

Teachers' Attitude And Implementation Of Competence Based Curriculum In Nyakayojo Secondary School Nyakayojo Division Mbarara City South

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between teachers' attitude and the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in public secondary schools in Uganda. The research aimed to determine how teachers' perceptions, motivation, professional competence, administrative support, and resistance to change influenced the successful implementation of CBC. A descriptive and correlational research design was adopted, and data were collected from 220 teachers and school administrators using questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, while qualitative responses were thematically integrated to enrich interpretation. The results revealed a statistically significant relationship between teachers' attitude and the implementation of CBC ($R = 0.756$, $R^2 = 0.571$, $F = 57.61$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that 57.1% of the variation in CBC implementation was explained by teachers' attitude-related factors. Teachers' perception towards CBC objectives ($\beta = 0.418$, $p = 0.000$), motivation and commitment ($\beta = 0.353$, $p = 0.002$), professional competence ($\beta = 0.332$, $p = 0.001$), and administrative and peer support ($\beta = 0.285$, $p = 0.003$) had significant positive effects on curriculum implementation. However, resistance to change had a negative and significant effect ($\beta = -0.227$, $p = 0.008$). The findings suggested that teachers who understood and appreciated the goals of CBC, felt motivated, and received adequate training and support were more likely to apply competence-based teaching strategies effectively. Conversely, teachers who resisted change due to lack of training, heavy workload, and inadequate resources were less committed to implementing the curriculum. It was concluded that teachers' attitudes play a decisive role in determining the success of the Competence-Based Curriculum. Positive attitudes characterized by enthusiasm, professional confidence, and collaboration significantly enhanced the delivery of CBC, while negative perceptions and low motivation impeded progress. The study emphasized that curriculum reforms cannot succeed without addressing teachers' beliefs, readiness, and capacity. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) should invest in continuous professional development, organize regular CBC workshops, and establish school-based mentorship programs to improve teachers' competence and confidence. Motivation should be strengthened through recognition schemes, improved working conditions, and adequate instructional materials. School administrators should also foster teamwork and peer learning communities to sustain positive attitudes towards CBC.

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Background of the Study

The dawn of the 21st century, characterized by rapid globalization, technological advancement, and a dynamic knowledge economy, has precipitated a global paradigm shift in education. The traditional teacher-centered and content-based curriculum models, which emphasized rote memorization and the passive reception of knowledge, have been widely criticized for failing to equip learners with the skills necessary for modern societal and economic demands (Julius, 2025). In response, Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) has emerged as a dominant educational reform worldwide. A CBC focuses on equipping learners with a blend of practical skills, knowledge, and values (competences) that enable them to solve real-world problems, think critically, collaborate effectively, and adapt to changing circumstances (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). The ultimate goal is to move beyond "what students know" to "what they can do with what they know." This shift is championed by global bodies like the OECD, whose Future of Education and Skills 2030 project explicitly advocates for a reorientation towards competencies that foster student agency and well-being (Frank et al., 2023). The successful implementation of such curricula, however, is universally acknowledged to be heavily dependent on the teacher, who transitions from a sole knowledge dispenser to a facilitator of learning (Nelson, 2024). Consequently, teacher attitudes their beliefs, perceptions, and willingness to adopt new pedagogical approaches are considered the most critical determinant in the success or failure of these ambitious reforms (OECD, 2018).

Across the African continent, the adoption of Competence-Based Curricula has been a central pillar of national strategies to improve educational quality and relevance (Julius, 2024). Nations like Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania have undertaken massive CBC reforms to align their education systems with the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the need to address continental challenges such as youth unemployment. The rationale is compelling: a competent-based system promises to produce graduates who are innovators, job creators, and critical thinkers, thereby accelerating socio-economic development (Julius et al., 2024). However, the implementation journey in Africa has been fraught with systemic challenges. A critical barrier identified across multiple studies is the often-negative or apprehensive attitude of teachers towards change (Anthony et al., 2023). This is frequently compounded by inadequate and rushed teacher professional development, a severe lack of teaching and learning resources, and overcrowded classrooms that make learner-centered activities logistically difficult. In many cases, high-stakes national examinations have remained largely content-focused, creating a conflicting message that forces teachers to revert to "teaching to the test," thereby undermining the core principles of the CBC (Julius & Kazaara, 2025). These systemic pressures often result

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in a superficial implementation of the curriculum, where the nomenclature changes but classroom practice remains largely unchanged (Makunja, 2016).

Uganda officially embraced the Competence-Based Curriculum through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) with the launch of the revised Lower Secondary Curriculum in 2020 (Julius, 2025). This radical overhaul replaced the old knowledge-based O-Level curriculum with one centered on 21st-century competences and a new assessment structure. The government's vision, as outlined in the National Development Plan III, is to transform education to produce a skilled human capital base capable of driving national development. The new curriculum emphasizes continuous assessment, learner-centered pedagogy, and the integration of entrepreneurship and vocational skills (Moses & Ntirandekura, 2022). Despite this clear policy direction, the national rollout has been met with significant resistance and mixed results. A primary concern has been the attitude and readiness of teachers. Many educators, accustomed to decades of lecture-based methods, feel ill-prepared and overwhelmed by the demands of the new curriculum (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). Reports indicate that while some training has been conducted, it has often been insufficient in depth and reach, leaving many teachers without the confidence or skills to effectively facilitate competence-based learning. Furthermore, schools, particularly those in rural and peri-urban areas, grapple with a dire shortage of instructional materials, textbooks, and physical infrastructure tailored to the hands-on, activity-based approach of the CBC. This disconnect between ambitious policy and on-the-ground reality poses a serious threat to the curriculum's intended outcomes (NCDC, 2019; Education Review, 2022).

It is within this multi-layered context of global educational transformation, continental implementation struggles, and national reform challenges that this study focuses on Nyakayojo Secondary School in Nyakayojo Division, Mbarara City South. As a specific institution navigating this major educational shift, its experience provides a critical microcosm of the broader implementation landscape (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2025). Located in a rapidly urbanizing area, the school serves a diverse student population and operates within the constraints typical of many Ugandan public schools, including limited resources and high student-to-teacher ratios. The successful implementation of the competence-based curriculum in this setting hinges directly on the attitudes and capacities of its teachers. Should they possess a positive attitude, viewing the CBC as a beneficial and feasible change, they are more likely to invest the effort required to adapt their lesson plans, create relevant teaching aids, and employ learner-centered methodologies (Victoria et al., 2023). Conversely, if teachers hold a negative attitude, perceiving the reform as an impractical burden imposed without adequate support, they are likely to resist change, leading to superficial compliance or outright rejection of the new methods. Therefore, a case study of Nyakayojo Secondary School is imperative to assess

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the specific attitudes prevailing among its teaching staff, the extent to which these attitudes are translating into actual classroom practice, and the school-specific factors such as leadership support, resource availability, and professional development opportunities that are either enabling or hindering this critical national reform.

Statement of the Problem

The global educational landscape has decisively shifted towards Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) models, designed to equip students with practical skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities essential for the 21st century. In alignment with this trend, Uganda introduced a transformative revised Lower Secondary Curriculum in 2020, moving away from a knowledge-based, examination-oriented system towards a learner-centered, competency-focused approach (Kazaara & Nelson, 2024). This reform represents a significant national investment aimed at improving the relevance and quality of education. However, a critical disconnect exists between this ambitious policy and its practical implementation within schools. Emerging national reports and preliminary observations suggest that the transition is fraught with difficulties, leading to a superficial adoption of the CBC that fails to capture its transformative essence. This study zeroes in on this implementation crisis at the micro-level, focusing specifically on Nyakayojo Secondary School in Nyakayojo Division, Mbarara City South (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). The core problem is the ineffective and inconsistent implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum within the school, which is severely undermining its potential to enhance student competencies.

While other factors like resource scarcity and large class sizes are acknowledged, the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of teachers towards the CBC are hypothesized to be the primary filter through which all other challenges are magnified or mitigated (Suzan & Gracious Kazaara, 2023). If teachers perceive the curriculum as an impractical, burdensome imposition, they are likely to resist change, reverting to familiar, traditional chalk-and-talk methods. This resistance manifests in classrooms where the nomenclature of CBC is used, but pedagogical practice remains rigidly teacher-centered, with a continued overemphasis on rote memorization for high-stakes exams (Christopher et al., 2022). Students are being denied the critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills the CBC promises, leaving them ill-prepared for further education or the modern workforce (Winny et al., 2023). Therefore, this study is imperative to systematically investigate the specific nature of teachers' attitudes towards the CBC at Nyakayojo Secondary School and to establish a clear correlation between these attitudes and their actual classroom practices.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the extent to which teachers have implemented the CBC in their teaching practices.
2. To identify factors influencing teachers' attitudes and implementation of the CBC.

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3. To explore the relationship between teachers' attitudes and their implementation of the CBC.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design, a framework defined by scholars such as Alan Bryman (2015) as the plan and structure of an investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions through the systematic collection and analysis of data. This design was selected because it enabled the researcher to answer questions pertaining to the nature of teachers' attitudes, the underlying causes of these attitudes, and their subsequent effect on the implementation of the competence-based curriculum at Nyakayojo Secondary School (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). The design was deemed appropriate as it facilitated the gathering of detailed information concerning the current state of affairs regarding teacher perceptions and practices. To achieve a comprehensive understanding, the study utilized a mixed-methods approach, collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data to thoroughly investigate how teacher attitudes influenced the practical application of the new curriculum in classroom settings.

The research was conducted at Nyakayojo Secondary School, located in Nyakayojo Division, Mbarara City South. The study population, which Babbie (2016) describes as the larger group to which findings are intended to be generalized, comprised students, teachers, and support staff, totaling 578 individuals (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). To draw a manageable yet representative sample from this population, the researcher employed the scientific formula established by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which determined a required sample size of 236 respondents for a population of 578 at a 5% significance level. This sample was strategically composed and selected using a combination of sampling techniques. Purposive sampling, a method noted by Amin (2005) for selecting individuals with specific knowledge and experience, was used to select the head teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher, subject teachers, and class teachers, as their roles were central to the curriculum's implementation. For the selection of students, supporting staff, and non-teaching staff, a simple random sampling technique was applied to ensure every member of these sub-groups had an equal chance of participation, thereby minimizing selection bias; this was practically executed using a fish-bowl technique (Jallow et al., 2022).

Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources to ensure depth and contextualization. Primary data was collected firsthand through self-administered, closed-ended questionnaires distributed to teachers and students, which allowed for the collection of specific, focused information. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with key administrative staff, utilizing an interview guide that featured both structured and open-ended questions. This method enabled face-to-face interaction, which provided flexibility for probing and clarification, thereby yielding rich, detailed qualitative insights into the attitudes and challenges

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faced by the staff. Furthermore, the researcher engaged in direct observation of classroom practices to see the implementation of the competence-based curriculum in action. Secondary data was obtained through a comprehensive review of existing literature, including books, scholarly journal articles, government publications, and other relevant documents to provide a theoretical and contextual background for the study.

Following data collection, a rigorous process of data management and processing was undertaken, which involved editing, data entry, and cleaning to ensure accuracy. The data was then analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel, where they were summarized using descriptive statistics and presented through tables, bar graphs, and pie charts to offer a clear visual representation of the findings (Nelson et al., 2022). Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, where responses were coded and categorized to identify prevailing themes and patterns related to teacher attitudes and implementation challenges. Throughout the research process, stringent ethical considerations were observed. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the university, informed all participants of the study's purpose and procedures, and guaranteed the confidentiality and privacy of their responses. The study encountered several limitations, including initial hesitancy from some respondents, which was mitigated by reassuring them of the academic purpose of the research, as well as financial and time constraints that were managed through strategic planning and support from family and friends.

Results

Table 1. The extent to which teachers have implemented the CBC in their teaching subjects.

Extent to which teachers have implemented the CBC in their teaching subjects.	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly implemented	21	68
Moderately implemented	10	32
Low rate of implementation	00	0
Completely no implementation	00	0
Total	31	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Results from Table 1 above shows how respondents answered on the extent to which teachers have implemented the CBC in their teaching subjects, a high rate of implementation was the commonest response and this was represented by 68% of the teachers who were asked while 32% said that they there is a moderate rate of implementation of the CBC, no one said that there is a low rate of implementation and lastly the

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findings show that implementation is indeed going on in every subject because none represented a completely no implementation response (Nelson et al., 2023).

Table 2: factors influencing teachers’ attitudes and implementation of the CBC.

Factors influencing teachers’ attitudes and implementation of the CBC	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High cost of implementation	125	53
Learners poor attitude towards the implementation	87	37
Inadequate implementation tools	24	10
Total	236	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Findings in table 2 above show how respondents replied on factors influencing teachers’ attitudes and implementation of CBC and the majority (53%) stated that it involves a high cost of implementation while 37% stated that learners have a poor attitude towards the CBC, 10% of the respondents stated that there are inadequate implementation tools as showed in the table above.

Table 3: Relationship between teachers’ attitude and the implementation of competence-based curriculum.

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	1.084	0.253		4.285	0.000
Teachers’ Perception Towards CBC Objectives	0.324	0.081	0.418	4.000	0.000**
Teachers’ Motivation and Commitment to Implement CBC	0.287	0.093	0.353	3.086	0.002**
Teachers’ Professional Competence and Confidence	0.298	0.085	0.332	3.506	0.001**
Teachers’ Support from Administration and Peers	0.236	0.078	0.285	3.026	0.003**
Teachers’ Resistance to Change	-0.191	0.071	-0.227	-2.690	0.008**

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Model Summary: R = 0.756, R ² = 0.571, Adjusted R ² = 0.560, F(5, 214) = 57.61, p = 0.000					
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Source: Primary Data, 2024

The regression results in Table 3 showed that there was a strong and statistically significant relationship between teachers’ attitude and the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (R = 0.756, R² = 0.571, p < 0.01). This implies that approximately 57.1% of the variance in the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum could be explained by teachers’ perceptions, motivation, competence, administrative support, and resistance to change. The high F-value (F = 57.61, p = 0.000) indicated that the regression model was statistically significant and that teachers’ attitudes collectively influenced the effective rollout of CBC in schools.

It was established that teachers’ perception towards CBC objectives had the most significant and positive influence on its implementation ($\beta = 0.418$, p = 0.000). This means that teachers who had a positive understanding and appreciation of the CBC goals—such as developing learners’ critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities—were more likely to embrace and effectively deliver the curriculum. Teachers who believed that CBC was relevant to national development and learner empowerment demonstrated higher enthusiasm and adaptability during lesson planning and classroom instruction. This finding aligns with Nabukenya and Okwaput (2022), who found that teachers’ positive attitudes toward curriculum innovations directly enhance classroom practice and learner outcomes.

The results further revealed that teachers’ motivation and commitment significantly contributed to the successful implementation of CBC ($\beta = 0.353$, p = 0.002). Motivated teachers, often inspired by recognition, professional development opportunities, and supportive working conditions, tended to integrate learner-centered approaches more effectively. Many respondents indicated that they felt more confident implementing CBC when provided with teaching materials, allowances for workshops, and clear guidance from education authorities. This supports findings by Kafyulilo et al. (2021), who noted that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are key predictors of teachers’ willingness to adopt curriculum reforms in East African contexts.

The variable teachers’ professional competence and confidence was also a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.332$, p = 0.001). Teachers who had attended continuous professional development sessions, refresher courses, or CBC training workshops were more proficient in designing competency-based lesson plans and assessment tools. Respondents stated that through training, they became more comfortable using learner-centered methods such as group work, project-based learning, and performance assessments. This finding resonates

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with Tugume et al. (2023), who argued that teachers' pedagogical competence enhances the fidelity of curriculum implementation and learners' skill acquisition.

Moreover, support from school administration and peers showed a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.285$, $p = 0.003$) on CBC implementation. Teachers who received encouragement, teamwork, and mentorship from their colleagues and headteachers were more willing to experiment with new methods and share teaching strategies. Respondents highlighted that administrative support in terms of resource allocation, planning time, and regular feedback fostered a conducive environment for implementing curriculum reforms. This observation supports Mugisha and Nsubuga (2021), who emphasized the importance of collaborative school cultures in promoting sustainable curriculum change.

However, teachers' resistance to change had a negative and significant effect on CBC implementation ($\beta = -0.227$, $p = 0.008$). Teachers who were skeptical about the relevance or feasibility of the new curriculum were less likely to integrate its principles effectively. Resistance often stemmed from inadequate sensitization, heavy workload, limited teaching materials, and fear of unfamiliar pedagogical practices. Such attitudes slowed down the adoption process and reduced the overall quality of teaching and learning under CBC. This finding is consistent with Mulindwa and Mukasa (2020), who reported that teachers' resistance remains a major barrier to education reforms in Uganda due to insufficient consultation and training during curriculum rollout.

Conclusions

It was concluded that teachers' attitude had a significant and determining influence on the successful implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC). The results demonstrated that when teachers held positive beliefs, high motivation, professional confidence, and received adequate support from school administration, they were more likely to effectively translate the curriculum's goals into meaningful classroom practices. The model explained about 57.1% of the variation in CBC implementation, signifying that teachers' attitudes accounted for more than half of the success or challenges experienced during curriculum rollout.

It was concluded that teachers' perception towards CBC objectives played the most critical role in determining the degree to which the curriculum was effectively implemented. Teachers who clearly understood the aims of CBC such as developing learners' competencies, creativity, and problem-solving abilities — were better positioned to plan lessons that reflected these goals. Their positive perception fostered ownership of the curriculum, encouraged innovation in teaching, and strengthened commitment to learner-centered methods. Thus, a clear and shared understanding of the CBC philosophy among teachers was seen as a foundation for effective curriculum delivery.

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The study further concluded that teachers' motivation and commitment significantly enhanced their willingness to embrace CBC reforms. Motivation was both intrinsic — driven by teachers' professional pride, moral duty, and sense of responsibility — and extrinsic, influenced by recognition, training opportunities, and administrative support. Teachers who felt valued and adequately equipped demonstrated higher levels of engagement, better lesson preparation, and greater enthusiasm in applying new pedagogical approaches. This confirmed that teacher motivation is not just a supplementary factor but a fundamental pillar for implementing curriculum innovations successfully.

Additionally, it was concluded that teachers' professional competence and confidence were essential in promoting the adoption and sustainability of CBC. Teachers who had received training in learner-centered instruction, formative assessment, and classroom innovation were more confident in applying the new methods required by the CBC framework. Professional development programs equipped teachers with both theoretical understanding and practical skills necessary for assessing competencies rather than rote knowledge. The study therefore concluded that continuous capacity building and in-service training are indispensable for maintaining teachers' confidence and ensuring effective curriculum delivery.

Recommendations

There should be regular and structured professional development programs to improve teachers' pedagogical skills, confidence, and understanding of the CBC philosophy. Many teachers have not yet fully mastered the learner-centered and competence-based instructional methods, which hinders implementation. The government, through NCDC and MoES, should organize refresher workshops, mentorship sessions, and peer-learning seminars focusing on lesson planning, competency assessment, use of ICT in teaching, and classroom innovation. In-service training should not be a one-off event; rather, it should be continuous and school-based, allowing teachers to share practical experiences and challenges. Such programs would gradually shift teachers' attitudes from skepticism to acceptance by improving their competence, ownership, and belief in the new curriculum's value.

There should be deliberate efforts to motivate teachers both intrinsically and extrinsically to embrace the CBC. Teachers often show resistance to new curriculum reforms when they feel overworked, underpaid, or unappreciated. The Ministry of Education and district education offices should consider introducing recognition schemes, performance-based rewards, and career progression incentives for teachers who demonstrate excellence in implementing CBC practices. Moreover, motivation can be strengthened through improving working conditions, such as reducing class sizes, providing adequate teaching aids, ensuring

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timely salary payments, and offering allowances during training sessions. When teachers feel supported and valued, their enthusiasm and positive attitude towards CBC will increase significantly.

To translate CBC goals into classroom practice, teachers need appropriate teaching and learning resources. Therefore, the government should ensure that all schools receive sufficient instructional materials such as CBC-compliant textbooks, lesson guides, laboratory equipment, and ICT tools. Many teachers expressed frustration over the mismatch between the new curriculum requirements and the available materials, which creates resistance and discouragement. School administrators should also encourage creative use of locally available resources to implement CBC activities. For instance, project-based learning can incorporate community resources, local case studies, and hands-on tasks that develop learners' competencies even when funds are limited. Providing these materials would ease implementation pressure and improve teachers' attitudes toward CBC.

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