



## INSTRUCTIONAL POLICY AND QUALITY OF BUSINESS STUDIES TEXTBOOK IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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### **Abstract:**

Meticulously developed business studies textbook facilitates individualized learning contributing to the achievement of learning objectives even in the absence of the teacher. Think-pair and share is accelerated as learners are likely to discuss amongst themselves new knowledge acquired through business studies textbook hence boosting learner enthusiasm in construction of knowledge. However, instructional information in business studies textbook may not necessarily facilitate realization of specific objectives where policy governing textbook selection, acquisition and review is inadequate and missing full implementation. Nevertheless, in an instance where the instructional policy guiding textbook selection, acquisition and review are adhered to, the quality textbook is availed to learners in secondary schools in Kenya. This study adopted an exploratory research design through qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Further analysis showed that textbook selection, acquisition and review influence quality of textbooks used in secondary schools thereby determining quality of learning through textbook contributing to achievement of academic excellence for lifelong learning. Therefore, it is recommended that educational policies be developed considering the needs of the curriculum as well as the learners in order to boost learner mean score in secondary schools in Kenya.

**Keywords:** instructional policy, textbook selection, textbook acquisition and textbook review, business studies, quality textbook

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## 1. Introduction

A well laid out instructional policy by the government of Kenya through the ministry of Education leads to the effective selection, acquisition and review of teaching and learning material for enhanced academic excellence facilitating mastery of concept and skill acquisition in business studies. As opined by Bekele, Odundo, Mwangi, and Ganira (2022), a successful instruction is that which equips learner with requisite information through selection and provision of well-structured textbooks in schools for teaching and learning of business studies. Learning through properly designed business studies textbook supports academic achievement for catapulted academic results across education system in Kenya. Selection of textbooks in Kenya is determined by the specific curriculum as it entails specific learning outcomes, pertinent and contemporary issues, and core values to be acquired by the novice. As postulated by Ganira, Odundo, Ciumwari and Muasya (2019), textbook selection depends on factors such as availability of textbooks, marketing by publishers, the familiarity of textbooks and textbook content for realization of academic goals among learners. Availability of appropriately structured textbook promotes reading culture across schools therefore yielding improvement in knowledge construction through the textbook. Knowledge creation is supported whenever the government through the ministry of Education acquires relevant textbook for instruction across school system. Additionally, appropriately selected textbook therefore enhances quality learning leading to the increased learning outcome in business studies.

Whenever learner-centered approach of teaching is adopted for instruction in business studies classroom mastery of concept and cementing knowledge is enhanced. Bekele, Odundo, Mwangi and Lilian (2021) assert that pedagogical technique has been globally changing and this has increased preference of learner-centered approach to teaching and learning. This means that business studies textbook has to be structured in a manner that learners can interpret information therein for accelerated learning outcome. In circumstances where knowledge creation is controlled by learner three domains of learner takes center stage: affective, psychomotor and cognitive domain. In learner centered teaching strategy learner is hands-on and therefore participates through the learning process with enthusiasm. According to Tezera (2019), education policy is aimed at initiating change that would encourage learning among learners in a manner that encourages improvement in academic excellence across schools in Kenya. Advancement in technology necessitates a change in structure and design of the textbook to match the individual needs of the learner and that of the curriculum captivating learners' interest to learn yielding higher academic scores in business studies. The appropriate instructional policy presents learners with adequate and relevant textbooks that would help the construction of knowledge and acquisition of skills in business studies. As cited in Oluoch, Odundo and Mwangi (2020), the core textbook is essential in promoting individuals learning and academic progress across the school system through exposing learner to real life situation to further cement the learnt concept. Instances

where system of education provides high-quality educational materials and competencies individuals are adequately prepared for success in academics. However, policies facilitating change may fail due to ignorance of individuals implementing it and hence weakness of the implementation process contributing to inadequate learning leading to low results in business studies. As stated in Shahab, Clinch and O'Neil (2017), revising core textbooks establishes the worth and value of the subject matter leading to the production of instructional material that instigates understanding and retention of knowledge for better learning outcomes. The results of the assessment may stimulate the production of core textbooks that meet set out quality measures and standards for a better learning experience and improved academic outcomes.

When textbook review is done annually and the amendment is made to encourage learning and acceleration in skill acquisition among learners' realization of specific learning objectives is achieved. As affirmed by DQASO (June, 2019), textbook instructional content is reviewed and any adjustment required is effected in order to obtain a more relevant and quality learning material and improved academic outcome. Textbook that meets expectations of curriculum is approved to be used in schools for instruction as tool of academic excellence in business studies. As postulated by Odundo *et al.*, (2018), the well-structured textbook will facilitate the achievement of learning objectives promoting competent and skillful learning opening up a world of learning experiences to the learner.

Appropriately planned acquisition process facilitates provision of quality textbooks required for the achievement of learning objectives. In the views of Bekele *et al.* (2022), textbooks with logically presented content boosts learner motivation to construct knowledge resulting in maximization of learning outcome. Logical information enables the learner to move from known to unknown thereby creating a pathway to generate deeper understanding and mastery of business studies concepts.

### **1.1 Instructional Policy, Textbook Selection and Quality of Business Textbook**

The selection of textbooks in Kenya is determined by the curriculum of the day. As postulated by Mailo, Odundo and Ganira (2022), textbook selection depends on factors such as availability of textbooks and textbook content. Based on these factors government makes a decision on whether to adopt a textbook for instruction or not. Appropriately selected textbook enhances quality learning through textbook leading to the increased learning outcome. According to Tezera (2019), education policy is aimed at initiating change that would encourage learning among learners contributing to increase in academic achievement. ICT integration in business studies class triggers interest in learning process fast tracking knowledge creation and acquisition of skill. Change in education prepares learners for a competitive global market with skills that are necessary for individual and societal development. As cited in Oluoch, Odundo & Mwangi (2020) the core textbook is essential in promoting individuals skill acquisition and academic progress across the school system. Systems of education that provide high-quality education and competencies prepare individuals for success in academics. However,

policies that are put in place to facilitate change may fail due to ignorance of individuals implementing it and hence weakness of the implementation process contributing to inadequate learning leading to low results. When selecting a textbook for the instruction it is important to consider the specific learning outcome of the business studies curriculum. According to Bekele *et al.* (2021) a quality business studies textbook is that which incorporates appropriate teaching methods. Teaching methods are usually suggested in the corresponding teachers' guide. Those methods have to be relevant to individual learner characteristics in order to yield maximum knowledge retention in business studies.

### **1.2 Instructional Policy, Textbook Acquisition and Quality Textbook**

An appropriately planned acquisition process facilitates the provision of quality textbooks required for the achievement of learning objectives. As postulated by Odundo *et al.*, (2018), the well-structured textbook will facilitate the achievement of learning objectives promoting competent and skillful learning opening up a world of learning experiences to the learner. An appropriately planned acquisition process facilitates the provision of quality textbooks required for the achievement of learning objectives. According to Bekele *et al.* (2022) textbook with logically presented content boosts learner motivation to construct knowledge resulting in maximization of learning outcome. Logical information enables the learner to move from known to unknown thereby creating a pathway to generate deeper understanding and mastery of business studies concepts. In view of Mailo *et al.* (2022), acquisition of business studies textbook is guided by policies and standards that ensure equity and quality of instruction material for better academic results. Many students still choose to use the campus bookstore because such textbook is rightfully stoked considering the need for the curriculum objectives. Whenever business studies curriculum is considered in selection and acquisition of textbook learning is enhanced contributing to achievement of learning objectives.

### **1.3 Instructional Policy, Textbook Review and Quality Textbook**

Business studies textbook effectiveness is enhanced by constantly reviewing the textbook with reference to the curriculum for improved learning experience. As stated in Shahab, Clinch and O'Neil (2017), revising core textbooks establishes the worth and value of the subject matter leading to the production of instructional material that instigates understanding and retention of knowledge for better learning outcomes. The results of the assessment may stimulate the production of core textbooks that meet set out quality measures and standards for a better learning experience and improved academic outcomes. Textbook review in Kenya is done annually and the amendment is made to encourage learning and accelerate skill acquisition among learners. In case of any reports received from the Directorate of quality assurance and standards on errors that may be reported then corrections are done after the review process. When a textbook meets the expectations of the curriculum developers then it is a quality of the textbook. As postulated by Odundo *et al.* (2018), the well-structured textbook will facilitate the

achievement of learning objectives thereby promoting competent and skillful learning. Governments should pay particular attention to their provision to ensure equal access to quality textbooks for all learners. Decision-makers must find a balance between textbooks affordability and quality. In the findings of Adebayo (2019), the quality textbook is that whose content is developed in a decentralized manner and aims to cater to the needs of all children, even those in the most rural areas. Instructional policy on the review of textbooks takes into account the general need of the learner in order to uphold accelerated academic success across the school system in Kenya.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Inadequate content in textbooks discourages effective independent learning hindering academic excellence in business studies. Business studies core textbook amplifies interesting instructional content which is appropriate for varied capabilities assisting learning satisfaction. In instances where the instructional policy does not focus needs of learners, learning is interrupted leading-learners into boredom thereby blocking knowledge construction in business studies. Inadequately structured business studies core textbook limits learner's broad, explorable field of marvel and discovery in learning and acquisition of desirable skills consequently resulting in decreased mean score in examination results. Properly designed business studies textbook boosts enthusiasm and synergy paving way for new discoveries promoting learners' aptitude for accelerated academic achievement in secondary schools in Kenya. Inadequacy in policies such as selection, acquisition and textbook review inhibits learning achievement degrading academic outcomes among learners. Additionally, a business textbook that does not match curriculum content is inappropriate and may block learning through textbooks.

## **3. Purpose and Objectives**

This article established the relevance of instructional policy; selection policy, acquisition policy and textbook review policy in enhancing the quality of business studies textbooks used in secondary schools in Kenya.

## **4. Theoretical Perspective**

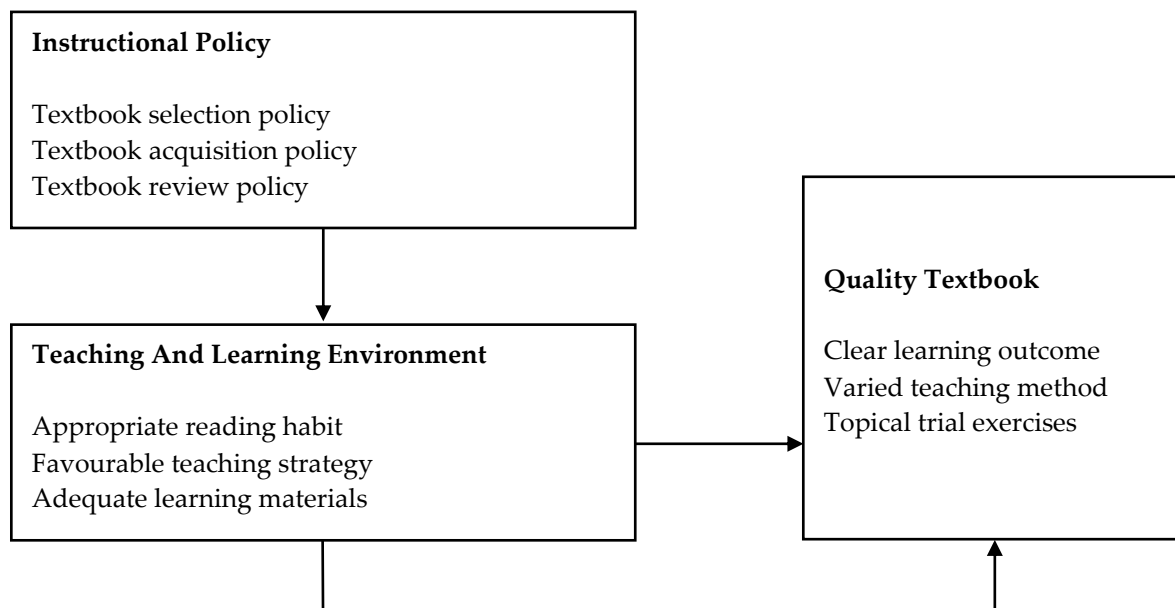
The study adopted the Zone of Proximal Development theory by Lev Vygotsky (1978). The ZPD comprises of series of activities too challenging for the child to achieve on his own, however learning is likely to be achieved through the assistance of a business studies core textbook even in absence of the teacher. The zone of proximal development is where learner receives support to learn from their immediate environment. For this study, the textbook provides support to learners to achieve learning objectives even in absence of the business teacher. The theory supports the fact that learning can be achieved by the learner through immediate support offered by core textbooks. Zone of proximal

development refers to the distance between what the learner can do without help and what he can do with help in order to achieve the desired learning objectives. As opionated by Vygotsky (1978), ZPD comprises of series of activities too challenging for the child to achieve on his own, however learning is likely to be achieved through the assistance of a business studies core textbook even in absence of the teacher. The zone of proximal development has three levels: very simple level, zone of proximal development and most difficult level. In the zone of proximal development, learning is promoted through immediate resources as business studies core textbooks without which achievement of learning is hindered. This ZPD involves contains a series of activities that aid in knowledge construction and the extreme level is composed of activities beyond the learner's ability to learn.

Margolis (2020) used Zone of Proximal Development in his study entitled *Zone of Proximal Development in Teaching Practice* and found out that the greater the level of abstraction available to the child the less spontaneous initial concepts remained in them. In other words, activities enhance the building of the learner's zone of proximal development. The theory is relevant to this study as it focuses on textbooks as a support tool for the learning experience.

## **5. Conceptual Framework**

Appropriate instructional policy results in the production of quality business studies textbooks facilitating the achievement of learning objectives leading to an increased learner mean score in business studies. Business studies textbook that presents information logically, adequate visual presentation and adheres to learner cognitive level through appropriate teaching and learning environment results in the achievement of learning objectives propagating mastery of concepts yielding sustained learning outcome in secondary schools.



**Figure 1:** Hypothetical Relationship between Instructional Policy and Quality of Business Studies Textbook

## 6. Methodology

The study adopted an exploratory research design involving qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis. In this study qualitative data was collected through interviewing of KICD officials and DQASO for Ministry of Education Probability Sampling was used to obtain the respondents since it gives every member of the population an equal chance of being selected (Orodho *et al.*, 2016). The validity of the research tool-interview schedule was verified by experts, statisticians and supervisors.

## 7. Findings and Discussions

### 7.1 Instructionally Policy, Textbook Selection and Quality of Business Textbook

Textbook selection is done by the Ministry of Education-National Office. Selection is influenced by the price of the coursebook. The government picks a textbook that has quoted the lowest price. Moreover, the selection is also influenced by the quality of content to some extent. There are several activities involved in the selection of textbooks. The initial stage begins with several books that are vetted and approved. Those textbooks go through second vetting to determine the best to be purchased with references to the costing- the textbook with the least price is selected. There are also textbook procurement guidelines that add to the instructional policies. Results concur with Mailo *et al.* (2022) who stated that quality content in textbook are one of the factors considered when acquiring a textbook. Acquisition of quality of textbooks required in the teaching and learning process leads to improved teaching and learning for the attainment of desired learning outcomes.

## **7.2 Instructionally Policy, Textbook Acquisition and Quality of Business Textbook**

To guide the requisition and acquisition of textbooks at the secondary school level, DQASO publishes the Orange Book which provides the list of approved coursebooks from which the school administration can acquire reference books for teachers and learners. The directorate of quality assurance officer then facilitates the acquisition of quality of textbooks by participating in the vetting of the textbook spearheaded by the KICD. The quality of textbooks in secondary schools is vital in ensuring that quality education is discharged. Results concur with Ganira *et al.* (2022) that the acquisition process of textbooks will impact the quality of textbook selected in that if the process is not adequate, chances that textbook of poor quality will be procured hindering learning achievement across school system. In an interview, Directorate of quality assurance and standards officer (DQASO) was quoted saying: “...DQASO ensures quality content is achieved in textbook through closely monitoring them and getting feedback from the subject teachers” (DQASO, June 2021).

The quality of textbooks spans a range of items including error-free textbooks. Reviews of textbooks have to be conducted to identify and correct the errors. The presence of errors in textbooks poses great damage to the reading and learning among teachers and learners thereby interrupting process of knowledge creation in business studies. According to Press release (February 2018), Jwan states that there has been a report on grammatical errors and inadequacy of content in government-provided textbooks during the DQASO assessment checks. Quality Assurance and Standards is important to school success in terms of its mission, goal and objectives. DQASO is tasked with establishing, maintaining and improving educational standards and thus the quality of textbooks for teaching and learning is essential. In an interview with DQASO was quoted saying: “...There are channels to report on issues in the textbook that discourages learning” (DQASO, June 2021).

## **7.3 Instructionally Policy, Textbook Review and Quality Textbook**

Textbook review in Kenya is done annually and the amendment is made to encourage learning and accelerate skill acquisition among learners. In case of any reports received from the Directorate of quality assurance and standards on errors that may be reported then corrections are done after the review process. When a textbook meets the expectations of the curriculum then it is likely to be a quality textbook. Quality textbook accelerates the achievement of the intended curriculum. Quality assurance that is focused on textbook quality supports schools to adapt to changing needs of learners upholding increased learner mean score. The focus is not only on improvement but also innovation that is, development or experimental testing of approaches in different contexts to support the quality of textbooks. Approaches to quality assurance may need to be adapted over time to efficiently meet the needs of learners for feedback and decision-making on matters related to educational provisions resulting in academic success. Findings agree with Bekele *et al.* (2022) that learners recall facts obtained through business studies textbook, if quality-coloured photos visualizing concepts relating to



issues that are abstract are presented in-text assisting the knowledge creation process bringing about growth in the academic outcome.

DQASO (June 2019) stated that in case of substantial issues in the textbook, subject teachers can write to the Directorate of quality assurance and standards office who in return writes to KICD after consulting with a relevant subject specialist to effect the highlighted concern. Kenya institute of curriculum development then informs respective publishers who will, in turn, contact authors of core business studies textbooks concerning reported errors. In some instances, there is acute underutilization of textbooks provided by the government as schools opt for another source of textbooks. In such cases, there is divergence in terms of content from certified curriculum guidelines which impacts the quality of textbooks developed. DQASO during the interview said: “...Directorate of quality assurance reports cases of underutilization to the immediate sub-county curriculum support officers for follow up” (DQASO, June 2021).

Textbooks are an educational investment and underutilization is an expense to the government. Textbook wastage implies inefficient utilization of education resources to achieve educational goals. There is a need for policies to minimize underutilization of business textbooks and as a result, lead to maximum usage yielding achievement of learning objectives through a business textbook. Findings agree with Mailo *et al.* (2022), that policies need to be stated and be communicated clearly to stakeholders to promote quality and effective textbook use for accelerated learner-centered knowledge construction.

## 8. Conclusion

This study sought to examine the relevance of instructional policy in supporting the quality of the business textbook. DQASO members indicated that there is a policy with regard to textbooks at secondary schools. Policy by the Ministry of Education in form of guidelines and circulars guides utilization of textbooks at secondary school level whenever new activity comes up enhancing harmony and maximization of achievement of learning outcome through a business textbook. However, stated policies are not clearly defined attracting challenges related to instructional policy implementation in teaching and learning of business studies among learners. Business studies core textbooks in most public secondary schools are not issued to learners inhibiting the effectiveness of learning through business studies textbooks, therefore close monitoring by DQASO is recommended to facilitate the issuance of business textbooks to learners and also to enhance appropriate maintenance of business textbooks and recovery of the lost textbook.

In terms of textbook selection, the task is undertaken by the Ministry of Education-National Office. Selection is influenced by the price of the business studies core textbook. The government picks a textbook that has quoted the lowest price. Moreover, the selection is also influenced by the quality of content to some extent. To guide the requisition and acquisition of textbooks at the secondary school level, DQASO Publishes

the Orange Book which provides a list of approved coursebooks from which the school's administration can acquire reference books for teachers and learners promoting effectiveness in the learning process. Moreover, the instructional policy is also geared towards ensuring the development of quality textbook which is free of errors and content irrelevant to the curriculum. The quality of textbooks spans a range of items including error-free textbooks. A review of business textbooks has to be conducted to identify and correct errors. DQASO has the task to ensure quality is achieved in the textbook through closely monitoring them and getting feedback from the subject teachers' improved learning experiences through business studies textbooks.

## 9. Recommendations

### 9.1 For Practice

Directorate of quality assurance and standards to put measures in place to regulate the quality of dummies presented by publishers to Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development for approval to support quality instruction across the school system in Kenya.

### 9.2 For Policy

Periodical review of guidelines, strategies and policies relating to content in the textbook to ensure inclusion of pertinent and contemporary issues.

### 9.3 For Further Studies

- 1) Influence of quality textbooks on learners' academic achievement in Kenya
- 2) Impact of quality textbook in implementation and achievement of competence-based curriculum (CBC) in Kenya.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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