

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT (CAPS) IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the findings from current research on the impact that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum subjects have on two South African Schools in Gauteng province in South Africa. The aim is to present the impact of the CAPs subjects in the school. The study did a critical evaluation of each subject to elaborate on the importance and challenges in implementing the subjects and using a qualitative research method to collect data on a group of teachers and students on their opinion on the impact of CAPs subjects. The findings suggest that even though the curriculum is effective, it needs to be improved to close the gap between public and private schools. Private schools are currently benefiting the most from the subjects and how the curriculum is structured.

KEYWORDS

CAPS Subjects, Public and Private Schools, Primary and High School, Department of Basic Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Former South Africa President 'Nelson Mandela' argued that "Education is the most powerful weapon that changes the world" [1]. Still, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) finds it challenging to develop a strategic curriculum that benefits public and private schools. The gap between private and public schools is enormous in the country, and it keeps increasing due to proper content structure in the current CAPs curriculum [2]. According to Adams [3], South Africa's educational system does not create equal opportunities for all students in the country, which can have a more significant impact on the country's future. Education is vital because if the students and citizens of the country are not well educated, they will not develop. The curriculum needs to be structured to make it possible for students to apply what they are taught in primary and high school in their daily lives and outside of the school environment, preparing them for higher education learning [4].

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, commonly known as CAPS, was introduced in 2012 by the Department of Basic Education, replacing the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) [5]. CAPS' introduction came with a significant focus on "the course content, teaching and learning pedagogy and learning strategies" [6]. The curriculum assists students' knowledge and skills and give teachers the structure on what to teach and assessed on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis [7].

With the introduction of CAPS, the government tried to close the existing gap between private and public schools [8]. Most private schools form part of the IEB (Independent Examinations Board), an agency that provides examinations to most private schools. The IEB also follows the CAPS curriculum like any other public schools. Still, with some differences in some fields, the IEB exams are difficult for most parents, teachers, universities even students when compared to exams prepared by the government for public schools' students [9]. IEB (private schools) and public schools students all get the National Senior Certificate (NSC) when they pass matric. But IEB students are more likely to be taken by universities than public schools' students because of the abundant resources and flexibility of curriculum available for private students. The educational gap between private and public schools led the government to introduce CAPS to close the gap between IEB students and public schools' students, to merge the inequality gap [9].

As a nationwide curriculum implemented by most schools in South Africa, CAPS has not benefited public schools. School Advisor [10] attest to this by stating that the curriculum seems to be helping private schools more than public schools. The reason is that most private schools offer an IEB curriculum. Private institutions can offer IEB curriculum because they have better resources facilities and, employ qualified and experienced teachers who know and understand the curriculum subjects better than public school teachers and provide integrated learning and teaching in each issue offered [10]. The typologies of private schools and public schools differ. For instance, private schools are more detailed in education and learning and service delivery than public schools.

Nevertheless, they are limited in research and the number of courses offered to learners. Furthermore, Lesufi [11] argued that the unique attribute of private schools is the ability to attract diverse student groups and work closely with several industries and employers of labour. Public schools do not have the facilities and enough resources to offer capacity training for their teachers on the technical know-how of the curriculum content.

Furthermore, the system does not offer proper monitoring and evaluation of the teachers on the curriculum offerings. As a result, public schools' quality of education is not up to standard, and public schools' students are disadvantaged as against the private sector counterpart [12]. Public schools' teachers must comply with the Department of Basic Education guidelines on teaching and learning curriculum and approach. At the same time, private schools can have their policies, and they are also allowed to set their assessments (exams, tests and assignments). In contrast, the government fixes the examinations for all public schools, giving private schools the advantage to excel better than public schools [12]. The CAPS curriculum makes it difficult for both public and private schools' students to enter higher learning institutions or advance to high school grades because of the low School-based Assessment (SBA) scores that have been set for students to pass [13].

For example, in public primary schools, grade 7 students need the following percentages to advance to high schools (grade 8); they must get 50% for Home Language, 40% for First Additional Language and 40% for Mathematics. The subjects are compulsory with the following percentages in other topics: 40% in 3 subjects and 30% in 2 subjects. The percentages are very low because they encourage students to aim lower and struggle to reach high school grades [13]. Moreover, in public high school, for students to pass matric, they need the following results: 40% in their Home Language, 40% in 2 other subjects, 30% in other four subjects, and they must pass 6 out of the seven subjects. The approved pass rate is sometimes challenging for most matric students hoping to get into a university [14]. The research aims to evaluate whether CAPS subjects are helping the students in South Africa to be able to have the ability to change the economic conditions that the country is currently facing or if the curriculum is restricting students to be able to become creative thinkers [15]. The paper presents the effectiveness of the CAPS

curriculum since its implementation, the challenges faced by students and teachers on the changes, explaining made on the curriculum, explaining which schools are benefiting the most (private or public schools) and future suggestions on modifications to the CAPS policy. Other information accessed in the study were from online educational articles, journals, government books, books and online web sites [15]. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education accessed its databases on past results from schools to get relevant information about teachers and students experiences about the subjects since the introduction of CAPS to evaluate the impact of the curriculum and its subjects since 2012.

The study engaged a qualitative method to understand the in-depth experience of teachers and students on the effectiveness of the CAPS curriculum in public and private schools. The qualitative approach used an exploratory design since it uses small samples sizes that make it more effective for a qualitative study [17]. Exploratory design helps gather data and information about what is known and unknown about a research problem. This research design style helps to address research questions of all types (what, why, how) by conducting an in-depth interview with the two groups of teachers and students in private and public schools [16]. The sample size consists of six teachers from private schools (regarded as Pvt 1-8) and six teachers from public schools (regarded as Put 1-8) who have taught CAPS curriculum for at least two years and are educators for grades 7, 8, 10 and 11 students. Eight students also took part in the research study; four students are from public schools (regarded as S1-S4) and four private schools (regarded as S5-S8) to understand their views and opinions about the subjects. In total, twenty participants participated in the study.

The participants were selected using a judgemental, also known as purposive sampling, to gather data and information from the participants [18]. The analysis projected the thematic analysis from themes that emerged from the data collection. Ethical principles such as seeking participant's consent, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly adhered to throughout the research. Education is critical in a country's economic growth and development. The paper argues that students must have a good education as it is their democratic right to have proper education [19].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

CAPS is the national curriculum mandated for all private and public schools in South Africa. Schools using the CAPS curriculum must follow the Department of Basic Education guidelines, but some challenges come with implementing some subjects. Some of the subjects are best implemented in public schools, while some are in private schools [20].

The literature explains each course offered in grade seven primary schools and grades 8-12 courses in line with the CAPS curriculum. The literature further demonstrates the importance and challenges of implementing each subject, the schooling system and its mode of implementation since CAPS curriculum inception. CAPS Curriculum has projected specific challenges in most schools' teaching and learning pedagogy[20].

2.1. Primary School Subjects

The subjects below are subjects taught in grade 7 in most schools. Students are required to do thirteen (13) significant subjects introduced by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in the implementation of CAPS [20].

2.1.1. Languages

Stoop (2017) highlighted that eleven languages represent the eleven official languages spoken in South Africa (the mother tongue languages). Private and public schools that use CAPS as their curriculum can teach the following languages: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu [21]. The constitution of the country is driving the decision to implement languages in schools. Section 29 (2) of the Constitution states that "everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where it is reasonably practicable"[21]. Therefore, languages are essential modules in the CAPS curriculum. CAPS makes it possible for students to learn at least two languages, the first language known as the home language, which is being used primarily as the adopted language of the school and an additional language (second language). Schools can select two languages from the eleven official languages and implement them in their schools [21].

Manyike and Lemmer [22] found out that most schools in rural areas prefer not to use English or Afrikaans as their home language but rather as their second language. In contrast, most urban areas choose to have English or Afrikaans as their home language and even as their second language. Private schools prefer English and Afrikaans as the languages of their schools, while public schools prefer to have the other languages as their home languages [22]

According to Manyike and Lemmer, the Department of Basic Education has advised most private and public schools to use English as their home language. English is a global language, and it becomes easier for students to be able to understand and communicate better when interacting with different people from different backgrounds and cultures. Students from grade 1 to 12 are encouraged to take English as their home language, and recently, English has become a compulsory subject in most schools [22].

The challenges in implementing most of the ethnic languages in schools are that foreign learners are starting to attend most public and private schools, limiting languages in South African schools. The Department of Basic Education has stated that if students fail any of their languages, they will automatically fail their respective grade [23].

2.1.2. Mathematics

"Mathematics is a language that makes use of symbols and notations to describe numerical, geometric and graphical relationships" [2]. According to the Department of Basic Education [2], Mathematics helps with the development of students and mental processes to make use of logical, creative thinking and accuracy when solving problems and making decisions. Mathematics teaches students to develop a number vocabulary, number concept and calculation skills, learn to think logically and apply mathematical techniques when solving problems, and for students to be able to investigate, analyze, represent, and interpret information [2]. Mathematics in primary schools is a combination of pure maths and maths literacy. Students can understand the values of both concepts and expose them to different ways and methods of solving mathematical equations and problems [2].

Mathematics is offered in all schools in South Africa, both in public and private schools, because it is a compulsory subject. Still, the challenge with implementing the subject is that students who find it hard to understand the contents of the subject do not have enough time to learn the concepts. If learners cannot solve some mathematical issues, they will not pass their grade, and teachers find it challenging to motivate learners who are unable to under the work [2].

2.1.3. History

According to the Department of Basic Education [2], history is a subject that focuses on helping students to understand how past human actions affects the present and how they can influence the future. History helps students understand the values that the country's constitution is built on to understand the importance of respecting different race, gender, and general human rights [2]. History is an important subject because it allows students to learn more about other cultures, religions, and languages and learn about their cultures and backgrounds. The challenges faced when implementing history are that most of the books used to teach the subject are outdated. Some schools prefer not to teach content that they find might be discriminative or racially not accepted by students [3].

2.1.4. Geography

Geography is a subject that studies human and physical environments [2]. In Human Geography, the subject's contents include studying and investigating activities that impact people and earth. In contrast, Physical Geography examines the natural processes and features of the earth studies, including the atmosphere, landforms, and ecosystems. Geography centres on four factors: Place, Spatial processes, spatial distribution patterns, and Human and environment interactions. The challenge with implementing Geography in public and private schools is the resources needed to understand the course, such as compasses and maps applicable for practical assessments[2].

2.1.5. Science

The Gauteng MEC for Education PanyzaLesufistated that "science makes life easier for all of us" [11]. CAPS curriculum designed natural Sciences to assist students to "develop scientific knowledge and understanding, process scientific skills and understanding of the roles of science in society" [2]. Teachers of Natural Sciences have devoted their teaching efforts in the past few years to help students access and recall information using several sources to access information that builds on a conceptual framework based on the relevant facts [2]. Natural Sciences is not an easy subject to pass because it requires concentration, hard work, and dedication to the subject to understand its content. The challenges encountered with implementing natural science are that it is taught from grade 7 upwards, making it difficult for most students to cope with the subject [2].

2.1.6. Creative Arts

Creative Arts arouse a "creative, expressive and innovative individual" [24]. Creative Arts assists students in identifying problems, solving them and making decisions using creativity and creative thinking. Students become more sensitive to the needs of others and the environment through teamwork in creative arts [24].

Students can express their creativity, and this helps to build their confidence and self-esteem [24].

2.1.7. Physical Education

Physical Education (PE) is an important subject because it helps build students' minds in the short and long run. Physical education initially removed from the curriculum in 1994, was restored in 2013 by the Department of Basic Education [23]. Physical education is essential because the key focus is to teach students the necessary interpersonal skills needed in life. Physical education includes playing games, sports, doing chores, exercising, and being involved in school and community activities [23].

Literature affirms that most teachers in public schools, as compared to private schools, did not welcome the idea of teaching a subject reintroduced after 19 years [23].

2.1.8. Life Orientation

According to Makati [24], Life Orientation (LO) has been an educational subject for years, designed to "promote self-awareness, respect for oneself and others, spark ambition and common decency to all school-going children" [25]. As an essential subject, life orientation is taught in every school in the country because it helps with students' personal development.

Life Orientation prepares students about life in general, the challenges they may encounter, how to overcome and deal with challenges, how to deal with changes, and how to make correct decisions regarding their environment, careers, health, and education. Students can learn about social issues currently happening in the lives of South Africans and the world. They can also learn to live their lives and help their families and friends live a healthy lifestyle, learn to respect the cultures and beliefs of others, race, gender, and demographics of the country's population and foreigners [25]. Students do not find the subject interesting enough, resulting in them not taking the subject seriously and failing the subject [25].

2.1.9. Technology

The Department of Basic Education introduced technology to help develop future engineers, technicians, and artisans and create a technologically literate population of students who can adapt to the modern world of technology [2]. Technology as a subject allows students to apply their creative thinking skills to develop creative and innovative ideas to solve problems. The subject is done from grades 7 to 9 because the department wants students to get the building blocks of subjects such as "civil technology, mechanical technology, electrical technology or engineering graphics and design" if they were to choose the subjects in grades 10 to 12 [2]. The major challenge in technology is the number of practical assessments students need to accomplish, which proves difficult for some students to complete the assigned projects [2].

2.1.10. Economics and Management Sciences

Economics and Management Sciences (EMS) is a social science subject aimed to explain the different ways private, public, or collaborative resources satisfy individual or organizational needs and wants. The subject explains the process of minimizing profits using scarce resources in the country.

EMS helps students to understand topics relating to; the economy (history of money, needs and wants, goods and services, inequality and poverty, the production process, government, the national budget, standard of living, markets, economic systems, the circular flow, price theory and trade unions). EMS also explains financial literacy (savings, budgets, income and expenditure, accounting concepts, accounting cycle, source documents, financial management, and records). Lastly, it explains entrepreneurship (entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, businesses, factors of production, form of ownership, sectors of the economy, levels and functions of management, operations of a company and business plan) [2].

The challenge schools have in implementing this subject in their schools is that the subject contains lots of work and students understand most of the content they need to research for themselves. The challenge serves as a disadvantage against students who do not have access to the internet or other research sources [2].

2.2. High School Subjects

High school in South Africa starts from grade 8 until grade 12. Students from grades 10 to 12 must choose seven subjects they have to complete during their academic years in high schools [15]. Four subjects are compulsory from the seven subjects, including two Languages (home language and first additional language), Mathematics (maths literacy or pure maths) and Life Orientation. The last three are often student's own choice completing the seven required course for the academic grade levels[15].

The Department of Basic Education recognizes 28 (more or less) subjects as the significant subjects in grade 10 to 12 for the CAPS curriculum. Not all the subjects are offered at a single school, as the Department of Basic Education gives schools a certain number of subjects to be implemented based on the number of classes, students, teachers, school facilities and resources that the schools have [15]. The section discusses the literature review on subjects offered in high schools, initially published in 2011 but updated in 2019.

2.2.1. Accounting

Accounting involves the "methods of recording transactions, keeping financial records, performing internal audits, reporting and analyzing financial information" [26]. Students in grades 8-12 are obliged to learn the subject if interested in South African schools. Accounting knowledge, skills and values that focus on "financial accounting, managerial accounting and auditing fields" were added to the curriculum in 2012 for students benefits [26].

Teachers in public and private schools have complained about the new curriculum implementation and insufficient time for effective student learning.

2.2.2. Business Studies

Business Studies "deals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values critical for informal, productive, ethical and responsible participants in the formal and informal economic sectors"[3]. The Department of Basic Education [2] argues that business studies help develop entrepreneurs who can apply their business principles and theories to help develop entrepreneurial initiatives. The CAPS curriculum outlines four main topics: learning about the 'business environment', 'business ventures', 'business roles', and 'business operations' [26]. The course has been an exciting subject in most schools with minimal challenges, as it assists students understand the application of knowledge in the business environment [2].

2.2.3. Computer Applications Technology (CAT)

Computer Applications Technology (CAT) is a subject that teaches students about the uses of computer components such as the hardware and software components of computers which are the integrated components of a computer system. End-user applications are used in Computer Applications Technology to help with solving everyday problems, managing, and processing information through various communication medium such as information and communication technologies (ICTs) [2]. Important topics learnt on computer applications include solution development (word processing, spreadsheets, databases, fourth application) and system technologies (concepts of computing, hardware, software, computer management). Other vital ideas include network technologies (PANs, LANs, WLANs, WANs) and internet technologies (internet and the World Wide Web (www) and e-communications). Information management such as finding, processing and presenting data information also forms part of computer applications. Topics on social implications such as the impact on society, legal, security and

ethical issues, health and ergonomic issues are essential topics integrated into computer application learning [2]. Public schools are always disadvantaged in implementing the subject due to increased vandalism in most schools compared to private schools with secured facilities.

2.2.4. Dramatic Arts

"Dramatic Arts is the study of the representation of human experience in dramatic form of an audience"[2]. Dramatic Arts allows students to express themselves freely and learn skills in improvisation, learning to communicate vocally and physically, interpretation skills, and creating and presenting a performance. Through Dramatic Arts, students acquire drama skills and techniques that assist them in controlling their body, mind, emotions, and voice; create and develop dramatic play and act of becoming narrators of South African diversity cultures [2].

2.2.5. Economics

Economics concerns how individuals and organizations, and government choose to make choices on the allocation of resources. Economics has four subtopics that help students understand the subject's contents from grade 10 to 12; macroeconomics, microeconomics, economic pursuits, and contemporary economic issues [3]. The subject content assists the students to understand how to use scarce resources responsibly and the flow of money in the South Africa economy. Topics on the economic growth, development, equality and inequality and effective functioning of the society are included in the curriculum enabling students to understand the current global, continental and national economies [3]. Economics is a subject of interest to students interested in social sciences [3].

2.2.6. Geography

Geography "is seen as an integrated discipline that examines both physical and human processes over space and time" [27]. Geography's content includes learning about: spatial patterns and trends (the location of people and places in the world); similarity and difference (how lifestyles and environments compare and why there are differences); movement and change of people, goods, water, land, sea and air; planet earth (land, water and air); human settlement (where people live and why); human activities (what people do, how the environment affects them and how they affect the environment); interdependence (the links between climate, wildlife, resources distribution, human settlement and activity); change (the changing nature of people and places) and, map skills including scale direction, latitude and longitude [27].

Wilmot and Irwin [27] argue that the subjects' improved content under CAPS aims to help students understand the world and bridge the gap between the natural and social sciences. Even though the subject has made some students enjoy it, other students still find it difficult to understand both in private and public schools [27]. Students need to understand map work and be able to analyze the natural environment around them for them to be able to understand and enjoy the subject. Teachers may waste time trying to explain new concepts to students who do not have prior knowledge of the subject, and that can cause the amount of work that has to be covered each term by students and teachers to increase [27].

2.2.7. History

Gina [8] stated that the Department of Basic Education wants to make history a compulsory subject because of the importance and knowledge. CAPS curriculum facilitated a better understanding of History book content, explaining "the past, the difficulties of the past and celebrating the achievements of the present and working hard towards a future" [8]. Gina (2018)

argues that before implementing CAPS, the textbooks used for history in schools were too Eurocentric and did not provide a clear picture about the history of South Africa and Africa, and the new curriculum has changed that. History is one of the most exciting and valued subjects in the country, and since the improvement of its content, the subject has become more appealing to students [8].

Students in private and public schools need to learn about the country and Africa's history, avoid historical mistakes, and respect South African cultures, traditions, and origins, associated with South Africa and its people [8]. Some teachers and students may allow their political views to affect the way they interpret the information. Schools and teachers who have strong political connections may impact how the lessons are presented and eventually give false information to students [2].

2.2.8. Languages

Stoop [21] argues that high school students can take two languages, a home language and a first additional language, just as in primary schools. Language is a compulsory subject for students to pass their grades. High schools also decide on the languages that they want to teach at their schools [21].

Languages are essential because they allow students to learn the different eleven official languages South Africa has. The subject contents are not accessible; schools and students must choose the language that works well with their schools' structure and academics, and they must be in line with the departments' guidelines [21]. Most schools find it challenging to implement more South African languages at their schools; since schools must select languages that every student understands and relate to [2].

2.2.9. Life Sciences

Life Science studies the "living things from the molecular level to their interaction with one another and their environments" [3]. Life Sciences uses methods to make hypotheses and allow for investigations and experiments to test the ideas. The methods used make it possible to analyze, evaluate, and present information in a manner that can prove the findings to be valid [3]. Students doing life sciences learn many theories and concepts during their years of studying the subject. Students learn concepts that make it easy for them to understand critical biological ideas and debate and evaluate scientific issues. They further learn how biotechnology works and its benefits on humans, and the importance of preserving indigenous animals and plants [3]. Life Sciences cover different sub-topics such as biochemistry, biotechnology, microbiology, genetics, zoology, botany. Life science also covers entomology, physiology, anatomy, morphology, taxonomy, environmental and socio-biology concepts, and theories from grades 10 to 12 [3]. Most students find the subject fascinating, and schools can provide the needed resource to have practical lessons. Students and teachers can understand the subjects' contents and concepts [3].

Having to complete practical assessments may require the schools to fund the students' programs, which can be a problem if the school did not plan for such expenditure. The problem with the subject that it also requires students to have the resources to practice at home, and disadvantaged students find it challenging to perform well in their practical assessments [3].

2.2.10. Mathematics and Mathematics Literacy

Zingiswa [27] argued that by introducing CAPS and adding Mathematics Literacy, the Department of Basic Education wants mathematics to have a critical role in student development.

Mathematics under the CAPS curriculum enables students to use critical and creative thinking to identify and solve problems. The curriculum also allows individuals to work effectively as a team, manage and organize themselves in handling activities responsibly and effectively. Mathematics assist students in collecting, analyzing, organizing and critically evaluate relevant data. The course further enables the student to use visual, symbolic and language skills in various modes to communicate effectively and recognize that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation and interpretation of the world as a set of related systems [27]. CAPS Mathematics is in two phases: 'pure mathematics' and 'mathematics literacy'. The two types of mathematics have their own merits and status but equally important [28]. Mathematics literacy is for students who cannot cope with complex mathematics, but science students find pure mathematics more useful [28]. CAPS subjects are not easy, which has become a problem in public schools than in private schools because of the facilities and resources available to private schools. Most teachers and students in private schools can understand the content much better because of the available resources. The new content in mathematics has benefited most private schools, but the opposite can be said about public schools even though it has been eight years since the implementation of CAPS [28].

2.2.11. Physical Sciences

Physical sciences help with investigations that require scientific methods, laws, and theories to make scientific predictions [2]. The subject encourages and supports students to be more aware of the environment and teaches them to learn skills that help them understand the physical and chemical phenomena. The following skills are learned by students doing physical sciences, problem-solving, classifying, observing, and comparing, communicating, predicting, drawing, and evaluating conclusions, measuring, interpreting, formulating models, designing an investigation, inferring, hypothesizing, and identifying and controlling variables skills [2].

Physical sciences are fascinating and offered in private and public schools. The difficulty involves assessment completion because the amount of work that has to be covered can be challenging for students to understand the subject's content fully[2].

2.2.12. Tourism

Tourism is a subject that focuses on activities, services and industries that deliver a travelling experience to groups and individuals in a particular sector. The subject studies what tourists expect to find in the tourism industry, the benefits of the industry on the economy and the social and environmental impact of the tourism industry in South Africa [3].

Tourism helps students understand topics related to the subject, such as; tourism, map work and tour planning, sustainable and responsible tourism, domestic, regional and international tourism, culture and heritage tourism, foreign exchange, communication and customer-care marketing [3]. Students learn about the different global, continental and national tourist attractions, the different world time zones on travel, and tour planning [3].

The challenge encountered by most schools (both primary and high schools) is that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) did not take into consideration the problems faced by separate schools (public and private) in implementing some subjects. Some schools do not have the facilities, qualified teachers, and resources to teach CAPS subjects and the most affected schools are public schools. In contrast, private schools have benefited the most from the improved curriculum. The DBE curriculum has improved the subjects in primary schools by including new subjects such as music education, creative arts and drama education to the subjects offered. The DBE also improved and introduced new subjects in high schools. They have been

trying to implement other new subjects such as maritime economics, marine science, sport and exercise science and technical mathematics. The DBE is trying to close the gap between public schools and private schools with the improved curriculum and the introduction of new subjects. Still, schools, especially public schools, face challenges with current subjects because of the lack of resources and teachers have while private schools keep improving. The DBE still has a long way to go before the closed gap between private and public schools.

2.3. The Theoretical Framework

The study analyzed the curriculum theory. "Curriculum theory is a term used to determine teaching and learning pedagogy and learning strategies in educational institutions [29]. The curriculum theory helps teachers decide which subjects' content to teach to students and determine which content students find effective learning [30]. The theory is essential to understand the changes that the new subjects have brought to schools and how teachers and students find the changes, "curriculum theory is essential when dealing with curriculum changes" [30]. The theory will help understand the teachers and the schools' experiences when implementing the new subjects and the content that needs to be covered. There are two types of curriculum two theories implemented in the study [30]. The first theory is the 'Pragmatic curriculum theory', which focuses on making sure that every student achieves essential competencies. The schools and teachers use this theory to ensure that students understand the subject's contents and pass their grades [29].

Secondly, the 'Individualist curriculum theory' focuses on encouraging students to continue learning throughout their lives. The theory requires teachers to help students achieve their goals and ensure that they are satisfied with the information they are exposed to by the subjects, and improve their capabilities over time [29].

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The section presents the findings on the collected data on the effectiveness of CAPS subjects in primary schools and high schools. It further presents the results and discussions on the importance of the subjects and challenges encountered while implementing the subjects. As mentioned in the introduction, the study used the qualitative research method to collect data on a group of teachers and students on their opinion on the impact of CAPs subjects. The findings suggest that most of the challenging subjects to implement in the schools are language subjects, including English, Afrikaans, IsiZulu and Sepedi. "These subjects are challenging to most of the students in private school both in primary and high school"(interview with Put 1, August 2020). Private school students who have English as their Home Language and Afrikaans as the First Additional Language (FAL) find Afrikaans more challenging speaking and writing because of the diverse culture amongst the students and the need for a universal language for comprehensive learning. Public school students who have either IsiZulu or Sepedi as their Home Language and English as the FAL can cope with the languages in terms of the subject's content. The interview conducted with Public School Teacher 4 stated that "even though some students in public primary school enjoy home language subjects, it makes other subjects easier to understand". However, the public high school teacher's opinion differs from this; according to Public Teacher 7,

"high school students enjoy subjects such as Mathematics, Social Sciences, Life Orientation. They also enjoy Economics and Management Science and Natural Sciences because they find the subjects interesting to learn. These subjects allow them to relate to the surrounding environment they are living in, and they regard them as the important ones to them. At the same time, other

students find them challenging because of the number of assessments (tests, exams, and assignments) that they have to complete in each module" (Interview with Put 7, 02 Sept 2020).

Private primary school students also enjoy similar subjects as public-school students, but private school students enjoy other subjects such as technology and creative arts, which are sometimes compulsory. Afrikaans is the subject that private primary school students find challenging because they cannot speak the language. Both the public and private school teachers in the primary and high sectors all agreed that Africans are challenging, as it is not a speaking language for most students.

The subjects that private and public high school students find intriguing and important include Mathematics, Mathematics Literacy, Geography, Dramatic Arts, Business Studies, Economic, Tourism, Life Orientation and Computer Applications Technology. The students find the subjects necessary because the subjects prepare them for their career fields after high school. Private teacher 8 stated that "These subjects are fundamental to prepare the students for their future career as students get the choice to pick their career subjects from grade 10-12" (Interview with Pvt 8, 14 Aug 2020).

Another key finding was that subjects such as Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Accounting and Economics are subjecting to challenging students because they must do practical assessments and conduct more research independently. "The public-school students are the ones at a disadvantage because most of them come from poor backgrounds and they find it challenging to research on their own because of limited resource in school and their personal lives" (Interview with Put 3, 02 Sept 2020). Most teachers in private schools can teach the subjects effectively because of the resources they can access to teach the courses. In comparison, public school teachers have difficulties reaching some of the subjects because of a lack of resources such as textbooks and their schools not having enough computers and internet access to research their assessment. Student 4 also agreed with these by saying, "we as private school students have more privileged than public school students as we can access better resources than what public school offers"(interview with S4, 17 Aug 2020).

The findings identified the benefits of CAPS curriculum implementation in South African schools from public and private school teachers (primary and high school).

- (a) the CAPS curriculum is explicit when it comes to Annual Teaching Plan (ATP),
- (b) the curriculum's subjects teach students to work independently, (c) learners can get involved in the subjects' assessments,
- (d) the subjects make it possible for students to work together,
- (e) the curriculum is very informative (every subject has information that can be useful to the students),
- (f) learners have an advantage on some subject's chapters that they understand,
- (g) CAPS curriculum gives teachers less work and more workload to students,
- (h) the subjects enable teachers to assess learners on equal standards,
- (i) the subjects keep students involved in their schoolwork,
- (j) learners carry out different forms of assessment from each subject.

According to the findings, the challenges of CAPS implementation include a 30% pass rate for most subjects, which is not practical for the students and their education. Most higher learning institutions (Universities and colleges) do not accept this pass-rate for students, making it difficult for students to advance their careers. The second challenge identified was the problem of insufficient resources for students to accomplish their schoolwork. Some subjects expect learners to do most of the work independently, and students from poor backgrounds cannot

complete the work on time because of the lack of adequate resources to complete their work on time. The curriculum and the subjects do not consider students who cannot read, and learners are only allowed to fail once per grade, and they must be passed to the next phase even when they are not ready. Furthermore, slow learners are usually left behind and do not have enough time to understand the subject's content, sometimes the curriculum instructions are unclear, and some subject's chapters do not benefit students. Lastly, some subjects can be seen as a waste of time by students and teachers as it does not add any value to them.

The CAPs curriculum in private schools makes the subjects more specific since subjects' concepts are divided into manageable chapters. The CAPS is designed to enable easy coverage of the subjects' essential concepts. Furthermore, the lesson plan for each subject is available for the whole year; there is integrated learning between students and teachers and learners can understand and know the subjects in depth. In terms of research, learners are given time to conduct research and to explore some subjects. The subject's concepts are also relevant to the work context, and there is a variety of genres as the subjects offered encourages and motivates students to think.

The disadvantages highlighted stipulated that some subjects do not serve the needs of the learners, and teachers are subjected to too much admin (paperwork) for teachers if a learner is given 0% for a subject's assessment. Also, the subjects have too many assessments (tests, assignments and exams and the subject's content might be outdated. Another disadvantage is planning structure versus the subject's content, as the subjects' assessments are not allocated proportionately over the four terms. Moreover, most often, students are put under pressure because of the amount of work they must complete for each subject. There is a wide gap between General Education and Training (GET) grades 8-9 subjects and Further Education and Training (FET) grades 10-12 subjects, making it difficult for students to cope with schoolwork. There are lots of dropouts in grades 10-12.

Some teachers want the curriculum to close the gap between public and private schools from the data and information gathered about the subjects. And other teachers are satisfied with the level of performance the curriculum subjects have shown since their implementation as the subjects require students to think and be dedicated to their schoolwork.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Basic Education introduced CAPS to close the gap between private and public schools but what they forgot about was how they would impact the schools, students, and teachers. The CAPS curriculum is more focused on getting results than improving the knowledge of students. The curriculum benefits the schools and the department the most because it is structured to enable students to pass. The Department of Education implemented the 30% passing mark in essential subjects to get to the next grade.

Most students from the primary and high schools can cope with the subjects offered at their schools, but the teachers feel like the subjects can be improved to benefit students the most and not the schools or the Department of Basic Education. The subjects that students find challenging are less than those they see the importance of, which shows that the subjects are impactful.

The findings discovered that the curriculum is effective to some extent. Still, it needs to be improved to close the gap between public and private school because private schools are currently benefiting the most from the subjects and how the curriculum is structured. Students and teachers enjoy the CAPs curriculum because students are forced to be engaged with their schoolwork, and teachers can plan effectively about what to teach students. Same subjects' topics

that are not compelling need to be removed so that students and teachers can cope with the subject's content. Also, the amount of work that student need to cover each term needs to be reduced so that students can be prepared for assessments (exams, tests and assignments). Students not being allowed to fail more than once per grade are just keeping the student back because when they can pass to another grade while still failing their grade, they will find it even difficult to cope with the grade they are allowed to go to without passing.

The study recommends that the CAPS curriculum be structured to allow students to learn on equal standards. Secondly, the Department of Education should identify and remove the subject's contents that are not important should be removed. Furthermore, the number of assessments each term should be consistent for every subject. If possible, the Department of Education should implement practical subjects such as Agriculture, Hospitality and Consumer Studies in public and private because students and teachers are interested in the subject. Students who are slow in learning will benefit the most from the practical subjects. For future purposes, schools should be engaged in quantitative research to broaden the research scope on the impact of CAPs as the sample size was an issue of limitation in the research. The limitation encountered was that the time frame in which the research was conducted and to submit the chapters was not enough, and the number of participants had to be reduced. The coronavirus made it challenging to use focus group interviews where opinions of students and teachers in groups could have been collected. Quantitative research is recommended to be conducted in order to avoid risks and threats to the validity of research [18].

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