorities suggested different sample sizes, for instance, Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorensen (2006) considered 30 as appropriate while McMillan (2008) suggested that the number of participants should range from five to 25. The selection of five participants is in line with the above stated authorities.

### **3.8 Piloting**

Piloting was not conducted for this study, as it is considered unnecessary in phenomenological hermeneutical research. Phenomenologists argue that unstructured

interviews do not require piloting because researchers engage participants multiple times, allowing for iterative refinement of interview questions to effectively capture the lived experiences of practicing teachers on Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance and its implications to competency Based Curriculum in Kenya. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) also noted that piloting is unnecessary in such investigations, as the dynamic and exploratory nature of the inquiry emphasizes deep, contextual understanding over rigid methodologies. Unlike quantitative studies, which benefit from preliminary testing, phenomenological research relies on authentic engagement and iterative data analysis to adapt and refine instruments throughout the research process. This approach prioritizes uncovering rich, qualitative insights and ensuring that findings reflect the unique voices and experiences of participants, making formal piloting redundant.

### **3.8 Validity**

To ensure that the truth value is obtained in this phenomenological research design, the researcher had to consciously put himself in a phenomenological bracket to understand the phenomenon from the participant's view. Bracketing was also used on the audio recordings made for each interview during transcription process. This approach was in agreement with Mouton & Marais (1990), Yuksel & Yildirim (2015), Groenewald (2004), and Bednall (2006).

Another way of establishing validity was through the use of the researcher's subjectivity statement as recommended by Yuksel & Yildirim (2015) and Merriam (1995). In the subjectivity statement, the researcher explained his/her initial impressions and expectations of the phenomena before the data analysis to determine whether the impressions changed after interacting with the participants. According to Merriam (1995),

a subjectivity statement enables the readers to situate the findings and appreciate how the data were developed by the researcher.

In this study, the researcher's subjectivity statement was as follows: "Competency-Based Curriculum has been proposed as the panacea to unemployment in Kenya. Is it possible that it can be the solution to this problem?"

### **3.9 Reliability**

Reliability in research refers to the consistency and accuracy of findings obtained through research tools (Joppe, 2000). In phenomenology, reliability is enhanced by repeated interactions with participants to confirm the truthfulness of early information and by empowering participants to share their experiences as they appear in consciousness (Stone, 1979). The researcher also enhanced reliability by taking detailed field notes (Groenewald, 2004; Trochim, 2006) and gathering comprehensive information. An audit trail was implemented, documenting every step of the research process for transparency, while peer debriefing provided external perspectives to identify biases and ensure the study's credibility.

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher used Moustakas (1994) approach where the participants in the research were referred to as co-researchers. The co-researchers did not participate in the study in terms of investigations, which the researcher undertook. However, the researcher explained to the co-researchers their roles in phenomenological research, which aims at answering the research questions based on their experiences and stories. The researcher had to interview the participants before choosing them for the study. The

rationale for conducting the first set of interviews was to gauge the participants' interest and readiness to be part of the study.

### **3.11 Data collection method**

One of the tenets of Husserlian phenomenology that Burrow (2017) espouses is that the essence of an experience can only be understood through one-on-one interactions with the participants. This was done through listening, participation and observation in order to get the real picture without any distortion due to the researcher's perception (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007).

The research therefore used two data collection techniques that are in line with phenomenology. Memoing was employed in the study and it involved the researcher's notes of what was heard, seen, felt and thought during the process of data collection and analysis. Groenewald (2004) also backed this approach. The study also used unstructured phenomenological interviews, which is a common method of data collection in phenomenology as recommended by Vagle (2014) because it provides detailed information from the participants. The unstructured interviews were natural, verbal, and unscripted, which was different from quantitative approaches that are formal and rigid. One of the key objectives of conducting in-depth interviews was to explore the participants' experiences (Burrow, 2017).

The first interview was about the participants' past experience with the phenomenon, the second interview was about the participants' current experience with the phenomenon and the third interview was a synthesis of the first two interviews where the participants described their core experience of the phenomenon (Seidman, 1998). For instance, the first

interview was on the teachers' experience with the 8-4-4 system, the second interview was on their experience with CBC and the third interview was a combination of both. The second set of data was obtained from articles in peer reviewed journals, government policies, international policies and acts, thematic textbooks, internet and newspapers. This data was sourced to achieve objectives two and three and was analyzed philosophically.

### **3.12 Explication of Data**

The data was explicated after conducting phenomenological interviews with the co-researchers who had experienced the phenomenon by following Hycner's simplified version of the phenomenological data analysis procedure. The term 'data analysis' was deliberately not used as a heading because Hycner (1999) warned that the word 'analysis' is dangerous for phenomenology. The term 'analysis' means to divide something into parts and this often leads to the loss of the phenomenon under consideration. On the other hand, explication entails analyzing the components of a phenomenon but with the background of the whole (Hycner, 1999). Thus, the lived experiences were explained with the help of Hycner's (1999) simplified version. The process are divided into five stages:

Bracketing and Phenomenological Reduction. At this stage, the researcher was involved in the Epoché (Bracketing) process in phenomenological analysis. For instance, based on the previous experiences of the phenomenon, the researcher suspended his own experience and knowledge of the difficulties or advantages of the phenomenon in order to capture the participants' experiences without bias. This meant that the researcher suspended his or her bias towards or against CBC in as far as self-reliance is concerned.

Reduction was done by using textual language to describe individual experiences. The researcher excluded all the aspects that are not relevant to the conscious experience as suggested by Moustakas (1994). In simple terms, reduction entailed purging the raw data of overlapping, redundant, and ambiguous terms.

Delineating units of meaning. The process of identifying units of meaning started at the phenomenological reduction level. In the process of reduction in the current study, the data was reduced to the variant constituents known as meaning units or horizons.

Grouping of units of meaning into themes. At this stage, the researcher grouped the units to make meaning. This was done through imaginative variation, an analysis process that involved the use of the researcher's imagination without the use of data. The researcher generated structural themes.

The validation was done by comparing what was discussed in the literature review with the interviews and observations.

General and unique themes from all interviews and making a composite summary  
The themes that emerged from the interviews were analyzed philosophically and argumentatively.

### **3.13 Ethical Considerations**

The participants in the study were informed that their information would be kept confidential and their names were not disclosed. The researcher sought permission from the Department of Educational Foundations, Masinde Muliro University of Science & Technology and research permits from NACOSTI before accessing the selected junior secondary schools.

The researcher used this clearance to seek permission from the county director of education of the selected secondary schools to access the participants.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents , interprets and discusses the findings of the study in light of the three research objectives.

The first objective of the study is to understand the experience of teachers in promoting self-reliance among their learners. This objective is divided into three sections as discussed below.

#### 4.1 Ways in which teachers foster independence among students in the context of the CBC.

The direct verbatims from participants ;

*T1: "I am more of an enabler than a disseminator of knowledge." I help learners to find knowledge and find solutions on their own, which fosters independence."*

*T2: "I think my role is to teach them life skills, not facts and information." I assist them to reason and engage in assignments that solve problems that are close to real life.*

*T3: "I envision myself as a role model." I allow students to be in control of their learning process, make decisions and be able to evaluate their choices.*

*T4: "In line with CBC, I assist the learners to relate what they learn in class to their day to day lives hence making them be more reliant."*

*T5: "My responsibility is to foster learning environments that promote learner's initiative and responsibility so that they can learn to be independent."*

##### 4.1.1 Hermeneutics of the findings

The teachers' reflections show that they have a rich, practical knowledge of the changes in their roles under the CBC. When viewed through the lens of phenomenological hermeneutic approach, these findings reveal how teachers perform and narrate their

professional roles in a day, not just as tellers of knowledge but as constructors of meaning. For example, T1 and T3 refer to themselves as ‘enablers’ and ‘coaches,’ which indicates a move away from direct teaching. These examples demonstrate a shift toward facilitating the development of students’ own knowledge and empowering them to be in charge of the learning process. This shift is in line with Heidegger’s being-in-the-world where knowledge is not a mere possession but a meaningful encounter with the world. All five participants agree that it is essential to relate what is taught in class to the real world. Both participants T2 and T4 stress the importance of project-based learning and practical orientation as the key factors that contribute to the development of independence. This is in line with Nyerere’s philosophy of education that education should prepare the learners for life and not for examinations alone, also for life and the society. From a phenomenological perspective, this is a reference to the idea of intentionality of consciousness: the teachers’ focus is not on the content of the learning process, but on the actual, contextualized experiences that are meaningful and relevant to the learners.

The issue of learner autonomy and initiative is also well developed. T3 and T5, for example, state that they are willing to foster students’ independence by providing them with choices, self-direction, and reflection. This is in line with constructivism learning theory that posits that learning occurs through experience, interaction and reflection. It also resonates with the cognitive constructivism of Piaget, where learning takes place through the process of assimilation and accommodation of the learner and the social constructivism of Vygotsky where learning is facilitated through scaffolding and social interaction.

#### **4.1.2 Discussion**

From the constructivist point of view, the teachers' roles as the guides and tutors are crucial. It assists students to work within the Zone of proximal development and progress towards independence. As T5 points out, designing learning environments that foster responsibility and initiative enables learners to gain not only knowledge but also skills for life, an element of independence. These practices are in line with constructivism and Nyerere's work-based education where learners learn through practice.

Therefore, the experiences of these participants support the notion that the CBC's learner-centered design is consistent with constructivism and Nyerere's education philosophy. The teachers do not view themselves as mere transmitters of knowledge but as constructors of meaning with their students. In this way, they translate and perform the CBC as a process of cultivating independent learners which is in line with constructivism and the emancipatory goals of education for independence.

One of the significant findings of this study is the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered practices. Teachers do not view themselves as knowledge providers but as enablers, tutors, and guides. This is in line with the phenomenological hermeneutic approach that embraces the experiences and how people perceive their positions in large systems of education. In this regard, teachers understand their professional self as being about facilitating learners' process of becoming an autonomous learner, which is in line with Heidegger's 'being-in-the-world' where teaching is not about the act of telling but of meaning making.

This transformation is based on constructivism learning theory especially the zone of proximal development (ZPD) where the teacher guides the learners to perform tasks that are just beyond their individual abilities. In this study, teachers help students to solve problems and to think critically, which are elements of ZPD. However, Koros and Achieng (2023) have noted that this philosophical stance is not without its implementation difficulties. Their study reveals that while teachers may be conceptually committed to these new roles, they are not adequately trained or supported to enact them.

The second major theme is the conscious attempt made by the teachers to relate what is taught in class to real life situations. Teachers stressed on the need to involve the students in activities that are relevant to their daily lives, so that learning becomes meaningful and practical. This is in line with the constructivist theory that holds that knowledge is constructed through interactions with real-life situations and issues.

Lumonya (2020) opines that CBC has not optimally embraced IKS in Kenya, which could help in contextualizing the content in the learners' culture. Likewise, Okeyo and Kanake (2021) argue that the competence-based approach adopted by CBC can help learners prepare for life outside school if project-based learning and community engagement are well incorporated. Therefore, the participants' narratives of implementing relevance and context-based learning align with the principles of constructivism and the fundamental objectives of CBC.

Learner autonomy and initiative were found to be the most significant aspects of teachers' perceptions of CBC. The teachers provided examples of practices that enable students to

be in control of their learning, to make decisions and be accountable for them. These are some of the features of constructivist learning environments that foster learners' transition from dependency to independence.

In this regard, Ngwacho (2019) has given a good argument on how CBC can help in the promotion of sustainable development through life skills. However, his argument which Wambua and Waweru (2019) also make is that such autonomy is limited by structural factors such as lack of resources, lack of materials, and uneven preparation of teachers. These constraints raise a question on the feasibility of the policy of self-reliance in the context of the Kenyan schools. Therefore, while the concept of autonomy is inherent in CBC, its implementation is less systematic.

Although the epistemological foundation of CBC is liberal and compatible with constructivist theory and phenomenology, the study shows that the practical application of CBC is problematic. While teachers in this study embraced their roles at the conceptual level, they are faced with structural barriers that limit the practical application of the roles.

Koros and Achieng (2023) note that many teachers are not well prepared and receive insufficient professional development to fully embrace CBC practices. This is in line with Sifuna and Obonyo (2019) who opine that the main challenges of implementation are due to the hasty implementation of CBC and lack of consultation. In addition, Wairungu and Magoma (2024) note that the implementation of CBC requires not only classroom level change but also societal perception, parents, and community support, which are often lacking or variable. These studies support the phenomenological concerns and underscore the need for systemic integration and community-wide support.

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on the philosophy of education for self-reliance as espoused by Julius Nyerere. The aspects of learner autonomy, practical learning, and relevance to the community are also in line with Nyerere's principles as espoused by the teachers. They are not just delivering content knowledge but are fundamentally questioning the moral and pragmatic function of education. As it focuses on skills and competencies, CBC aligns with Nyerere's vision of education that is relevant to work and contextually African. However, he notes that if there is no philosophical direction, sufficient resources, and prepared teachers, the curriculum may end up as a replica of the previous systems. This is why it is not enough for CBC to merely transform its form, but to transform the very way of thinking and practicing education to embody the spirit of Nyerere's vision.

Based on the phenomenological hermeneutic analysis and constructivist theory, the findings suggest a clear ideological and philosophical fit between the goals of CBC and teachers' practice and perceptions of their roles. Teachers are not just carriers of knowledge; they are philosophical workers who are caught in structures as they seek to empower learners to be independent. However, studies reveal structural, logistical, and training-related challenges that may erode the very objectives of CBC. To ensure that CBC aligns with constructivist approach to learning and Nyerere's vision of education, these challenges require policy change, long-term commitment to teacher education, and the incorporation of community and indigenous knowledge in curriculum.

#### **4.1.3 Fostering independence and problem solving in teaching.**

The direct verbatims from participants ;

*T1: "I employ group projects and challenge-based learning." Students are required to come up with solutions, which makes them to work on their own.*

*T2: "In my lessons, I engage the learners in inquiry-based lessons where they explore areas of their interest." This makes them more curious and proactive."*

*T3: "I rarely explain things to the learners and allow them to work through problems and learn from their mistakes."*

*T4: "In this type of activity, learners have to search for materials, organize and perform tasks individually or in groups."*

*T5: "I use questions and do not provide answers to them." Instead, I allow students to consider possibilities and explain why they are right or wrong.*

#### **4.1.4 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The teachers' experiences in encouraging learners to be independent show that they have a bias towards learner independence, which is a key principle in constructivism and phenomenology. For example, T1, T3, and T5 stress the need to let learners decide and engage in open-ended activities. These experiences depict a move from transmission of knowledge to acquisition of knowledge where the teacher is more of a guide than a conductor. From a phenomenological perspective, this shift can be seen as a form of intentionality where learners are not mere vessels for receiving information but rather meaning makers who actively engage with their surroundings. This is in line with Nyerere's education philosophy that aimed at preparing learners to be proactive and be on their own in terms of ideas and actions.

In addition, the focus on the practical and hands-on approach was another common theme, which was evident in the responses from T1 and T4. Their accounts of group assignments, challenge-based activities, and practical assignments indicate that the learning process is grounded in authentic contexts. From a phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, these are not mere classroom practices; they are practices that learner use to make sense of their roles, responsibilities, and capacities. In this way, self-reliance is not only a concept that is explained to the learners but one that is practiced, analyzed, and embodied. This is

supported by the constructivist theory which posits that learning is most effective when learners are involved in meaningful activities that are relevant to their daily lives.

The teachers also emphasize the importance of inquiry and critical thinking as the key steps towards the process of becoming more independent. T2's approach of using inquiry-based learning and T5's method of asking open-ended questions show that both believe that curiosity and exploration will lead to a better understanding. Constructivism views this as a crucial process through which learners develop knowledge by asking questions, making assumptions, and experimenting with them. In phenomenological hermeneutics, such reflective inquiry is a part of the hermeneutic circle where understanding is a process that is in a constant state of becoming through the interaction between the learner and the meanings they make. Nyerere's educational ideals also emphasized critical thought as a foundation for societal transformation and self-directed development.

Contrary to being the source of knowledge, teachers such as T1 and T3 prefer to refer to themselves as facilitators who set the stage for the learners to reason on their own. This is in line with the constructivist view of the teacher as a guide who supports learning rather than directs it. From a phenomenological perspective, this dynamic can be described as intersubjectivity, which means that meaning is created through interaction between the teacher and the learner. This teaching approach is in line with Nyerere's education philosophy where the learner is an active participant in the learning process and not a receptacle to be filled with knowledge.

Therefore, the experiences of these teachers support the notion that, when implemented with philosophical purpose, CBC can produce self-directed, critical thinking, and autonomous learners. Their stories show that, despite structural and policy barriers,

practices at the classroom level are already in the process of producing learners in line with Nyerere's vision. By analyzing their experiences and applying the principles of constructivist learning theory, it is possible to conclude that self-reliance education is most effective when it is practice-oriented, question-based, self-directed, and based on the partnership between the teacher and the learner.

#### **4.1.5 Discussion**

The change from teacher-centered to learner-centered approach that teachers T1, T3, and T5 adopted is in line with Inyenga et al. (2021) who posit that CBC is meant to replace the content and examination focused 8-4-4 system with learner focused skills-based system. These authors note that CBC is grounded in constructivist epistemology, which posits that learners are not passive recipients of knowledge but rather active constructors of knowledge. Similarly, teachers' perceptions of how they encourage students to make mistakes and search for answers independently are consistent with the constructivist principles of experience, reflection, and autonomy as the key components of competence and continuous learning.

From a phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, the focus of the teachers in this study on project-based and experiential learning, as described by T1 and T4, is consistent with Vagle (2014) and Eddles-Hirsch (2015) who argue that learning is meaningful when it is anchored in life experiences. In phenomenology, such experiences are not passive but are rather highly interpretive and active. The learner does not learn by passively receiving information but through active participation in the world that is presented to them. This resonates with Nyerere's (1967) assertion that education should be practical and work-oriented where learners not only gain knowledge but also apply it to benefit their society

and become economically productive. This emphasis on practical activities aligns with Nyerere's vision of education as a process that should combine manual work with academic learning to create a harmonious, self-sustaining person.

T2 and T5's use of inquiry-based learning and critical questioning aligns with Murungi et al. (2019) who posited that autonomy, creativity, responsibility, and critical thinking are the key self-reliance skills. These traits are developed through inquiry-based learning since it encourages students to explore and solve problems on their own, which is what CBC seeks to achieve through the competencies of creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving as proposed by Nyakangi (2018). Nyerere also stressed the need for critical and questioning attitude as the key to education for liberation. Therefore, the teachers' practices reflect the critical reflective component of learning that is valued in phenomenological research and constructivism. This is in concordance with Steffe & Gale (2012) who opine that learners build new knowledge through a process of interaction with prior knowledge, a process that is cyclical in nature and referred to as the hermeneutic circle where meaning is constantly being refined through reflection. The shift of the teacher to a facilitator as described by T1 and T3 also supports the findings of Kaviti (2018) who observes that one of the philosophical tenets of CBC is the decentralization of the classroom where learning is a collective process. This is also supported by Tobias & Duffy (2009) who opine that in constructivist environment, teachers facilitate learning by helping the learners to find and apply knowledge on their own rather than telling them what to do. This interpretation is phenomenologically meaningful as it reflects the constructivist epistemology of the teacher-learner relationship and the hermeneutic phenomenology of meaning co-creation. This co-learning

relationship is in tandem with Nyerere's participatory model of education where the teacher is not just an instructor but a facilitator of the learning process of the learners. Thus, the themes derived from teachers' experiences, namely, autonomy, experiential learning, inquiry, and the change in the roles of teachers, are well grounded in this study. They also align with the constructivist principles of the CBC and Nyerere's educational philosophy of relevance, critical awareness, and learner autonomy. These narratives support the notion that, despite structural barriers, there is congruence between the practices of the teachers and the philosophical underpinnings of CBC and Nyerere's vision. What is left is to remove barriers to these promising pedagogical changes to enhance the realization of education as a tool for self-sufficiency, change, and human worth in Kenya's socio-economic environment.

#### **4.1.6 Indicators of self-reliance skills in the learning process**

The direct verbatims from participants ;

*T1: "I consider their capacity to work independently and how assertively they solve problems that they have never encountered before."*

*T2: "I employ the rubrics that address the aspects of independence, initiative, and creativity. Peer assessment also helps."*

*T3: "I monitor their performance during tasks, particularly on how they handle resources and time on their own."*

*T4: "For instance, by observing how often they initiate activities during group work or how they resolve issues without the help of adults."*

*T5: "I monitor progress in portfolios students write about their development and personal objectives, which is beneficial."*

#### **4.1.7 Hermeneutics**

From the responses of the participants, there is a clear indication that the aspect of independence is the most important aspect of self-reliance among learners. T1 and T3 assess the students' capacity to perform tasks on their own and the ability to manage resources. This is in line with Nyerere's philosophy of education that aimed at producing individuals who would be self-reliant and useful to society. From a phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, these reflections show how the teachers' understanding of independence changes with classroom experience. The idea of independence is not introduced as an idea but as a process that is manifested in the learners' behaviour, problem-solving, and initiative. From the constructivist perspective, this demonstrates a learning context that fosters the construction of knowledge and its application in meaningful, student-controlled ways.

Another important aspect is the application of the reflective and metacognitive approaches as the means of self-evaluation. For example, T5 discusses the use of learner portfolios for monitoring progress and setting personal learning objectives, and T2 refers to the use of rubrics that assess initiative and creativity. These approaches move away from external assessment and allow the learners to assess themselves and their progress. This emphasis on learner reflection is in line with the constructivist theory that posits that learning is enhanced when learners are involved in their thinking processes. Furthermore, in line with the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach, the teachers' interpretations of the learners' reflections enable them to get at the essence of how self-reliance is experienced and understood in the context of the CBC framework.

Other aspects that were identified as important for learner independence included social interaction and collaborative competence. T2 and T4 explained how students are involved in the management of the group work and conflicts and that peer assessments are also used in the assessment. The findings support the communal aspect of self-reliance that Nyerere advocated in his policy of Ujamaa, where individualism is not separable from social organization. In this regard, self-reliance is not an individualistic virtue but a relational one that is produced through participation in the community. From a constructivist point of view, learning is a social process that involves construction of knowledge through interaction with other people, and the notion that learners benefit from interaction with others is supported. This is also in line with the hermeneutic view that understanding is dialogical in nature, that is, it is made through conversation and interpretation. Finally, the trends identified suggest a shift towards process and utilitarian assessment over outcome and research-based assessment. Learners' participation during tasks, time and resource management, and self-motivation in completing assignments were some of the areas that teachers noted as crucial. This pragmatic approach is in line with Nyerere's argument that education should be relevant to the world of work and real-life situations and not just a theoretical exercise. The focus on practical activities, assignments, and personal tools such as portfolios aligns with constructivism, which posits that knowledge is constructed through action, exploration, and contemplation. From a phenomenological perspective, these practices respect the learner's reality as they engage with the environment and construct meaning from their actions.

Therefore, the hermeneutics of the teachers' experiences shows that self-reliance, as promoted by the CBC, is a complex and evolving concept. It is evident in learners' self-

directed learning, critical thinking, social interactions, and application of skills. From the phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, it is clear that teachers are not just measuring learners against certain standards but are in the process of interpreting the phenomenon of self-reliance as it is manifested in actual teaching and learning environments. The findings also support the CBC's objectives with constructivist philosophy and Nyerere's vision of education as emancipation, self-actualization, and social change.

#### **4.1.8 Discussion**

The focus on students' independence is in line with the CBC's focus on competencies that are relevant to real-life situations. Okeyo and Kanake (2021) note that CBC aims at imparting skills and attitudes that learners need to deal with life issues, not just gramming knowledge. However, some of the challenges that have been highlighted include lack of adequate training for teachers and limited resources as some of the factors that hinder the promotion of autonomy among learners (Sifuna & Obonyo, 2019).

The application of portfolios and rubrics for self-assessment is consistent with the constructivist approach to learning since the learners are involved in the learning process. Nzoka (2024) also notes the transition from content-based to competency-based assessments in CBC, with a focus on formative assessments that enable learners to showcase competencies in context. This approach fosters the acquisition of metacognitive skills, which help the learners to self-assess and set individual learning objectives. The observations of the teachers on the students' ability to lead group work and solve conflicts on their own are in line with the communal aspect of learning that is espoused in CBC. According to Nzoka (2024), CBC seeks to produce individuals who are fit for the dynamic world with collaboration as one of the competencies. This is in line with

Nyerere's Ujamaa philosophy where education is not only an individual investment but also a communal one.

The concern with learners' activity and self-motivation during the tasks is consistent with the practical orientation of the CBC. Nzoka (2024) explains that in CBC, Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBA) assesses the students' competencies through tasks that mimic real-life situations, unlike conventional tests. This approach makes it possible for the learners to be evaluated on their practical understanding of the knowledge they have gained, which is in line with the constructivist theory of learning as an active process that takes place in a given context.

The teachers' experiences and observations offer real-life information on the application of CBC in Kenya. This is in line with the curriculum goals and objectives and is backed by current studies on the use of autonomy, reflective practices, collaboration, and practical assessments. However, challenges like inadequate training and resources are some of the areas that need more support and development to achieve the goals of CBC

#### **4.1.9 Encouraging learner independence: Practical experiences and challenges**

*T1: "In a waste management project, students initiated a clean-up campaign within the school compound without my influence. The most significant issue was that they did not want to plan collectively at the beginning."*

*T2: "I once set a business simulation exercise where students formed their own products and marketed them." They had some problems with budgeting at the beginning."*

*T3: "Learners ran a mini-science fair. Many feared speaking in public, which was a major obstacle at the beginning."*

*T4: A cooking project was done to enable the students to practice home science skills. It was challenging to get them to work independently and follow instructions."*

*T5: "They planned a community visit to a local farm." The main problem*

*was coordination and ensuring that they convey the information to the stakeholders on their own.*

#### **4.1.10 Hermeneutics of the findings**

In all the accounts, the teachers described project-based learning that reflects real-life situations such as waste management, business, cooking, and community visits. This is in line with the phenomenological focus on the lived experience. For example, T2 where learners simulate a business and T5 where learners visit a community expose learner to real life economic and social responsibilities. From the constructivist perspective, such situational engagement allows learners to build knowledge through activity and contemplation rather than through direct teaching. The experiences described above reveal that students learned through practice, which is in line with the constructivism theory and Nyerere's education for self-fulfillment and the needs of society.

Learner independence was mentioned by teachers as a major issue where learners are initially reluctant to undertake tasks on their own. T1 mentioned that he/she did not like working in a group to plan, while T4 mentioned that he/she found it hard to follow instructions without being told how to do so. These are signs of learner discomfort in transitioning from teacher reliance to independence, a typical issue when transitioning to constructivism. The hermeneutic lens, which focuses on the participants' intentions, shows that these challenges are not only practical they indicate a change in the learner role from the passive one to the active one. This kind of resistance is not easy but it is a process of change towards self-employment as Nyerere and constructivist theories postulate.

One of the challenges that were mentioned was the ability to work in groups and

communicate effectively. T1 and T5 reported challenges in getting learners to collaborate or engage stakeholders independently. This is in line with the constructivism theory that posits that knowledge is constructed through social interactions. These activities require learners to co-construct meaning, co-ordinate responsibility and co-solve problems, which is in line with the African socialism philosophy of Ujamaa as propagated by Nyerere. In this regard, the challenges identified are not failures but rather the processes that are necessary for the formation of shared agency and cooperative skills the goals of education for self-reliance.

The teachers' experiences reveal that struggle and discomfort were at the heart of the learning process. From budgeting to logistics to public speaking, students were challenged to go beyond their comfort zones. In this way, using the phenomenological hermeneutic approach, we do not consider these as obstacles but as meaningful and essential phases of learning. According to the constructivist theory, learning is a process of resolving conflicts and it is in these conflicts that learners develop more effective and transferable skills. T3's account of overcoming fear of public speaking, for example, highlights personal growth through real engagement.

The participants' narratives indicates that although CBC has ideological compatibility with Nyerere's vision, the change that is needed at the classroom level is profound. Teachers are empowering learners through the use of real-life, experiential, and constructivist approaches, but they encounter cultural, structural, and pedagogical barriers. The phenomenological hermeneutic approach enables one to gain a deeper insight into these experiences not as mere instructional practices but as signifying the changing nature of the learner-teacher relationship. From a constructivist perspective, these projects create

the foundation for further, more profound learning, as they require learners to engage, think, and develop.

#### **4.1.11 Discussion**

The focus on project and experiential learning is in line with Kenya's CBC system and current academic theories that support contextually relevant and real-life learning. As stated by Inyega et al. (2021), the rationale for CBC in Kenya is based on the assumption that learners are most effective when they are learning through contextually relevant tasks. The findings support the ideology, where business simulations (T2) and community visits (T5) are examples of activities that allow learners to apply knowledge in a practical manner, which is one of the tenets of constructivism as espoused by Steffe and Gale (2012).

In addition, Murungi et al. (2019) posit that practical involvement is a necessity for developing self-sufficiency among learners. Nyerere (1967) argued that education should equip the youth to "live in and serve their own communities" and this is evident in the CBC's learner-centered projects. The teachers' phenomenological experiences reveal that when students are presented with real-life tasks, they start to appreciate the concepts of independence, responsibility, and relevance the principles of Nyerere's education for self-reliance.

The lack of autonomy observed in the learners, especially in planning, decision making, and following instructions on their own (T1, T4) is in line with the current research findings of CBC. Kaviti (2020) observes that while CBC has learner-centered objectives, many learners remain trapped in exam-orientated and teacher-dependent systems inherited from the 8-4-4 system. This transitional struggle is indicative of the gradual process of

learner identity construction ,a concept that is central to constructivism. From a philosophical perspective, Nyerere's vision entailed critical thinking and self-motivated action for the benefit of society. This shift from dependence to agency is also reflected in Yussuf (1995) and further supported by Maira et al. (2017) who posit that learner autonomy is the cornerstone of community-based education. This is why the hermeneutic interpretation of students' hesitation points to a profound problem, the transition from the internalized learner roles to the roles of constructors of meaning.

T1 and T5's concerns about group work and stakeholder engagement are not unique but reflect some of the issues that have been raised about collaborative learning in CBC. Bakanauskas et al. (2020) state that communication and cooperation are not well developed in traditional Kenyan classrooms, which makes it challenging to implement the social interaction aspect of CBC. However, these are important in building what constructivists refer to as 'co-constructed knowledge' (Tobias & Duffy, 2009). This is evident in Nyerere's Ujamaa philosophy where learners are supposed to take group responsibilities and engage in group and community activities as required in CBC. Kouassi (2015) has it that true self-reliance is not an individualistic process but a communal one, a competence. Therefore, the challenges that learners experience in collaborative work are not the negation of the CBC model but rather the challenges that come with the shift in the educational and epistemological paradigm towards collaborative and meaningful learning.

According to the constructivism theory, learning takes place when one is confronted with a conflict or a challenge that requires him or her to change. The learners' discomfort with

budgeting (T2), logistics (T5), and public speaking (T3) are examples of what Vygotsky's zone of proximal development promotes, learners develop best when they are challenged just slightly.

The findings are further supported by Jeffery (2021) who opines that real-world tasks do not only build competence but confidence and resilience which are core to self-reliance. Similarly, Gielen (2013) also stresses the importance of creativity in competence-based models. From the phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, these difficulties are part of the learning process and form the basis of learners' competence.

In conclusion, the study aligns with the philosophical compatibility of CBC with Nyerere's vision but also the lack of implementation. Matere (2024) and Mackatiani (2020) argue that while the CBC is intended to foster self-reliance, the system hinders the process due to lack of implementation, inadequate teacher training, and socio-economic differences.

The study links the ideal with the real, emphasizing the need for structural intervention, cultural shift, and teacher training to realize the potential of both CBC and Nyerere's vision of education.

#### **4.1.12 Strategies for addressing challenges to learner independence and their effectiveness**

*T1: "I grouped students in a way that I thought would be most effective and provided them with planning frameworks." This helped them organize their thoughts."*

*T2: "We did a budgeting practice session and invited a local entrepreneur." That motivated them a lot."*

*T3: "I conducted mock presentations and provided individual feedback." Eventually, their confidence grew."*

*T4: "I appointed group leaders to ensure that there is accountability and developed checklists to ensure that the process is followed."*

*T5: We acted out real-life scenarios and rehearsed polite language. They performed well during the visit."*

#### **4.1.13 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The teachers' narratives show that all of them value practical, authentic learning experiences, which are at the core of both phenomenological hermeneutics and constructivism. From a phenomenological hermeneutic point of view, each teacher's narrative is a story of a lifeworld that reveals how meaning is made in context in their interactions with learners. These practices show how independence is not presented as knowledge that is to be transmitted but as a process that is negotiated between the teacher and the learner in context with the use of real-life situations.

The planning templates and the strategic grouping that T1 employed show how learners are guided to plan on their own. This method aligns with constructivism, especially the concept of cognitive structuring, which posits that knowledge is constructed rather than taught. Here, the learner is viewed as an individual who is able to integrate ideas with the necessary scaffolding.

The budgeting exercises and the invitation of a local entrepreneur are indicative of T2's approach that is in line with the social aspect of learning that is espoused in constructivism. Education is not viewed as an individualistic process but as a social process rooted in the community, which is in line with Nyerere's call for education that is relevant to the local economy. From a hermeneutical perspective, the teacher's interpretation of learner motivation as a result of authentic exposure implies that meaning was constructed from

the learners' engagement with the real world and not as a mere reception. Likewise, T3's account of mock presentations and coaching underscores the process of learning and confidence-building, how learners gradually build internal structures of understanding through practice, reflection, and feedback, a process that is characteristic of a constructivist learning cycle. From a phenomenological perspective, this is a process of becoming, the learner's identity is formed through the process of guided practice. T4's delegation of leadership and checklists fosters personal responsibility and autonomy, which are key to Nyerere's philosophy and constructivism. When the teacher delegates leadership to the learners, the learners are able to understand that they are capable of directing and managing the outcomes of the group, which is in line with the objective construction of the 'self' as constituted through relational responsibility. The use of real-life scenarios and the emphasis on communication in T5 can be considered as a good example of the implementation of the principles of experiential and situated learning, which is crucial in constructivism. The actual visit, as pointed out by the teacher, is the epitome of meaning-making knowledge gained in class applied in practice. From a phenomenological perspective, the learners' performance is a tangible sign of their new self how their experiences repositioned them as agents of change and competence.

Participant's' narrative indicate that independence is not an inherent quality, but a process that is constructed through relational learning, realistic environments, and metacognition. The teachers act as enablers and co-constructors of meaning, helping the learners to construct a view of themselves as agents of change. This is in line with Nyerere's view of education as a process of transformation, work and community, and with the constructivist

epistemology that posits knowledge as constructed through experience, interaction and reflection.

Therefore, both in terms of interpretation and construction, the results suggest a gradual and contextual process of self-organization for independence through learner involvement, action, and supported responsibility.

#### **4.1.14 Discussion**

The incorporation of the practical, experiential learning in the Competency-Based Curriculum has been considered as crucial in producing self-reliant individuals. In their study, Inyenga et al. (2021) noted that CBC in Kenya focuses on the practical learning through projects and assessments that mimic the real-world and market conditions. The teachers' practices, as described in the findings, are in line with this shift from direct instruction to learner-centered, project-based learning, which aligns with the curriculum's objectives. For example, T2's budgeting sessions and the entrepreneurial engagement are closely related to this framework, which shows that the curriculum is oriented towards economic self-sufficiency and continuous learning, which is one of the main principles of Nyerere's educational vision.

According to Murungi et al. (2019), the effectiveness of CBC is in the fact that it is not only an academic exercise of imparting knowledge but skills that prepare learners to be productive members of their societies and economies. T3's use of mock presentations and personalized coaching aligns with this idea because it demonstrates how confidence and skill development can be achieved through practice in a guided and scaffolded manner, which is also in line with Jeffery (2020) who noted that the use of reflection-action-

reflection cycles is effective in enhancing learners' autonomy and confidence. According to Bakanauskas et al. (2020) from the constructivist perspective, the focus should be made on socially situated learning, which is evident in T1 and T4. Learner grouping, checklist, and peer leadership enhance collaboration, shared responsibility, and decision-making, which in turn enhance internal motivation and self-management skills in learners. This is in line with Piaget's and Vygotsky's constructivism, especially the social construction of knowledge through guided participation.

Maira, Vengi, and K'Odhiambo (2017) posit that for education to be meaningful and relevant in the African setting, it has to be communal, work-based, and moral. This is in line with T5 that employed role-play and interpersonal communication where learners practiced real-life interactions and then applied them in the public domain. This transition from classroom simulation to real life practice is what Nyerere (1967) described as education for liberation not for the purpose of passing examinations but for being able to perform effectively and responsibly in society.

Furthermore, Kaviti (2020) has also pointed out that the implementation of CBC has been inconsistent in terms of resourcing and teacher preparedness. Nonetheless, the results of this study show that while the systemic issues are problematic, the teachers are finding ways to use the CBC's structure to promote practical learning and self-sufficiency. This is in line with Yusuf (2021) who noted that teacher agency is a key determinant of CBC success and that teachers who adopt experiential and constructivist approaches are likely to foster resilience and self-sufficiency among learners.

The study's findings resonate with Nyerere's Ujamaa philosophy where education is closely associated with work, responsibility, and the common good. The practices that have been used in the constructivist practices such as role-play, budgeting, leadership, and self-assessment tools are not only effective in teaching but also in line with the philosophy of education for self-reliance.

In phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, the teachers' experiences are the main source of meaning. They do not merely teach CBC they mediate it through their contexts and the realities of their learners. Thus, education is a hermeneutical process (Gadamer, 1989), in which meaning is constructed between the teacher and the learner, between the concept and the practice.

The teachers' narratives reveal that while there are structural constraints, it is possible to be creative in teaching and be in harmony with constructivism and Nyerere's vision of education. The practical strategies that the teachers employed are a clear indication of a shift from the traditional model of learning where knowledge is passively imparted to the learners to the modern model of learning where the learner is an active participant, reflecting on what he or she is learning and learning within the context of the society in order to produce self-reliant citizens in Kenya.

#### **4.1.15 Learners' reactions and shifts in the learning process**

*T1: "They were proud and more willing to take charge in later projects."*

*T2: "I noticed that they became more organized in planning and performing the tasks in the later sessions; they asked fewer questions and seemed more confident."*

*T3: "Their presentations became more polished. I observed that there was more peer support and less fear."*

*T4: "Learners began to come up with ideas for future lessons, which is an indication of ownership of learning."*

*T5 “They began to volunteer for leadership positions and were more proactive.”*

#### **4.1.16 Hermeneutics of the findings**

Learner behaviour changed for the better as the teachers noted that the learners became more proactive and more responsible for their learning. For example, T1 stated that “learners were proud and more willing to take charge”, which is in line with constructivism since it focuses on learners’ autonomy where learners are not mere receivers of knowledge but actively involved in the construction of knowledge. T4 also noted that “Learners started suggesting ideas for future lessons” which is an ontological shift where students no longer saw learning as a process that is dictated by the teacher but as a process that is co-constructed, which is a key feature of hermeneutic and constructivist learning paradigms.

In the responses, there is a clear trend of increasing self- efficacy, which is one of the key principles of Nyerere’s education and constructivism. T2 used the terms ‘more confident’ and ‘less questioning’ to refer to the learners, which suggested that students had assimilated and individualized their learning. Such experiences are described in phenomenological hermeneutics as meaningful structures of life , the students were no longer in need of external approval or guidance, but rather, they relied on themselves, which is the core of Nyerere’s self-reliance.

T3’s comment that “presentations became more polished” and that there was “more peer support and less fear” shows a shift not only in the level of skills, but in the social aspect of learning, which is in line with Nyerere’s Ujamaa (familiarity) and constructivism. This refers to the social construction of meaning, which means that knowledge is not only

created within an individual but also through social relations. Such experiences support the notion that education for self-reliance has to be based on the principles of cooperation and context, not competition.

When T5 stated that learners ‘began to seek leadership positions and be more proactive,’ it highlighted a key phase of learner development from passive to active. In constructivist pedagogy, this corresponds to the transition from guided learning to free roaming. From a phenomenological perspective, this leadership is the emergence of the internalized values and identity where the learners’ self starts to emerge in the behavior that is responsible, creative and autonomous, which are the principles of constructivism and Nyerere’s education.

Altogether, these experiences suggest that when learners are offered meaningful, motivating, and student-oriented learning environments, as CBC does through project-based learning, they start to redefine themselves from being mere consumers of knowledge to being knowledge producers. This shift, when viewed through the lens of phenomenological hermeneutics, is the very nature of education for self-sufficiency, learners not only acquire practical competencies but also become different in how they perceive themselves, their fellows, and the learning contexts.

Therefore, the study supports the notion that when CBC is practiced in accordance with constructivist principles and Nyerere’s philosophy, it is possible to foster the very attributes that are required for self-employment, confidence, initiative, teamwork, and learning ownership.

#### **4.1.17 Discussion**

The thematic findings from the teacher interviews emergence of learner agency, confidence, peer collaboration, and leadership are in line with the literature on Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum since its implementation in 2019. These studies support the idea that the curriculum can help learners become more independent, especially when the curriculum is delivered through constructivist and phenomenological paradigms.

The shift towards learner initiative and responsibility is in line with the learner-centered approach that is espoused in CBC. Okeyo and Kanake (2021) have pointed out that CBC is an approach that aims at cultivating competencies that can be used in practical contexts and not memorization. This is in line with the constructivist theory that posits that learners construct meaning through participation. However, some of the challenges that have been noted to hinder the achievement of this learner agency include; lack of adequate training and resources for teachers (Sifuna & Obonyo, 2019).

The teachers' perceptions of the students' confidence and reduced reliance on direct instruction are indicative of self-efficacy, which is one of the aims of CBC. According to Nzoka (2024), CBC seeks to develop critical and creative thinking and problem-solving skills that will enable the learners to be independent. However, the development of these skills depends on the implementation process, which has been a challenge due to factors such as lack of preparedness among teachers and inadequate resources (Mackatiani & Ejore, 2024).

The increase in peer support and collaborative learning as noted by the teachers corresponds to the social constructivism that is at the core of CBC. According to Akala (2021), the implementation of group activities and projects in CBC enhances learners'

support for one another. This not only improves academic performance but also fosters social skills that are crucial for independence.

The student leadership and initiative that was evident in the interviews is in line with the CBC to produce learners who are able to take charge of their learning and be responsible citizens in society. According to Nzoka (2024), CBC is aimed at developing all-round individuals who are fit for the dynamic world. However, the achievement of this goal calls for the following implementation issues; teacher training and resource mobilization (Muasya & Waweru, 2019).

In conclusion, the goals highlighted by the teachers are in line with the goals of Kenya's CBC. The focus on learner-centered approaches, critical thinking, and practical application of the knowledge correlates with the observed increase in students' self-organization. However, the implementation of CBC depends on the following factors which are; teacher training, availability of resources and stakeholders. When the implementation strategies are anchored on the principles of constructivism and phenomenological hermeneutics, CBC has the potential of achieving its goal of producing self-reliant learners in Kenya.

#### **4.1.18 Impact of CBC structure on the promotion student self-reliance, facilitators and barriers"**

*T1: "While CBC promotes self-reliance through skills development, the implementation is not always consistent."*

*T2: "It does so because it is learner centered but the problem is that we are often limited by resources."*

*T3: "The practical activities are well incorporated; however, the teachers require more support to adopt the change."*

*T4: "CBC allows for creativity in teaching and promotes independence, but the large class sizes are a limitation."*

*T5: “The structure of the curriculum is quite independent, but excessive paperwork reduces the amount of time for teaching.”*

#### **4.1.19 Hermeneutics of the findings**

All the five participants opined that CBC is consistent with the goal of self-reliance because it is skills-based, promotes learner autonomy, and encourages innovation in teaching. For example, T1 stated, “CBC supports self-reliance through its emphasis on skills,” and T5 stated that “The curriculum structure encourages independence.” These statements capture the phenomenological reality of teachers’ perception of their role in promoting independence. From the phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective, this theme means that educators see a philosophical compatibility between the purpose of CBC and Nyerere’s vision, which is to produce people who can reason and make decisions on their own.

From the constructivist perspective, the focus on practical, student-centered approach is in line with the constructivist notion of learning as an active process that takes place through experience. Learner-centeredness is another aspect of CBC that resonates with the ideas of Piaget and Vygotsky that learning is an internal process that is initiated by learners’ interactions with the environment.

However, as it will be recalled, CBC was aligned to the ideology of self-reliance; the teachers were quick to point out the practical difficulties in the implementation of the policy. T2 noted that “resources are scarce and this limits us,” while T4 said that “large classes are a problem.” Likewise, T5 opined that “too much paperwork reduces the amount of time that can be spent on teaching.” These reflections raise a hermeneutical dilemma between the ideal of CBC as a transformative, learner-centered model and the practical

contexts in which it is practiced. The phenomenological approach used here shows a gap between the theory and reality of education how lofty goals can be hampered by bureaucracy.

From a constructivist perspective, these barriers reduce the constructiveness of learning environments. Constructivism is most effective when learners are self-directed, have access to materials, and are guided by a master. When the teachers are overwhelmed or lacking in resources, the learner is not able to construct knowledge through experience as constructivism and self-reliance philosophy postulated by Nyerere advocate.

One of the critical insights that T3 pointed out was that “teachers require more training to effectively adopt the change. This sentiment reveals the need for capacity building and continuous professional development, especially in transitioning from traditional teacher-centered models to constructivist, learner-led approaches. T4’s statement that “CBC gives us the freedom to be creative with teaching” shows how the curriculum can foster teacher autonomy an important concept in hermeneutic phenomenology, which values subjectivity and self-reflection, as well as constructivism, which views the teacher as a guide rather than an instructor.

The findings imply that although teachers acknowledge and embrace their broadened role in accordance with CBC, they need guidance to acquire new skills that are consistent with philosophical imperatives of learner autonomy and self-sufficiency. From a phenomenological perspective, this is a process of change in their identity within a changing educational landscape a change in epistemology as well as in pedagogy. In conclusion, the teachers’ narratives portray CBC as a curriculum that is philosophically

consistent with Nyerere's vision of self-reliance and the constructivist approach to education. However, there are practical challenges that hinder its effectiveness including; lack of resources, too much bureaucracy, and inadequate training. Collectively, these themes demonstrate how educators make sense of, engage with, and at times, grapple with the tension between the ideal and the real in education using the phenomenological hermeneutic approach. In essence, this analysis confirms that the goal of attaining self-reliance through CBC will not only entail changes in curriculum but also structures, teaching practices, and culture in the Kenyan education system.

#### **4.1.20 Discussion**

Nyaboke et al. (2021) notes that since CBC focuses on student-centered learning, it seeks to foster competencies such as creativity and collaboration, which are in line with Kenya's Vision 2030. Muchira et al. (2023) have pointed out, CBC's emphasis on skills development enables learners to be ready to face real-life situations and be independent.

From the constructivist point of view, the change towards learner-centered approach in CBC is in line with the Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories that learning occurs through activity. This is considered as crucial in the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills among the learners as noted by Akala (2021).

However, there are practical difficulties that hamper the implementation of CBC. According to Gichuru (2024), some of the challenges include; resource constraints, lack of administrative support, and lack of teacher training. These challenges are supported by

Cheruiyot (2024) who states that scarcity of resources and curriculum difficulties hinder the achievement of the goals of CBC.

These challenges are compounded by large class sizes that make it hard to attend to each learner and contradict the learner-centered approach that is the foundation of CBC (Amunga et al., 2020). This disconnection between the curriculum and classroom practices shows that there is a need for system changes to enhance the implementation of CBC. The lack of adequate teacher training is a common thread that runs through your study and the literature. According to Momanyi and Rop (2020), many teachers lack adequate preparation and support to teach effectively under the CBC system. In the same vein, Wairungu and Magoma (2024) argue that teachers need to undertake professional development to meet the challenges of CBC and to promote learner independence.

The implementation of CBC means that teachers are no longer the providers of knowledge but rather the guides of the learning process, which means that they have to possess not only pedagogical skills but also the understanding of the constructivist approach. Meeting this need is important in supporting teachers and enhancing the effectiveness of CBC implementation.

In conclusion, although CBC is in line with the overall goal of promoting learner independence, there are practical difficulties that include lack of resources, large class sizes, and inadequate teacher training to support the implementation of the approach. It is therefore important to address these issues through systemic reforms and comprehensive professional development in order to unlock the potential of CBC in transforming education system in Kenya.

#### **4.1.21 Aspects of CBC which help in the development of self-reliance.**

*T1: “The focus on project-based learning and real-life application really helps to achieve this goal.”*

*T2: “Performance tasks and portfolio assessments challenge the learners to design, implement and evaluate their work.”*

*T3: “Competency indicators are more concerned with what the learners are capable of doing rather than what they are capable of knowing.”*

*T4: “Community-based activities make learners aware of the real-life situations and foster self-reliance.”*

*T5: “Learner choice in tasks empowers students, which fosters independence.”*

#### **4.1.22 Hermeneutics of the findings**

From the phenomenological-hermeneutic explication of the teachers’ responses, it is possible to identify meaningful themes that reflect the teachers’ experience of curriculum implementation and its connection to Nyerere’s vision of education for self-reliance. Hermeneutic phenomenology aims at identifying not only what is experienced but how it is experienced and how it is given meaning by the participants. Constructivism supports this by placing the learner at the center of the learning process, constructing knowledge through meaningful interactions with the world. Altogether, these lenses provide a useful set of tools for making sense of the practical narratives of teachers.

Participants also noted that project work (T1) and community activities (T4) are the most important components of CBC that promote independence. From the phenomenological perspective, these methods are viewed as the ways in which learners live their world, they are not passive recipients of knowledge, but active creators of meaning through practice. This is in line with the constructivist learning theory that posits that knowledge is not imposed but constructed through participation and reflection. These projects place

learning in the socio-economic context of the learners, and challenge them to think critically and practically an educational goal that is consistent with Nyerere's philosophy of education that sought to link education to experience and service. The following examples from the participants' interviews are T5: learner choice and T2: performance tasks, which reflect the change from the transmission of knowledge to the learner-centered approach. From a hermeneutical perspective, this suggests a shift in the learner from a passive subject to an active subject. From the constructivist perspective, this learner autonomy is crucial in fostering intrinsic motivation and self-regulation, which are the core of self-ownership. When learners are allowed to make decisions, think through their actions, and observe the outcomes of their actions, they develop the culture of taking responsibility one of the philosophical principles of Nyerere's education model. The responses of T3 and T2 suggest a shift in epistemology of assessment from knowledge acquisition to the ability to apply the knowledge. CBC's competency indicators are in contrast with the conventional rote learning paradigms, as they are closer to the experience and practical skills. From a phenomenological perspective, this shifts the focus of education to what is significant and significant to the learner's reality. It captures the spirit of Nyerere's argument against colonial education is not about cramming for tests, but about preparing learners to be active citizens who can solve problems and contribute to society.

T2's focus on learners having to reflect on their work is a principle of hermeneutics and constructivism that meaning is made through interpretation and self-reflection. Metacognition is the process of reflecting on activity in order to gain insight into one's own learning process. In this regard, it aligns with Nyerere's vision of education as a

process that should produce thoughtful beings capable of thinking, changing, and developing not mere performers.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that when properly applied, CBC has features that are fundamental to phenomenology of education and the constructivist notion of learning in context. These aspects such as project-based learning, competency-based assessment, learner centeredness and reflective practice are not only compatible with but also go further than Nyerere's education for self reliance philosophy. However, the extent of their effectiveness depends on the extent to which they are implemented and the extent to which the socio-political climate is conducive to such change.

#### **4.1.23 Discussion**

From the participant's responses, it is possible to identify meaningful themes that reflect the teachers' experience of curriculum implementation and its connection to Nyerere's vision of education for self-reliance. Hermeneutic phenomenology aims at identifying not only what is experienced but how it is experienced and how it is given meaning by the participants. Constructivism supports this by placing the learner at the center of the learning process, constructing knowledge through meaningful interactions with the world. Altogether, these lenses provide a useful set of tools for making sense of the practical narratives of teachers.

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#### **4.1.24 Internal conflict in the system that hinders the achievement CBC goals**

*T1: "Yes, the system requires learner-centeredness, but the assessment tools are still very structured."*

*T2: "We are encouraged to promote independence, but how can we do that when there are too many students in a class to attend to."*

*T3: "The goals of CBC are not aligned with the existing infrastructure."*

*T4: "It is expected that students will perform well, but they are not given much support by their teachers." That creates a gap."*

*T5: "While policy encourages the development of skills, examinations remain the key to success."*

#### **4.1.25 Hermeneutics of the findings**

Based on phenomenological hermeneutics and constructivist theory, the above findings are thematically explicated to understand the nature of the teachers' experiences in implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and its goal of self-reliance.

These direct quotations capture the subjective experiences of teachers as they struggle to balance between the ideal of the curriculum and the constraints of the Kenyan education system. This interpretation is based on the themes of systemic contradiction, resource-based limitation, policy-practice divergence, and assessment-related tension.

T1's statement, 'Yes, the system demands learner-centeredness, but the assessment tools are still quite rigid,' captures a phenomenological paradox between the learner-centeredness and the actuality of the system. From the hermeneutic perspective, this means that while the CBC advocates for constructivism, which posits that learners acquire knowledge through experience, the assessment structure is still grounded in traditional examination-based approaches. This theme reflects the dilemma of teachers as the curriculum demands change in practice, but the system remains unchanged.

T2 focuses on the problem of "large classes," stating that "class sizes make it impossible to attend to each student." The constructivism learning theory emphasizes learner control, cooperation, and interactivity, which are significantly hampered by inadequate resources and large class sizes. From a phenomenological perspective, this captures the teachers' perception of disjointed scaffolding where they are required to mediate learners' construction of knowledge but are not provided with the practical means to do so. Their experience shows that structural barriers prevent the development of genuine, personal learning processes that are required for independence.

T3's statement that there is a "mismatch between CBC goals and available infrastructure" also supports the idea of environmental incompatibility. Constructivism is based on the learning environment that allows the learners to experiment, to use the tools and materials, and to gain access to the tools. However, as the teachers explain,

the CBC is being practiced without the support structures that would help to realize the philosophy of the CBC. From a phenomenological perspective, this can be interpreted as a lack of correspondence between the educator's purpose and the physical and structural environment in which they are expected to function. The teachers are trapped in an idealism that is not backed by the necessary resources to make it a reality.

T4 states that "expectations are high, but teacher support is minimal," which indicates that there is a gap between expectations and support. From a hermeneutical point of view, this can be understood as a kind of exclusion of the teacher as a co-creator of knowledge. According to constructivist approaches, the teacher is more of a mediator, a mentor, and a critical thinker. However, when educators are not backed up with training, resources, emotional and professional support, their ability to participate in this capacity is limited. This is a clear indication of disempowerment that undermines the philosophical framework of the self-reliance espoused by CBC.

T5 summarizes the paradox in the following way: "On the one hand, policy emphasizes skills, but on the other, examinations remain the key to success." This raises an issue of conflict between skill acquisition and academic achievement, which is contrary to Nyerere's education for self-reliance. As CBC is based on the acquisition of competencies, including practical, social, and emotional competencies, teachers remain in a system that rewards exams over preparedness. This implies that while the policy documents may advocate for constructivism, assessment practices remain a determinant of pedagogy, which is incongruent with the constructivist curriculum.

From a phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, the teachers' stories offer thick

descriptions of their daily experiences with CBC's enactment. Their voices reveal the meanings that are hidden in their experiences and show how the intended purpose of education for independence is compromised by context. According to the constructivist theory, it is clear that the true learner-centered education which promotes independence, creativity and problem solving cannot be achieved through mere policy interventions but needs a coherent approach that involves assessment, teacher education, classroom environment and community support.

Therefore, the findings thematically indicate that although CBC has the potential of achieving Nyerere's vision of self-reliance, the phenomenological experiences of the teachers show that structural and philosophical incongruities need to be resolved for that potential to be realized. CBC being an approach that is oriented towards constructivism, it requires holistic, practical and contextual reforms to enhance its efficiency in promoting genuine learner independence.

#### **4.1.26 Discussion**

Learner-centered goals of CBC are not aligned with the continued use of traditional assessment practices, according to teachers. This is a phenomenological paradox between the educational process and organizational environment. Constructivist theory focuses on learning through experience, which is not supported by the current assessment systems. Muasya and Waweru (2019) note that teachers were not ready for the new curriculum as they lacked proper training and resources to support the implementation process.

Lack of space and inadequate resources hinders the ability to provide personal attention and engage the students. Constructivism is based on exploration and interaction, which are not well provided in most of the Kenyan schools. The study conducted in Nyeri County revealed the following challenges; lack of resources (85.4%) and lack of access to teaching technologies (85.2%).

The focus of the CBC on the development of practical skills is not backed up by the necessary facilities. Teachers are unable to implement the philosophy of the curriculum due to poor facilities. A study shows that many schools are poorly equipped with basic facilities such as laboratories and information technology gadgets to support the practical learning activities.

Teachers also feel that they are neglected and not given adequate support in their roles as educators. According to constructivist theory, teachers are facilitators of learning, but if they are not well equipped with knowledge and tools, they cannot perform well. Studies also indicated that teachers need to be trained on how to implement the CBC methodologies in their teaching.

However, traditional examinations remain prevalent in CBC, which contradicts the curriculum's goals of skill development. This is a blow to the constructivist approach that emphasizes formative and authentic assessments. The studies show that teachers face challenges in developing competency-based assessments and end up using traditional forms of assessment.

From the teachers' perceptions, it is clear that although CBC aims at achieving Nyerere's vision of education for self-reliance, practical factors hamper its

achievement. Phenomenological hermeneutics reveals the gap between policy and implementation, while constructivist theory focuses on the importance of support and teacher agency. To address these challenges, there is need for a reform agenda that entails adequate training, provision of resources, and change of assessment culture that will promote learner independence.

#### **4.2 Objective two :The extent to which CBC reflects Nyerere’s philosophy for self-reliance and assess.**

This objective was guided by the following sections as discussed below

##### **4.2.1 Evaluating the alignment of CBC principles with Nyerere's educational philosophy of self-reliance**

*T1: “CBC and Nyerere’s philosophy have the same aim of making the learner independent. However, CBC is still too examination-conscious in practice.”*

*T2: “I see CBC attempting to encourage independence, but Nyerere was aiming at the welfare of the society while CBC is more inclined to personal skills.”*

*T3: “There is a philosophical correlation, particularly in the practical area, but the CBC fails to develop the community-based learning system.”*

*T4: “Nyerere wanted education that is relevant to the community. CBC attempts to impart practical skills, but we are not there yet.*

*T5: “I believe that competencies that CBC promotes are in line with Nyerere’s pragmatic education. The alignment is present but not as effectively implemented in classrooms.”*

##### **4.2.2 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The findings of the study indicate that the philosophy of education for self-reliance as espoused by Nyerere and the intentions of Kenya’s Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) are not far apart. T1 agrees with the idea of learner independence but points out that in practice, CBC is still “too examination-oriented,” which reveals a gap between

the theory and practice. From a phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, this is a clear indication of the difference between the emergent curriculum and the proclaimed curriculum. The nature of CBC as felt by the teacher does not capture the emancipatory and pragmatic value that Nyerere envisioned. This is in line with the constructivist paradigm that rejects knowledge-telling approaches such as examinations and embraces knowledge construction and knowledge construction through discovery and application, which CBC professes but fails to practice.

Some of the teachers interviewed observed that there is a shift in the ontological orientation of CBC as compared to Nyerere's vision. T2 also notes that CBC seems to focus on individual competencies, while Nyerere's philosophy was based on the concept of the common good and the welfare of the community. This interpretation is consistent with the hermeneutic approach of using context and contrast, where the contrast is the transition from the communal to the individualistic culture. While constructivism focuses on the construction of meaning by the learner, it also acknowledges the social context of learning. Therefore, the teacher's insight reveals a philosophical issue that CBC may fail to address the social aspect of education that Nyerere emphasized in self-reliance.

One of the most common elements in all the five narratives is the emphasis on the practical approach to learning. T3 finds that there is a philosophical match between 'practical work' in CBC, but community-based learning is not well developed. This directly relates to Nyerere's argument that education should not only be a process of imparting knowledge but also of training people to be productive members of society.

In this way, the teacher's experience is a phenomenological reflection of this ideal in which CBC is the form of Nyerere's model but not the substance. Experiential learning is well aligned with constructivism, as the latter emphasizes the need to engage with real-life issues to enhance personal and social responsibility.

T4 contrasts the theoretical potential of the CBC with its limitations in practice: while CBC aims to provide practical skills, the classroom experiences indicate that Nyerere's vision of education that benefits the community is "not yet realized." This is in line with the hermeneutical approach that aims at explaining the difference between the intended and the actual. Phenomenological approach to research embraces these experiences as valid knowledge, implying that educational change requires understanding how teachers make sense of policy. Here, constructivist theory provides a critique learners and teachers construct meaning from their context, and without systemic support infrastructure, training, community engagement, these meanings may never coalesce into Nyerere's vision of integrated self-reliance.

Participant T5 argues that the competency orientation of the CBC is in line with Nyerere's practical education, but this is "not fully implemented in classrooms." This statement encapsulates the constructivist paradox: on the one hand, learners are encouraged to learn competencies through active, real-world learning; on the other hand, institutional factors may hinder the realization of these principles. From a phenomenological perspective, the teacher's experience provides a view into how policy is implemented, modified, or even ignored at the practice level. The teacher's call suggests that without philosophical underpinnings and sustained backing, the CBC

may not deliver the critical, creative, and autonomous citizens that Nyerere envisioned. The views of the participants show that there is more to the integration of CBC with Nyerere's philosophy than meets the eye. Phenomenological hermeneutics reveals the tension between policy and practice, while constructivism emphasizes the importance of authentic, culturally relevant learning that connects personal development with social change. The CBC system, as a philosophical system, needs to move from structural change to the kind of education that empowers the learner and the community, which is the vision of Nyerere's education.

#### **4.2.3 Discussion**

The gap between the ideal and the real in the case of CBC was a common theme that teachers expressed. They highlighted some of the issues like lack of preparation of teachers and lack of equipment. Muasya and Waweru (2019) affirm these findings arguing that the expansion of CBC without proper preparation such as training of teachers and adequate facilities has hampered the implementation process. To achieve the envisioned change, it is crucial to have systemic support and adequate training for educators in CBC implementation.

In this regard, competency orientation of CBC is in line with Nyerere's education that focused on practical education, but teachers noted that its implementation in the classroom is not fully realized. According to Muchira et al. (2023), the lack of coherence in the teaching methods and the assessment methods hinders the acquisition of competencies among the learners.

It is clear that CBC is in harmony with Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance in that both support practical knowledge and learners' autonomy. However, there are some challenges that have been observed in the implementation of these ideas, allocation of resources and the involvement of the community. To this end, it is imperative that these challenges be tackled through teacher training, incorporation of indigenous knowledge, and system-wide changes for CBC to realize its potential of transforming education.

#### **4.2.4 CBC and independent problem-solvers in real-life situations**

*T1: "Not yet. The concept is sound, but the system is still very much tied to the teacher's imagination and the resources available in the school."*

*T2: "Some learners do become more independent, but this depends with the implementation of the CBC by teachers."*

*T3: "CBC trains learners on how to solve problems on paper, but when it comes to implementation, they are still very weak."*

*T4: "If done correctly, yes. However, most teachers require professional development to elicit those skills in learners."*

*T5: "We are trying, but the structure of CBC alone can not guarantee independence. More support is needed."*

#### **4.2.5 Hermeneutics of the findings**

In general, teachers state that while the concept of CBC promotes self-reliance is good in theory, it is relative to certain conditions. T1 states that success depends on a teacher's initiative and the availability of resources, which means that self-reliance is not an inherent feature of the system but rather a result of the environment and the teacher's actions. This is in line with constructivism, which posits that learners, and by extension teachers, build knowledge based on their context. From a phenomenological perspective, this is a situated experience in which meaning (in this case, 'self-reliance')

is created through the interaction with the context rather than being imposed or provided.

T2 and T4 show a tension between the ideal of learner-centeredness and autonomy that CBC promotes and the actual practice that relies more on the teacher's skill and knowledge. From the hermeneutic perspective, this is an indication of the difference between the planned curriculum and the delivered curriculum. Teachers are the bearers of the CBC philosophy and if their understanding or capacity is weak, the meaning of self-reliance is distorted. From the constructivist perspective, it also emphasizes the importance of the teacher's preparedness to create conditions that will enable learners to engage in the construction of knowledge something that cannot be achieved through policy.

T3 offers a phenomenological perspective, students are trained to solve problems on paper but lack practical skills. This implies a disconnection of learning an experiential void where knowledge is acquired but not practically applied. Constructivism requires learners to participate in real-life activities in order to acquire knowledge and develop proficiency. The fact that learners look good on paper but perform poorly in real-life activities may indicate that CBC may be poor in experiential depth, which is a critical aspect of phenomenology and constructivism. Thus, self-reliance becomes an ideal rather than a reality.

T4's statement that most teachers require training suggests that pedagogical capacity is a prerequisite for the achievement of the goals of CBC. In hermeneutic phenomenology, the teacher's existence or Dasein in Heideggerian terms determines

the learner's way of encountering meaning. Thus, without adequate training, the values of self-reliance, which are based on Nyerere's education-for-liberation, cannot be transmitted. This is supported by constructivist theory that views the teacher as a guide to learning rather than a dispenser of knowledge. Therefore, the development of teachers is not just a matter of practicality but of principle.

T5, states that 'the structure of CBC alone can't guarantee independence,' expresses a more general idea of inadequacy. CBC aligns with Nyerere's ideas of relevant, bottom-up, and sustainable education. However, its current implementation does not have the structural ecosystem community participation, resources, and philosophical framework that would make such a vision possible. From a phenomenological point of view, this has to do with the gap between the curriculum as it is prescribed and the curriculum as it is practiced in education. According to constructivism, learners cannot build rich and portable knowledge on their own without the support of contexts and scaffolding.

These teacher voices, when hermeneutically analysed, reveal the gap between the philosophy of curriculum and practice. Constructivism provides a strong theoretical framework for the CBC's vision of independence, but as these results show, philosophy must be practiced to be effective. The experiences of teachers reveal that for the vision of CBC to be realized, teachers need to be trained, supported by the context, and have their practice aligned with the ideals of CBC. Self-reliance, as Nyerere envisaged it, has to go from being an abstract goal in the curriculum to a practical reality in the classroom for both the teacher and the learner.

#### **4.2.6 Discussion**

Teachers' perception reveals that although the concept of CBC is to promote self reliance, it has its success anchored on factors such as teacher's initiative and availability of resources. This is in line with constructivism, which holds that learning construction depends on the learner's environment and experiences. Phenomenologically, this supports the contextual nature of education, where the achievement of the goal of self-sufficiency is a product of social relations in particular contexts.

Studies corroborate these insights. For instance, Akala (2021) notes that the adoption of CBC in Kenya has faced barriers such as lack of resources and teachers' preparedness, which has resulted in inequity in learning. In the same vein, Muchira et al. (2023) argue that the effectiveness of CBC is not only in the curriculum but also in the system support given to the teachers and students.

Although CBC is learner-centered in theory, the actual process is still highly dependent on the teacher. This paradox raises the question of the gap between the curriculum as planned and the curriculum as practiced, and in this gap, teachers' knowledge and skills are critical. From a hermeneutic point of view, teachers are the ones who interpret the curriculum and their interpretation plays a major role in the actualization of the curriculum. Constructivist theory also supports the idea of teachers creating conditions that foster learning activities.

Empirical evidence supports this observation. Ngeno (2023) noted that there is a positive relationship between teacher training and the implementation of CBC, implying that when teachers are not trained properly, they are unable to teach as per

the CBC syllabus. Further, Momanyi and Rop (2020) have pointed out that many teachers in Kenya lack adequate knowledge on CBC hence the challenges in its implementation.

This is evident in the way students struggle to apply the problem-solving skills that are taught in the classroom to real life situations as practiced in the case of CBC. This is due to the absence of experiential learning, which is essential for the acquisition of competencies. According to constructivism, meaningful activities should be used to build knowledge and phenomenology stresses on the experiences of learners. According to Gichuru (2024), teachers face challenges in assessing learning outcomes, which is attributed to lack of resources and lack of training in the use of experiential teaching. In addition, the study also reveals that the competencies identified in CBC are not very useful if they are not put into practice.

The need for continuous professional development of teachers cannot be overemphasized in the realization of the goals of CBC. From a hermeneutic perspective, the professional development of teachers allows them to understand and apply the curriculum. Constructivist theory also emphasizes the role of the teacher as a mediator who helps learners build knowledge.

Studies affirm this need. Amunga et al. (2020) also stress that teacher training is important for the effective implementation of CBC, as many teachers lack confidence in their ability to teach the curriculum. In the same vein, Wairungu and Magoma (2024) found that teachers support more training to improve their knowledge and implementation of CBC.

However, the structural support required for the implementation of CBC is not only in the area of curriculum but also in terms of resources, infrastructure, and stakeholders. From the phenomenological perspective, the experiences of educators show that the goals of the curriculum are not achieved without proper support from the system. According to constructivist theory, learning is also affected by the environment, which requires extensive support.

Empirical studies highlight these challenges. According to Gichuru (2024), some of the challenges include; lack of administrative support, lack of resources, and limited access to teaching technologies which are some of the barriers to the implementation of CBC. Also, the study emphasizes the need to engage parents and communities to support competency-based learning environment.

The phenomenological hermeneutic and constructivist analysis of teachers' experiences with CBC in Kenya shows that although the goals of the curriculum are noble, their achievement depends on several factors. These are teacher training, practical experience, staff development, and structural support. These areas are important in order to turn the CBC from a mere concept into a practical model of education that will empower learners to be independent.

#### **4.2.7 Philosophical differences between Nyerere's vision and the current CBC approach**

*T1: "Nyerere stressed the importance of service to the community." CBC is more of a personal growth and preparation for the job market."*

*T2: "Yes, CBC is learner-centered but it does not have the moral and communal aspect that Nyerere envisioned."*

*T3: "Nyerere wanted integration of work and learning." CBC separates them too much we need more real-world experiences."*

*T4: “The gap is in values. Nyerere was more of a collectivist while CBC is more of an individualistic approach.*

*T5: “CBC doesn’t address the socialist, communal ideology of Nyerere. It’s more westernized and competitive.”*

#### **4.2.8 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The responses show that there is a conflict between Nyerere’s vision of a community-oriented society and the individualism of the CBC. T1 points out that “Nyerere stressed service to the community,” while CBC is “self-actualization and preparation for employment.” This juxtaposition represents a paradigm shift from the communal responsibility to the individual freedom. From the phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, T1’s experience as an educator reveals a disconnection between the communal orientation of African socialism (Ujamaa) and the neoliberal orientation of the current CBC. This shift negates the moral responsibility of education as Nyerere had envisioned it.

T2 and T4 both point to a lack of moral and communal grounding within the CBC framework. T2 argues that while CBC is “learner-centered,” it does not have the “moral and communal” orientation that Nyerere envisioned. Likewise, T4 posits that “the gap is in values,” especially in the sphere of “collective responsibility.” From the constructivist point of view, these findings indicate that, although CBC is based on the principles of experiential learning, it does not necessarily involve moral construction or socially situated knowledge. Learners are building knowledge in isolation from the moral principles that should underpin their behaviour. This is because Nyerere’s emphasis on education for communal service is only a partial achievement when collective values are not being built in the learner’s social context.

T3 notes that “Nyerere wanted integration of work and learning,” while CBC “separates them too much.” This creates a gap between the academic content and its practical use, which is contrary to the functional purpose of independence. In phenomenological hermeneutics, this critique focuses on the tension that teachers feel between the curriculum’s ideal and the classroom environment. Teachers, who are daily practitioners, experience a curriculum that is not well anchored in the practical, embodied realities of work, which is one of the tenets of Nyerere’s philosophy. According to constructivism, learning is most effective when it is situated in real-life contexts; therefore, the lack of integration of work experiences in the CBC hinders the construction of contextually relevant knowledge.

T5 is a critical insight that CBC “does not challenge the socialist, communalism of Nyerere,” and seems “more Western and individualistic.” This is an ideological match where CBC aligns with global capitalist values that may not be in harmony with the cultural and philosophical orientation Nyerere espoused. This idea is closely connected with hermeneutic critique that is focused on the cultural-historical aspect of meaning. Teachers regard CBC as an ideological system that is out of touch with the African communalism, resulting in a curriculum that is foreign and unfamiliar to the African context. Constructivism encourages localized learning, but as described, CBC constructs knowledge through other systems, excluding African philosophies such as Ujamaa.

The thematic explication shows that, although CBC has some features of learner-centeredness and skills acquisition, it does not have an ontological foundation and a moral purpose that Nyerere’s philosophy has. The study reveals that the self-reliance

as envisaged by Nyerere cannot be realized without grounding education in responsibility, relevance, and morality. These tensions are revealed by the hermeneutic-phenomenological approach that goes beyond the mere analysis of what teachers say to the analysis of what their experiences mean in a socio-cultural and philosophical sense. Constructivism also emphasizes that knowledge is constructed by the learners and the teachers within cultural and moral contexts contexts that CBC needs to embrace if it is to fully achieve the ideal of self-reliance.

#### **4.2.9 Discussion**

The teachers' observations reveal that while Nyerere was based on the community, CBC is based on individual performance. This is in line with Ndungu's (2021) argument that CBC focuses on individual growth and employability at the expense of public service and citizenship. Likewise, Akala (2021) observes that the implementation of CBC has been hampered by factors such as lack of resources and low community engagement, which hinders the development of community-based education.

Teachers T2 and T4 have concerns about the moral and communal relevance of CBC. According to Ngwacho (2024), it is crucial to incorporate value education into CBC to enhance social justice and sustainable development. However, the current curriculum's emphasis on competencies may not capture the moral and ethical aspects that Nyerere considered crucial.

This perceived disconnect between the academic content and its application in CBC is similar to the concerns raised by Kereri et al. (2021) who opined that the curriculum lacks the necessary resources and teacher training to support work integrated learning.

This is counterproductive to the concept of self-sufficiency since the students may not be equipped with the necessary skills to handle real-life situations.

Teacher T5's criticism of CBC as westernized and competitive is part of a larger discussion on the cultural appropriateness of the curriculum. Ogwora (2022) offers a philosophical view, stating that the philosophical underpinnings of CBC may not be compatible with Kenya's cultural and philosophical orientation, thus causing learners and educators to feel estranged.

The combination of these themes indicates that while CBC seeks to transform education in Kenya, it may also marginalize the communal aspects that are core to Nyerere's vision. Studies also points to the need for a more comprehensive approach that incorporates moral education, skills, and culture to enhance learners' self-reliance. To fill these gaps, there is need to ensure that the curriculum goals are relevant to the Kenyan communities' realities and cultural realities.

In conclusion, the teachers' narratives and criticisms of CBC align with academic literature, emphasizing the importance of a curriculum that fosters both personal and communal competencies, moral education, and vocational skills to realize the humanistic vision of Nyerere.

#### **4.2.10 Examining the alignment of CBC learning activities, such as project-based learning and community service, with Nyerere's vision of education for self-reliance**

*T1: "They reflect Nyerere's ideas because students learn by doing, but the activities are often rushed or poorly followed up."*

*T2: "I think there is some correlation, especially in the agricultural and environmental sectors, but it is not fully integrated."*

*T3: “They diverge because learners approach the projects as assignments and not as tools for learning skills or as a service.”*

*T4: “CBC has potential, especially in group projects, but the impact is not significant if there is no connection with the community.”*

*T5: “It is similar in kind, but Nyerere wanted meaningful participation. CBC activities feel surface-level.”*

#### **4.2.11 Hermeneutics of the findings**

From the phenomenological hermeneutical point of view, the teachers’ narratives indicate that, although the CBC activities may appear to embody Nyerere’s vision, their essence is shallow. T1 and T5 also acknowledge that the activities are ‘rushed,’ ‘poorly followed up,’ and ‘superficial,’ which shows a gap between the design of CBC activities and their purpose of existence for learners. Nyerere saw education as a process of radical transformation and as an integral part of the learners’ social context. The teachers’ reflections, especially T3’s statement that learners approach the projects as assignments, suggest a lack of intentionality, which is a phenomenological concept that refers to the way consciousness should be purposefully directed towards experiences. These shallow engagements limit the chances of learners to develop self-reliance as a value and skill.

According to the constructivist theory that posits that knowledge is constructed through experience and interaction, T2 and T4 teachers admit that they have achieved some level of success in implementing Nyerere’s education principles. While activities in agriculture, environmental studies, and group projects do offer the kind of learning that is at the heart of constructivism, the other activities do not. However, these experiences are described as lacking community integration an important aspect in Nyerere’s Ujamaa-based educational model. According to constructivism, learners should be able

to construct meaning with their social context, but teachers have noted that CBC fails to provide adequate social learning contexts. The activities, although are constructivist in nature, seem to be practiced in a vacuum of actual community practice. T3's finding that learners approach projects as tasks and not as a means of learning for a lifetime is an ontological issue that is central to phenomenology and constructivism. According to constructivism, learning takes place when the new information is incorporated into the existing mental frameworks of the learner through participation. However, the teachers' reflections reveal that the learners are not fully appreciating the why of learning. This misalignment leads to reduced learner autonomy, which is a key principle of Nyerere's philosophy and constructivism. The lack of development of learners' personal agency and responsibility for their learning goes against the grain of the CBC's goal of self-sufficiency.

According to constructivist theory, the teacher is more of a guide rather than an instructor. T1 and T4 refer to the problem of poor follow-up and minimal effectiveness of CBC projects because of inadequate facilitation and structural reinforcement. From a phenomenological perspective, this implies a disruption of the co-constructed zone between the teacher and the learner. The interpretive process which is a core component of hermeneutics is hampered when learners are not led through reflection on their experiences leaving activities without mooring to deeper learning and personal development.

In conclusion, these results reveal a significant gap between the theoretical purpose of CBC and the practical experiences of teachers in its application. Although CBC replicates Nyerere's principles in terms of structure, it does not have the practicality,

community involvement, and learner involvement to achieve the goal of self-reliance. From a phenomenological hermeneutic and constructivist perspective, the success of CBC is not only in the content of the curriculum but in how learners experience, think, and make meaning of these educational interactions. If implementation is not done in consonance with these deeper educational processes, then CBC is likely to be a mere replication of Nyerere's dream.

#### **4.2.12 Discussion**

The study shows that the implementation of CBC is superficial, and teachers complained that the activities are "rushed" and "skin-deep." This is in line with Akala (2021) who opined that the implementation of CBC has been rushed and therefore the students are just going through the motions without any meaningful learning taking place. The phenomenological hermeneutic perspective focuses on the learners' search for meaning in their learning activities, which is disrupted when such activities are not well done. This is supported by the constructivist theory that posits that learning occurs when one is actively involved and reflecting, which is hampered by poor implementation.

Teachers noted that although there are aspects such as agriculture and environmental projects in CBC, these are not fully part of the community as envisaged by Nyerere. This is in agreement with Muchira et al. (2023) who opine that the Kenyan model of CBC is not as community integrated as those of South Korea and the USA. According to constructivism, learning is most effective when it is contextualized, which means that the partial application of CBC hampers the development of independence.

The perception of CBC projects as mere assignments is a clear indication that learners' goals are not aligned with the goals of CBC. According to Gichuru (2024), factors like lack of teacher training and lack of resources are some of the reasons that lead to this misalignment. From a phenomenological perspective, this implies that learners are not fully committed to the purpose of learning, while constructivism would call for learning experiences that are self-directed and meaningful, which are not evident in this case.

The study points to weak facilitation and lack of structural support as barriers to effective experiential learning. This is supported by Wambua and Waweru (2019) who note that lack of adequate preparation of teachers and inadequate provision of resources are some of the barriers to the implementation of CBC. Phenomenological hermeneutics and constructivist theory emphasize the role of guided reflection and active participation in learning, which are impossible under the existing circumstances. The mismatch between CBC and Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance is due to shallow implementation, exclusion of the community, misaligned learner purpose, and poor facilitation. These findings are in line with other studies that calls for adequate teacher training, resource provision, and community engagement to support the implementation of CBC for its intended purpose. It is important for CBC to address these issues in order to achieve its goal of producing self-reliant citizens in Kenya.

#### **4.2.13 Activities that assist students in the acquisition of skills that can be used in other areas of life**

*T1: "Skills such as teamwork, communication, and planning are some of the skills that are evident in CBC projects."*

*T2: "Yes, especially in problem solving and using local materials to come up with solutions that is practical learning."*

*T3: “They teach learners to be proactive and work independently something that is very useful in life.”*

*T4: “CBC assists learners to be confident especially when presenting their work or when leading projects.”*

*T5: “Budgeting, time management, and research are some of the skills that are exercised through CBC activities.”*

From the phenomenological-hermeneutic point of view, the teachers’ narratives show that CBC is not only a curriculum but a lived process that forms learners through daily interactions in education. The focus on skills like teamwork, communication, budgeting, planning, and initiative is the manifestation of the process through which learners acquire values that are necessary for learners’ independence and social responsibility. T1’s description of ‘teamwork, communication, and planning’ shows how learners engage in communal cooperation and exercise individual initiative in group projects, which aligns with Nyerere’s Ujamaa philosophy of communal self-reliance.

The phenomenological hermeneutic method requires the understanding of meaning through narratives. T2’s focus on problem-solving and the use of local materials suggests that learners’ engagements with their environment are viewed as contextual learning where knowledge is constructed from the learners’ socio-economic context. These activities assist learners in not only acquiring procedural knowledge but also constructing meaning from their actions, which is in line with constructivism. According to constructivism, knowledge is constructed by the learners as they engage in activities and reflect on them.

From the statements of T3 and T4, it is evident that learners are encouraged to be proactive and gain confidence, which are core to constructivism and phenomenology. T3, which states that ‘they teach learners to take initiative and work without direct supervision,’ is a shift from reception to construction. In constructivism learning, the student is not a passive recipient of knowledge but an active learner constructing his or her own knowledge. Likewise, T4’s statement that learners become more confident through presentations and leadership in projects is in line with the notion that authentic, learner-centered activities foster self-actualization. When viewed hermeneutically, confidence can be understood as the learner’s assertion of control over the learning process, which is in line with Nyerere’s education for self-reliance.

By using the terms such as budgeting, time management, and research, T5 connects the concept of self-reliance to real-life experiences. These competencies are not only academic but are life competencies. From a constructivist perspective, these are not directly taught but are learned through activities, mistakes, and discussions. These skills are viewed as existential phronesis, which means that learners use them to navigate the world, make choices, and understand their role in society through learning. In conclusion, the study supports the notion that when implemented properly, CBC enables learners to build independence through meaningful experiences. Phenomenologically analysing the teachers’ narratives, it is possible to state that learners are not only learning about self-reliance, but experiencing it. Constructivism is the theory that explains how such learning happens, that is through experience, reflection and interaction. This is in line with Nyerere’s view of education as life, not

preparation for life, where learners develop into self-reliant, self-directed, and responsible citizens.

#### **4.2.14 Discussion**

The participants noted that through the implementation of the CBC activities, students develop important skills like teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. This assertion is in line with Okeyo and Kanake's (2021) argument that CBC focuses on the acquisition of competencies that can be applied in real-life situations, not just knowledge. In addition, the use of local materials and practical tasks in CBC is in line with constructivism, whereby knowledge is constructed through learners' interactions with their surroundings.

As pointed out by the participants, the learner-centered approach of CBC is evident in the ability to empower learners to be more proactive and gain confidence. Nzoka (2024) notes that CBC seeks to produce citizens who are fit for purpose in a dynamic world by focusing on competencies rather than content acquisition. This shift aligns with the constructivism theory that posits that learners construct knowledge through participation and reflection.

The practical skills that are incorporated in CBC like budgeting and time management are very relevant in preparing the learners for real life situations. According to Ndungu (2021), philosophy plays a crucial role in the achievement of the CBC objectives since practical competencies are crucial in enabling learners to solve real-life problems. This is in line with the constructivist theory that holds that knowledge is constructed from meaningful experiences.

In conclusion, the teachers' experiences with CBC reveal that when implemented, the curriculum fosters the creation of self-educating individuals through experiential and contextual learning. This is in line with Nyerere's education philosophy where the learner is supposed to be self-reliant and responsible citizen. However, there are challenges like lack of resources and the need for constant training of teachers as pointed out by Wairungu and Magoma (2024) that need to be overcome to enhance the effectiveness of CBC in promoting self-reliance.

#### **4.2.15 Comparison in student participation in CBC activities versus conventional learning approaches**

*T1: "They are more engaged in the CBC tasks than in the traditional lecturing and writing on the blackboard activities."*

*T2: "I have observed that students are more active when they are assigned responsibilities."*

*T3: "Some are very enthusiastic, while others still prefer the traditional way perhaps because it is easier."*

*T4: "Engagement increases when the task is related to their environment or interest."*

*T5: "They like it, especially when they are able to use their hands or work in pairs it becomes real to them."*

#### **4.2.16 Hermeneutics of the findings**

T1 and T2 observed that learners are more involved when the tasks are based on real-life situations: "They are more involved in CBC tasks..." and "...more involvement when students are assigned real-life roles." These remarks are in consonance with hermeneutic interpretation that aims not only at narrating these experiences but at interpreting the meaning, that learners are more motivated when the curriculum enables them to relate learning with their existence.

Phenomenology teaches us to pay attention to these experiences as not mere remarks, but as voices that reveal the essence of education how students grasp and internalize knowledge. T4's comment "Engagement increases when the task is related to their environment or interest" is very important. It aligns with the constructivist theory that posits that knowledge is constructed when learners interact with meaningful contexts as opposed to being transmitted. This makes it easier to learn and retain knowledge because it relates with their phenomenal world their day-to-day experiences and social-cultural context.

T5's statement "They enjoy it, especially when they get to use their hands or work in groups it feels real to them" is a clear example of constructivism, which is a learning paradigm that posits that learning is an active, social process. It implies that the practical and collaborative approach of CBC improves the level of engagement. According to constructivism, learners construct their own understanding of the world through activity, contemplation, and communication. Here, it is manifested when students are active constructors of knowledge especially when the tasks assigned are real life like.

However, the insight by T3: 'Some are very excited, but others still prefer the old ways maybe because it is less work' brings phenomenological tension. However, not all learners are able to make a smooth transition into this new paradigm. This divergence shows that although CBC fosters learner independence and critical analysis, some learners may resist change because of cognitive lock-in or preference for routine. From a hermeneutic perspective, this indicates the personal meanings learners bring from

past learning contexts, which implies that educational change requires both curriculum development and learners' mind-sets.

The teachers' narratives suggest that CBC is in the process of embodying the principles of constructivism, activity, learner-centeredness, and contextual relevance. At the same time, the phenomenological hermeneutic approach assists in identifying the changes in the process of engagement, which is more than what learners do, but how they experience, understand, and perceive their learning process. The engagement observed is not a mere skin-deep it is a manifestation of learners' interaction with an educational model that is familiar with their reality.

These findings provide a strong support to the idea of self-reliance as espoused by Nyerere where active participation and relevance of knowledge are key to the process.

#### **4.2.17 Discussion**

The study established that students were more engaged when the tasks assigned by the teachers were related to real-life situations. This is in line with Sifuna and Obonyo (2019) who posit that CBC focuses on the learner as the center of learning and learning activities that are real life based and assessment methods. This is in line with the constructivist theory that posits that knowledge is constructed when learners interact with meaningful contexts.

This is in line with the observation made by Wairungu and Magoma (2024) that teachers appreciate the use of collaborative and practical activities in the classroom. This approach is in line with the constructivist epistemology that posits learning as an active, social and constructive process.

As pointed out by the participants , some students’ preference for traditional methods shows that they are not ready to embrace change. This is highlighted by Muasya and Waweru (2019) who note that teachers are challenged in implementing CBC due to existing mindsets and the need to change the teaching culture. This kind of resistance shows that there is a need to focus on both the design of learning environments and the learners’ beliefs in the process of education change.

The phenomenological hermeneutic approach and constructivist theory used in this study to analyze these findings offer a rich understanding of the educational experiences under CBC. This approach does not only show what learners do, but also how they experience, understand and construct their learning process. These findings affirm the idea of self-reliance as espoused by Nyerere, in the sense that learning engagement and relevance is the foundation of the process.

#### **4.2.18 CBC approach that may hinder it from achieving the goal of self-reliance as Nyerere intended.**

*T1: “There is too much theory and documentation in CBC , not enough actual learning.”*

*T2: “Resources are lacking. It is impossible to teach self-reliance with empty hands.”*

*T3: “Training for teachers is inconsistent. Some do not know how to facilitate the process of learners’ independence.”*

*T4: “The system does not accommodate learners from poor background they find it hard to do projects.”*

*T5: “The community is not involved enough CBC needs to link schools to the community more effectively.”*

#### **4.2.19 Hermeneutics of the findings**

T1's opinion that "there is too much theory and paperwork in CBC , not enough real practical learning" is a typical phenomenological issue, the gap between policy and practice. From the hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, this statement captures the spirit of frustration that stems from a curriculum that does not close the gap between knowing and doing, which Nyerere had warned against in colonial education. From a constructivist perspective, learning should be contextual and students should be placed in a situation where they are required to perform certain tasks in order to learn. The observation suggests that CBC has not attained the right proportion of theory and practice that would enable learners to become self-reliant through real-life learning. T2's remark, "resources are lacking. The phrase "You can't teach self-reliance with empty hands" brings out the material context of teaching. From the phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, this statement reveals the emotional and professional burnout that teachers undergo when their beliefs are not backed by structures. It reveals the tension between the ideal of CBC and the actual educational environment. According to the constructivism, tools, materials and environment are considered as the key mediators in the construction of knowledge. Lack of resources means that students cannot participate in practical, constructive learning activities that foster independence. This finding supports the notion that learner-centered approaches need to be accompanied by adequate support in terms of infrastructure to be effective.

T3 observes that, 'Teacher training is not well-coordinated.' Some do not know how to help learners become independent," which captures a phenomenological epistemology of the teacher as an enabler and an interpreter. The hermeneutical dimension

emphasizes that knowledge is not simply transferred but co-constructed between teacher and learner a core tenet of constructivism. Teachers need to be trained constantly and consistently not only in the methods of teaching but also in the philosophy of teaching as Nyerere wanted, the philosophy of learner autonomy and community. Lack of training hinders the teachers from effectively scaffolding learners' independence, which interferes with the reflective cycle that is crucial in developing independent learners.

T4's reflection, "The system doesn't cater for learners from poor backgrounds they struggle with projects," captures the phenomenology of inequality and marginalization. This comment raises the issue of how socio-economic factors influence education, which is in line with the constructivist view that learning is contextual. Learners who do not have access to resources at home or school are disadvantaged when it comes to participating in CBC's project-based approach. This is a contradiction to Nyerere's vision of education for all and exposes a structural weakness in the CBC system: the lack of consideration of the social-economic context of learners in Kenya.

T5: The community is not engaged enough CBC needs to integrate schools into the life of the community more actively. This can be said to be a hermeneutic understanding of the relational epistemology of education the self is not made in isolation but in relation to the community as espoused by Nyerere's Ujamaa. According to the constructivism theory, learning is a social process. If communities are not active co-constructors of education, learners are deprived of significant cultural and social contexts that underpin knowledge as practice. T5 supports the need for CBC to take

learners out of the classroom and expose them to communal, practical, and real-life experiences that relate to what they are learning.

In conclusion, the five participants' voices show that there is a conflict between the theory of CBC and the practice of education in Kenyan classrooms. By applying phenomenological hermeneutics, we are able to identify hidden layers of conflict stemming from isolation, rejection, and lack of readiness. Constructivist theory supports this by arguing that for CBC to foster independence in the manner that Nyerere envisioned, it must be contextual, community-based, resource-enhanced, and underpinned by philosophical principles of learners and teachers.

#### **4.2.20 Discussion**

Teacher T1's comment on the overemphasis of theory in the CBC is a common concern with the implementation of curriculum where the design and the practice are two different things. This is reflected in other studies where researchers have pointed out that there is a gap in the implementation of the learner-centered approach that underpins CBC. For example, Sifuna and Obonyo (2019) observed that the implementation of CBC faced challenges due to the fast implementation without proper preparation of teachers on how to implement the curriculum. According to the constructivism, learning is meaningful when it is active and applied in real-life situations, and the current theoretical emphasis may be counterproductive in the development of independent learners.

T2's comment on the absence of resources is a major challenge to the implementation of CBC. Research has revealed that there is a severe scarcity of adequate teaching aids,

teaching facilities, and technology that is required in competency-based education. For instance, Waruingi et al. (2021) noted that most schools are poorly equipped, thus limiting the ability to offer practical, skill-based education. From a constructivist perspective, it is important for learners to have access to a variety of resources to be able to learn through discovery and experience. The lack of such resources not only hinders learning but also widens the gap in education.

T3's comment on the inconsistency of teacher training is one of the major concerns that have been raised regarding the implementation of CBC. The competency-based approach calls for a change of role from the traditional teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach where the teacher becomes a facilitator. However, Muchira et al. (2023) have noted that many teachers are not well prepared for this transition because they have not been adequately trained for it. From a phenomenological perspective, this lack of preparedness results in teacher frustration and perceived professional incompetence. According to constructivist theory, the teacher is supposed to act as a facilitator of learning and therefore, without adequate training, the teacher may not be able to create the right environment for learning.

T4 reveals the difficulties faced by learners from disadvantaged background to support the argument that socio-economic factors hinder the effectiveness of CBC. The study shows that students from low-income background are unable to acquire the materials and support structures that are needed for competency-based learning. For example, Muasya and Waweru (2019) noted that economic challenges affect students' participation in CBC activities in a negative way. According to the constructivism

theory, learning is a contextual process; therefore, socio-economic factors can hinder construction of knowledge and competency.

T5 noted that there was lack of community engagement in the implementation of CBC, which means that there was no engagement of local knowledge and support. Nyerere's philosophy of education was based on the principle of education for self-reliance and education for the community. For instance, Akala (2021) has pointed out that lack of parental and community participation in the CBC processes is counterproductive to the curriculum. According to constructivist theory, learning is a social process that is enhanced by the interaction with other people. Thus, the development of community relations could improve the practicality and reality of learning, as well as the students' independence.

Phenomenological hermeneutics show how educators experience the system's inadequacies, and constructivism emphasizes context, resources, and social interaction in learning. To address these challenges, there is need for a multi-faceted approach that entails teacher training, fair distribution of resources and community participation in order to achieve the CBC's goal of producing self-sustaining citizens.

#### **4.2.21 Recommendations to make CBC more consistent with the philosophy of self-reliance**

*T1: "Increase the number of practical assignments related to industries or community requirements."*

*T2: "Modify the curriculum to incorporate service learning and local business ventures."*

*T3: "Strengthen vocational skills in the curriculum not just theory on competencies."*

*T4: "It is important to incorporate philosophy and ethics to develop the right attitude and not just the techniques."*

*T5: “Let learners engage in long-term projects that affect their own communities.”*

#### **4.2.22 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The teachers’ experiences show that education is closely linked to real-life situations. T1’s call for ‘hands-on activities linked to local industries or community needs’ is a phenomenological call for learners’ understanding to be grounded in the real world. This is in line with the constructivist theory that posits that knowledge is constructed through experience and interaction. Learning is meaningful when it is contextualized in the socio-economic and cultural contexts that the learner is familiar with. It is an approach that fosters self-reliance not only as an idea but as a result of learning.

T2’s focus on ‘meaningful community service and local entrepreneurship’ is in line with constructivism and Nyerere’s emphasis on the relational and experiential learning. In phenomenological hermeneutics, meaning is not inherent; it is constructed through the experience of the world. Community engagement, therefore, provides learners with not only a context for applying knowledge but also a way of being involved in the construction of meaning in society. This proposal also supports Nyerere’s view of education as a service to the community, which supports the learning process as a social activity.

T3’s concern about ‘vocational skills not just theory on competencies’ is an indication of the gap between curriculum aims and practice. The interpretive phenomenological lens reveals a paradox: although competencies are at the core of CBC, implementation does not have the practical support to put them into practice. Constructivism requires the learners to perform tasks that are similar to the actual working environment. This

means that there is a need to close the gap between the general course objectives and the practical experiences in order to attain the goal of self-employment, which Nyerere advocated for through the integration of head and hand.

T4 to 'add philosophy and ethics to foster the right attitude' is a clear indication that values and attitudes are part of the building blocks of self-reliant individuals. From a phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, this emphasizes the subjective aspects of experience, such as thinking, willing, and believing, as the way in which people interact with the world. According to the constructivist perspective, values are not imparted; they are co-constructed through discussion and reflection. This supports the notion that self-employment is not just about learning skills but also about learning to be independent, responsible, and moral as Nyerere had envisioned.

T5's advice to 'let learners work on long-term projects that affect their own communities' captures the constructivist model of learning as sustained, self-reflective, and personal. Long-term projects enable learners to engage with content, people, and contexts in a meaningful way over an extended period. In phenomenological terms, such projects are incorporated into the learner's life-world a realm where learning is not only received but also understood and processed in the process of becoming. This practice aligns with Nyerere's education for liberation and participation where learners are active participants in finding solutions to real-life challenges. The analysis participants' narratives is consistent with the principles of phenomenological hermeneutics and constructivist epistemology. Teachers articulate the desire for education that goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and turns into an experience that is contextual and transformative as espoused by Nyerere and

the Competency-Based Curriculum. These themes indicate that reform must be more than structural and must include philosophical underpinnings, practical application, and thoughtful practice.

Teachers have called for more practical activities that are related to industries and the community needs as opposed to the traditional knowledge-based approach. This is in line with the CBC's goal of preparing learners with competencies that can be applied in practice. Mackatiani and Ejore (2023) note that CBC focuses on the importance of knowledge and the application of competencies in context, rather than memorization.

Community service and local entrepreneurship should be incorporated into the curriculum to ensure that learning is contextualized. According to Ngwacho (2024), CSL is an instructional approach in CBC that enables students to engage in real-life community issues to improve their moral, social, civic, and economic competencies. This is in line with Nyerere's education for self-reliance and the education that serves the society.

Integration of vocational skills in the curriculum helps to overcome the gap between the theoretical and practical aspects of learning. The CBC seeks to produce competencies that will enable the learners to be productive in the economy and the society. However, there are some challenges that have been observed to affect the implementation of the program and they include; According to Akala (2021), the early years of CBC implementation were characterized by some challenges such as lack of human and material resources to enhance the realization of the goals of the program.

Introducing philosophy and ethics into the curriculum is crucial for the learners' personal growth and moral reasoning. This is in line with the CBC's focus on values and attitudes as skills. According to Okeyo and Kanake (2021), CBC aims at assisting learners to develop the required knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to deal with life issues, thus underlining the need for ethical and philosophical education for self-reliance.

The involvement of learners in long-term projects that affect their communities enhances learning and change. Such projects enable the learners to practice what they have learnt and also to be independent in their learning process. According to Ngwacho (2024), CSL within CBC helps students to engage in problem solving in societal issues, develop competencies and foster sustainable development.

Studies shows that the integration of practical, community-based learning, community involvement, vocational skills, philosophical understanding, and long-term projects in Kenya's CBC is feasible. These elements are important in the promotion of learner autonomy, which is in line with Nyerere's education philosophy and the CBC goals. However, the following challenges need to be met to enhance the implementation of CBC: inadequate resources and teacher training to achieve the goal of self-sufficiency.

#### **4.2.23 The effectiveness of current CBC policies in addressing economic and social factors impacting self-reliance**

*T1: "Not really. On paper, they may seem perfect, but in practice, it is a different story altogether."*

*T2: "CBC does its best, but there is a significant difference between the policy and the implementation."*

*T3: “The policies are ambitious, but they do not capture the poverty and inequality that is evident in the society today.*

*T4: “That is why, without proper infrastructure, CBC can not address those realities adequately.”*

*T5: “There is still much that can be done particularly with parents and communities to enhance learners.”*

#### **4.2.24 Hermeneutics of the findings**

From the phenomenological hermeneutical perspective, these responses depict the real-life experiences of educators who are not merely engaging with policies but are practicing CBC. The teachers’ voices, especially T1 and T2, indicate that there is a gap between the theory and practice of CBC: “Not really. They seem perfect on paper, but the actual scenario is quite different” (T1) and “CBC attempts to do so, but there is a significant disparity between theory and implementation (T2). These experiences are in harmony with the hermeneutical process of understanding meaning from the context of those who experience it. Here, meaning is not derived from abstract ideas, but from the very contexts and paradoxes of their teaching practices.

From the constructivist perspective, the teachers’ words indicate that the information about the effectiveness of CBC is constructed from the socio-economic realities and not from the top down. T3’s insight “The policies are ambitious, but they don’t reflect the poverty and inequality we see daily” implies that learning and development of self-directed learners cannot happen in isolation. The teachers are arguing that the constructivism values of authentic, meaningful learning experiences are hampered by structural factors like poverty, inequality, and lack of resources.

T4 and T5 also relate to this theme by pointing to the realities of implementation and the social context of learning. T4’s statement that “Without proper infrastructure, CBC

can't address those realities effectively" also reflects the phenomenology and constructivism's notion that the physical and material context of learning matters. However, T5 changes the focus to the community level and says, "More needs to be done especially parents and communities to support learners." This is in line with the constructivist theory that learning is a social process that occurs through interactions with parents, the community, and society at large and not just within the classroom.

In conclusion, this thematic interpretation demonstrates that although CBC is theoretically coherent and constructivist in its design, its effectiveness is contingent on the socio-economic, infrastructural, and cultural contexts in which it is situated. From the phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, it is the understanding of these lived experiences by the teachers, the implementers of CBC, that brings out the true meaning and nature of educational reform. Their voices call on policymakers to balance the philosophical with the contextual if CBC is to promote self-reliance in the manner that Nyerere envisioned.

#### **4.2.25 Discussion**

The rationale for the theme "The Disconnection Between Policy and Practice in Realizing Self-Reliance" within Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) is supported by the literature review, which is in tandem with the phenomenological hermeneutic findings from the educators. These studies show that although CBC aims at promoting learner autonomy, the actual implementation of the model is not without challenges.

One of the concerns that have been raised is the lack of adequate preparation and training of teachers to teach under CBC. A common complaint that many educators

have is that they lack the necessary tools to make the shift from traditional teaching practices to the learner-centered practices that are expected in CBC. This lack of preparedness is a problem because the curriculum aims to produce self-sufficient learners. Research also points to the need for extensive in-service education to ensure that the teaching practices are in line with the CBC goals.

The following are the challenges that hinder the implementation of CBC due to resource constraints, Schools especially in rural and marginalized areas are known to be poorly equipped in terms of infrastructure, teaching aids and technology. These shortcomings hinder the provision of skills-based education that CBC espouses. It is important to close these gaps in order to achieve the curriculum's vision of learners who are independent.

Another factor that is crucial for the implementation of CBC is the involvement of parents and the community. However, parents lack knowledge of the principles and expectations of CBC hence they are not very much involved in their children's education. This can reduce the amount of support learners get outside the classroom, which is crucial for the practice of independence. It is crucial to increase the awareness and involvement of parents and communities for the overall effectiveness of CBC.

The implementation of the CBC policy has been characterized by some degree of inconsistency and lack of direction. Teachers are always subjected to unclear instructions and changing policies, which complicate the process of teaching and learning. There is a need for better policy coherence and communication to help teachers and to guarantee the achievement of the curriculum goals.

In conclusion, although CBC has the potential of enhancing learners' self-reliance in Kenya, the practical issues highlighted by the educators and evidenced by the current research must be resolved. Teacher training, better resource distribution, community involvement, and policy coherence are the key strategies that can help CBC close the gap between its vision and practice.

### **4.3 Objective 3: Ascertain the likelihood of achieving self-reliance in CBC in Kenya through philosophical analysis.**

#### **4.3.1 Possibility of the CBC system in producing self-reliant individuals in Kenya's current socio-economic environment"**

*T1: "It is a good concept, but it is not yet practical." In this case, without adequate infrastructure and resources, CBC cannot effectively foster self-reliant individuals.*

*T2: "CBC has the potential, yes, but it needs more support." The current socio-economic environment hinders the learners from being able to apply what they learn in their day-to-day life.*

*T3: "In theory, CBC is consistent with self-reliance." However, in practice, it is still a long way off from producing individuals who can live on their own.*

*T4: "Feasibility is low at the moment." This is due to the fact that there is a lot of variation in the level of implementation across the regions.*

*T5: "It is a positive move but it is not enough." The socio-economic disparities play a significant role in determining the effectiveness of CBC."*

#### **4.3.2 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The core of the teachers' lived experience is the belief in the principles of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) especially on the aspect of self-reliance. This is evident in sentiments such as T1's where CBC is referred to as "a noble idea" and T5 where it is referred to as "a step in the right direction." These responses suggest that the teachers are purposefully involved with the CBC: the teachers' awareness is

oriented towards the signification and possibility of the curriculum. However, when one tries to interpret the reality, it is possible to notice that this potential is not fully realized in practice. This is a familiar hermeneutic issue of the difference between policy and practice, the ideal and the real. Their narratives reveal how the structural and systematic deficiencies hinder the achievement of the CBC objectives, thus restricting the ability of CBC to produce self-sufficient citizens.

In constructivism, knowledge and competence are developed through the learner's experience of the environment. The teachers' narratives, however, reveal how the current socio-economic realities make this interaction difficult. T2's assertion that "the socio-economic environment hinders the ability of learners to practice what they learn in real life" supports this argument. Likewise, T4 and T5 are also problematic in terms of regional differences and inequality, which affects the uniformity and fairness of CBC. This is a major constructivist principle: learning should be contextualized. Lack of support structures and equal opportunities to access resources means that learners cannot engage in the construction of the kinds of knowledge that would enable them to be self-reliant. The phenomenological implication here is that self-reliance is not only a teaching-learning achievement but an ontological state that cannot be fostered in social-economic uncertainty.

T3 and T4 highlight the pragmatic concerns of implementation while acknowledging the theoretical viability of CBC but doubting its ability to foster autonomous citizens in the current context. This is in line with the hermeneutic circle where one moves between the parts (the individual teachers' experiences) and the whole (the meaning of CBC as a national curriculum). This skepticism is not due to the teachers' rejection of

the philosophy of CBC but stems from the disconnection between the learner-centered philosophy of CBC and the reality of the system that the teachers encounter. This is a clear case of constructivist failure points whereby the learner is unable to apply knowledge gained through experience due to external factors.

However, all the teachers interviewed have a positive outlook towards the future of the CBC and its objectives. Their comments are a mix of criticism and hope they state that they agree with the constructivist principles that underlie CBC, but have not yet seen them in practice. From a phenomenological point of view, this implies that teachers have a shared intentionality of making the curriculum work. However, this hope is accompanied by a realistic view of the current difficulties, which the authors consider as actors in a system that is not entirely conducive to their goals. The knowledge that is constructed from their experience is therefore situated and influenced by their professional practice as well as their social, economic and regional background. These findings are an accurate portrayal of the interconnection between practice and theory, where the goals of the CBC are in line with both Nyerere's philosophy and constructivism but are limited by practicality. The phenomenological hermeneutic interpretation reveals the personal connotations and emotional aspects of these experiences, while the constructivist perspective focuses on the gap between the context of curriculum development and the context of curriculum delivery. Together, they point to the fact that for CBC to achieve the goal of producing self-reliant citizens in Kenya, there is a need for structural change, contextual sensitivity, and real commitment.

### **4.3.3 Discussion**

Teachers' understanding of the fact that CBC has good intentions is in line with the curriculum that focuses on the learner and the use of knowledge in practice. However, research shows that the process has been slowed down by poor planning and lack of proper preparation of teachers. For example, Sifuna and Obonyo (2019) note that many teachers were not ready for the new curriculum, they lacked the knowledge and skills. Also, other challenges like inadequate approved textbooks and instructional materials, inadequate infrastructure have also contributed to the poor implementation of the policy. These challenges highlight the discrepancy between the curriculum's vision and the actual implementation of the curriculum.

It is therefore important to note that the success of CBC depends on the socio-economic environment in which it is practiced. Learners have also complained that socio-economic differences and regional differences make it difficult for them to apply the competencies they have acquired in practice. This is true as studies show that many schools especially in the developing world are poorly equipped with basic facilities like classrooms, laboratories and teaching aids. For instance, Wambua and Waweru (2019) noted that infrastructural challenges and lack of teaching and learning resources impacted on the successful implementation of CBC. These socio-economic factors are a contradiction to the constructivist theory that learning should take place in real and supportive environments.

This is because teachers have practical experiences of the challenges that hinder the implementation of CBC hence doubting its effectiveness. Some of the challenges that have been reported include; lack of preparation of teachers, lack of resources, and poor

management support. For example, a study done in Nyeri County showed that a large number of teachers experienced challenges such as lack of resources, lack of support from the administration, and limited access to teaching technologies. These challenges lead to a feeling of frustration among educators as they are unable to implement the theoretical framework of the curriculum in the classroom. This disconnection between policy and practice further underlines the importance of the provision of support structures that would enhance curriculum implementation.

However, the teachers do not lose hope in the realization of the goals of CBC as outlined above. This optimism is subject to the condition that the implementation barriers are addressed. The studies show that with proper training, funding, and involvement of the stakeholders, the goals of the curriculum can be achieved. For instance, Wairungu and Magoma (2024) argue that teachers opined that the implementation of CBC would be effective if the government provides more training, increases awareness of the role of parents, and hires more teachers. This cautious optimism is due to the fact that there is a collective goodwill among educators to ensure that the curriculum works, given that the system hitches are fixed.

In conclusion, the results of your study are consistent with other studies, and the philosophy of CBC and the practical issues are in line with each other. To achieve the goal of the curriculum of producing self-reliant citizens in Kenya, these challenges require a comprehensive planning, adequate resource mobilization, and stakeholder participation.

#### **4.3.4 The internal and external factors that facilitate or hamper the goal CBC outside the education system**

*T1: "One of the challenges is that there are few teaching aids and many students in a class."*

*T2: "There is no doubt that political instability and poor infrastructure outside school negatively affect progress."*

*T3: "The system is exam-driven in practice, despite the CBC's intentions."*

*T4: "Teacher preparedness is a big issue." Some of us did not receive training for the CBC approach."*

*T5: "Parental support is also lacking. Some parents are unaware of the CBC and do not participate in their children's learning process."*

#### **4.3.5 Hermeneutics of the findings**

T1's statement "One major hindrance is lack of teaching resources and overcrowded classrooms" is an indication of a situation where the physical environment is a negation of constructivism. This hampers the chances of learners to be actively involved in meaningful and practical learning activities, which is contrary to the CBC vision of making learners to be independent.

Likewise, T2's reflection "Political instability and poor infrastructure outside school definitely hinder progress" reveals the external realities of education. This is in line with the hermeneutic phenomenology's focus on situating the experience in the world of the participant. It indicates that learning cannot be isolated from the learner environment; the breakdown of external systems affects the classroom, hindering the application of learner-centered approaches.

T3's observation "The system is exam-driven in practice, despite the CBC's intentions" suggests a significant disconnect between the CBC's goals and the actual practices of teaching and learning. According to constructivist theory, learners should not memorize information for tests but rather learn through interactions, reflections, and

solving problems. T3 shows that while CBC is based on the idea of self-assessment, the current assessment culture at the university level is not ready for such a change.

T4's concern "Teacher preparedness is a big issue. The statement "Many of us weren't trained for the CBC approach" highlights one of the challenges of attaining the goals of CBC through the phenomenological notion of intentionality. In constructivist theory, teachers who are the architects of knowledge construction must be purposeful in leading learners through the process of experience-based reflection. If not well implemented, this intention is defeated and the process reverts to the conventional modes of transmission which is contrary to the CBC's learner-centered, skill development approach. This also affects the self-efficacy of the teachers, which is crucial in developing the same in the learners.

This is further supported by T5 which noted that; "Parental support is also lacking." Some parents are unaware of the CBC and do not participate in their children's learning process. According to constructivism, learning is social and contextual and does not occur only in a school environment. Learner's environment is incomplete when parents are not involved. From the analysis of T5, it can be inferred that cultural and communicative differences between the curriculum and the community reduce the cohesiveness required for CBC to promote self-reliance.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while CBC is philosophically consistent with constructivism and Nyerere's education for self-reliance, its implementation is hampered by contextual factors such as material, poverty, political instability, poorly prepared teachers, and low parental involvement. Hermeneutic interpretation requires

one to go deeper than the face value of these challenges and see what is hidden behind them. They are not just practical issues they are ontological tensions between autonomy, freedom, and agency on one hand, and oppression, subjugation, and dissonance on the other.

Therefore, any change in policy or curriculum must go beyond the structural change to the philosophical change where all the stakeholders including the teachers, parents, and policymakers embrace and practice the culture of self-reliance. Teacher training must be reimagined not only to deliver CBC content but to embody the spirit of CBC and make teachers constructors of meaning with learners as the constructivist epistemology and Nyerere's education principles suggest.

#### **4.3.6 Discussion**

The study reveals deep-rooted structural and systemic barriers that hinder the successful implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya, especially in terms of promoting self-employment among learners. The challenges mentioned by the teachers in the study included overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching aids, poor infrastructure, and poorly equipped learning facilities. When viewed through the lens of phenomenological hermeneutics, these lived experiences suggest that the vision of the CBC is not fully attainable in Kenyan classrooms. T1's account of lacking resources and overcrowding contradicts the constructivist principles of learning through exploration, interaction, and practical activities. This is in line with Mwarari, Githui, and Mwenje (2020) who observed that infrastructural constraints and lack of basic teaching and learning resources make implementation of CBC in Kenya a nightmare to teachers and learners.

The participants of the study also noted that socio-political instability and poor infrastructure outside the school also affects education. T2's reflection on these broader societal issues is consistent with the hermeneutic phenomenological focus on experience in context. According to constructivism, learning is not an individual process but is influenced by the environment in which the learner is placed. Gichuru (2024) supports this by arguing that systemic and infrastructural barriers hinder the realization of CBC's intended positive impacts in marginalised communities. Wambua and Waweru (2019) also opine that the government has been very keen on implementing CBC without fixing existing structural vices hence jeopardizing the success of the program especially in preparing learners for self-employment.

Another emergent issue from the findings is the disconnection between the intended pedagogical change of CBC and the current assessment practices. T3 observed that while the government has shifted from exam-based learning, the system is still exam-based in essence. This is a contradiction that distorts the philosophical direction that CBC was supposed to champion. Constructivism learning theory supports the use of real-life, constructive, and formative assessment where learners show their understanding through performance, but the exam culture is still dominant, as Inyega et al. (2021) also pointed out. These systemic constraints indicate that the goals of fostering problem-solving, critical thinking, and independence are in danger of becoming mere lip service without actual change.

Furthermore, the findings show that professional capacity and stakeholder engagement are the key factors that affect the outcomes of CBC. T4's concern about inadequate teacher training is a significant issue in developing the pedagogical readiness. In

constructivist paradigms, the teacher is not an information transmitter but a knowledge mediator. If not trained, teachers cannot adequately assist students in the reflective and experiential learning processes.

Mwarari et al. (2020) also established that most teachers in Kenya were not well prepared for the implementation of CBC especially in terms of embracing student centered approaches. Adding to this problem, T5's statement on the absence of parental support for CBC reveals another significant challenge in the learning environment. According to constructivism, learning is a social process and parents play a crucial role in this process. However, research by Mwarari, Githui, and Mwenje (2020) shows that many Kenyan parents are still out of the CBC loop due to lack of information, time or resources.

Taken together, studies suggest that while CBC is consistent with the principles of constructivism and Nyerere's vision of education for self-reliance, the implementation of the policy is limited by structural factors and contextual mismatches. From the perspective of phenomenological hermeneutics, these teacher narratives are not whining they are existential reflections on a system in disequilibrium. They reveal the paradox of choice, freedom, and creativity on one hand and dependency, disempowerment, and conformity on the other. To overcome these barriers, it is not enough to change policies on the surface level; it calls for a shift in the philosophy where all the stakeholders, including educators, parents, and policymakers, embrace and practice education for self-reliance. This would entail effective investment in teacher training, effective parental involvement, and changes in the assessment and

distribution of resources for learning, all of which should be based on the principles of constructivism and Nyerere's humanistic education.

#### **4.3.7 Ways in which CBC help students prepare for the difficulties of the job market or becoming an entrepreneur**

*T1: "Increase the number of practical assignments and subjects that are related to the real world and the job market."*

*T2: "Make entrepreneurship a core part of the curriculum, not just an optional topic."*

*T3: "We need to start teaching problem-solving and innovation from early grades."*

*T4: "Promote school business relations to enable learners to gain practical experience."*

*T5: "Assess learners on life skills, not just academic performance."*

#### **4.3.8 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The interviews reveal that the teachers have a shared concern of the need to integrate practical, real-life learning experiences into the CBC framework. T1's statement that "real-life projects and vocational subjects that reflect market needs" are important, is a clear indication of a concern with the practicality of education in real life situations. This is in line with phenomenological hermeneutics where meaning of a phenomenon (in this case, CBC) is constructed from the experiences of the users. The teacher's call is not just a complaint but a revelation of the gap between theory and practice. According to the constructivism theory, learning is most effective when the learner is actively involved in constructing meaning through activities. The call for "vocational subjects" and "entrepreneurship as a core part" (T2) indicates that these educators think that learners should build knowledge through activity a constructivist concept. It emphasizes that knowledge is not a one-way process where the teacher imparts knowledge to the learner but is constructed in context that is relevant to the learner.

Another theme that can be derived from T3 is that problem-solving and innovation should be integrated from the early grades; this is another crucial aspect of life skills. From the phenomenological perspective, this is an indication of how educators view the developmental process of learners as being shaped not only by the content of the curriculum but also by the timeliness and efficiency of the content in engaging the learner's reality. The teacher here does not present innovation and problem-solving as concepts that are relevant only in academic settings but as skills that are essential for independent living.

Constructivism, once more, affirms this by arguing that learners construct new knowledge based on their past experiences and knowledge. The integration of critical skills at an early stage helps the learners to develop complex knowledge over time to meet the dynamic world challenges.

T4 calls for the enhancement of "school-business relations," which adds a relational and social aspect to self-reliance. From a hermeneutical point of view, this captures how meaning of education is constructed not only in classrooms but in the social, economic and cultural contexts in which schools are situated. It affirms that self-reliance is not the triumph of the individual, but a social process that is associated with the learner's engagement with society as Nyerere intended through Ujamaa. This also relates to social constructivism, which is a part of constructivism theory that focuses on the role of social interaction and cultural tools in constructing knowledge. The involvement of external community actors in learning can make the CBC more contextualized and prepare learners for the social and economic contexts.

T5's perspective "Assess learners on life skills, not just academic performance" provides a valuable insight into the mismatch between assessment practices and CBC objectives. On the phenomenological level, this is evidenced by the existence of a gap between the goals of CBC and the realities of implementation. It is a lived contradiction. While CBC advocates for the overall development of the learner, current evaluation systems are still inclined towards the academic achievement.

From the constructivist perspective, traditional assessments are inadequate because they do not reflect the contextual and process-based nature of learning. Soft skills like teamwork, innovation, and flexibility cannot be measured by traditional assessments, but they are crucial for independence. This is why there is a need to adopt more realistic assessment practices that assess learners in real-life situations such as portfolio, community-based projects, and reflective journals.

The findings encapsulate the essence of what it means to teach for self-sufficiency not as a theoretical concept but as a reality in the classroom. The phenomenological hermeneutic approach reveals from the teachers' stories the need for education that is based on the learners' experiences. If constructivism is applied to the analysis of the concept, it is possible to conclude that the strength of CBC is in its ability to individualize, contextualize, and socialize learning. However, to achieve this potential, CBC must do a better job of integrating vocational training, entrepreneurship, community involvement, and authentic assessments in other words, to become the genuine constructivist learning theory and Nyerere's vision of education for self-reliance.

#### **4.3.9 Discussion**

The participants stressed the importance of practical assignments and vocational courses to make education relevant to the market. This is in line with the change from the previous 8-4-4 system that was deemed to be academic and exam based to the CBC that is learner centered and prepares the learners for the future through the acquisition of skills such as teamwork, innovation, and competency.

However, the implementation of the strategies needs resources and preparedness of the teachers in terms of time and other resources. Research shows that many teachers have no clue about the new system, which hinders the implementation of CBC. This calls for proper teacher training to enable them to incorporate practical skills into their teaching and learning process.

The idea of integrating problem-solving and innovation from the early grades is in line with the CBC approach of developing critical thinking and creativity. According to the research, CBC seeks to prepare learners for future community service by providing them with skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. However, there are some challenges that limit the development of these skills such as lack of teacher training and lack of resources. It is important to address these challenges in order to ensure that learners acquire the required competencies from a tender age.

The idea of partnership between schools and local businesses is in line with the communal aspect of Nyerere's Ujamaa philosophy where education is seen as a tool for societal transformation. CBC is highly dependent on stakeholder participation, but the initial attempts to implement it were not very successful because of low public interest and inadequate resources.

Teachers' advocacy for the assessment of life skills over academic performance is an indication of a mismatch between the CBC and current assessment practices. This means that the assessment methods used should be real-life based in order to assess the competencies of the learners. However, studies shows that there are challenges that affect the implementation of CBC including; limited resources and lack of policies on assessment of learners.

It is therefore important to establish broad frameworks for assessing learners' competencies in real life situations in order to achieve the vision of CBC. The thematic analysis of the interviews with teachers supports the literature that calls for practical, community-based, and skills-based education for self-sufficiency. It is therefore important to address challenges like teacher training, resource management, community involvement, and assessment in order to support the implementation of CBC as espoused by Nyerere's education system and constructivism.

#### **4.3.10 Influence of external factors on CBC's capacity to foster self-reliance among learners**

*T1: "Government policies are usually formulated in a reactive and an inconsistent manner, which makes it very hard to implement them."*

*T2: "The economy does not provide employment to the graduates, and therefore learners are challenged even after attaining skills."*

*T3: "Societal attitudes still prefer white-collar jobs, and that is a contradiction to the CBC's objectives."*

*T4: "Most communities don't even know what CBC stands for." That's a major setback."*

*T5: "Even if the curriculum is the best one, it will not produce self-reliant individuals if there is no economic stability."*

#### **4.3.11 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The responses of the five participants show a profound worry of the gap between the CBC as a policy and the socio-economic and political context within which it is implemented. From the phenomenological hermeneutical perspective, which aims at interpreting the meaning of the lived experiences, it is possible to notice that the teachers' narratives are not only critiques but rather the manifestation of their understanding and engagement in the CBC context. Their narratives reveal how their experiences are influenced by structures like government inconstancy (T1), economic volatility (T2, T5), societal values (T3), and communal perceptions about education (T4).

This is evident in T1's statement that "government policies are often reactive and inconsistent" which depicts a level of disappointment in the policymaking process, especially in the area of educational reform in Kenya. From a constructivist perspective, this erodes the development of meaningful learning contexts as teachers and learners are left to operate in policy landscapes that are not well defined or stable. Constructivism is a learning theory that focuses on learning from experience, but when there is irregularity in the government, it hinders the provision of such experiences.

T2 and T5 reveal a paradox, while CBC advocates for a practical, autonomous education, economic insecurity hinders its implementation. T2 says that "the economy does not support graduates" and T5 says that "even the best curriculum cannot produce self-reliant individuals" if there is no economy. These reflections are what phenomenology refers to as intentionality, which is the focus of consciousness on an object, in this case, the societal impact of education. The teachers' attitude is optimistic

about the future of CBC, but they are faced with structural barriers that hinder the realization of that vision. This is because constructivism, one of the learning theories that emphasize the use of knowledge in meaningful contexts, fails to provide learners with the ability to apply their skills in employment or business ventures. T3 focuses on the issue of societal expectations, noting that “societal attitudes still prefer white-collar jobs,” which is in contrast to the CBC’s approach to vocational education. This suggests that there is a gap between the curriculum and the culture of the society in terms of awareness. From the constructivist point of view, learners are not isolated — their construction of knowledge is influenced by the community. If the society does not embrace vocational careers, learners are likely to adopt such attitudes, thus reducing the effectiveness of CBC. From a phenomenological perspective, this means that the lifeworld becomes fragmented and the educational process is no longer supported by society.

T4 is quite revealing when it states that most communities do not even know what CBC stands for, which points to a significant epistemological deficit. Hermeneutically, this means a disconnection between curriculum designers, teachers, and the community in terms of interpretation. In constructivism, meaning is constructed by the learner and the environment in which the learner is placed. When parents and communities are disengaged or ignorant, they cannot support the competencies that are taught in school, thus eradicating the curriculum’s learner-centeredness pillar. In conclusion, the thematic analysis of these reflections reveals that external systemic factors, political, economic, cultural, and epistemological are severely eroding the experiential and philosophical foundations of CBC as envisaged through Nyerere’s

philosophy and the constructivist paradigm. From a phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective, these voices are not just data but rich narratives of the gap between the real and the policy.

Thus, the success of CBC and the attainment of self-reliance is not only a matter of what is taught and learned in the classroom but also of the transformation of the lifeworld in which education is embedded. This supports Nyerere's argument that education must be grounded in social reality and that without structural integration, the CBC is more of a wish than a reality.

#### **4.3.12 Discussion**

The experiences of the five teachers reveal a huge gap between the vision of the Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and the existing socio-economic and political realities that shape the implementation of the curriculum. This thematic concern is reflected in the current literature where various scholars have pointed out various system level barriers to the achievement of the CBC agenda.

Teacher T1's observation of the reactive and inconsistent nature of government policies is supported by Wambua and Waweru (2019) who observed that the CBC was introduced without addressing basic issues like teacher training and lack of infrastructure. In the same vein, Waruingi et al. (2022) highlighted the challenges of staff development, training, and financial resources in implementing CBC and called for collective efforts among the stakeholders.

T2 and T5's arguments about the effects of economic instability on graduates' self-reliance are also in line with Muchira et al. (2023) who noted that there is limited

research on the effects of CBC on learners' competencies in Kenya partly because of economic factors. Similarly, Gichuru (2024) established that there was a lack of resources and limited access to teaching technologies that hinders the implementation of CBC principles.

T3's comment on societal preference for white-collar jobs is a cultural issue. Wairungu and Magoma (2024) pointed out that societal attitudes and lack of parental support are some of the new challenges in the implementation of CBC, arguing that community perception plays a crucial role in the success of the curriculum.

This is in line with T4's assertion that there is low community knowledge on CBC, and as noted by Sifuna and Obonyo (2019), there is low public engagement in the curriculum reform process. This lack of stakeholder engagement is problematic because the construction of knowledge is a collaborative process that is central to CBC's learner-focused model.

Studies also reveals that infrastructural constraints are among the main challenges to the implementation of CBC. Gichuru (2024) and Amunga et al. (2020) have pointed out challenges like overcrowded classes, inadequate teaching aids, and lack of basic amenities, which hamper the curriculum.

The issues raised by the teachers are quite valid and are supported by current research findings that have been published in the recent past. These challenges which include; policy issues, economic barriers, social factors, and infrastructural factors all work against the effectiveness of the CBC. To address these challenges, there is a need to

reform policies, invest in education infrastructure, engage the community, and train teachers to embrace the curriculum's learner-centered approach.

#### **4.3.13 The role of government funding and resource allocation in CBC**

*T1: "A huge role. This is the reason why without adequate funding, CBC is just a dream on paper."*

*T2: "Funds decide whether schools can implement practical courses such as agriculture or information technology."*

*T3: "As of now, the funding is inadequate." This is the reason why we are having a hard time in implementing the curriculum properly."*

*T4: "There is a gap between the policy and the implementation of the budget."*

*T5: "Most schools do not even have the most basic learning facilities. That is how poor the funding is."*

#### **4.3.14 Hermeneutics of the findings**

From the teachers' narratives, there is a deep-seated issue of government funding and its implications on the possibility of the CBC to foster educational self-sufficiency. These are statements that are deeply embedded with meanings that are derived from the phenomenological hermeneutical method of the teachers' practice with the CBC system. T1 states that the dream of CBC "remains on paper" because of financial shortfalls a phrase that captures the gap between policy and implementation. This is also supported by T2 who equates financial investment with the implementation of practical programs such as agriculture and IT, which would help learners to acquire relevant skills in the market.

Phenomenological hermeneutics also supports the interpretation of such experiences in existential and educational sense and not only on the face value. The common thread that runs through all five teachers is that lack of resources, teaching aids, and structures

makes the curriculum irrelevant in the achievement of the philosophy behind it. These teachers are not only conveying information but are also participating in what Heidegger would refer to as 'being-in-the-world' of education. Their experiences capture the very nature of educational disadvantage, where the promise of a liberating curriculum is undermined by bureaucracy and lack of resources. From the constructivist point of view, funding is a crucial factor because it influences the context in which learners and teachers build knowledge.

Constructivism posits that learners build understanding through interaction with their environment both social and material. However, when schools are described as lacking even basic learning materials as T5 has done, the environment becomes sterile and unproductive, which negates active, meaningful learning. T3 and T4 indicate that there is a lack of alignment between the national policy and its execution, which undermines the constructivist assumption of an environment that supports learning. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the theory and practice, as mentioned by T4, is a major problem in the formulation and implementation of education policy. This has profound philosophical implications if viewed through the prism of Nyerere's education for self-reliance that focused on skills, relevance, and community. Lack of adequate funding means that the CBC does not enable the very processes through which learners can become self-directed, innovative, and productive citizens, which is contrary to constructivism and Nyerere's vision of education.

In conclusion, the analysis of the teachers' narratives based on the themes shows that there is a disconnection between the curriculum's emancipatory purpose and the physical environment in the schools. The phenomenological hermeneutic perspective

reveals the existential angst of teachers who are part of an idealized bureaucracy that is limited by materialism. At the same time, the constructivist framework shows how lack of support hinders co-construction of knowledge, which in turn hampers learners' ability to become independent, an aspect that is espoused by both CBC and Nyerere's education systems.

#### **4.3.15 Discussion**

The teachers' concerns about inadequate funding are supported by the findings of other studies conducted in the recent past. For example, a study revealed that most junior secondary schools in Kenya are poorly equipped with limited classrooms, laboratories, and teaching resources, which hinders the achievement of CBC goals. Another study also revealed that the following factors were some of the challenges that teachers faced in implementing CBC at the junior secondary school level; inadequate administrative support and resource constraints.

The current state of CBC implementation seems to deviate from Nyerere's education for self-reliance philosophy, which focused on skills, relevance, and community. Due to inadequate funding, CBC is unable to offer the practical experience that is required for students to gain independence and innovation, which are the principles that Nyerere espoused.

According to the constructivism theory, the learning environment is very important in the construction of knowledge. The absence of basic learning materials and poor infrastructure hinders the development of effective learning environments, which are

crucial for active, effective learning experiences that are necessary for learners to become self-reliant.

This is evident in the case of CBC where policy formulation is done without due consideration of infrastructural and resource requirements for implementation. According to research, the government should ensure timely release of funds and the participation of teachers and parents in the implementation of the curriculum.

The findings of the study, in combination with the literature review, reveal that government funding is a crucial factor in the effectiveness of CBC. To ensure that CBC is in tandem with the constructivist approach to learning and Nyerere's vision of education for self-reliance, it is crucial to address the financial and infrastructural issues.

#### **4.3.16 The perception of parents and communities towards self-reliance and alignment or conflict with the objectives of CBC.**

*T1: "Many parents associate independence with academic achievement only, not skills."*

*T2: "Some communities still hold the view that employment is the only way to be employed."*

*T3: "There's little awareness. Parents expect teachers to do all."*

*T4: "It opposes CBC because they do not appreciate practical experience or innovation."*

*T5: "There is a little more support in urban areas." However, the difference is even more pronounced in rural areas."*

#### **4.3.17 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The responses suggest that the society has a different understanding of success and the philosophy of self-reliance as espoused by Nyerere and the CBC framework. T1 and T2 argue that many parents and communities still equate independence with academic

achievement and formal employment, not with skills or business opportunities. This shows that even in the post-colonial society, success is still linked to white-collar jobs, which perpetuates the same colonial ideologies that Nyerere despised in education. From a constructivist perspective, this becomes a challenge to learning since the learners cannot relate what they learn in school with real life situations because of societal norms.

From the phenomenological hermeneutical point of view, the teachers' responses especially from T3 and T4 depict the real life struggle between the curriculum as an ideal and the curriculum in practice. The statement "parents expect teachers to do everything" (T3) supports the idea of a passive role of parents in the process of learning. This is in contrast to the constructivist model of learning that is achieved through the interaction of learners, educators, and the community. In addition, T4's assertion that 'communities do not value hands-on learning or creativity' implies that even though CBC has embraced practical, learner-centered education, social prejudices hinder learners from embracing competencies, which is a fundamental principle of constructivism.

T5 brings in the issue of spatial disparities in the implementation of CBC by noting that urban communities are more supportive than rural ones. From a hermeneutic perspective, this lived experience demonstrates how structural and contextual differences influence teachers' interpretation of educational phenomena. The constructivist theory would suggest that such differences hinder equal learning chances because learners in rural areas with poor resources cannot create knowledge and self-sufficiency through environmental stimuli and support. This also resonates with

Nyerere's call for an education system that is based on the realities of the community, which would be culturally and geographically appropriate.

Altogether, these narratives suggest that there is a disconnect between the theoretical vision of CBC (and Nyerere's vision) and the realities of its application. By using the phenomenological hermeneutical approach, we understand that teachers are not merely relaying information but are telling stories of their bodily angst and desire as they feel that their teaching practices are not supported by the community. From constructivism, this implies that real learning is being hindered by social misconceptions, lack of cooperation, and socio-cultural opposition.

Thus, for CBC to foster self-reliance as Nyerere intended, it has to extend beyond curricular development and engage in raising consciousness, community-based learning, and policy change that would support the practical and contextualized education.

#### **4.3.18 Discussion**

The thematic analysis of the teacher interviews reveals the following: First, there are differences in the perception of self-reliance, second, parents and the community are not very involved, and third, rural and urban differences are evident; all of which are supported by the current literature on Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). These studies highlight the issues and prospects of achieving CBC goals in light of social demands and resource constraints.

The teachers' observations that many parents associate independence with academic achievement and formal employment are not far from the truth. This is in line with the study conducted by Wairungu and Magoma (2024) where the teachers pointed out that lack of parental support was a major challenge in the implementation of CBC. The study also highlighted the need to raise awareness of parents' roles in the CBC framework.

Similarly, Mwarari et al. (2020) noted that parents understood the significance of home-school partnership but reported challenges like time constraints, lack of skills, and resource limitations. These challenges limit the ability of parents to support their children's learning hence affecting the development of self reliance among learners. The teachers' experiences of passive parental roles and lack of appreciation for practical learning are in line with Amunga (2020) who noted that lack of parental involvement is a challenge in the implementation of CBC. The study also highlighted the fact that despite the fact that parental involvement is a key factor in educational achievement, parents are often ill-equipped to provide the support that their children need.

In addition, Njeru (2023) study conducted in Tharaka South Sub-County found out that parents should be involved in the learning process of their children for the learners to develop. The study also revealed that parents' participation in the implementation of CBC was low and therefore the need to promote parental participation.

The teachers' observation of the low support for CBC in rural areas as compared to the urban areas is well illustrated by the study done in Tarbaj Sub-County, Wajir County.

The study established that lack of parents/guardians' involvement as co-teachers meant that the rates of success in the implementation of CBC were low. This means that the implementation of CBC in rural areas is a challenge due to the following reasons; lack of resources and low parental involvement.

Similarly, Njati and Ireri (2022) highlighted the need to scale up resource mobilization for the implementation of CBC at the basic education cycle. The study also revealed that due to scarcity of resources, especially in the rural areas, the implementation of CBC is a challenge.

The analysis of the teachers' perceptions and the review of the literature show that there are a number of complex issues that hinder the achievement of the goals of CBC in Kenya. The congruence between the phenomenological accounts of educators and the research findings underscores the importance of multifaceted approaches to tackling the societal attitudes, increasing parental and community involvement, and narrowing the resource gaps.

To achieve the vision of self-reliant individuals as espoused by Nyerere and anchored in the CBC, it is necessary to undertake the following interventions. These are community awareness campaigns to change the perception of success, training of parents and teachers, and fair distribution of resources to ensure that every child in any part of the country receives quality education that will enable him or her to be an independent person.

#### **4.3.19 Philosophical and practical recommendations to enhance CBC's capacity for fostering self-reliance in line with Nyerere's philosophy**

*T1: "Increase the amount of practical work and decrease the amount of theoretical material."*

*T2: "Let learners engage in community projects so that they can appreciate the issues affecting their society."*

*T3: "We need to teach for life, not for exams just like Nyerere envisioned."*

*T4: "Promote the use of local knowledge and practice learning by doing."*

*T5: "Educate teachers philosophically on what self-reliance entails."*

#### **4.3.20 Hermeneutics of the findings**

One common thread that runs through all the responses is the focus on the practical application of knowledge in the learning process. T1's statement, "Reinforce practical work and reduce emphasis on theoretical content," reflects a growing concern among educators that the current CBC structure still retains more of an emphasis on abstract academic knowledge, contrary to Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance. In the context of the phenomenological hermeneutic tradition, this concern captures teachers' practical knowledge of the gap between the curriculum and practice. These are understood as invitations to change schooling into a context in which learners engage with the world in a meaningful way where knowledge is not only acknowledged but also enacted.

T2's statement, "let learners participate in community projects to understand local problems" aligns with both the constructivist approach and Nyerere's community-based education model. In constructivism, learning is defined as the process that is constructed by the learner based on the context in which he or she is placed. Teachers as co-constructors of meaning here support learning that goes beyond the classroom to the community. From a phenomenological perspective, the teacher's story reveals the

true meaning of education as education that is relevant and contextual, which is in line with Nyerere's assertion that education should be relevant to the society in which it is practiced. The teacher's experience is thus not just a description of a need but an interpretation of a fundamental pedagogical concern: the reintegration of schooling with societal progress.

T3 affirms, "We need to teach for life, not for exams just like Nyerere envisioned." This insight can be seen as a philosophical conflict between the current practices in schooling and the concept of education. From a phenomenological perspective, this is a critique based on the teacher's practice in assessment-focused learning contexts. From a constructivist point of view, such environments do not allow for meaningful knowledge construction, as learners are more concerned with memorization. The teacher's statement reflects the vision of education that is in line with Nyerere's vision and constructivism, which is education as a lifelong process that is formative and based on the development of practical skills.

T4 to "integrate local knowledge systems and encourage learning by doing" aligns with the epistemological diversity that both constructivism and Nyerere's philosophy embrace. Constructivism embraces situational and cultural knowledge, as it does not assume that knowledge is equal across the globe but is constructed through experience. The teacher's statement also aligns with the hermeneutic understanding of identity and culture, which situates education within culture. This is in line with Nyerere's African socialism and communal life (Ujamaa) where indigenous practices are not inferior but the basis for building self-reliant and dignified learners.

T5's recommendation to 'educate teachers philosophically to appreciate the concept of

self-reliance' is a meta-educational theme: the need for philosophical foundation in teacher education. From the phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, this suggests that there is a need for educators to reflect more on their part as change agents. The teachers' experiences show that even the best curricula, if they are not grounded in a clear philosophical framework, will not work in practice. Constructivism aligns with this view by presenting teachers as meaning makers rather than knowledge transmitters. Therefore, for the teachers to foster self-reliant learners, they themselves need to develop the value and vision of self-reliance as espoused by Nyerere. Therefore, based on phenomenology and constructivism, the voices of the five teachers suggest that it is high time that Kenya's CBC embraced experiential, community-based, and philosophically informed education. Together, their stories provide a rich understanding of education for self-sufficiency not as a theoretical concept, but as a process that is grounded in practice, culture, reflexivity, and purpose.

#### **4.3.21 Discussion**

The focus on practical learning as captured by T1 is in line with the criticism that has been made in the current literature about the Kenyan education system that it is overly theoretical. Okanda and Mwebi (2015) note that in technical courses, for instance, there is over-emphasis on theory, which limits the acquisition of practical skills among the graduates. This disconnection between the curriculum and practice is a clear indication that there is a need to change the system to incorporate more practical experiences that will enable the students to be more independent

T2's advocacy for community-based projects is in line with Nyerere's education for self-reliance and the needs of the society. Murungi (2019) also supports the idea of

decolonization of the curriculum by incorporating indigenous knowledge and community participation for self-sufficiency. Such approaches make education relevant and contextual to the learners and the environment they are preparing to work in. The call to “teach for life, not for exams” by T3 is a part of a larger discourse against exam-based education systems. According to Akala (2021), the early years of implementing the Kenya’s CBC was fraught with challenges occasioned by examination culture. Moving to lifelong learning means changing the culture of education and focusing on the development of skills and their constant improvement rather than memorization.

T4 is in agreement with the proposal to adopt local knowledge systems, as the International Journal of Innovative Research and Knowledge (2019) has pointed out that practices such as apprenticeship and mentorship can improve students’ self-sufficiency. This integration not only helps in the preservation of culture but also ensures that the learners acquire skills that are relevant to their society. Academia

The call for philosophical preparation in teacher education as highlighted by T5 is supported by literature that portrays teachers as change agents. Okanda (2024) also emphasizes the need to ensure that the teacher education is in harmony with the philosophies of self and community. Such philosophical frameworks equip teachers with the knowledge that enables them to help learners achieve personal and social development.

Thus, the teachers’ ideas are in tune with the current academic discussions, which stress the need for practical, contextually embedded, and philosophically informed practices

in education. These strategies are crucial in achieving the objectives of Kenya's CBC and in the realization of Nyerere's education for self-reliance.

#### **4.3.22 Educational models that could be adopted to improve the effectiveness of CBC**

*T1: "I believe that the idea of creativity and no examination system of Finland would be suitable."*

*T2: "The vocational training model of South Korea should be emulated."*

*T3: "The project-based learning in Scandinavian countries can really improve CBC."*

*T4: "The German model of education that combines school and vocational training is perfect."*

*T5: "Ubuntu from South Africa community-based education is important."*

#### **4.3.23 Hermeneutics of the findings**

The five teachers' responses provide a vivid picture of their real-life experiences and their rational and reasonable dreams that are rooted in a more profound philosophical desire for a better and contextually appropriate curriculum. From a phenomenological hermeneutical perspective, these insights are not simply preferences but rather meaningful experiences that show how these educators understand education, independence, and curriculum change. Their comparisons are not mere rhetoric with other education systems but are grounded in the existential experiences they encounter daily in Kenyan classrooms experiences that are characterized by resource constraints, examination cultures, and minimal community involvement.

T1 shows that the author appreciates the Finnish model of no examinations as a way of freeing learning from the constraints of examinations. From a constructivist perspective, this means adopting formative, learner-centered assessment an approach that focuses on the process of constructing meaning rather than on the end product.

T1's experience of assessment-oriented instruction means that he or she longs for a model that embraces creativity as a fundamental skill. Here, phenomenologically, the teacher articulates a critique of alienation where assessment obliterates meaningful learning experiences and issues a call for the learner's educational path to be transformed into one of discovery and imagination, in line with Nyerere's vision of emancipatory education.

T2 argues that South Korea's vocational training system is one that should be followed. This reflection is based on the teacher's knowledge of the gap between education and employment in the Kenyan labor market. From a hermeneutical perspective, this suggests that the interpretation of CBC is unpragmatic, especially in the sense of preparing learners for economic self-actualization. Constructivism supports this view, arguing that knowledge is situated, practical, and constructed. This call for vocational emphasis can be seen as a practical critique of Nyerere's call for education that prepares learners to serve society through productive labor and a philosophical plea from the teacher.

T3 focuses on project-based learning from the Scandinavian countries, which is in line with the constructivist approach to learning as construction of knowledge. This shows the teacher's appreciation of learner autonomy, inquiry and reflection which are principles of constructivism and Nyerere's approach to teaching. As used here, project-based learning is not just a teaching method; it is a new vision of the learner as a knowledge producer. The teacher, based on the classroom practice, feels the constraints of memorization and transmission of knowledge and, therefore, imagines education as an active and inclusive process that liberates learners.

T4's endorsement of the German model of dual system offers a plausible explanation of how theory and practice can be integrated to foster independence. This is in line with hermeneutic phenomenology where meaning is co-created through interaction with the environment. The teacher's experience results in a vision where learners are not confined to books but are placed in practice where they gain competencies that can be useful to the community and the economy. This is in line with Nyerere's philosophy of work and learning as a way of making people self-reliant, education as a means of changing society and not as a way of creating a class of elite.

T5 appeals to the African philosophy of Ubuntu to bring the CBC discourse back to its roots in indigenous knowledge systems. This is a hermeneutical move of the highest order – to read education not only through the lens of the West, but through the lens of the African community and togetherness. From a constructivist perspective, Ubuntu is a system of learning that is social, contextual, and relational. The teacher's experience within the Kenyan community is a call for an education that is rooted in the culture of the people, relevant to the people, and one that fosters self-reliance in the community, in line with Nyerere's Ujamaa principle.

Together, these teacher voices reveal an embodied knowledge: that, as it stands, CBC is not whole, and requires a reimagining of its structure, its approach, and its foundational principles. In the context of the phenomenological hermeneutic approach, their recommendations are not just ideas but rather stories of meaning-making in practice. From the constructivist perspective, we acknowledge their desire for an education system that empowers people, is relevant to their environment, and is based

on community principles, which are all principles of constructivism and Nyerere's education for self-reliance.

#### **4.3.24 Discussion**

The theme "Comparative Reflections and Aspirational Practices for CBC Enhancement" as used by Kenyan teachers in relation to global education models is in line with the current literature on curriculum development. These reflections raise a shared desire to ensure that the Kenyan Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) is in harmony with practices that promote creativity, practicality, and community involvement.

T1 has expressed his appreciation for the Finnish system of no examinations and this is in line with the CBC approach that focuses on students and creativity. Kereri et al. (2021) note that the CBC is expected to foster skills like teamwork and innovation, contrary to the 8-4-4 system that focused on examinations. This change is a move to free learning from the confines of tests, which will allow learners to grow through discovery and creativity.

T2 is referring to South Korea's vocational training model where the focus is on the skills that are relevant in the job market. In their study, Muchira et al. (2023) explain how the implementation of CBC in South Korea has enhanced problem-solving skills and self-efficacy among learners. This implies that incorporating vocational aspects into Kenya's CBC could improve its applicability and efficiency in preparing learners for the world of work.

T3's adoption of project-based learning from the Scandinavian countries is a constructivist approach to learning where knowledge is acquired through experience. According to Nzoka (2024), Kenya's CBC seeks to foster critical thinking and practical skills, which are in tandem with the project-based learning. This approach fosters learner independence and engagement, which are critical for effective learning.

T4 shows how Germany's dual education system is supported by the integration of theory and practice. This model has a close correlation with Nyerere's education model that aimed at preparing learners for productive labor in society. The adoption of such a system in Kenya could help close the gap between learning and employment, thus empowering the graduates.

T5 also resonates with Ubuntu in that it underscores the communal and cultural aspects of education. The success of the CBC is not only in the content of the curriculum but also in the participation of parents and communities. Wairungu and Magoma (2024) noted that teachers regard parental support as essential for the implementation of CBC. The use of indigenous philosophies such as Ubuntu can enrich the curriculum and increase its relevance to the community. SPU Journals

In conclusion, the teachers' comparative reflections support the notion of a creative, practical, and community-based CBC as suggested in the literature. These findings imply that the adoption of best practices from other countries, adapted to the Kenyan context, can improve the CBC's ability to promote self-sufficiency and human development among learners.

#### **4.3.25 Ways in which teacher training programs can be enhanced to enhance the goal of self-reliance.**

*T1: "Training should not only be about the content to be delivered."*

*T2: "We require more workshops that are more practical in nature rather than theoretical."*

*T3: "All teachers should be trained in constructivism and learner-centered approaches."*

*T4: "It is important that continuous professional development should be made compulsory."*

*T5: "Make training as contextual as possible, in terms of the community and the learners' requirements."*

#### **4.3.26 Hermeneutics of the findings**

From the responses of the five teachers, phenomenological hermeneutical analysis and constructivist theory provide rich understanding of the experience of Kenyan teachers in Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) especially in relation to teacher training for self-sustainability.

T1's assertion that 'training should include philosophy, not just content delivery' is a lived experience that views education as a process that is more than the mere transmission of knowledge – a view that is in line with Julius Nyerere's vision of education as a process of producing purposeful, self-reliant individuals with critical consciousness. From a phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, this statement reveals an existential longing of educators to get back to the question of why education is being done a question that cannot be answered without reference to philosophy. T1 is a veiled attack on a technocratic view of education that is content-based, devoid of values, mission, and social change, which are core to constructivism where meaning is constructed by the learner in consultation with the teacher within a given context.

T2's opinion that "we need more workshops on practical approaches, not just theory" indicates the discrepancy between policy and practice. Teachers are disempowered

when theory is prioritized over experience. Interpreted hermeneutically, this is a frustration with a model that is imposed from above, which does not take into account the practical knowledge of the practitioners. According to the constructivist theory of learning, learning is contextual and enactive, and for the trainers to promote independence in the learners, they also have to undergo training that is participatory, introspective, and application-based. This is in line with Nyerere's assertion that education should be based on experience and not on knowledge that is removed from the learner and the teacher.

T3 specifically calls for the retraining of all teachers in constructivist and learner-centered approaches, which is in line with the theoretical framework of this study. From a phenomenological perspective, this suggests a change in the educators' experience of teaching towards a more constructivist approach where learners are active participants in the construction of knowledge rather than passive recipients. Hermeneutically, T3 can be understood as a call for integration of the philosophy and practice of education – that is, the fact that the success of CBC does not lie in the structure of the program but in the extent to which the implementers have embraced the philosophy of the program. Nyerere's vision of education as practical, community-based, and comprehensive is in harmony with the constructivist approach to learning as active, contextual, and reflective.

T4's assertion that 'continuous professional development should be mandatory' shows the progressive consciousness of teachers in the process of curriculum transformation. This lived realization is in line with the constructivist epistemology and hermeneutic phenomenology that hold knowledge as a non-static entity. Teachers view themselves

as learners in a continuous process, and their perception of this need arises from their daily practice with the challenges posed by CBC. In Nyerere's terms, education for self-reliance is a moral imperative for national development teachers must therefore be learners for their lifetime to enable them to empower learners.

T5 states, "let training be contextual aligned to the community and learners' real needs." This is perhaps the most direct appeal to Nyerere's education for self-reliance philosophy which asserted that education must be relevant to the learner's social, economic and cultural context. When viewed through the lens of phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective, T5 insight is a manifestation of a general concern with the one-size-fits-all approach. It reasserts the notion that meaning in education is not found in the abstract but in the local. Constructivism also holds that learning is contextual social and cultural and therefore training that is not contextual will not prepare teachers to foster competencies in learners that they will need in real-life situations.

These statements taken together paint a phenomenological picture of current teacher preparation that is at odds with the CBC's vision of change. The hermeneutic interpretation of their experiences shows that they want more philosophy, practical assistance in teaching, and contextualized training that is in line with the learner. Both constructivism and Nyerere's philosophy are reflected in these voices, emphasizing that teachers' capacity is key to developing people who are able to solve life's problems in a critical and innovative manner.

#### **4.3.27 Discussion**

The thematic findings from the five teachers' views on Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) are consistent with the current literature, which underlines the importance of teacher training in promoting self-employment among learners. These findings, when considered from the lens of phenomenological hermeneutics and constructivist theory, highlight the need for philosophical underpinnings, practical experience, learner-centered approaches, ongoing professional development, and contextualized teacher education.

T1's statement that training should include philosophy and not just content delivery shows that there is a need for educators to consider the why of learning. This is in line with Ngaruiya (2023) who argues that for CBC to work, it is not just a structural reform but a reform of the educational culture where teachers are the bearers of the philosophy of the curriculum. This is in line with constructivism where the teacher is expected to act as a mediator and help the students construct knowledge from meaningful experiences.

T2's statement of 'more workshops on practical approaches, not just theory' shows the existing chasm between theory and practice in the classroom. This is in line with the findings of Njiru and Odundo (2025) who noted that lack of practical training for teachers is a challenge to the implementation of CBC. They recommend that there should be frequent, practical, and interactive sessions and training sessions to help the teachers to implement the curriculum objectives in their classroom practices. Such learning experiences are important for the teachers to acquire the competencies that can help them to promote independence among the learners.

T3's focus on training teachers in "constructivist and learner-centered approaches" is consistent with the principles of CBC, which include engagement and reasoning. This view is supported by Ngeno (2023) who notes that many teachers are not well prepared for learner-centered practices, which are critical for implementing CBC. Constructivism is a teaching approach that enables the teacher to design learning environments that require the students to be active in the learning process, which is important for independence.

T4 agrees with the statement that professional development should be continuous and mandatory because teaching is not a static profession. Koros and Achieng (2023) noted that professional development is crucial for teachers to be up to date with the CBC expectations and to enhance their teaching practices. Professional development meetings, peer cooperation, and critical discussions help the teachers to address the changes in the curriculum and to assist the students in the acquisition of competencies for independence.

T5's suggestion to "let training be contextual aligned to the community and learners' real needs" is a good example of culturally relevant pedagogy. According to Awuonda et al. (2023), teacher training programs should take into account the cultural, economic, and resource realities of the communities in which they are to be implemented. This way, teachers can provide training that is pertinent to the needs of the communities and ensure that the students are able to apply what they have learnt in practice and be more independent.

The teachers' views support the need for a broad, contextual, and philosophically informed teacher education for effective implementation of CBC in Kenya. These findings are in line with the current literature, which posits that teachers should be supported through practical, ongoing, and culturally appropriate professional learning to foster independent learners. This way, education is not only the process of imparting knowledge but also the process of preparing students for the roles they are to play in society.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

This study investigated the extent to which Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance can inform the implementation of Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), focusing on junior secondary school teachers in Trans Nzoia County. Anchored in interpretive phenomenology and guided by constructivist theory, the study employed philosophical methods such as conceptual analysis, critical reflection, and phenomenological interpretation to explore teachers' lived experiences, analyze the philosophical congruence between CBC and Nyerere's ideals, and assess the potential of CBC to foster self-reliance.

#### **5.1 Summary of the findings**

In objective one, it was established that despite the fact that CBC was designed to promote independence and problem-solving ability, it was mostly teacher-centred, examination-based, and limited by the systemic issues like the lack of resources and teacher training. Teachers have been quoted complaining that it is practically hard to develop learner independence because of overworked curriculums, lack of community participation, and lack of flexibility in assessment procedures. Teachers, however, recognized the potential of CBC in terms of supporting learner independence in project-

based learning, creativity and collaborative tasks, but the practices were not applied consistently across schools.

In objective two it was determined that CBC has some common aspirations with the philosophy of Nyerere such as acquisition of practical skills, learner-centredness and the focus on holistic education, but there are still big gaps. The emphasis of CBC on individual competencies had ignored the communal values and the service to the society and collaborative learning which were essential elements of the educational ideals of Nyerere. Furthermore, the persistence of examination culture and poor incorporation of work-oriented projects that are community-based restricted the curriculum of Education for Self-Reliance. The research found that project-based learning, environmental education, and life skills training were some of the partial reflections of the ideas of Nyerere, although there was a need to have a wider philosophical and structural alignment.

In objective three , it was disclosed that although CBC has theoretical capabilities of producing self-reliant individuals, this is undermined by internal and external factors. On the inside, such problems as unequal teacher readiness, unequal access to resources, and a long-term focus on examinations hinder the achievement of the holistic competencies. On the outside, the socio-economic obstacles, parental attitudes, government funding issues and the lack of industry connections restrict the ability of CBC to promote economic and social self-sufficiency even more. The research found that without fundamental changes to the system, that transforms and re-aligns CBC to collective self-reliance and community service, as Nyerere had envisioned, then the prospect of self-reliance being attained is minimal.

## 5.2 Conclusion

In objective one it was concluded that teachers develop independence in learners under CBC by means of project-based learning, practical tasks, choice, and community involvement. Teachers also feel that they are changing their role of being imparting knowledge to being facilitators, mentors, and coaches to help learners in problem solving and decision making. Nevertheless, the systemic obstacles, including the high number of students in a classroom, the poor infrastructure, the lack of teaching materials, and the excessive focus on classical forms of assessment were identified as the factors that limit the successful development of learner autonomy. The phenomenological hermeneutic examination confirmed that although CBC reflects the principles of learner-centeredness and practice, its practice is still limited by the reality of the situation, which is in opposition to the intentions.

Objective two it was concluded that the Competency-Based Curriculum has philosophical similarities with the vision of Nyerere in education towards self-reliance especially in terms of practical skills, autonomy of the learner and knowledge that is context specific. Conceptually, project-based learning, performance tasks, and community-based activities are similar to the ideals of Nyerere. Nevertheless, some serious philosophical differences were observed; CBC is more concerned with individual competencies to be employable than the welfare of the community and social responsibility. Another observation that teachers made is that CBC activities tend to be shallow and are not well connected to actual needs of the community. Besides, the lack of consistency in implementation and policy-practice gaps reduce the desired outcomes. The researchers come to the conclusion

that in order to pay tribute to the philosophy of Nyerere, CBC will have to implement moral education, communal values, and a sense of responsibility shared by all.

In objective there it was conclude that there were conflicting perceptions on the ability of the CBC to create self reliant individuals in the Kenyan socio-economic set up. Although theoretically and constructivist in nature, its practical challenges like shortage of resources, uneven infrastructure, inadequate teacher preparation, and socio-economic differences reduce its potential. Other external factors such as poverty, unemployment and disengagement in the community further reduce the capacity of the learners to transfer competencies to the outside world. Teachers observed that, unless these systemic problems are resolved and the CBC philosophy is made contextual, the chances of the attainment of the real self-reliance of learners will be minimal. The conclusion demands that there should be wholesome changes in teacher training, resource distribution, policy consistency, and community participation to bring the practice of CBC in line with its philosophical aspirations.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

#### **5.3 .1 Policy Recommendation**

- i. Teacher training programs on CBC implementation should be reinforced by the Ministry of Education with special emphasis on pedagogical approaches that encourage learners to be independent, problem-solvers, creative, and critical thinkers. Also, the national curriculum policies need to focus on incorporating self-

reliance goals in the lesson planning and classroom activities, leaving exam-based tendencies behind.

- ii. To embrace the vision of Nyerere, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) ought to redesign CBC curriculum models to incorporate the intended incorporation of communal values, social responsibility, and work-based learning experiences. This would involve the re-institution of community service, agricultural projects and artisan skills as primary areas of CBC learning, and clearly defined assessment criteria.
- iii. To facilitate the implementation of CBC objectives, the government ought to develop a national policy framework of resource mobilization, infrastructure development and community participation in education. This will entail providing sufficient funds to CBC materials, workshops and teacher professional development as well as institutionalizing school-community and local industry partnerships in provision of skills-based learning opportunities.

### **5.3.2 Recommendations for further study**

- i. A Philosophical analysis of teacher beliefs and values in implementing CBC.
- ii. An exploration on how parents and communities view their responsibility in fostering learners' self-reliance.

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix I: A letter of introduction**

My name is Salim Muengele Rashid, and I am a PhD candidate at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST). This interviews were created to aid in a study looking into the “analysis of Nyerere’s philosophy of education for self-reliance and its implications to competency based curriculum in Kenya”. You have been identified as a critical player in this study. Your input in this study will be most helpful and invaluable. I am therefore requesting you to participate as freely, honestly and precisely as possible.

The information given will be handled confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes.

Yours faithfully,

Salim Muengele Rashid.

**Appendix II: Interview schedules for Junior Secondary School teachers who had been promoted from primary schools**

1. How do you understand the concept of CBC?
2. After taking learners through the first stage of CBC (G1-G6) and basing on the core competencies of digital literacy, collaboration, and communication, what is your explanation of the extent to which these learners are self-reliant in the stated competencies?
3. To what extent would you judge the level of creativity among the grade seven students
4. What challenges do you face as a teacher of Junior Secondary School with respect to installation of core competencies among the learners?
5. What do you think should be done to strengthen the concept of self-reliance among the learners?