TEACHER'S VIEWS ON THE RELEVANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH CURRICULUM: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND THEORY

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Abstract:

The English curriculum in schools in Kenya is prepared by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). This institute mainly relies on input from curriculum experts at the national level, denying classroom teachers the opportunity to express their views in developing a quality education system for its learners. This results in misinterpretations of curriculum intentions consequently impacting on learner achievement in annual English national examinations. The curriculum in use for teaching English in Kenya was last reviewed in 2002. Given the educational changes that have taken place over the years, the curriculum may have become obsolete. The purpose of this study was to assess teachers' views on the relevance of the English curriculum. The study was guided by three objectives: establish relevance objectives of the English curriculum, determine the relevance of the content of the English curriculum and determine the relevance of suggested resources of the English curriculum. This study was carried out among teachers of English in secondary schools using a descriptive research design. A sample of 180 teachers of English was used. The study used a questionnaire with Likert-type questions as the main instrument for data collection. Qualitative data analysis established that the objectives on reading and listening and speaking skills, content on reading and writing skills, and nine of the suggested resources scored low means when compared to the composite mean. This was an indication that the objectives, content and suggested resources of the English curriculum had discrepancies which ought to be addressed in order to align and make the curriculum relevant to the current needs of learners.

Keywords: relevance, objectives, content, resources, curriculum

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1. Introduction

The English curriculum for use in secondary schools in Kenya was last reviewed in 2002 giving rise to the integrated approach to teaching English. The integrated approach meant teaching English language and Literature in English as one subject of the school curriculum (KIE, 2002). This was due to an overload in content as a result of teaching English and Literature as two separate subjects. Over time, there have been a lot of changes in the nature of learning needs, the emergence of new teaching and learning technologies and new approaches to classroom instruction. This makes us question the relevance of the curriculum in use since there has been no review that has taken the changes into account. Could the objectives, content and suggested resources that were set in the curriculum still be relevant today? This is the question this study sought to address by assessing teachers' views on the relevance of the English curriculum. Teachers in schools were chosen due to their close interaction with using the curriculum, possession of knowledge of English subject matter, teaching experience as well as having an understanding of learners' needs. In order to make the curriculum relevant, it is important that teachers' views of the curriculum are sought in order to align with the changes that may have taken place.

Borrowing from Taba's theory of curriculum development (Taba, 1962) and the constructivist worldview, Taba (1962) places teachers at the centre of the curriculum development process for two reasons: one is that teachers are aware of learners' needs and thus better placed to identify needs of the learners for whom the curriculum is to be planned. Secondly, teachers are users of the curriculum and thus should practice developing the curriculum from the level of the school, hence the Grassroots approach to curriculum development. According to Taba, teachers are key players in selecting and aligning content to learning needs which makes the curriculum relevant by ensuring coherent flow of the selected learning experiences for effective learning. This theory is supported by constructivism world view which relies on the participants' views of the situation being studied in order to construct meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This worldview lends itself to the qualitative method of research inquiry which was employed in data collection and analysis. The theory and worldview provided the basis upon which discussion of results and interpretations were made.

In Kenya, English is the official language of communication as well as the medium of instruction in schools for all subjects except Kiswahili, French and German (KIE, 2002). This makes English a core and compulsory subject at the basic level of education. As a compulsory examinable subject in the national examination at the secondary school level, the learner is expected to have a firm grasp of the subject as it influences the understanding of content in other subjects of the curriculum. Further, a learner is expected to have passed highly, with a minimum grade of C+ in English in order to secure chances of placement into higher levels of professional training. This implies that the English curriculum has to be tailored to be responsive to the needs of learners and societal expectations.

Learner achievement in English as measured through the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) national examinations has continually recorded a national mean score of 4.49 on average out of 12.00 for the last five years (2017-2021). According to the KNEC classification of grades, this is a mean grade of a D+ which is far below the minimum university and tertiary colleges entry into professional courses. Although English performance slightly improved in the 2022 KCSE results, the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) report for 2022 indicated that the overall performance still fell short of the ideal mean of 50% of 6.00 points (KNEC, 2022). The KCSE mean scores during the five years (2017-2021) are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Performance of KCSE English Examination

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	**Mean**
KCSE mean	4.41	4.36	4.92	4.36	4.42	**4.49**
Mean grade	D+	D+	C-	D+	D+	**D+**

Source: KNEC 2022 Examination Report.

As the dominant language of instruction in schools in Kenya, this low performance in English could be a microcosm of underlying challenges teachers experience during the interpretation and use of the curriculum. This has ended up as a discrepancy between the intentions of the official curriculum prepared by the central curriculum developers and the curriculum in use in schools. Therefore, assessing teachers' views of the English curriculum could result in shared intentions in determining a relevant curriculum for learners hence better achievement in English as reflected in national and school examinations. In light of this argument, the purpose of this study was to assess the relevance of the English curriculum.

This was guided by three objectives:
- Establish relevance of objectives of secondary school English curriculum;
- Determine the relevance of the content of the secondary school English curriculum;
- Determine the relevance of the suggested resources for teaching English in secondary schools.

2. Literature Review

The English curriculum comprises objectives, content and suggested resources which focus on teaching the four skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four skills are not taught in isolation, but in an integrated approach so as to complement each other. Grammar is also added as a component of language learning.

2.1 Relevance of Objectives of the English Curriculum
The teaching of the English curriculum in secondary schools in Kenya is stipulated in the revised Kenya Secondary School syllabus Volume 1 of 2002. The objectives of English are clearly stated and describe specific behavioral changes expected of learners at the end of

secondary school. Teachers at the secondary school level of learning have the responsibility of translating these general objectives into specific instructional objectives to be achieved by the end of every lesson.

However, a summative evaluation conducted by KICD in 2009 on the secondary school curriculum revealed that there were gaps in the achievement of curriculum objectives (MOE, 2018). Research conducted on the English language has also identified gaps in the relevance of the English curriculum. For instance, a study by Magoma (2016) on teachers' and head teachers' views of the integrated English curriculum pointed out that the objectives of the English curriculum were adequate although some were not relevant to the needs of the learners. Another study by Mbithe (2014) revealed that students can only do simple reading and listening with little ability to use these skills to correctly infer meaning or process information from a variety of sources. In addition, speaking accurately fluently confidently and appropriately in a variety of contexts seemed to be a big challenge to some learners. This implies that the objectives may be failing to achieve the relevance as initially planned thus calling for teachers' views on assessing the relevance of the curriculum in relation to current learning needs.

2.2 Relevance of Content of the English Curriculum

In 2002, the English curriculum was reviewed to address issues of overload and overlaps in content resulting in the teaching of English as an integrated subject (KIE, 2002). In this approach, content was subdivided into the four skills of listening and speaking, reading, writing and grammar. The syllabus further explains that through exposure to literature, the learner would improve their language skills and that an improved knowledge of the language would enhance the learners' appreciation of literary material. The content of the English curriculum thus functions in a symbiotic approach.

A study by Gathumbi, Bwire and Roy-Campbell (2014) on instructional practices for English revealed that more than 82% of the teachers in the study felt that the English language curriculum content was adequate for teaching and learning expected skills. However, the teachers in the study noted that the syllabus had some weak areas. For instance, the study established that learners lacked proficiency in writing skills and grammar and recommended an emphasis on reading culture to improve the skills. The present study sought to identify specific weak areas of the content as perceived by the teachers.

2.3 Relevance of Suggested Resources of the English Curriculum

Instructional resources are materials utilized in the classroom by teachers for learning purposes. Resources aid in the acquisition and practice of skills of language. KIE's (2002) syllabus suggests resources for teaching English which have not been revised since 2002 despite advancements in learning approaches and emerging instructional technology. Resources suggested can be categorized as print, non-print and electronic. Print resources include textbooks, class readers, notes, posters and magazines while non-print includes resource persons, libraries, realia and models. Electronic resources include computers,

recorded audio and video tapes and the Internet. The KIE syllabus (2002) states that in order for the teacher to effectively help the learner acquire proficiency in language skills, it is important to use appropriate human and material resources.

Osman and Kemboi (2015) observed that blame on poor performance in English has been put on teachers of the English language for relying on particular techniques and resources at the expense of the learners, rendering some resources as irrelevant. This is likely to negatively impact on the teaching and learning process leading to undesired learning outcomes. The syllabus further explains that for every lesson, the teacher should determine the best resources for a particular learning activity and have them ready in advance. This is a biased approach that may end up making some resources least used.

Teachers rarely alter their teaching practices in spite of the emergence of new resources and technologies. The traditional resources like hard-copy textbooks no longer appeal to learners in this digital age and this demands adaptation of emerging resources in order to make the classroom environment and teaching more learner-centered and individualized. Teachers need to be content creators and develop original materials that appeal to learners. New technologies such as audio and video recordings in language labs, YouTube and computer simulations and e-books can be more effective resources for teaching as they offer authentic learning experiences.

In order to improve on relevance of the curriculum, teachers in the study recommended revision of the syllabus after every five years. This has not been done as the English curriculum in Kenya was last revised in 2002, more than twenty years ago, which goes against the international standards recommendation by the International Bureau of Education (IBE). As observed by Fullan (2007), curriculum is usually subject to change. Since it has been two decades after the review of the English curriculum for secondary schools, the curriculum is likely to have become obsolete such that it detours from the set objectives it was set to accomplish. This prompted the researcher to assess teachers' views on the relevance of the English curriculum aimed at identifying weak areas and reviewing the curriculum in order to address current learning needs.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey design is a type of qualitative approach that focuses on the natural setting and seeks to gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations of human behaviour towards an issue (Goddard & Melville, 2004). This study sought to assess teachers' views of the English curriculum and therefore used a qualitative approach.

3.2 Population Size
The study population consisted of 412 teachers of English in secondary schools. These are teachers who had been trained and qualified to teach English in secondary schools. The

study assumed that the teachers had taught for more than four years, thus knowledgeable about the English curriculum as well as current learner needs.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Teachers of English who had taught for more than four years were purposively chosen since they were knowledgeable and experienced with the phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Purposive sampling also allows the researcher to focus on specific areas of information and gather in-depth data on the topic of study. Simple random sampling was used to select teachers of English for the study. Actual sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula which yielded a sample size of 180 teachers of English.

3.4 Research Instruments

The study employed a questionnaire for teachers of English as the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of Likert-type statements and open-ended questions to probe respondents to give reasons and suggestions for ensuring the relevance of the curriculum.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher first developed a proposal under the guidance of supervisors. After approval by the School of Graduate Studies, the researcher sought clearance from the Maseno University Ethics and Review Committee, before proceeding to NACOSTI for the research permit. Upon receiving the permit, the researcher proceeded to sample schools and sought permission from the Principals who gave access to the teachers of English. Arrangements were made on the time and date of data collection using questionnaires to avoid disrupting lessons. On the agreed dates, the researcher visited each sampled school, and talked to the teachers sampled to explain the ethics, nature and purpose of the research in order to gain informed consent to fill in the questionnaire. Once consent forms had been signed, the researcher proceeded to actual data collection. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and collected as soon as they were filled in. The researcher then booked appointments with the respective principals of the sampled schools to conduct interviews on agreed dates.

3.6 Validity of the Research Instruments

Validity was determined by experts in the Department of Educational Communication, Technology and Curriculum Studies of Maseno University who studied the questionnaire items and provided feedback that was incorporated in the final instruments before the actual study.

3.7 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Reliability refers to the consistency and replicability of instruments over time and over groups of respondents (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). To achieve this, the study

adopted the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of internal consistency. A pilot survey was carried out in five schools. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .7589 was obtained from the questionnaires indicating an acceptable level of reliability.

3.8 Data Analysis

Bogdan and Bicklen (2007) explain data analysis as a process of making sense out of collected materials by systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials accumulated to enable the researcher to come up with findings. Responses from the questionnaire were scored and the subject total score on each scale of the questionnaire was computed to generate descriptive statistics. In addition, all responses to open-ended questionnaire items were arranged by identifying words and phrases that helped generate preliminary coding categories that were used for analysis. Analysis was done using descriptive statistics and interpretations made in relation to the objectives of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

Relevance of the English curriculum was studied under three areas: objectives, content and suggested resources. The findings were categorized into the four skills of listening and speaking, reading, writing and grammar and presented as follows.

4.1 Relevance of Objectives of the English Curriculum

This study sought to establish teachers' views on the relevance of the objectives of the English curriculum. A five-point Likert scale was used to extract answers from the respondents using scales of Very Relevant (VR), Relevant (R), Somewhat Relevant (SR), Irrelevant (I) and Very Irrelevant (VI) on a rating scale of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The mean and standard deviation were calculated and the results are presented in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, the objectives of the English curriculum seem to be relevant as seen in the high mean scores with writing skills scoring the highest mean of 4.74 against the composite mean of 4.64. The high mean scores indicated strongly positive responses from participants. The findings of the study established that two objectives of listening and speaking had low means: listen and process information from a variety of sources (M=4.37) listen attentively for comprehension and respond appropriately (M=4.55). This shows that learners had challenges in listening which affected processing and comprehension of information.

Table 2: Teachers' Views on the Relevance of Objectives of the English Curriculum

SN	Objectives	Mean	STD
1.	Listening and Speaking	4.62	0.639
2.	Reading	4.54	0.488
3.	Writing	4.74	0.364
4.	Grammar	4.70	0.474
	Composite Mean and SD	**4.64**	**0.491**

However, data from the open-ended questions on what should be done to improve listening and speaking skills indicate that there was the need to intensify practicals in English, the same way it is done in the French and German languages of the curriculum. This would ensure learners get the opportunity to practice listening and speaking skills. In addition, it was suggested that KNEC should initiate testing of speaking and listening skills orally which will enable learners to assess their proficiency in spoken English (Melly, Okari & Oreko, 2023) instead of the written examination which focuses on rote learning. Even though mobile phones had been banned for use in teaching and learning in secondary schools, respondents observed that it was important to integrate other ICT tools in the classroom in order to enable practical learning and testing of listening and speaking skills.

On reading, findings established that four objectives had lower means when compared to the composite mean of 4.54. The objectives are to: read and analyze literary works from Kenya, East Africa, Africa and the rest of the world and relate to experiences in these works (M=3.99), read and comprehend literary material (M=4.35), appreciate and respect own as well as other peoples' culture (M=4.45) and make efficient use of a range of sources of information including libraries, dictionaries, encyclopedias and internet (M=4.45). In order to cultivate the love for reading in learners in secondary schools, teacher responses to the open-ended questions indicated that it was important to use collaborative effort from parents, teachers in primary school and learners themselves. When asked to suggest what should be done to improve reading, teacher's response stated:

"Encourage wide reading among learners from home and in their primary schools by sensitizing parents to have home libraries".

"Make learners appreciate literary works right from primary schools".

This implies that for learners to gain mastery out of reading, the reading culture has to be developed in homes and primary schools and not wait to start practicing good reading habits after joining secondary school.

Further, the study sought to assess teachers' views on the relevance of objectives on writing in the English curriculum. Two objectives had lower means when compared to the composite mean of 4.74. These include learners being able to: appreciate universal human values contained in literary works (M=4.54) and use grammatical and idiomatic forms of English (M=4.64). Good writing is a function of mastery in reading skills and grammar. These results are an indication that learners need to spend more time on reading, which will equip them with writing skills in order to communicate effectively in writing tasks. The 2022 KNEC Report on English observed that candidates made many errors in punctuation, spelling and grammar. These errors attracted penalties which lowered the scores and performance in the English examination. This is consistent with findings by Gathumbi, Bwire and Campbell (2014) whose study revealed that learners

lacked proficiency in writing skills and grammar. This implies that teachers need to give more practice on grammar and also penalize such errors when teaching so that learners improve in grammar.

The study also assessed teachers' views on the relevance of the objectives of grammar in the English curriculum. Findings revealed that two objectives had low means indicating a negative impression. These are: communicate appropriately in functional and creative writing (M=4.55) and use a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary correctly (M=4.63). Grammar is embedded in all other skills and areas of the English language and it is necessary that learners acquire mastery of grammar conventions by interacting with the other areas of the English language. The English syllabus emphasizes that literature provides circumstances for language use, thus learners should be encouraged to read a variety of literature texts in order to be exposed to vocabulary, sentence structures and paragraphing in order to communicate appropriately in functional and creative writing.

4.2 Relevance of Content of the English Curriculum

This study assessed teachers' views on the relevance of the content of the English curriculum. A five-point Likert scale was used to extract answers from the respondents using scales of Very Relevant (VR), Relevant (R), Somewhat Relevant (SR), Irrelevant (I) and Very Irrelevant (VI) on a rating scale of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The mean and standard deviation were calculated and the results are presented in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, the content of the English curriculum seems to be relevant with listening and speaking skills scoring the highest mean of 4.71 against the composite mean of 4.61. However, findings from data indicate that three areas of the content on listening and speaking had low means: etiquette including telephone register (M=4.54), debates and interviews (M=4.55) and note-taking (M=4.63). The evidence from this finding suggests that the effective mastery of content on note-taking is a result of a learners' ability to read and comprehend materials they are exposed to which was identified as one of the objectives with low means. This implies that content has to be taught carefully concerning the objectives.

Table 3: Teachers' Views on the Relevance of the Content of the English Curriculum

SN	Objectives	Mean	STD
1.	Listening and Speaking	4.71	0.501
2.	Reading	4.54	0.585
3.	Writing	4.48	0.601
4.	Grammar	4.69	0.461
	Composite Mean and SD	**4.61**	**0.537**

Further, findings from the study established that two content areas on reading had low means when compared to the composite mean of 4.54. These are: extensive reading on contemporary issues (M=4.17) and summary writing skills (M=4.44). Contemporary issues require learners to be keen on what happens around them by watching news and

reading current news from newspapers, magazines and journal articles. Teachers of English had the responsibility to ensure learners had access to contemporary readings so as to be conversant with current happenings. There was however need to review content on analytical skills so as to help learners gain content from intensive and extensive reading.

Findings of content on writing skills have shown that six out of eleven content areas of writing had differences in levels of agreement of relevance. These are: social writing (M=4.12), building sentence skills (M=4.45), public writing (M=4.00), study writing M=4.36), creative writing (M=4.18) and personal writing (M=4.36). A study by Onchera and Manyasi (2013) on functional writing skills for effective communication established that teachers have different understandings about teaching of various writing skills and as such may not be exposing learners to appropriate functional writing text varieties. This in turn prevents learners from acquiring effective writing and communication skills. This implies that there is a need for teachers of English to understand writing skills so as to provide learners with appropriate writing exercises that can help improve performance in writing skills.

The results of this study have shown that two areas of grammar had low means when compared to the composite mean of 4.69 on grammar. These are: content on clauses (M=4.63) and content on simple sentences (M=4.63). This is an indication that a student's grasp of clauses is a prerequisite to the construction of good simple sentences. This perhaps explains why learners are unable to construct simple sentences, which goes a long way in affecting writing skills as it needs the construction of coherent sentences to form paragraphs that communicate ideas.

4.3 Relevance of Suggested Resources of the English Curriculum

This study assessed teachers' views on the relevance of suggested resources in the English curriculum. A five-point Likert scale was used to extract answers from the respondents using scales of Very Relevant (VR), Relevant (R), Somewhat Relevant (SR), Irrelevant (I) and Very Irrelevant (VI) on a rating scale of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

The mean and standard deviation were calculated and the results are presented in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, the resources of the English curriculum seem to be relevant with nine (9) resources showing low mean scores compared to the composite mean of 4.36. These are: resource centres (M=4.27), reports and periodicals (M=3.73), resource persons (M=4.17), notes, posters and advertisements (M=4.28), computers and television sets (M=4.08), use of realia (M=4.00), extracts from magazines and books (M=4.34), improvised materials (M=4.19) and recorded materials like radio broadcast (M=4.18). Asked why the resources had low means, the respondents indicated that it was due to unavailability of the resources or inadequate resources, inadequate time to use the resources and lack of ICT resources in schools. For instance, resources like radios and computers were unavailable in some schools and hindered the integration of ICT in the teaching and learning process.

Table 4: Teachers' Views on the Relevance of Suggested Resources for English

Suggested Resource	VR F(%)	R F(%)	SR F(%)	I F(%)	VI F(%)	Mean	Std
Visual aids e.g. pictures, charts, models	148 (82.2)	32 (17.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.82	0.383
Textbooks	147 (81.7)	17 (9.4)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.73	0.306
Recorded material e.g. radio programs	81 (45.0)	67 (37.2)	16 (8.9)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	4.18	0.661
Original material from teachers	98 (54.4)	66 (36.7)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.45	0.492
Improvised materials	82 (45.6)	66 (36.7)	16 (8.9)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	4.19	0.662
Extracts from magazines, books	82 (45.6)	82 (45.6)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.34	0.642
Notes, posters, advertisements	98 (54.4)	50 (27.8)	16 (8.9)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	4.28	1.012
Use of realia	48 (26.7)	100 (55.6)	16 (8.9)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	4.00	0.595
Oral or written poetry	65 (36.1)	115 (63.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.36	0.482
Resource persons	81 (45.0)	66 (36.7)	16 (8.9)	17 (9.4)	0 (0.0)	4.17	1.179
Class readers	164 (91.1)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.91	0.571
Library books	131 (72.8)	33 (18.3)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.64	0.641
Computers, television sets	81 (45.0)	50 (27.8)	32 (17.8)	17 (9.4)	0 (0.0)	4.08	1.002
Resource centers	81 (45.0)	67 (37.2)	32 (17.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.27	0.746
Reports and periodicals	49 (27.2)	50 (27.8)	65 (36.1)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	3.73	2.667
Prescribed set books	116 (64.4)	32 (17.8)	16 (8.9)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	4.38	2.814
Internet	115 (63.9)	49 (27.2)	16 (8.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.55	0.654
Composite Mean and Std						4.36	0.912

This was attributed to inadequate finance to purchase and facilitate the use of modern resources Further, respondents indicated that some schools had not fully incorporated technology due to limited access to internet connectivity and other schools had no computers at all to be used for teaching and learning. Although it was noted that some teachers lacked skills on the use of computers and the internet, in other schools the Internet was not very stable making it difficult to use the resources in teaching and learning. Ocharo, Okwako and Okoth (2019) observed that insufficient instructional materials negatively affected teaching and consequently learning and this limited teachers from adequately facilitating the instructional process.

However, data from the open-ended questions on what should be done to improve on use of the resources indicate that the school administration played a bigger role in the use of the resources. Suggestions for improvement on the use of these resources included availing a variety of resources that had not been provided by KICD. This included audio and video clips, flip cards and flashcards, mobile phones and recorded simulations. Presently, KICD has invested in the use of recorded audio compact discs for teaching the set books. Although this was a timely and relevant intervention in providing digital resources, the same audio resources should be extended to other areas of the English Language. Research by Orwenyo and Erastus (2022) established that challenges in production and access to quality and relevant teaching and learning resources had persisted despite the availability of free open education resources which could potentially improve the quality of existing resources to help improve teaching and learning of English. Although this was attributed to a lack of ICT competencies and skills in the use of the resources, the low levels of access to the same showed that teachers may not be aware of the availability of such resources. Therefore there was a need to create awareness on the availability and use of open resources to improve teaching and performance of English.

5. Conclusions and Implications on Policy, Practice and Theory

5.1 Conclusions
This study assessed teachers' views on the relevance of the English curriculum for secondary schools. Findings have established that the objectives, content and suggested resources of the English curriculum seem to be relevant. However, from the discussion and suggestions, there are gaps in the English curriculum that ought to be addressed. The English curriculum initiated in 2002 is now out of time with current realities. For instance, the objectives and content of the curriculum should be revised to align with current learner needs. Further, a paradigm shift from traditional resources to emerging trends in information communication technologies will enhance practical aspects of the curriculum thus equipping the learner with real-time competencies for the present world. This will ensure relevance of the content and objectives is achieved.

5.2 Implications on Policy, Practice and Theory
The International Bureau of Standards set by the International Bureau of Education (IBE) recommends that curriculum should be reviewed after every five years to ensure relevance by incorporating any upcoming trends and issues that require attention. As seen in the last two decades, curriculum reforms in the world have been driven by rapid technological and social changes and the need to address new challenges of contemporary life. The current English curriculum for secondary schools in Kenya has not addressed these changes. This calls for the implementation of the Basic Education Act No. 14 of 2013, whose policy guidelines on curricula stipulate that curricula should be

reviewed every five years. This will ensure that the curriculum remains relevant at all times.

This study was based on Taba's (1962) theory of curriculum development. This theory places teachers at the center of the curriculum development process for two reasons: teachers are aware of learners' needs and thus better placed to identify the needs of the learners, and teachers are users of the curriculum and should practice developing the curriculum. Although this theory focuses on the initial process of developing the curriculum, teacher contribution in giving feedback on the curriculum is equally important. In view of this, the findings of this study contribute to the development of this theory by advancing that teachers as users of the curriculum are key in assessing the relevance of the curriculum. Therefore, teachers should participate in the review of the curriculum in order to make it relevant.

Conflict of Interest Statement

I, Carolyn Dayo Kivihya, as the corresponding author for the paper on "Teachers' Views on Relevance of Secondary School Curriculum: Implications for Policy, Practice and Theory", declare that there is no conflict of interest among the authors, participants in the study or the institution where this research was done.

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