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Blended professional development impact in junior school instructional leadership and teacher efficacy

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Abstract

Effective instructional leadership is critical for the successful implementation of the Competency Based Education (CBE) in Kenya's junior schools. However, many school leaders lack targeted professional development (PD) to effectively guide instructional change, limiting, teachers' confidence and capacity to implement learner-centred pedagogies. The Implementing National Curriculum REforms through App-Based Learning for School Leaders in Secondary Education (INCREASE) programme addresses this challenge through blended professional development that combines online and face-to-face learning experiences to strengthen instructional leadership practices. This study examined how the programme's blended PD contributed to instructional leadership development and enhanced teacher efficacy in the implementation of CBE in Kenyan junior schools, while exploring its potential for generating meaningful and scalable change. The study employed a qualitative design using a process tracing approach, complemented by Most Significant Change (MSC) stories. Data were collected through reflective narratives, in-depth interviews with school leaders and teachers, and key informant interviews with education stakeholders across multiple counties. Analysis focused on identifying causal pathways linking leadership development to changes in teacher efficacy and examining the sustainability, spread, depth, and ownership of observed outcomes. Findings indicate that blended PD strengthened school leaders' knowledge, confidence, and leadership practices, enabling more

effective planning, resource mobilisation, instructional support, and management of change. These improvements fostered stronger collaborative school cultures, increased access to instructional resources, and expanded school-based professional learning through mentoring, coaching, and peer collaboration. Evidence of sustained practice uptake and shifts in leadership norms suggests the growing institutionalisation of effective instructional leadership practices. The study demonstrates that blended PD for school leaders can strengthen teacher efficacy and support sustainable, system-level improvements in teaching and learning within the context of CBE reform.

Key terms: Blended professional development, Instructional leadership, Junior School, School leadership, Teacher efficacy, Competency Based Curriculum

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Globally, education systems are increasingly recognising the importance of school leadership in improving teaching and learning outcomes. Effective instructional leadership has become central to curriculum reforms because school leaders influence teacher motivation, school climate, professional learning and instructional quality (Dorukbaşi Erdal & Cansoy Ramazan, 2024). Research consistently demonstrates that school leadership is second only to classroom teaching among school based factors influencing learner achievement (Yongco, 2026). In developing countries undergoing curriculum transformation, school leaders play a particularly critical role in translating policy reforms into classroom practice.

Kenya's transition to the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) represents one of the most significant educational reforms in the country's history. The CBC emphasises learner-centred pedagogies, competency acquisition, continuous assessment, digital literacy and practical application of learning (Republic of Kenya, 2018). Successful implementation of CBC requires not only teachers capable of adopting new pedagogical approaches but also school leaders capable of providing instructional support, resource mobilisation and organisational leadership.

Despite the centrality of school leadership, many school leaders in Kenya have historically lacked targeted professional development opportunities focusing on instructional leadership for curriculum reform implementation (Bush et al., 2022). Traditional leadership preparation programmes often focused more on administration than instructional leadership. Consequently, school leaders frequently struggled to support teachers effectively during the transition to CBC (MOE, 2019). Little is known about the causal pathways through which leadership development interventions translate into changes in school practices and teacher outcomes.

To address this gap, VVOB Kenya, in collaboration with the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) and the Ministry of Education (MOE), implemented the INCREASE programme. The programme introduced the Effective School Leadership for Junior Schools (ESL4JS) course targeting junior school leaders across Kenya. The course adopted a blended professional development modality combining online learning through Moodle, with face-to-face sessions. The programme sought to strengthen instructional leadership capacities necessary for effective CBC implementation. This study explored how blended professional development contributed to instructional leadership and teacher efficacy in junior schools participating in the INCREASE programme.

1.2 Problem Statement

The successful implementation of competency-based education reforms depends significantly on school leaders' ability to support instructional change. However, many school leaders in Kenya lacked adequate preparation to guide teachers through the pedagogical and organisational shifts associated with CBE implementation. This leadership capacity gap limited teachers' efficacy, particularly their confidence and capability to implement learner-centred pedagogies, digital integration, competency-based assessment and differentiated instruction. While professional development initiatives for school leaders have increased globally, limited empirical evidence exists on how blended professional development specifically contributes to instructional leadership and teacher efficacy within African curriculum reform contexts. Existing studies often focus on teacher professional development rather than leadership development. Additionally, little evidence exists regarding the mechanisms through which leadership professional development influences teacher efficacy and school improvement. This study therefore sought to address this knowledge gap by examining how blended professional development for school leaders contributed to instructional leadership and teacher efficacy in Kenyan junior schools.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To examine the impact of blended professional development on instructional leadership and teacher efficacy in junior schools participating in the INCREASE programme in Kenya.

Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following research objectives:

i. To examine how blended professional development contributes to instructional leadership among junior school leaders.

ii. To assess how school leaders' professional development influences teacher efficacy.

iii. To explore the mechanisms and pathways that explain the relationship between instructional leadership development and teacher efficacy.

iv. To identify the factors that support or hinder the sustainability and scalability of blended professional development programmes.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

i. How does blended professional development contribute to instructional leadership among junior school leaders?

ii. How does school leaders' professional development contribute to teacher efficacy?

iii. What mechanisms and pathways explain the relationship between instructional leadership development and teacher efficacy?

iv. What factors support or hinder sustainability and scalability of blended professional development?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by instructional leadership theory and social cognitive theory. Instructional leadership theory emphasises the role of school leaders in improving teaching and learning through strategic direction, instructional support and school culture development (Jones, 2009). Bandura (1977) social cognitive theory, concept of self-efficacy, explains how beliefs regarding capability influence behaviour and performance. The study conceptualised that blended professional development strengthens school leaders' knowledge, attitudes and skills, which subsequently influence teacher efficacy through instructional leadership practices including planning, resource mobilisation, collaboration, mentoring and pedagogical support.

2.2 Empirical Studies

Instructional leadership refers to leadership practices that directly influence teaching and learning processes (Ruebling et al., 2004). Hallinger & Murphy (2002) conceptualise instructional leadership around defining the school mission, managing instructional programmes and promoting positive school learning climates. Effective instructional leaders support curriculum implementation, facilitate professional learning, monitor teaching practices and establish collaborative school cultures. Within curriculum reform contexts, instructional leadership becomes particularly important because reforms require changes in teacher beliefs, pedagogical practices and school organisation (Republic of Kenya, 2018). School leaders provide direction, resources, motivation and professional support necessary for reform implementation. Studies have shown that leadership practices influence teacher commitment, instructional quality and learner outcomes.

Recent scholarship continues to position instructional leadership as a critical driver of teacher development and instructional improvement, particularly during periods of educational reform. However, studies differ regarding the strength and mechanisms of its influence. For example, He et al. (2024) found that principals' instructional leadership significantly predicts teachers' professional development, suggesting that leaders who provide instructional guidance, monitor teaching practices, and support professional learning create conditions that enhance teachers' growth and instructional competence. Similarly, Thien and Liu (2024) reported that instructional leadership positively influences teacher professional learning both directly and indirectly through teacher self-efficacy, indicating that teachers are more likely to engage in continuous learning when they feel capable of implementing new instructional practices. These findings suggest that leadership-focused professional development can strengthen teacher efficacy by improving school leaders' capacity to support teacher learning.

Teacher efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in their ability to effectively organise and execute actions required to accomplish teaching tasks. Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001) argue that teacher efficacy influences persistence, innovation, classroom management, motivation and student achievement. Teachers with high efficacy demonstrate greater resilience, openness to change and willingness to adopt new pedagogies. Research indicates that teacher efficacy is shaped by several factors including professional development, access to instructional resources, collaboration, mentoring, supportive leadership and school climate (Habibi et al., 2025). Within CBC implementation contexts, teacher efficacy becomes critical because teachers are expected to shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred pedagogies.

While these studies establish positive relationships among instructional leadership, professional learning and teacher efficacy, other researchers argue that the effects of instructional leadership are neither automatic nor uniform across contexts. Chen and Rong (2023) found that instructional leadership positively predicts teacher self-efficacy only when strong levels of teacher collegiality exist within schools.

In schools characterised by weak collaboration among teachers, the influence of instructional leadership on teacher efficacy was minimal. Likewise, Karakose et al. (2024), through a meta-analytic structural equation modelling study, found that instructional leadership exerts much of its influence on teacher self-efficacy indirectly through collective teacher efficacy rather than through direct leadership actions alone. These findings challenge the assumption that leadership practices independently improve teacher outcomes and instead suggest that organisational and relational factors mediate leadership effectiveness.

Recent meta-analytic evidence further demonstrates broad agreement that instructional leadership contributes positively to teacher efficacy, but disagreement remains regarding the magnitude and contextual variability of this relationship. Hallinger, Liu and Niu (2025), synthesising findings from 66 quantitative studies, reported a moderate positive relationship between instructional leadership and both teacher self-efficacy and collective teacher efficacy across diverse educational settings. However, the study also revealed substantial variation across cultural contexts, suggesting that leadership practices do not produce identical outcomes in all environments. This finding contrasts with earlier universalistic perspectives that viewed instructional leadership as equally effective across contexts and highlights the importance of examining leadership interventions within specific reform environments such as Kenya's CBE

Professional development for school leaders aims to strengthen leadership knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices (Moorosi & Bush, 2020). Effective leadership professional development is continuous, contextually relevant, collaborative, practice-oriented and linked to instructional improvement. Traditional workshop based leadership training has been criticised for being disconnected from practice and insufficient for sustained leadership transformation (Oxford Business Group, 2022). Consequently, blended professional development approaches have gained popularity because they combine flexibility, accessibility, collaboration and contextual learning.

The literature on CPD similarly presents mixed findings regarding its contribution to teacher efficacy. Recent evidence indicates that well-designed professional development interventions significantly enhance teacher self-efficacy by strengthening pedagogical knowledge, mastery experiences and instructional confidence. A large-scale meta-analysis by Täschner et al. (2024), involving more than 11,000 teachers, found that professional development interventions generally improve teacher self-efficacy, particularly when they provide opportunities for active learning, feedback and sustained engagement. Likewise, studies on professional learning communities and collaborative professional development demonstrate that teachers become more confident in implementing instructional innovations when professional learning is continuous and practice oriented.

Nevertheless, recent research also highlights inconsistencies in the effectiveness of professional development initiatives. While some programmes generate significant improvements in teacher efficacy and instructional practice, others produce limited classroom change because learning is not adequately supported at the school level. Emerging evidence suggests that the success of CPD depends heavily on school leaders' ability to create supportive conditions for implementation, including coaching, feedback, collaboration and follow-up support. Consequently, researchers increasingly argue that leadership and professional development should not be examined as separate constructs but as interconnected processes influencing teacher outcomes.

Blended professional development combines face-to-face and online learning experiences (Buao & Sarmiento, 2022). It enables participants to engage in flexible, continuous and collaborative learning while balancing professional responsibilities. Blended modalities became particularly important following the COVID-19 pandemic which accelerated digital learning adoption globally. Studies indicate that

blended professional development enhances accessibility, peer learning, reflection, personalisation and sustained engagement (Hu, 2020). Online platforms provide opportunities for self-paced learning, resource sharing and continuous interaction. Face-to-face sessions complement digital learning through discussion, practical application and relationship building. In Kenya, blended professional development aligns with national priorities promoting ICT integration and digital literacy within education systems. However, evidence on blended leadership professional development within African contexts remains limited (MOE, 2023).

Taken together, contemporary literature suggests three important relationships relevant to the present study. First, instructional leadership positively influences teacher professional learning and teacher efficacy. Second, professional development interventions contribute to teacher efficacy by strengthening teachers' instructional competence and confidence. Third, the effectiveness of both instructional leadership and professional development is shaped by contextual factors such as collaboration, collective efficacy and school culture. However, despite growing evidence on these relationships, most recent studies have examined instructional leadership, teacher professional learning and teacher efficacy as separate or indirectly connected constructs. Limited research has specifically investigated how school leaders' own blended professional development experiences translate into improved teacher efficacy, particularly within competency-based curriculum reforms in low and middle-income countries. Furthermore, most existing studies originate from Asia, Europe and North America, leaving a significant evidence gap regarding how school leaders' blended CPD influences teacher efficacy during CBC implementation in Kenya. The present study addresses this gap by examining the contribution of school leaders' blended CPD (independent variable) to teacher efficacy (dependent variable) within the context of Kenya's ongoing competency-based education reform.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative research design using process tracing complemented by Most Significant Change stories. Process tracing was appropriate because it enabled examination of causal pathways linking blended professional development to instructional leadership and teacher efficacy. The design further facilitated in-depth understanding of contextual and organisational dynamics influencing change processes.

The study was conducted within the INCREASE programme, implemented by VVOB in Kenya in collaboration with KEMI and the Ministry of Education. The programme targeted 1,121 junior school leaders across 21 counties in Kenya through the Effective School Leadership for Junior Schools (ESL4JS) course. The ESL4JS course comprised six units: digital literacy for learning, CBC implementation, effective resource management, learner support programmes, learner and teacher welfare, and institutional governance. The course was delivered through a blended learning model over approximately 120 hours.

This study employed a purposive, criterion-based sampling strategy informed by the Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology and process tracing principles. The sampling approach was designed to identify information-rich cases capable of providing detailed evidence regarding how participation in the blended Effective School Leadership for Junior Secondary Schools (ESL4JS) course contributed to changes in teacher efficacy. The focus on cases that had experienced and could articulate significant change was consistent with the study's objective of examining causal mechanisms linking school leaders' professional development to teacher efficacy outcomes.

The sampling process began with a review of MSC stories submitted by all 642 school leaders who had successfully completed the ESL4JS course across two cohorts (175 school leaders in Cohort 1 and 467 school leaders in Cohort 2). To ensure methodological rigor, only stories meeting predefined eligibility criteria were considered for further assessment. First, the story had to be successfully submitted through

the Moodle e-learning platform. Second, the story had to describe changes related to teacher efficacy, defined as teachers' beliefs in their capability to successfully implement the CBC in Junior Secondary Schools. Third, the story was required to clearly articulate a discernible "before" and "after" situation attributable to participation in the ESL4JS course. Finally, consideration was given to demographic representation, including county, gender, geographical location, years of leadership experience, and school type (public, private, or integrated), to ensure diversity and enhance the transferability of findings.

To strengthen the credibility and objectivity of case selection, an MSC Story Selection Committee was established comprising five stakeholders: one representative from KEMI, one school leader, one representative from the MoE, and two representatives from VVOB. The committee independently assessed each story using a structured nine-point scoring framework. Two core criteria assessed whether the story described a realistic and observable change and whether it was written authentically from the participant's personal experience. Seven additional criteria assessed the extent to which the reported changes reflected innovation, improvements in school-based continuous professional development, parental engagement, teacher welfare, ICT integration, teacher attitudes, knowledge and skills, and availability or quality of teaching and learning resources.

Stories were scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating stronger evidence of meaningful and significant change. Only stories that attained a minimum score of 5.0 were considered sufficiently robust for follow-up investigation. This threshold ensured that selected cases provided credible evidence of change while also reflecting multiple dimensions of school improvement associated with the programme's Theory of Change.

Following the screening and scoring process, 25 school leaders were purposively selected for in-depth investigation. The sample comprised 13 school leaders from Cohort 1 and 12 school leaders from Cohort 2, representing 13 counties across Kenya. The selected participants included 12 female and 13 male school leaders, consisting of 21 head teachers and 4 deputy head teachers. They were drawn from 16 public schools and 9 private schools, ensuring variation in leadership roles, school contexts and geographical locations. This diversity enabled the study to explore how the blended CPD intervention operated across different educational settings and strengthened the explanatory power of the process tracing analysis.

The selected school leaders constituted the primary participants for the process tracing investigation. To facilitate triangulation and corroboration of reported changes, additional participants were recruited from the selected schools. In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with school leaders and teachers to obtain detailed accounts of the reported changes, explore how those changes occurred, and examine alternative explanations for observed outcomes. Furthermore, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 145 Junior Secondary School teachers from the selected schools. The teachers were purposively included because they were direct beneficiaries of the school leaders' instructional support and were therefore well positioned to validate, challenge or elaborate on the changes reported by school leaders.

The combination of criterion-based MSC sampling, multi-stakeholder story assessment, demographic representation considerations, and triangulation through interviews and focus groups enhanced the credibility, trustworthiness and explanatory depth of the study. This rigorous sampling strategy ensured that the selected cases provided rich evidence for examining the causal pathways through which participation in the ESL4JS blended CPD programme contributed to changes in teacher efficacy.

Data were analysed using a process tracing approach to examine the causal mechanisms through which participation in the blended Effective School Leadership for Junior Secondary Schools ESL4JS course contributed to changes in teacher efficacy. The analysis followed five iterative steps: identifying the

changes to be explained, establishing evidence for the changes, documenting causal processes, examining alternative explanations, and assessing the strength of evidence for hypothesised causal pathways. First, MSC stories submitted by school leaders were reviewed to identify reported changes in teacher efficacy. Subsequently, data from IDIs with school leaders and teachers and FGDs were transcribed, coded, and analysed through both within-case and cross-case comparisons. Within case analysis involved mapping causal pathways for each of the 25 schools, while cross case analysis enabled the identification of recurring patterns and variations across contexts. Using deductive thematic analysis, data were coded against the programme's initial Theory of Change (TOC), with attention to facilitators, barriers, intermediary outcomes, and alternative causal explanations. Triangulation of evidence from school leaders and teachers was undertaken to assess the coherence and credibility of reported changes and to determine the extent to which they could be attributed to the ESL4JS intervention rather than external influences. The strength of evidence for each causal pathway was categorised as weak, moderate, or strong based on the consistency of participant accounts, the clarity of attribution to the intervention, and the consideration of rival explanations. Findings from the individual school analyses were then synthesised to refine the original TOC. The revised TOC further incorporated intermediary mechanisms and contextual factors that deepened understanding of how and under what conditions the blended CPD intervention contributed to changes in teacher efficacy and educational outcomes.

Ethical principles including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation and anonymity were observed throughout the study. Participants were informed about study objectives and their right to withdraw without consequences.

4.0 RESULTS/FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Strengthening Instructional Leadership through Blended Professional Development

Findings revealed that blended professional development significantly strengthened instructional leadership among school leaders. Leaders reported improvements in knowledge, confidence, attitudes and leadership practices related to CBC implementation.

Many leaders indicated a shift from administrative leadership to instructional leadership. Participants reported improved understanding of CBC principles, digital integration, financial management, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement and teacher support.

One school leader explained that before participating in the programme, leadership practices were more authoritarian and reactive. After the training, leadership became collaborative, strategic and supportive. Another leader stated that the course transformed understanding of leadership by demonstrating how school leaders shape instructional environments and teacher motivation.

The blended nature of the programme enhanced flexibility and sustained engagement. Leaders appreciated opportunities for self-paced learning, peer interaction, practical reflection and continuous access to resources through Moodle. Face-to-face sessions complemented online learning by enabling discussions, collaboration and contextual application.

4.2 Pathway One: Improved Planning and Resource Mobilisation

The first major pathway linking blended professional development to teacher efficacy involved improved school planning and resource mobilisation.

School leaders reported stronger capabilities in collaborative planning, budgeting, procurement and

strategic management. Many leaders introduced participatory planning processes involving teachers, boards of management, parents and communities. In their own words a school leader had this to say,

During procurement, we involve teachers in decision-making. We have a procurement committee, they sit down with the teachers, discuss among them what they need and what is to be prioritized. When the resources are delivered, I usually show them so that they confirm that whatever they requested is delivered. They now have trust in me. *School leader, School 17, 2025*

Collaborative budgeting improved alignment between school resource allocation and instructional needs. Teachers confirmed increased involvement in identifying instructional material requirements and curriculum priorities.

Improved planning further enabled mobilisation of additional resources. School leaders engaged parents, communities and development partners to support infrastructure development, ICT integration and procurement of teaching materials. Several schools upgraded laboratories, libraries, computer laboratories and sports facilities.

Teachers reported that improved access to teaching and learning materials enhanced confidence and effectiveness in implementing CBC pedagogies. Availability of ICT devices, internet connectivity, laboratory apparatus and supplementary books increased instructional efficiency and fidelity to curriculum requirements. In one of the schools a teacher had this to say,

This confidence has changed over the past year because more teaching and learning materials to support the teaching of CBC have been made available to me as a teacher. *Teacher, School 6, 2024*

Teachers further explained that they previously frequently skipped practical or technology-related learning activities due to lack of resources. Following leadership interventions informed by professional development, schools acquired materials necessary for learner-centred instruction.

4.3 Pathway Two: Strengthening School Culture and Teacher Welfare

The second pathway involved strengthening school culture, collaboration and teacher welfare.

School leaders increasingly prioritised collaboration with teachers, parents and communities. Leaders introduced regular meetings, team-building activities, participatory decision-making and shared leadership practices. Teachers described improved communication, trust and collegiality within schools. One school leader had this to say,

We introduced team building. You know when teachers are united, when teachers are happy, they'll work. They work, not because of the teacher, but they feel that they are part of the school, they are part of administration, they are part of the school community, they own the school. *School Leader, School 19, 2025*

Parental engagement increased significantly. Leaders involved parents in planning, fundraising and instructional support. Some schools sensitised parents regarding digital learning and encouraged home support for technology-based assignments.

Strengthened collaboration contributed to shared ownership of school improvement processes. Teachers reported feeling more valued, involved and motivated.

Blended professional development further increased leaders' awareness regarding teacher welfare. Several schools introduced welfare initiatives including teacher meals, social support programmes, sports activities, SACCOs, recognition awards and workload redistribution.

Teachers associated improved welfare with enhanced motivation, morale, collaboration and confidence.

Reduced workload pressures and supportive relationships created enabling conditions for instructional effectiveness.

4.4 Pathway Three: Pedagogical Support and School-Based Professional Learning

The third pathway involved improved pedagogical support through mentoring, coaching, school-based professional development and peer collaboration.

School leaders increasingly facilitated continuous professional learning opportunities for teachers. These included mentoring, peer observation, departmental collaboration, coaching, external training opportunities and collaborative lesson planning. In their own words as school leader mentioned,

When I came back to school, I got an expert who took us through the handling of the gadgets, connection, projection and so forth. The teachers were taken through that and at the end of it, they were able to implement this themselves and present the lessons. *School Leader, School 17, 2025*

Teachers explained that school leaders became more accessible and supportive regarding instructional challenges. Leaders monitored instructional practices, provided feedback, facilitated peer learning and supported CBC implementation.

School-based professional development improved teachers' instructional confidence and competence. Teachers reported increased ability to implement learner-centred pedagogies, competency-based assessment, ICT integration and differentiated instruction.

Peer collaboration emerged as particularly significant. Teachers increasingly shared ideas, teaching materials and instructional strategies. Departmental teamwork strengthened collective efficacy and instructional coherence.

4.5 Sustainability and Scalability

Findings suggested promising sustainability and scalability prospects for blended professional development.

Distributed leadership practices contributed to institutionalisation of changes within schools. Rather than relying solely on individual leaders, leadership responsibilities increasingly involved teachers and committees. In one school a school leader had this to say,

In terms of systems, we now have a service charter and a school policy in place. Before, we didn't record much, we would just talk and go. Now, everything is documented. For example, when there's a discipline case, the child writes a letter that's filed. We keep occurrence books and case files for reference. That's one of the things I learned from the INCREASE training the importance of documentation and accountability. *School leader, School 2, 2024*

ICT integration also demonstrated sustainability potential because digital practices became embedded within school routines. School-based professional development structures further increased continuity of learning.

The programme's collaboration with KEMI strengthened institutional ownership and alignment with national systems. Participants highlighted that government involvement increased legitimacy, scalability and sustainability prospects.

However, sustainability challenges remained. Some infrastructure improvements depended heavily on individual leadership initiative and external funding. Resource constraints, teacher shortages, internet instability and leadership transfers also threatened continuity.

Discussion

The study demonstrates that blended professional development can significantly strengthen instructional leadership capacities within curriculum reform contexts. Findings align with existing literature emphasising that effective professional development is continuous, contextually relevant, collaborative and practice oriented (Buao & Sarmiento, 2022).

The blended modality enhanced flexibility and sustained engagement while balancing school leaders' professional responsibilities. This finding also align with Davies (2018) finding that online learning enable accessibility and self-paced reflection whereas face-to-face sessions strengthened collaboration and contextual application. Importantly, the study demonstrates that instructional leadership development extends beyond technical administrative skills. Leadership transformation involved attitudinal and identity shifts regarding leadership roles, collaboration, instructional support and teacher development.

Findings support social cognitive perspectives suggesting that teacher efficacy develops through supportive organisational environments, professional learning opportunities, collaboration and access to resources.

The study identified three interconnected pathways through which instructional leadership influenced teacher efficacy: planning and resource mobilisation, collaborative school culture and pedagogical support. Resource mobilisation improved instructional conditions necessary for effective CBC implementation. Collaborative cultures strengthened teacher motivation, ownership and collective efficacy. Pedagogical support enhanced instructional confidence and competence. These findings relate to International Development Research Centre (2024) conclusions on teacher professional development that is facilitated by school leaders.

These findings reinforce Habibi et al. (2025) literature emphasising that leadership influences teaching indirectly through organisational conditions, professional relationships and instructional support systems.

The study highlights the importance of leadership development within curriculum reform implementation. Curriculum reforms frequently fail because insufficient attention is given to leadership capacities necessary for organisational and instructional change (PAL Network, 2021). The findings demonstrate that strengthening school leadership can create enabling environments for teacher learning and instructional transformation. Leadership professional development should therefore be integrated within broader education reform strategies.

Evidence regarding distributed leadership, collaborative cultures, ICT integration and school-based professional learning suggests promising institutionalisation prospects. The programme's partnership with KEMI further strengthened alignment with national systems and increased potential for scalability. However, as indicated in OECD/The World Bank (2026), the study also established that sustainable reform requires continued investment in infrastructure, financing, policy support and leadership continuity.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of blended professional development on instructional leadership and teacher efficacy within Kenya's junior school CBC implementation context. Findings demonstrate that blended professional development significantly strengthened school leaders' instructional leadership capacities, contributing to improved teacher efficacy through multiple interconnected pathways.

Improved planning and resource mobilisation enhanced access to instructional materials and learning infrastructure. Strengthened school culture improved collaboration, motivation and shared ownership.

Enhanced pedagogical support strengthened teacher confidence, competence and professional learning.

The study contributes empirical evidence regarding mechanisms linking school leadership development to teacher efficacy within African curriculum reform contexts. It further demonstrates the value of blended modalities as flexible, scalable and contextually responsive approaches to leadership professional development.

Overall, the findings affirm that when school leaders are equipped with instructional leadership knowledge, skills and support, they can create enabling conditions that empower teachers to implement learner-centred pedagogies effectively.

Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

i. The Ministry of Education should institutionalise blended professional development for school leaders within national leadership development frameworks.

ii. KEMI and related institutions should expand instructional leadership training focusing on CBC implementation, teacher support and school-based professional learning.

iii. Government and development partners should invest in ICT infrastructure and internet connectivity to strengthen blended professional development accessibility.

iv. Policies should support distributed leadership and collaborative school cultures to enhance sustainability of instructional improvement.

v. School-based professional learning structures including mentoring, coaching and peer collaboration should be strengthened nationally.

Practice Recommendations

i. Schools should institutionalise collaborative planning and budgeting processes involving teachers and communities.

ii. School leaders should prioritise teacher welfare and supportive professional environments.

iii. Schools should integrate continuous school-based professional learning within routine instructional practices.

iv. Teachers should be encouraged to participate actively in collaborative instructional leadership processes.

Recommendations for Future Research

i. Future studies should explore long-term learner outcomes associated with instructional leadership development.

ii. Quantitative studies examining relationships between leadership professional development and teacher efficacy are recommended.

iii. Comparative studies across countries implementing competency-based reforms would strengthen contextual understanding.

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