

Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) Implementation: Expected Challenges on Sports Talent Pillar for University Education in Kenya

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Abstract

Extensive studies have been done on nexus between university education and students' sports talent development. These studies have revealed that university education is a crucial factor influencing development of students' talents in elite sports. Lack of focused institutional policy to integrate academics and students' sports talent development through university education can be a challenge. The objective of this study was to determine the challenges in integrating academics and students' sports talent development in the university education in Kenya. The country is phasing out the 8-4-4 education system to embrace 2-6-3-3-3 Competency Based Curriculum. The embraced curriculum has included talent pillar on sports as an academic pathway in the senior secondary and university education levels. The study adopted systems theory and focused on input, process and output approach. Survey and interview schedules were the main techniques that were used to collect data. The response rate was 93.6% of the targeted sample. Qualitative data was analyzed to identify the challenges so as to come up with interventions to support the implementation of the sports talent pillar in the embraced Competency Based Curriculum for university education. Based on results, the study revealed that, the current elite sports management in the universities has a weak link in integrating academics and students sports talent development. Flexible academic structures, funding of sports, training and competition opportunities should be improved in order to support effective implementation of sports talent pillar as embraced by the Competency Based Curriculum in the university education in Kenya.

Keywords: *University Education; Students' Sports Talent Development; Elite Sports; Talent Pillar; Competency Based Curriculum (CBC).*

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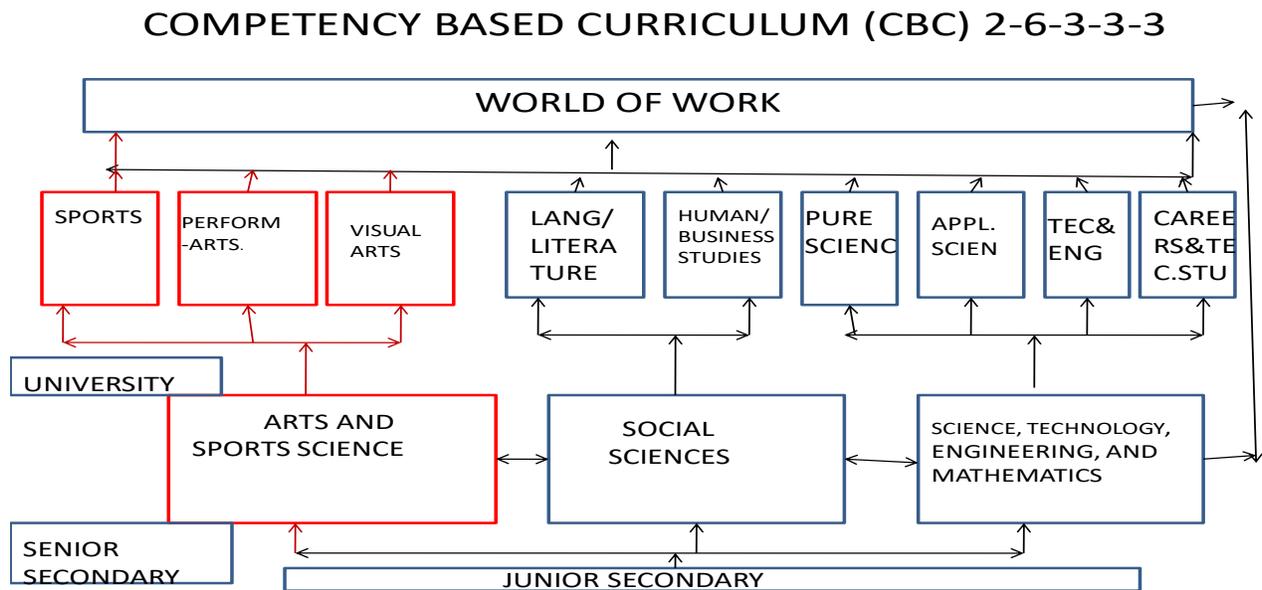
1.0 Introduction

The nexus between university education and students’ sports talent development has generated research interest from many scholars (Aquilina, 2013; Aquilina & Henry 2010; Capranica & Guidotti, 2016; Georgakis et al.,2014; Kaves, 2017; Rubin & Rosser, 2014; Smoliannov et al., 2015). Integrating university education and students’ talent development require prudent management structures and strategies that are able to balance both career pathways

(Kaimenyi & Rintaugu, 2011; Kaves, 2017).Kenya has undertaken reforms to replace the 8-4-4 curriculum with a more dynamic system of education. The embraced new curriculum has three pathways; talent pillar 15%; social studies pillar 25%; science, technology, engineering and mathematics 60% (STEM); (Ministry Of Education Science and Technology [MOEST], 2017) figure 1;

Figure 1

Competency based curriculum



Talent Pillar in the University Education Curriculum CBC (Adapted from MOEST, 2017).

The philosophy behind implementation of 8-4-4 system and phasing out the independence 7-4-2-3 curriculum was “Education for Self-reliance” (MOEST, 2017). Unlike the anticipated philosophy, the 8-4-4 curriculum was described as too academic and

examination oriented (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development [KICD], 2016). According to the ministry of education, the 8-4-4 curriculum failed to provide policies, appropriate pedagogical approaches and sufficient resources to lay a good foundation

for the development of these dual pathway skills (MOEST, 2017). While the implementation of competency based curriculum has started in the basic education levels, the Higher Education Curriculum Framework (HECF) is yet to implement the curriculum in the university education system in Kenya. The challenges during the implementation are also yet to be identified and addressed. This study was designed to determine the challenges of integrating academics and students' talent development in elite sports in the universities in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

To nurture and develop students' talents in elite sports, university education has been used by countries that have been associated with increased monopolization in international sports competitions, including the Olympic Games (Aquilina, 2013; Aquilina & Henry 2010; Capranica & Guidotti, 2016). These countries employed prudent management strategies and structures to integrate both academics and elite sports for the talented students' career pathways (Kaimenyi & Rintaugu, 2011; Kaves, 2017). Universities in Kenya have not integrated academics with students' talent development in elite sports. The new curriculum has embraced talent pillar, including sports, among the three learning pathways (MOEST, 2017).

The 8-4-4 curriculum made very little provision towards recognition of learners' potential, gifts and talents due to focus on academics and examinations (MOEST, 2017). The challenges during the implementation of the talent pillar in sports

are yet to be identified and addressed. This study was designed to determine the challenges in integrating studies in university education and students' sports talent development to inform the implementation of competency based curriculum in the university education in Kenya.

"In order to integrate academics in university education and students' talent in elite sports, talented students must be nurtured in a developmental process and supporting environment"

Research Objective

The study objective aimed to determine the challenges in integrating academics and students' sports talent development in elite sports in the university education in Kenya.

Research Question

The study sought to answer the following research question:

What are the challenges in integrating academics and students' sports talent development in elite sports in the university education in Kenya?

Literature Review

Top American and European sport performing nations and their universities have collaborated to nurture talents in elite sports through university education (Aquilina, 2013; Capranica & Guidotti, 2016; Coput-Jogunica et al., 2012; Rubin &

Rosser 2014). Aquilina (2013), Aquilina and Henry(2010) and Capranica and Guidotti (2016) have advised that, in order to integrate academics in university education and students' talent in elite sports, talented students must be nurtured in a developmental process and supporting environment. Aquilina and Henry (2010) analyzed ways in which European member states address the educational requirements for talented students in elite sports. The study recommended that, to accommodate special delivery processes in education for the talented students, universities should operate a flexible academic schedule to facilitate examinations, sports training and competitions.

Aquilina (2013),and Capranica and Guidotti (2016) identify academic challenges, financial challenges, training challenges, management challenges and challenges in competition opportunities as obstacles that face students' talent development in elite sports in the universities. Kenya is phasing out the 8-4-4 education curriculum to embrace 2-6-3-3-3 curriculum. The Higher Education Curriculum Framework (HECF) is yet to provide clear policy guidelines to link academics with talent development in the university education curriculum in Kenya (MOEST, 2017).

The challenges to be encountered during the implementation of talent pillar in the embraced curriculum need to be informed through an empirical data derived from a study. While Aquilina, 2013; Capranica and Guidotti, 2016; Coput-Jogunica et al., (2012) Rubin and Rosser (2014) have addressed

talent development in the context of universities outside Kenya, the researcher borrowed from these studies to determine challenges and their interventions before the talent pillar embraced by the 2-6-3-3-3 competency based curriculum is implemented in the university education curriculum in Kenya.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that was adopted by the study was Systems Theory. In Systems Theory, behavior is determined by the relationships between the components translating into "whole is greater than individual components" (Yurtseven& Buchanan 2016). Carayannis et al. (2016) added that a system can be understood as composed of elements which are tied together by a self-rationale. Yurtseven and Buchanan (2016), however, caution that the system's behavior is determined by the relationship between systems' components and not just by the nature of individual elements. Mele and Polese (2010), in agreement with Yurtseven and Buchanan (2016), pointed out that the relationship between parts and the outcome as a result of their interaction become more important resulting to rationally connected elements.

In systems theory, elements are rationally interconnected towards a shared goal and the focus is on connections between parts in order to understand how the processes, functions and key outcomes are associated with the processed inputs to provide outputs. The talented students are the inputs processed by the sports management support systems to produce the output, which in this case is

developed students' talent in elite sports. Deans of students, Sports Directors, Games Tutors, Coaches and KUSA officials are the components to interact with the talented students during the process, and hence determine the outcome of the system.

2.0 Materials and Methods

The 24 universities that participated in the 2015 inter-university games constituted the target population in the study. Through stratified and purposive sampling, the top nine 9 performing universities (37.5%) constituted the sample. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study design adopted in the study was a convergent parallel mixed methods study design that employed descriptive model in a mixed research methods, and in a single study. The study used questionnaires and interview schedule techniques in collecting the data. The sampled universities were those best placed to provide the critical sample that best addressed the central phenomenon because they were top performers in 2015 version of the national inter-university games championships.

The respondents were five (5) Dean of students, six (6) Directors of Games and Sports, nine (9) Games Tutors, 15 Coaches, 381 Talented Students and 16 Kenya Universities Sports Association officials as they provided the critical sample from the

student affairs section, under which sports in the universities are managed. The central phenomenon in the study was to determine the challenges in integrating academics in the university education and students' sports talent development in elite sports in the universities in Kenya. Descriptive characteristics are associated with qualitative data that could not be measured numerically and were either the attributes or characteristics present or absent in an individual, institution or category.

Data regarding academic challenges, financial challenges, sports' training challenges, sports competition challenges and sports management challenges were collected and analyzed qualitatively. This determined the descriptive characteristics that could not be measured numerically, and were either the attributes or characteristics were present or absent in an individual, institution or category. Since the study used mixed methods, the quantitative data on the relationship between academic, financial support, training support and competition support opportunities against students sports talents were corroborated to validate the findings from the qualitative data.

3.0 Results and Discussions

The study investigated the challenges and sought intervention strategies. Table 1 presents academic challenges from talented students.

Table 1

Academic Challenge faced by Talented Students

Students' Response	Number (N)	Percentage %
Lack of balancing between academic and elite sports	124	32.5%
Tight academic schedules with little time for sports training and competitions,	126	33.1%
Unfavorable timetable with inconsiderable lectures.	74	19.4%
Limited or lack of sports scholarships (as students are out of class due fees demands),	16	4.2%
Lack of motivation and engagement in sports due to academic pressures,	8	2.1%
Lack of flexible admission criteria,	2	0.5%
Rigid academic requirements in the universities	2	0.5%
Total	352	92.3%

From Table 1, talented students who are the primary consumers of university services indicated the academic challenges as lack of balance between academics and elite sports 87.2% (348); rigid admission criteria 1.0%(4).To correct the imbalance between academics and elite sports in the universities in Kenya, the study sought from talented students the strategies they consider effective to address the academic related challenges faced by talented students.

41.5% (158) of the respondents indicated flexible timetable that can accommodate elite sports and academics obligations for talented students in universities, 21.0% (80) indicated need to balance sports and academics,8.1%(31) indicated the need to develop academic sports curriculum in the universities, 7.1%(27) indicated a clear provision of elite sports programs in the universities,3.7% (14) addressed sports and academic support systems in the universities, 2.9% (11) indicated creating awareness about sports in the universities, 2.1% (8) indicated focus for missed classes and examinations

during competitions, 2.1% (8) indicated the need to identify and develop talents in elite sports from the grass roots, 0.5% (2) indicated to address lack of technical competence in elite sports,0.3% (1) recommended the lowering university admission criteria for talented students and0.3% (1) indicated the need to create awareness about elite sports in the universities.

To corroborate and address the academic challenges (table 2), the study sought from talented students, coaches, directors and KUSA officials who are key sports implementers in the universities, whether universities should adopt flexible academic schedules for talented students to accommodate sports assignments.85.04% (324) of the talented students, 54.4% (8) of the coaches, 100% (6) of the directors and 87.5% (14) agreed that, universities should adopt a flexible academic program to facilitate sports participation. The responses from talented students, coaches, directors and KUSA officials are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Universities to adopt flexible academic schedules for talented students to balance between academics and elite sports in order to accommodate sport assignments

Respondents	Number (N)	Percentage %
Talented Students	324	85.04%
Coaches	8	54.4%
Directors/Heads of Games & Sports Depts.	6	100.0%
Kenya Universities Sports Association (KUSA)	14	87.5%

The finding from the quantitative data confirmed that while there is a relationship between academics and students’ sports talent development, the relationship is moderate and negative, implying over emphasis on academics and not elite sports. This confirmed lack of balancing between academics and elite sports in the university education in Kenya.

Financial challenges and students’ talent development in elite sports in the Universities in Kenya

The study sought the types of financial challenges that face talented students in elite sports in the universities in Kenya and responses are as presented in table 3 below;

Table 3

Financial Challenges faced by Talented Students

Students’ Responses	Number(N)	Percentage (%)
Lack of sports scholarship opportunities for talented students	158	41.5%
Poor allocation of funds for sports development in the universities	145	38.1%
Purchasing sports equipment	27	7.1%
Universities do not invest in sports as in academics	7	1.8%
Mismanagement of sports funds	5	1.3%
Parents invest more in academics and not sports	4	1.0%
Medical bills arising from sports injuries	2	0.5%
Total	348	90.8%

The study further sought to establish strategies to address the financial challenges. 34.9% (133) students indicated provision of sports scholarships for talented students, 28.6% (109) indicated provision of funds to support sports in the universities; 8.4% (32)

indicated relevant use of sports funds, 8.1% (31) indicated that the Ministry of Sports to finance elite sports in the universities, 4.2% (16) indicated the link with external agents to support sports in the universities, 3.1% (12) indicated that universities should invest more

in sports, 1.8% (7) indicated need to eradicate corrupt and poor sports management in the universities. Findings from the quantitative data on the relationship between financial support and students' talent development indicated that a moderate direct relationship

exists, confirming that the allocation of funds for elite sports in the universities is inadequate.

Training and Competition Challenges and elite sports in the universities in Kenya

Table 4 presents the challenges;

Table 4

Challenges experienced by talented students in Training and Competitions

Students' responses	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Lack of training facilities	100	26.2%
Lack of training and competitions due to academics	97	25.5%
Lack of technical competence in sports	91	23.9%
Lack of elite competition opportunities	46	12.6%
Corruption during team training and competitions	11	2.9%
Irregular competitions	4	1.0%
Universities do not invest in sports as in academics	2	0.5%
Total	351	96.2%

The findings from quantitative data revealed that the relationship between training support and students' sports talent development is moderate and negatively related; while that of competition support and students' sports talent development was moderate and positively related.

The study through an open ended question for talented students sought to establish strategies to address identified challenges in training and competitions. 29.7% (113) indicated provision of adequate facilities and equipment, 25.2% (96) indicated provision of qualified trained personnel in elite sports, (61) 16.0% indicated provision of competition opportunities in elite sports, 10.5% (40) indicated flexible time tables to accommodate training and competitions, 3.9% (15) indicated incentives for players,

3.1% (12) indicated supervision of technical personnel during training and competition.

Through a closed ended item in the Deans' questionnaire and that of Directors, the study investigated the status of financing training and competitions in the universities in Kenya. From the Dean of Students responses, 40.0% (2) indicated inadequate funding, and 20.0% (1) indicated acute shortage of funds for the development of facilities and equipment.

From the Directors responses on the status of financing training and competitions in elite sports in the universities, 66.7% (4) indicated that inadequate funds are allocated to sports in the universities, 16.7% (1) indicated lack of qualified coaches; and 16.7% (1) indicated poor budgetary allocation to elite sports in the universities. The findings from both the Deans and Directors have implied that inadequate funds are allocated to sports in the

universities and are among the factors that should be addressed.

Table 5 presents how academic programs and elite sports schedules should be implemented.

Table 5

Universities to adopt flexible academic schedules for talented students to balance between academics and elite sports in order to accommodate sport assignments

Respondents	Number (N)	Percentage %
Talented Students	324	85.04%
Coaches	8	54.4%
Directors/Heads of Games & Sports Depts.	6	100.0%
Kenya Universities Sports Association (KUSA)	14	87.5%

From the Directors questionnaire which sought how university academic programs should be implemented in order to respond to students training and competition needs in elite sports, 100% (6) agreed that universities should adopt a flexible academic schedule for talented students to accommodate their participation in international training and competitions. On the implementation of academic programs, a closed ended item in the questionnaire for Kenya Universities Sports Association (KUSA) officials sought to establish how academic programs in the universities should be implemented in order to respond to students’ training and competitions in elite sports. Based on the results obtained, 87.7% (14) KUSA officials agreed that universities should consider a flexible academic program implementation that responds to students training and participating in international competitions.

Management challenges and elite sports in the universities in Kenya

The study through a closed ended item in the Dean of students’ questionnaire sought to

establish the sports department management alignment structures in the universities. 40.0% (2) indicated that, the departments were structurally under the Deputy Vice chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, 40.0% (2) indicated that the departments were under the Director, Games and Sports, (1)20.0% indicated that, the department was structurally under the Dean of students. With regard to management challenges, 100.0% (5) of the Dean of students agreed that elite sports management challenges experienced in the universities is due to inconsistent and different sports management structures in the universities.

In an open ended item in the questionnaire for Directors or Heads of games and sports departments in the universities, the study sought to find out from the respondents how they would describe the current management structures for the sports departments in the universities. 33.3% (2) indicated that Departments of Games and Sports in the universities were structurally under the supervision of Deputy Vice Chancellor,

Academic Affairs 33.3% (2) indicated that Games and Sports Departments were under the supervision of the Director of Sports; and 16.7% (1) indicated that the current structure of the department of games and Sports was under the Dean of students. Responses from both the Dean of students and Directors of Sports and Games were in agreement on the different and inconsistent management alignment in games and sports departments in the universities. However, 16.7% (1) of the

directors cautioned that the current structures are wanting and do not support elite sport at all; but do support mass sport instead. An open ended item in the questionnaire for directors sought to find out whether there were personnel challenges experienced during the implementation of elite sports programs. Tables 6 and 7 present’s responses from the directors on personnel and management challenges.

Table 6
Directors’ Responses on Personnel to Implement Elite Sports Programs

Directors’ Responses	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Current personnel is not sufficient	3	50.0%
Lack of employing qualified coaches	1	16.7%
Professional Sports Managers are needed	2	33.3%
Total	6	100.0%

One further open ended item in the Directors’ questionnaire sought to establish the management challenges experienced due to elite sports management structures in the universities.

Table 7
Directors responses on Management Challenges experienced due to elite sports Management structures in the universities

Directors’ Responses	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
The policies on sports scholarships are not streamlined	2	33.3%
Sports management structures in the universities are not well defined	2	33.3%
Lack of adequate funding in elite sports programs	1	16.7%
Total	5	83.3%

The results indicated that professional sports managers and qualified coaches are lacking in the universities, the policies on sports scholarships are not streamlined, there is lack of adequate funding for elite sports programs, and that sports management structures in the universities are not well defined. To address these management challenges, universities

should establish sports management structures that are responsive to the educational needs of their talented students.

4.0 Conclusion

While Competency based Curriculum (CBC) has embraced sports in the academic talent pillar in the university education curriculum,

the challenges that have been identified should be addressed to prepare for the implementation of this curriculum. The structures that should be in place are: flexible academic schedule to accommodate sports training and competitions; remedial classes to cover academic content missed during international sports training and competitions; scouting for talents for admission; and provision of sports scholarships and involvement of the ministry of sports and other external agencies in financing elite sports in the universities. Sports structures in the universities to hire and train competent and qualified personnel in management and training in elite sports before the implementation of competent based curriculum (CBC) in the university education system in Kenya.

5.0 Recommendations

To address the anticipated challenges before implementation of sports programs in the talent pillar as envisioned by Competency

Based Curriculum in the university education in Kenya, academic, financial, sports training, competition opportunities and management structures should be addressed. The academic structures must put in place flexible academic schedules to accommodate training and competition opportunities for talented students. The financial structures must be in place so as to provide adequate sports funds to support sports programs in the universities.

Training and competition in elite sports must be supported through adequate facilities and equipment, qualified trained personnel in elite sports, creation of competition opportunities and flexible academic schedules to accommodate national assignments in training and competitions. The management structures must address admission policies for talented students, sports scholarships and support system for both academics and sports programs in the university education in Kenya

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