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Teacher Practices in the Implementation of the New Business Subjects' Curriculum in Uganda: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Kabale District

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Abstract

The study aimed at identifying the teacher practices that support the implementation of the new business subjects' curriculum in selected secondary schools of Kabale district, Uganda. The study was underpinned by Ralph W. Tyler's (1949) principles of curriculum theory. Based on the pragmatist perspective, a concurrent triangulation research design was adopted. Data were collected from 37 business subject teachers and 13 directors of studies across 13 secondary schools in Kabale district, making a total of 50 participants. Data were collected using semi-structured in-depth interview schedules, and survey questionnaires. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2006). Findings revealed that ICT integration, assessment and evaluation, lesson planning, use of teaching aids, and integration of teaching methods were the major teacher practices that business subject teachers use to support implementation of the new business subjects' curriculum. It emerged that business subject teachers had some knowledge on ICT; were fully equipped in designing assessment items; dominated class sessions with both teacher-centeredness and learner-centeredness; and prepared prior actual implementation process for consistency and timely completion of the syllabus. The quantitative findings revealed that: the majority (56%) of business subject teachers applied a combination of teacher practices in a single lesson. The findings provide insights into the teacher practices that support business subject's teachers in the implementation of the new curriculum and could be useful in informing the development of guidelines for the implementation of the same.

Keywords: Teacher Practices, New Business Subjects' Curriculum, Curriculum Implementation

Introduction

The school curriculum in Uganda has evolved from various reforms and reviews

over the years, especially the curriculum of business subjects. For example, the Instructional Materials Reform Programme in 2000, the 2008 curriculum review, and the recent curriculum review of 2020 for lower secondary are all aimed at developing appropriate content for the implementation process (NCDC, 2020). For this matter, therefore, Business subject teachers should be well prepared to enhance the implementation of the new Business subject's curriculum to impart the values of UgandaVision 2040 (MEOS, 2020). This is because these reviews have informed the dropping of the previously taught subjects: Shorthand, and Office Practice; and the integration of Principles of Accounts and Commerce elements into two subjects, namely, Entrepreneurship Education and Economics (NCDC, 2020). This means that Uganda has embraced an integrated approach for Business subjects entailing two subjects only -- Entrepreneurship Education and Economics (currently at Advanced level) and Entrepreneurship Education which is compulsory in senior one and two at the Lower Secondary level (MOES, 2020). UBOS (2019) articulates that curriculum reforms are aimed at reducing the heavy workload for both the teachers and the students and hence enhance the curriculum implementation of Business subjects.

The new curriculum is referred to as a competency-based curriculum that requires problem-solving, pragmatic, and contemporary teacher skills and computer skills among others (MOES, 2020). On the whole, there has been limited empirical discussion on the guidelines of the teacher practices that support the implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum. However, several scholars have studied curriculum implementation of Business subjects. In this regard, Tumushabe and Makaaru (2013) point out that Ugandan secondary school curriculum implementation is jeopardized by limited teacher training. Correspondingly, Baluku (2020) conducted a study in Kasese district and reported that teachers integrated computer resources for curriculum implementation in Ugandan secondary schools. However, the highlighted studies need specific empirical proof of the teacher practices and curriculum implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum.

This article presents key findings of a study that was conducted to identify the teacher practices in the implementation of the new business subjects' curriculum in selected secondary schools in Kabale district, Uganda. The article begins with a review of the literature and identifies the gaps; then the methodology followed by the researchers. It also covers the key findings and conclusion as well as recommendations.

Literature Review

Globally, curriculum evaluation is an imperative teacher practice to strengthen the quality of the curriculum implementation phase and learning upshot at higher levels of education (Rohmad, 2017). In this regard, Phelan (2018) an American scholar indicated that student self-assessments are significant components of curriculum implementation since they provide prospects to reflect on goal achievement in the ongoing curriculum.

However, the text evidence portrays a contextual knowledge gap regarding Higher Education. For this reason, the present study focused on identifying teacher practices for curriculum implementation of Business subjects in a secondary school context

Moreover, in the United Kingdom, emotional and relational support to students when embraced by teachers enhances curriculum implementation. This is because it enhances confidence, self-esteem, and students' participation in class discussions (Bowles, Radford, & Bakopoulou, 2018). However, Slater's (2019) findings indicate that the retrieval practice of reviewing the previous lesson materials by asking quizzes at the start of a new lesson contributes to curriculum implementation. This shows that reviewing previous lessons whenever the Business subjects' teachers are to start a new lesson is paramount in curriculum implementation, as the practice enhances the students' memory.

Ainsworth (2012) advocates for a continued programme and curriculum development strategy for curriculum implementation in Europe. However, Park and Tan (2016) report that Asian countries that have adopted ICT competence teacher training successfully attained curriculum implementation. The emphasized text displays a clear connection between evaluation strategy and curriculum implementation. However, the text lacked pragmatic evidence of studies done in Uganda addressing teacher practices that support the implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum.

Furthermore, interviews conducted in Indonesia recommended revisiting the curriculum of Entrepreneurship Education for non-Business Studies in advanced institutions of learning to facilitate its implementation process (Mulyati & Susilana, 2019). Therefore, curriculum reforms are vital for curriculum implementation for they cater to the contemporary curriculum content and skills needed. While the Indonesia study was conducted in higher education institution context and on non-Business subject students, the present study was conducted in secondary school Business subjects and employed interviews and questionnaires as data collection methods.

Atepor (2019) reports that the adoption of online learning in teaching Business Studies leads to curriculum implementation of the Business Studies curriculum. Moreover, quantitative studies by Ayemhenre and Okolo (2019), Dikeocha, Nwagu, Ugochukwu, and Okoronkwo (2019), Duktur (2019), Wolugbom and Ben-George (2019), Ademiluyi, Bello and Akande (2019), Maureen and Oliver (2019), and Chris and Atah (2019) report that adoption of ICT and utilization of the WWW in teaching Business studies is rational for curriculum implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is evidenced by over 65% of questionnaire respondents who agreed that ICT aided the curriculum implementation process of Business Studies.

This reveals that achieving the end goals of the ongoing curriculum is reached when ICT is adopted in the implementation process. However, different from these quantitative studies, the current study espoused a mixed-method research design to establish the practices for curriculum implementation of Business studies in a Ugandan

setting.

In Nigeria, Ezeabii and Ndelekwute (2017) report that evaluation of instruction relates to curriculum implementation. However, Akpan and Odum (2019) indicated a strong positive association between curriculum reform and the preparation of Business edification students for worldwide competitiveness. This is evidenced by the coefficient index of +0.79 that was yielded using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. This means that increasing efficiency in teaching staff in the area of implementing Business Studies programme and instruction evaluation relates to the instruction of Business Studies.

However, in East Africa, sufficient scholarly work has not been done to address the above same. In Uganda, little focus has been put on teacher practices for curriculum implementation of Business subjects. Ndawula et al. (2013) reported that Business teachers with ICT skills guided the curriculum implementation of online-related Business subject content. Moreover, the majority of the teachers use both oral questions and written tests to assess the implementation process reliable strategy for implementation of Entrepreneurship Skills Education in Ugandan secondary schools (Luyiima, 2011). Therefore, these findings mean that evaluation and monitoring of curriculum is being implemented to measure its effectiveness. The current study was conducted on only Business subjects in the Ugandan secondary school context in Kabale district.

Kerubo (2015) reports that allowing the scholars to intermingle freely with the local setting makes learning experiences more pertinent, hence curriculum implementation by Kenyan Business subject's teachers. This reveals the importance of learner independent learning in Business studies' curriculum implementation. However, the highlighted text lacks empirical evidence of studies done in Uganda relating to teachers' practices and curriculum implementation of Business subjects. Therefore, the current study sought to identify teachers' practices for the implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum in a Ugandan setting.

Methodology

Approach and Research Design

A pragmatic worldview underpinned the study. Pragmatism believes that research is reinforced by the worth of knowledge being pursued as opposed to the realists-positivists/ relativists-interpretivists with a distinctive viewpoint about the world as being real (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This philosophical perspective was adopted because it guides a study that aims at determining applied resolutions to glitches and real connotations of the outcomes, applying what works superlative and exploiting it to comprehend the research problem (Shannon-baker, 2016). This perspective allows the use of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches to explore diverse approaches of inquiry to attain the intended objectives (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This study adopted a mixed-

methods research approach that embraced a concurrent triangulation research design which allowed instant collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and the use of the results to comprehend a research problem (Creswell et al., 2018).

Sampling Strategy

The study was conducted in Kabale district, south-western Uganda. The district is divided into three divisions; Kabale Municipality, Ndorwa West and Ndorwa East. Fifty participants were selected from the 13 selected secondary schools in Kabale district. This was done through both probability sampling and non-probability sampling procedures. The secondary schools were selected using proportionate stratified sampling based on the total number of private and public secondary schools in the district. The directors of studies and business subject teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique.

Data Collection Methods

Using semi-structured in-depth interviews and the questionnaires as data collection methods, a semi-structured interview guide and a closed-ended questionnaire and were applied to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Research Instruments were piloted in a neighbouring district of Rubanda to detect the uncertainties in some of the items and ambiguous questions for improvement as denoted by Kumar (2005) and Murray (2009). Face construct and content validity were preferred as they were relevant to the nature and purpose of the interview schedule and questionnaire that were used. The researcher used data gathered from the pilot study to establish the reliability of the instruments' items for quantitative data. The research field responses were computed using the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) which yielded a consistency coefficient of 0.72. The figure was considered desirable for the consistency levels for a reliable instrument since it was over 0.7 as recommended by Amin (2005) and Creswell et al. (2018).

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The researchers did coding and identified categories and patterns emerging from the data collected. The categories were then categorized into themes to support writing of key findings. The researchers presented findings on each theme and used quotations from participants to illustrate the findings. The analysis approach was adopted to ascertain the accuracy, credibility, consistency, usefulness of the information as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). Quantitative data collected using questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics of percentages and frequencies utilizing the Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS

V.21.1).

Ethical Considerations

The following ethical procedures and measures were considered and observed by the current study: ethical clearance from Moi University, Gulu University Research Ethics Committee (GUREC), the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), and Kabale District Education Officer (DEO); Informed Consent and Voluntary participation of respondents; and assuring the same respondents of unreserved confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. Since the study was conducted during the Coronavirus period, the researcher ensured that the study participants were safe from the spread and contact of the Coronavirus during the data gathering. In this regard, the researcher bought and used hand sanitizer and a temperature monitor; emphasized social distance of at least 2 meters between participants; and ensured the wearing of recommended face masks by all the research participants during the data collection phase.

Key Findings

Data collected using questionnaires were complemented by the qualitative data generated from interviews as well as content analysis. Grounded on the study design, both qualitative and quantitative data are presented side by side to assist understanding of the study. The two sets of data are then interpreted and discussed together for complementary as well as corroboration purposes.

Quantitative data were analyzed by descriptive statistics while qualitative data was by thematic analysis. Data generated from questionnaires are presented in form of percentages, graphs and charts while the data generated from the interviews are presented on the basis of categories and themes.

Response Rate

Thirty-seven questionnaires were administered to the Business subject teachers. All the thirty-seven questionnaires were returned by the Business subject teachers. This represents a response rate of 100%. This response rate is per the recommendation that an excellent, acceptable and appropriate response rate for making study conclusions should be 70% and above (Kothari, 2004).

Demographic Information of Respondents

The demographic statistics of the surveyed study respondents comprised of gender, teaching experiences, qualification, the class taught, school category, school type, school setting, respondents' age as well as the subject taught. This information was not part of

the research objectives or even the research questions of the current research problem. Nevertheless, this information was included to permit a deeper understanding of the current research problem.

Table 1: Demographic information of the respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	26	70.3
	Female	11	29.7
Teaching experience	0-9 years	25	67.6
	10-19 years	9	24.3
	20-29 years	3	8.1
Qualification	Certificate	1	2.7
	Diploma	5	13.5
	Degree	31	83.8
School category	Public	23	62.5
	Private	14	37.8
School type	Girl	1	2.7
	Boy	2	5.4
	Co-education	34	91.9
School setting	Rural	15	40.5
	Urban	22	59.5
Respondents' age	20-29	15	40.5
	30-39	15	40.5
	40-49	5	13.5
	50+	2	5.4
Subject taught	Economics	7	18.9
	Entrepreneurship	16	43.2
	Both	14	37.8

Source: Survey data (2021)

Table 1 revealed that the majority 70.3% of the Business subjects' teachers teaching the secondary schools were males while females were 29.7%. Concerning their teaching experience, 24.3% of the Business subjects' teachers had 10-19 years' experience while 8.1% of the Business subjects' teachers had teaching experience of 20-29 years in secondary school teaching. The highest 67.6% of the Business subjects' teachers had had 0-9 years of teaching experience. This is according Ogwench (2018) who asserts that Business teachers in secondary schools lack vast experience in handling the curriculum

content for the implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum, and an understanding that learners have diverse capabilities. On qualifications, just 2.7% of the respondents were certificate holders, 13.5% had attained a diploma in teaching, and 83.8% were degree holders. For the school category, 62.5% of the surveyed respondents were from public schools while 37.8% were from the private secondary schools in Kabale district. For school type, 2.7% of the selected Business subjects' teachers taught in a girl's school, 5.4% were from a boy's school, while the highest 91.9% taught in co-education schools. For the school setting, 40.5% of the respondents taught in rural schools, while 59.5% were from urban secondary schools. For respondents' age, 40.5% of respondents were aged between 20-29 and 30-39, 23.5% were aged between 40 and 49, while 5.4% were aged 50 and above.

Descriptive Statistics Measuring Respondents' Attitudes on Teacher Practices in the Implementation of New Business Subject Curriculum

Quantitative data were obtained from measuring the Business subject teachers' attitudes on the practices they used for the implementation of the new Business subject's curriculum. The participants' responses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for teacher practices that business subjects' teachers used to support them in the implementation of the new business subjects' curriculum

Code	Item	Response	%
TP1	ICT integration	Always/often	32.4
		Seldom/Sometimes	56.7
		Never	10.8
TP2	I use teaching aids	Always/often	86
		Seldom/Sometimes	14
		Never	0
TP3	lesson planning	Always/often	75.7
		Seldom/Sometimes	24.3
		Never	0
TP4	Integration of teaching methods	Always/often	86.5
		Seldom/Sometimes	13.5
		Never	0
TP5	Evaluation and assessment	Always/often	97.3
		Seldom/Sometimes	2.7
		Undecided	0

Source: Survey data (2021)

Table 2 indicates the descriptive statistics for the items measuring Business subject teachers' attitudes towards predetermined teacher practices as from the reviewed literature that they use for implementing the new Business subjects' curriculum. The high assortment of 'always' responses for the study items was between 75% and 98%. The majority 86%, 75.1%, 86.6%, and 97.3% of the Business subjects indicated that they always used TP2 (I use teaching aids, TP3 (lesson planning) TP4 (integration of teaching methods), and TP5 (Evaluation and assessment) respectively. However, a proportion (56.7%) of Business subjects' teachers revealed that they seldom used the Item 'ICT integration' (TP1). Therefore, interpreting the results indicated that ICT integration was the least used teacher practice by Business subjects' teachers to implement the new Business subjects' curriculum. This could be attributed to the adequacy of the ICT facilities as well as little know-how by teachers to use the facilities. This corresponds to the study findings of Park and Tan (2016) that found out that ICT usage among teachers while implementing the curriculum in educational institutions of Asian countries was low.

Participant Perspectives Regarding The Teacher Practices That Support the Implementation of the New Business Subjects' Curriculum

The researcher sought views and perspectives of directors of studies and selected teachers of business subjects regarding the teacher practices that support the implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum. The participants' responses are presented below:

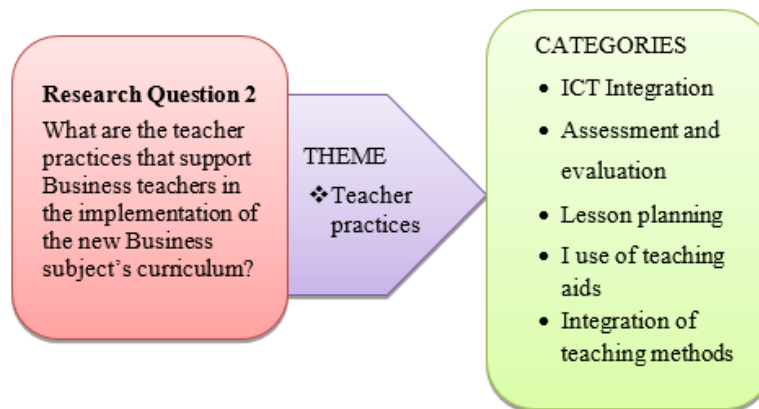


Figure 1: Summary of the key qualitative for qualitative findings for research question two

Source: Survey data (2021)

ICT Integration

The majority of the Directors of Studies revealed that their schools had procured

some ICT facilities to be used while implementing the new Business subjects' curriculum.

Below are some of their responses:

[.....] remember this curriculum is a computer-based curriculum that is intended to impart ICT skills to the learners. It encourages the integration of computers in every lesson ICT, that is use projectors, smart boards computers to make the learning process enjoyable by both the learner and the teacher. Eventually, this increases the morale of students in liking what they are learning with I think with no doubt leads to effective teaching. However, one of my Business subject's teachers sometimes do not use these facilities when the laboratory technician is absent because the teacher cannot fully work with the machines independently due to limited ICT skills (Interview, key informant, line 101, pp.132-133{24/04/2021}).

Therefore, interpreting the results indicated that some Business subjects' teachers integrate ICT while implementing the new Business subjects' curriculum. This could be attributed to the adequacy of the ICT facilities as well as little know-how by teachers to use the facilities.

The current research findings are supported by Atepor (2019) who reports that the adoption of online learning in teaching Business Studies favours curriculum implementation of the Business Studies curriculum. Moreover, studies by Ayemhenre and Okolo (2019), Dikeocha, Nwagu, Ugochukwu and Okoronkwo (2019), Duktur (2019), Wolugbom and Ben-George (2019), Ademiluyi, Bello and Akande (2019), Maureen and Oliver (2019) and Chris and Atah (2019) report that the adoption of ICT and utilization of the WWW in teaching Business studies is rational for effective curriculum implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Assessment and Evaluation

From the current study, the majority of the participants specified that Business subjects' teachers evaluated and assessed their learners to determine new Business subjects' curriculum competencies. The majority of the Directors of Studies revealed that most of their Business subjects' teachers assessed and evaluated their students while in the Business subjects' curriculum implementation process.

Below are some of the quotations from their conversation with the researcher;

[...] we always cherish weekly tests to the students in the Business subject department in addition to the end of the month and term examinations. This all is intended to find the extent to which students have achieved the new curricular objectives." (Interview, key informant, line 112, p.87 {21/4/2021}).

The above narration implies that the majority of the Business subjects' teachers were competent in assessing learners especially on designing assessment items. Further interpretations from the current findings indicate that Business subjects' teachers were fully

equipped in designing an assessment test.

The current findings agree with a study conducted in Indonesia on curriculum implementation in higher education. The study found out that curriculum evaluation is a very important strategy to increase the quality of the curriculum implementation process and learning outcome (Rohmad, 2017). Moreover, Phelan's study (2018) conducted in America confirms that student self-assessments are imperative components of effective curriculum implementation for they offer prospects to reflect on goal advancement in the ongoing curriculum.

Besides, Ezeabii and Ndelekwute (2017) in their study on competencies possessed by upper basic education level teachers for teaching Business Studies for effective service delivery in Nigeria made findings that correspond to the current study's findings. The study found out that evaluation of instruction related to effective curriculum implementation revealed the gaps in the implementation process at an early stage. Furthermore, it is revealed that the majority of the teachers used both oral questions and written tests to assess the implementation process of a reliable strategy for implementation of Entrepreneurship Skills Education in secondary schools of Uganda (Luyiima, 2011). In this regard also, Phelan's (2018) study in American found out that students' self-assessments are imperative components of an operative curriculum implementation system, as they provide opportunities to reflect on goal achievement in the on-going curriculum.

Lesson Planning

The Directors of Studies interviewed indicated that lesson planning was an adopted teacher practice of the Business subjects' teachers.

This is indicated in the following participants' quotations:

As I have already told you, we encourage lesson preparation here. This means that a lesson plan is embraced by our school. We provide templates for the same for the teachers to prepare lesson plans. These act like a compass of a Pilot to a teacher. This breeds consistency in delivering the subject content in with the respective subject curriculum and syllabus sequence (Interview, key informant, line 38, p.17 {15/03/2021}).

[...] Lesson preparation is not a mere practice but an imperative indicator of a teacher's preparedness to deliver in actual class sessions and students master the content being taught. So, we recommend the practice in our school because when teachers prepare, they keep on the syllabus track until completion (Interview, key informant, line 90, p.50 {26/03/2021}).

These narrations imply that lesson planning is an imperative teacher practice for enhancing punctuality as well as time management for Business subjects' teachers. This is because the preparation could help a teacher to manage time for a given content, thus promoting timely syllabus completion as well as permitting consistency in lesson delivery

while implementing the new Business subjects' curriculum.

The current study's findings relate to those of Briggs (2019) which indicated that the utilization of the concept planning instruction supported Business Studies teachers in their teaching process which led to attaining the curricular goals.

Use of Teaching Aids

The responses from the interview indicated that most of the selected Business subjects' teachers highly embraced the use of teaching aids for implementing new Business subjects' curricular goals. This assertion is evidenced by the following quotation:

[...] Business subject's teachers embrace the use of teaching aids while in-class sessions to enhance memory retention of content among students. One time I saw a Business subject's teacher of Entrepreneurship Education displaying and using empty boxes in class when teaching package concepts as a packaging material (Interview, key informant, line 41, p.30 {25/04/2021}).

This interview quotation implies that Business subjects' teachers used teaching aids to capably implement the new Business subjects' curriculum. This could be because it can enhance content retention among students while implementing new Business subjects' curricular goals. The current study findings are not different from the study conducted in Nigeria by Okoye, Nwobodo, Donatus, and Osuji (2019) on the influence of the use of instruction aids on secondary school students' accomplishment and retention in Business studies. Their study findings portrayed that the use of teaching aids significantly facilitated the implementation of the curriculum as it promoted students' ability to retain learnt content

Integration of Teaching Methods

The foregoing interview findings indicated that most of the schoolteachers highly embraced mixing of teaching methods though they were leaning towards learner-centeredness while implementing new Business subjects' curricular goals.

The following quotation confirms the above:

Integrating learning approaches is emphasized here, this is because we encourage our teachers to integrate learning activities in a single lesson to ensure that student acquires something to help him or her in daily life. This can only be achieved when teachers use different methods to impact different life skills (Interview, key informant, line 35, p.70 {25/03/2021}).

From the findings of the present study, the business studies integrated teaching methods in-class sessions while implementing the new Business subjects' curriculum. Interpreting the findings to imply that the use of both teacher-centred and learner-centred

teaching approaches by Business subjects' teachers while implementing the new Business subjects' curriculum facilitate relaxed achievement of the new Business subjects' curriculum goals. The study findings are similar to Bowles, Radford and Bakopoulou's study (2018) that found similar results in their study on the framework as a significant role for instruction assistants which indicated teachers' integrated teaching methods to enhance confidence, self-esteem, and students' participation in class discussions.

Summary of the Findings

The study found numerous teacher practices that supported the Business subjects' teachers in the implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum. The study participants revealed that ICT integration, assessment and evaluation, lesson planning, use of teaching aids, integration of teaching methods were the major teacher practices that Business subjects' teachers used to support their implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum. The foregoing indicated that Business subjects' teachers had some knowledge on ICT; were fully equipped in designing assessment items; dominated class sessions with both teacher-centeredness and learner-centeredness, and, prepared prior actual implementation process for consistency and timely completion of the syllabus. These findings were not different from the quantitative findings as it was found that the majority of Business subjects' teachers applied a combination of teacher practices in a single lesson. This was depicted by a percentage of over 56 % posted by all the items that were used to measure attitudes towards the teacher practices for implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the above study findings, it can be concluded that a variety of teacher practices were used to support the implementation of the new Business subjects' curriculum. However, a number of Business subjects' teachers have limited knowledge of ICT and therefore seldom integrate it in their curriculum implementation process. The Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) should train and prepare Business subjects' teachers on ICT skills to enable them fully to use the provided ICT facilities and equipment to enhance the implement the new Business subjects' curriculum that is computer-based.

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