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Influence of Teachers' Pedagogical skills on the Implementation of Competence-Based Education in Junior Schools in Seme Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya

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Abstract: The study assessed influence of teachers' pedagogical skills on the implementation of competence-Based Education in Junior Schools in Seme Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Curriculum Implementation Theory by Gross (1971). This study adopted a mixed methods approach and convergent design. The study targeted 453 participants comprising of 332 teachers, 116 head teachers and 5 curriculum support officers in 116 Junior Secondary Schools in Seme Sub County (EMIS, 2024). The study adopted simple random and purposive sampling techniques in selecting participants. The sample size of this study was 176 participants comprising of 155 teachers, 16 head teacher and 5 CSO. Questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers and an interview guide to collect data from head teachers and CSO. The validity and reliability of instruments was tested during piloting study. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS. 26.0 and the results are presented in tables of frequencies and percentages while the qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that pedagogical competence is central to the successful implementation of CBE. Teachers with strong skills in learner-centered instruction, task design, and formative assessment were better positioned to achieve curriculum goals. However, gaps in differentiation and inclusive teaching highlighted the need for targeted professional development to strengthen teacher capacity. The study recommends enhanced teacher training systems to support and sustain effective CBE implementation in Junior Schools.

Keywords: Teachers, Pedagogical Skills, Implementation of Competence-Based Education, Junior Schools

1.1 Background of the Study

Most countries in the world have shifted to an education system that promotes the acquisition of skills rather than content (Khanna & Mehrotra, 2019). This education system is popularly known as the Competence-Based Education (CBE). Competence-Based Education is increasingly recognized as a transformative approach to education (UNESCO, 2023). UNESCO views CBE as a holistic framework that aims to align curricula with the practical requirements of employment (UNESCO, 2023). This alignment ensures that learners acquire competencies relevant to the rapidly changing needs of the workforce. To support its implementation, UNESCO has actively organized workshops and consultations in various educational systems, promoting the integration of competencies into teaching and learning practices (UNESCO, 2023).

Similarly, UNICEF collaborates with governments and other organizations to champion competency-based education as a key component of broader educational reforms (UNICEF, 2023). For example, in Tajikistan, UNICEF, in partnership with UNESCO and Credit Institute for Reconstruction (CIR), launched the second phase of the Quality Education Support Programme (UNICEF, 2023). This initiative focused on introducing competency-based education in general secondary schools, reflecting the global push toward modernizing education systems to meet contemporary demands.

In the United States, Scheopner (2018) studied competency education implementation and addition examined the influence of contextual forces in three Hampshire secondary schools. He noted that competency-based curriculum first appeared in the 1970s. Then it spread widely to other countries. This curriculum requirement was first felt in vocational schools and adult education. He added that the low learning outcomes expressed by graduates and graduates of vocational schools are cited as one of the reasons behind the introduction of this curriculum.

Walsh (2018) assessed the inclusion of students in the general education classroom in California and noted that moving from a goal-based curriculum to an outcomes-based curriculum can lead to significant change and innovation in education. A paradigm shift is also prompted by modifications in the curriculum to satisfy such changes. The objectives and code of conduct have since been translated into accomplishments. The teacher-student connection must adapt to reflect this change in the teaching and learning process.

In Africa, Ramoupi (2022) in his study on the imperative of an African-centered curriculum in South Africa, highlighted those African countries, including South Africa, have historically re-aligned their education systems to address both colonial legacies and contemporary needs. His findings suggest that these periodic adjustments aim to incorporate African values, knowledge systems, and cultural perspectives into the curriculum, fostering a more relevant and decolonized educational framework that resonates with the African context and identity. He further asserted that some teachers began to recognize the importance of skill development over mere knowledge acquisition, leading them to gradually embrace the Competence-Based Education.

In Rwanda, Nsengimana, Mugabo, Ozawa, and Nkundabakura (2021) conducted a multiple case study examining the relationship between a school's profile of competence-based curriculum implementation and its capacity for innovation. They found that while there were variations among teachers and schools in CBE implementation, most schools demonstrated a low level of CBE implementation in classroom interactions, teaching and learning activities, and assessment. The low CBE implementation was linked to certain aspects of a school's innovation capacity, such as teachers' experience, readiness to enact CBE, and the availability of teaching and learning resources for science.

Zeiger (2018), in his study on the role of teachers in the curriculum process in the Arusha Region, Tanzania, emphasized the critical role teachers play in the successful implementation of the Competence-Based Education. According to his findings, teacher preparedness is a cornerstone of effective CBE implementation. A prepared teacher is not only expected to understand the curriculum content but also to possess the pedagogical knowledge and skills required to integrate CBE aspects into classroom instruction effectively. This includes the ability to incorporate core competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving into teaching and learning activities.

In Kenya, CBE was introduced in primary schools in 2016 and was expected to be rolled out in secondary schools in January 2023 (Amutabi, 2021). The aim was to solve the problems of unskilled school leavers with a knowledge-based curriculum to a practical-based curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2019). The Kenya Vision 2030 emphasizes the connection between quality education and the labour market, the need to create invention, innovational skills and competencies that will support both public and private sectors (Ministry of Education, 2019). However, there have been issues surrounding implementation of CBE in Kenya since implementation of CBE had not been thoroughly planned (Sifuna & Obonyo, 2019).

The KICD report (2023) paints a concerning picture, indicating that only 3% of teachers feel adequately prepared to implement the new curriculum effectively. This statistic underscores a lack of confidence and readiness among educators, suggesting that most teachers lack the pedagogical skills, resources, or understanding required to transition from the traditional curriculum to the more dynamic and learner-centered CBE. The report further highlights that 20% of teachers believe they were somewhat prepared, which, while slightly more positive, still signals a significant gap in knowledge and skills among the majority of educators.

Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), the organization that developed the Kenyan Competence-Based Education recently exclaimed that schools have a misconception of the Competence-Based Education rollout (Oduor, 2020). KICD report (2023) points out that teachers have limited understanding on how the syllabus works. This report states that teachers transfer the burden of Competence-Based Education to parents instead of working with pupils in developing improvised tools for learning and at times suggesting unnecessary activities. While the idea is to prepare learners to be creative, teachers have instead directed parents to purchase items which they ought to improvise. This alters the objective of Competence-Based Education; denies learners the chance to flex their creative ability and consequently diverts the burden of the CBE to parents. This study aimed to bridge the identified gaps by assessing Influence of Teachers' Pedagogical skills on the Implementation of Competence-Based Education in Junior Schools in Seme Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teachers play a key role in providing opportunities for learners to learn and develop their potentials (Syomwene, 2019). Therefore, teachers need knowledge and skills that can enable them have the ability to use appropriate pedagogical approaches, developing lesson plans, assessment tools and choosing appropriate instructional materials that can accommodate pupils at different levels. A study conducted in the United States of America by Venenglosky, Cale and Aguilar (2021) concluded that before the implementation of a new curriculum innovation, teachers need thorough preparation to be able to execute the plan. The study also concluded that there were unique challenges faced by teachers attending learners at elementary school level in urban areas. A study done in early grade primary school teachers in Bomet East Sub-County found that teachers were insufficiently prepared to implement Competence-Based Education (Momanyi & Rop, 2019). Though the Competence-Based Education could serve as a solution to the shortcomings of the 8-4-4 system, its success largely depends on teachers' understanding of the curriculum and their possession of the necessary competencies to drive the reform. However, despite its implementation, various stakeholders have raised concerns about the level of teacher preparedness, particularly highlighting insufficient training and limited instructional resources as major setbacks (Mbae, 2020). In Seme Sub-County, Kisumu County, concerns have been raised regarding the level of teacher preparedness in implementing the Competence-Based Education in Junior Schools. The Kenya National

Union of Teachers (KNUT) has observed that many teachers in in Seme Sub-County lack adequate capacity to effectively deliver the CBE, citing that not all teachers have undergone proper training, the training provided is often insufficient, and the in-service training manuals are developed without involving teachers (KNUT, 2019). Additionally, the issue of overcrowded classrooms and inadequate learning resources in schools within the sub-county has been highlighted, leading to unfavorable learner-to-teacher ratios, as reiterated by the KNUT Secretary-General (Wanzala, 2019). Moreover, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has noted that even among trained teachers, there remains a significant misunderstanding of CBE concepts, resulting in misinformation being passed on to parents (Oduor, 2020). These challenges present serious barriers to the successful implementation of CBE in Junior Schools within Seme Sub-County. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to assess the Influence of Teachers' Pedagogical skills on the Implementation of Competence-Based Education in Junior Schools in Seme Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Question

What is the influence of teachers' pedagogical skills on the implementation of competence-based education in junior schools in Seme Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya?

1.4 Conceptual Frame Work

Conceptual frameworks according to Soviadan (2019) are structured from a set of broad ideas and theories that enable researchers to properly identify the problem to be investigated, frame their questions and identify the suitable methods of data collection and analysis. Figure 1 illustrates this.

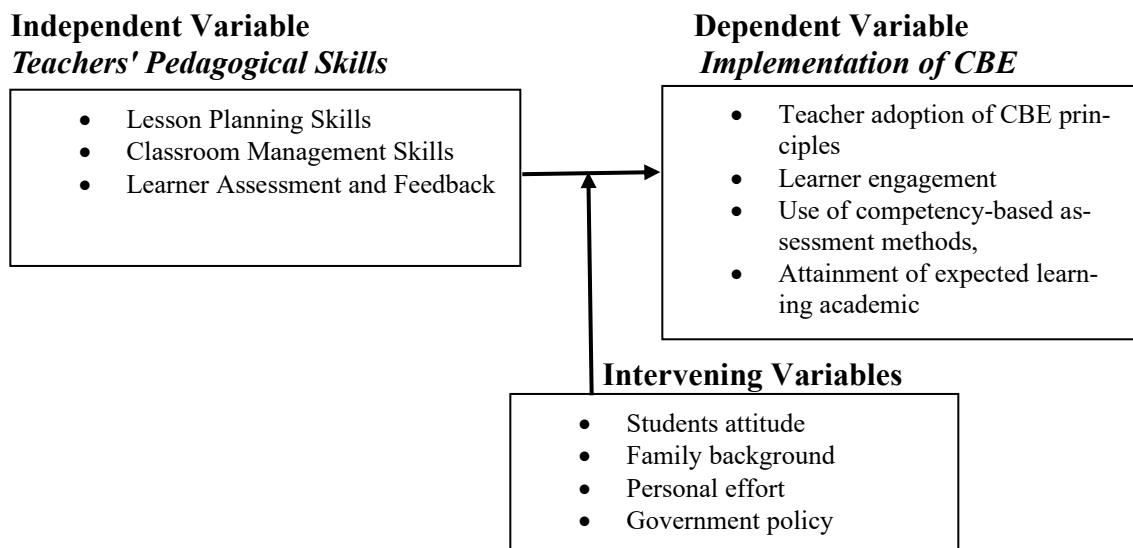


Figure 1: *The Relationship between Teacher Pedagogical Skills and Implementation of CBE*

Source: Researcher, 2024

This study puts into conceptualization that the dependent variable (Teachers' Pedagogical Skills) depends on the independent variable (Implementation of CBE). The relationship between the dependent, intervening and independent variables.

1.5 Literature Review

In this section, theoretical and empirical reviews on the influence of teachers' pedagogical skills on the implementation of competence-based education in junior schools is presented.

1.5.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Curriculum Implementation Theory (CIT) by Gross (1971). Gross explained in this theory that the implementation of any educational programme brings into consideration the question of facilities, teachers' capability, management support and compatibility with organizational arrangement and clarity of the implementer of what is to be done. Curriculum Implementation theory claims that there are specific aspects that must be in place for successful implementation of an innovation of an organization, in this case a new. Curriculum Implementation Theory provides a robust and comprehensive framework for examining how educational policies and curriculum designs are translated into classroom practice. One of its primary strengths lies in its recognition of the teacher as the central agent in the curriculum delivery process. According to Mulenga (2020), the theory underscores the critical role of teachers' professional competence, instructional strategies, attitudes, and preparedness in determining the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. This made the theory particularly relevant for this study, which sought to assess the extent to which teachers in Junior Schools in Seme Sub-County are prepared to implement the Competence-Based Education. However, Curriculum Implementation Theory has certain drawbacks, despite its many merits. One of its fundamental flaws is the assumption that teachers, schools, and education systems operate under identical conditions (Omolo, Odongo, & Raburu, 2020). In actuality, educational settings differ greatly in terms of infrastructure, resource availability, socioeconomic dynamics, instructor motivation, and student variety. This contextual diversity limits the generalizability of findings and makes it difficult to establish universal implementation techniques based only on theory. To overcome this restriction, the current study used a contextualized approach to data collecting and analysis. This theory is relevant to guide the study because teacher preparedness may play a key role in enhancing the implementation of Competence-Based Education in Junior school in Seme Sub- County Kisumu County. In his theory, Gross advocated four major elements that influence curriculum implementation, namely; clarity of the innovation to implementers, capability of the implementers, and availability of resources and provision of management support. This theory is quite appropriate for this study since a curriculum encompasses all these things as Mulenga (2020) had noted.

1.5.2 Review of Empirical Literature

Scheopner, Brett, Cox, and Greller (2018) did assessment and evaluation to determine whether the curriculum content provided to students results in gaining of knowledge and understanding in New Hampshire. The target population involved were 53 public schools located with special needs teachers of the targeted schools forming the target population. A sample size of 69 special needs teachers was selected as the sample for the study selected through simple random sampling method. To collect data, questionnaire was used. The analysis of data was done using quantitative and qualitative methods. Research result showed that majority of special needs teachers were not adequately prepared to undertake evaluation and assessment of children with special needs in line with the CBE curriculum. The lack of adequate understanding and application of formative assessment methods by special needs teachers denied the special needs learners' opportunity to acquire competencies and skills as per CBE. The study further revealed that implementation of competency-based curriculum requires students to demonstrate mastery of skills and competencies in order to advance and earn credit, usually through an assessment where learners

demonstrate mastery of knowledge and acquisition of skills. The study found that there were still problems that are technical, normative and political, which have hindered the full implementation of reforms for more than six years.

It is evident that the level of Competence-Based Education implementation in schools in New Hampshire was found to be low. However, the study conducted in New Hampshire employed a qualitative case study research design, whereas the current study utilized a mixed-methods design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Additionally, while the New Hampshire study focused on a target population of 53 public schools with special needs teachers, the current study specifically targeted junior schools (JS) and involve teachers who are responsible for implementing the CBE at this level. This distinction highlights a difference in focus, as the current study concentrated on the unique challenges and practices related to CBC implementation in the context of JSS, providing a more localized perspective on the curriculum's implementation.

Molapo (2018) conducted research to determine how grade 3 teachers in Limpopo primary schools in South Africa implemented the new curriculum. The study combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative approach was used to identify variables and quantitative approach was used to group the variables into factors. Using exploratory factor analysis with principal factor extraction. The study revealed that teacher training in the curriculum can influence the implementation process. According to the study, the majority of grade three teachers were found to lacking necessary skills and understanding to carry out the curriculum, which slowed the process. This implied that inadequate teacher training impedes the effective implementation of a curriculum. The study recommended that there is need for in-service training. Regular professional development workshops, seminars, and courses to help current teachers adapt to CBE.

Since the study was conducted in South Africa, its findings may not be directly applicable to Kenyan schools. Therefore, there is a need for this study to investigate teacher preparedness in the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools (JS) in Kenya. Additionally, while the previous study involved Grade 3 teachers in Limpopo primary schools, the current study focused on JS teachers in Kenya, ensuring the context and educational level are relevant to the local setting.

A study was conducted by Sabola (2017) to examine the extent to which teachers in Malawi had been trained to implement a revised primary school curriculum. The study aimed to establish whether primary school teachers had the ability to develop appropriate assessment tools for the revised curriculum in Malawi. The study used descriptive research design. A sample size of 306 was selected from a population of 994. Stratified and simple random sampling procedures were employed to select the subjects in the study sample. Respondents to the questionnaire and interview were randomly selected. A pilot study was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach alpha coefficient reliability at 0.7 was recorded. The data generated was processed and converted into percentages to facilitate the analysis and discussion processes. The study established that there was minimal implementation of the curriculum in schools. The study reported that majority of the teachers were not trained on how to implement the curriculum. As a result, they used old modes of assessment which were used in the previous curriculum. The study recommended that there is need for practical implementation strategies where teachers are equipped with practical methods and tools for applying CBE in the classroom. This implied that it is crucial to train teachers on how to implement a curriculum especially when it calls for change

in assessment methods. This current study filled this gap by investigating level of teachers training on the Competence-Based Education implementation in Junior School in Seme Sub-County Kisumu County, Kenya.

A study conducted by Ndiokubwayo, Habiyaemye and Rukundo (2019) on implementing Competence-Based Education in terms of successes and Challenges in Rwanda. The study used the ex post facto design that adopted the causal comparative research technique and data was collected from 500 students using questionnaires. Percentages, means and standard deviations were used to describe the quantitative. The study found that CBE was generally well-received by teachers, who appreciated its focus on practical skills and learner-centered approaches. They found that CBE emphasized developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills, aligning with Rwanda's educational goals to produce more competent and employable graduates. However, it was found that while there were efforts to train teachers, the training was often insufficient, leaving many teachers feeling unprepared to fully implement the new curriculum. These findings highlight both the promise and the difficulties of shifting to a competence-based approach in education. The study recommended that to enhance effective implementation of the curriculum in Rwandan schools, all primary school teachers were to be taken through regular intensive in-service training on how to implement the curriculum.

This study used an ex post facto design with a causal-comparative research technique. In contrast, the current study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of teacher preparedness in the implementation of the Competence-Based Education in Junior Schools in Kenya.

Komba and Mwandangi (2020) assessed how technical college trainers implement Competence-based education and training curriculum in Arusha city, Tanzania. The study adopted a qualitative approach through the use of case study design in order to get an in-depth understanding of the Competence-based education and training (CBET) implementation process. A total of 24 trainers were selected through purposive sampling from three (3) Science and Allied Technology (SAT) technical colleges in Arusha city, Tanzania in which in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used to collect information. The findings indicated that, though majority of the trainers got in-service training, more than half had limited awareness and understanding about the meaning and aim of the CBET curriculum. Also, trainers showed little knowledge and skills for employing CBET teaching and learning methods as well as conducting student's assessment and evaluation. Lastly, it became apparent that, technical colleges in Arusha city have inadequate human and material resources for effective implementation of the CBET curriculum. It is concluded from the findings that, CBET was introduced without relevant and necessary preparations.

A study by Ndiokubwayo et al. (2019) adopted a qualitative approach using a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation process of competence-based education and training. This focus on pedagogical skills in relation to curriculum implementation provides valuable insights into the challenges and strategies involved. However, this study employed a mixed-methods design, specifically a convergent parallel mixed design, to explore how teachers' pedagogical skills influence the implementation of the Competence-Based Education. The quantitative component utilized a descriptive survey to gather data on teachers' pedagogical competencies, while the qualitative component adopted a

phenomenological design to explore teachers' lived experiences and perceptions regarding CBE implementation.

A study by Abdullahi (2020) investigated school factors influencing the implementation of CBE in pre-schools in Garissa Sub-County, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive research design and collected data using questionnaires and interview schedules. The findings of the study revealed that there was inadequacy of instructional resources especially digital equipment in the schools. Based on the study findings, it was recommended that the ministry of education should supply more instructional resources in public primary schools to enhance implementation of the curriculum. The reviewed study used descriptive research design while the current study used mixed methods design. In addition, the reviewed study did not investigate level of competence-based curriculum implementation in schools.

A study conducted by Silas (2020) on teachers understanding and skills, reality on Competence-Based Education in schools in Kiambu county, Kenya. The study employed an ex post facto cross-sectional design and data was collected using questionnaire. The study used a sample of 69 teachers and 12 school principals. The information gathered was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that in Kiambu county, several teachers lack an understanding of the CBE system; and this has complicated the successful level of the implementation of Competence-Based Education in most secondary schools in the county. Although there are many successes associated with the curriculum change, low level of CBE curriculum implementation has also been encountered. Research therefore seeks to establish level of training of teachers on the implementation of Competence-Based Education implementation in schools with focus on to investigate teacher preparedness in the implementation of Competence-Based Education in Junior school in Seme sub-county Kisumu County, Kenya.

Wamuyu (2020) investigated the impact of Headteacher Training on Competence Based Curriculum Implementation in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. In this study, a descriptive survey was used as the research design. Questionnaires were used to collect the necessary data, and 76 respondents were chosen. The information gathered was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that teachers faced challenges in adapting to new assessment methods that focused on competencies rather than traditional exams. This struggle has had a negative impact on the effective implementation of the Competence-Based Education. The study concluded that the training practices of public primary school headteachers, such as programmed instruction and role modeling, positively influence the implementation of the CBE in Kiambu County, Kenya. Therefore, teacher training is crucial for the successful implementation of the CBE. However, the study is delimited to Kiambu County, Kenya, meaning its findings may not fully capture the dynamics of teacher training practices and CBE implementation in other counties or regions with differing socio-economic, cultural, or infrastructural conditions. Therefore, there is a need for similar studies in other counties or regions to validate the findings and account for geographical variations. Moreover, the study focuses solely on public primary school headteachers, leaving out other stakeholders, such as classroom teachers, who play a critical role in the actual implementation of the CBE. The teacher's preparedness in CBE implementation and their training practices remains unexplored in this study.

1.6 Research Methodology

This study employed mixed methods approach and convergent parallel design. The mixed methods approach combines both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, and concepts into a single study, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data was collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and then merged to draw well-rounded conclusions. The target population was 453 which included 332 teachers, 116 head teachers and 5 curriculum support officers (CSO) in 116 Junior Schools making (EMIS, 2024). To determine the appropriate sample size, Yamane's formula (1967) for a finite population will be applied:

$$n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)$$

Whereby; n= is the sample size, n= is the size of the population (in this case, 453 population size), e= is the desired level of confidence (at 95% = (0.05)). The sample size was therefore computed as $n = 453 \div (1 + 453 \times 0.05^2) = 212$. Thus, a total of 212 participants were sampled for the study. Out of the total 332 teachers across the 116 schools, a proportional sample of teachers were drawn: Teacher Sample = $332/453 \times 212 = 155$ teachers. Thus, 155 teachers were selected through simple random sampling (9 teachers from each 15 schools and 20 teachers from one school with higher number of teachers), ensuring each teacher had an equal chance of participation. Sampling lists was obtained from each 16 selected school to guide the process. Purposive sampling techniques was used in selecting 16 head teachers and 5 curriculum support officers. Therefore, the total sample size of this study was 176 participants. Data was collected using questionnaire, interview guide and document analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, with descriptive statistics summarized in terms of percentages and frequencies. Qualitative data, collected through interview guides, were analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form.

1.7 The Study Findings

In this section, the study findings are presented.

Table 1: Teachers Response on Pedagogical Skills. n=153

Pedagogical Skills	1 (SD)		2 (D)		3 (N)		4 (A)		5 (SA)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers effectively apply learner-centered approaches in implementing the CBE.	5	3.3	10	6.5	2	18.3	70	4	40	26.
					8			5.		1
							8			
Teachers' pedagogical skills enhance learners' acquisition of core competencies in CBE.	3	2.0	8	5.2	2	16.3	75	4	42	27.
					5			9.		5
								0		
Teachers design instructional activities that promote active learning under the CBE framework.	4	2.6	12	7.8	3	19.6	65	4	42	27.
					0			2.		5
								5		
Teachers' ability to differentiate instruction supports diverse learner needs in CBE classrooms.	6	3.9	14	9.2	3	20.9	60	3	41	26.
					2			9.		8
								2		
Teachers integrate real-life experiences into lessons to foster competency development.	7	4.6	13	8.5	2	19.0	66	4	38	24.
					9			3.		8
								1		

Pedagogical skills enable teachers to assess learners continuously and meaningfully in CBE.	5	3.3	11	7.2	2	17.6	68	4	42	27.
					7			4.		5
Teachers' skills in classroom facilitation influence the depth of learner engagement in CBE.	4	2.6	10	6.5	2	17.0	72	4	41	26.
					6			7.		8
Teachers use reflective practices to improve instructional strategies in CBE implementation.	6	3.9	9	5.9	3	20.3	64	4	43	28.
					1			1.		1
								8		

Source: *Field Data, 2025*

Findings presented in Table 1, majority, 70 (45.8%) of the teachers agreed and 40 (26.1%) strongly agreed that teachers effectively apply learner-centered approaches in CBE implementation. In contrast, 10 (6.5%) disagreed, 5 (3.3%) strongly disagreed, and 28 (18.3%) were neutral. These findings suggest that most teachers have adopted learner-centered methodologies, aligning with Wamuyu (2020), who emphasized that pedagogical transformation is essential for CBE success.

When asked whether teachers' pedagogical skills enhance learners' acquisition of core competencies in CBE, 75 (49.0%) agreed and 42 (27.5%) strongly agreed. Only 8 (5.2%) disagreed, 3 (2.0%) strongly disagreed, and 25 (16.3%) remained neutral. This high agreement indicates a strong belief among teachers that their pedagogical competence facilitates development of key learner outcomes, consistent with Abdullahi (2020) who linked skilled instruction to competency mastery.

In relation to the design of instructional activities that promote active learning, 65 (42.5%) agreed and 42 (27.5%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 12 (7.8%) disagreed, 4 (2.6%) strongly disagreed, and 30 (19.6%) were neutral. These results demonstrate that most teachers are integrating participatory and student-driven tasks, reinforcing findings by Komba and Mwandangi (2020) on the effectiveness of activity-based learning in CBE settings.

Regarding the ability to differentiate instruction to support diverse learner needs, 60 (39.2%) agreed and 41 (26.8%) strongly agreed. However, 14 (9.2%) disagreed, 6 (3.9%) strongly disagreed, and 32 (20.9%) were neutral. This implies that while majority of teachers are addressing learner diversity, a considerable proportion still struggle with differentiation, signaling a potential area for capacity building. Komba and Mwandangi (2020) emphasize that although many teachers acknowledge the importance of differentiation in promoting inclusivity, practical challenges often hinder its consistent application in classrooms.

When asked if teachers integrate real-life experiences into lessons to foster competency development, 66 (43.1%) agreed and 38 (24.8%) strongly agreed. On the other hand, 13 (8.5%) disagreed, 7 (4.6%) strongly disagreed, and 29 (19.0%) remained neutral. These responses show a positive trend in contextualizing learning, which is a hallmark of CBE. This finding is consistent with previous research, where Ndiokubwayo et al. (2019) emphasized that real-life application enhances learners' problem-solving skills.

In response to whether pedagogical skills enable continuous and meaningful assessment in CBE, 68 (44.4%) agreed and 42 (27.5%) strongly agreed. Only 11 (7.2%) disagreed, 5 (3.3%) strongly disagreed,

and 27 (17.6%) were neutral. This indicates strong teacher engagement with formative assessment practices essential for CBE implementation. These results align Silas (2020) found that teachers' pedagogical capacity in conducting ongoing assessments enhances learner participation and mastery of skills, while Wamuyu (2020) stressed that continuous assessment is a cornerstone of the CBC framework, ensuring that learning is competency-driven rather than examination-oriented.

On the influence of classroom facilitation skills on learner engagement, 72 (47.1%) agreed and 41 (26.8%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 10 (6.5%) disagreed, 4 (2.6%) strongly disagreed, and 26 (17.0%) remained neutral. These findings suggest that most teachers believe their facilitation skills actively drive learner involvement, reinforcing active learning approaches. This is consistent with Wamuyu (2020) emphasized that learner-centered facilitation skills are essential for shifting from traditional teacher-dominated instruction to active, competency-driven learning under the CBE framework.

In response to whether teachers use reflective practices to improve instructional strategies, 64 (41.8%) agreed and 43 (28.1%) strongly agreed. Only 9 (5.9%) disagreed, 6 (3.9%) strongly disagreed, and 31 (20.3%) were neutral. This shows that most teachers value reflection as a professional growth tool, aligned with Abdullahi (2020) who emphasized reflective practice as key to improving instructional quality.

The study further sought the opinion of the head teachers and Curriculum Support Officers who participated in this study on how teachers' pedagogical skills influenced competence-based curriculum implementation in Junior Secondary Schools in Seme Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya. The Curriculum Support officer responses were, "teachers who design learner-centred lessons, integrate group activities, and employ inquiry-based strategies. They are therefore more successful in achieving CBE objectives." This aligns with Social Constructivism Theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Dewey, 1938), which emphasizes active learner participation, collaboration, and critical reflection in the learning process. Consistent with Schunk (2022), our findings suggest that teachers' ability to shift from the role of knowledge transmitters to facilitators significantly determines learner engagement and success.

The observed persistence of traditional, content-driven teaching mirrors earlier studies in Kenya and comparable contexts. For instance, Oduor and Mwinzi (2021) reported that many teachers remain entrenched in lecture methods, limiting opportunities for learners to develop competencies such as creativity and critical thinking. Similarly, Luambano (2014) argued that without a pedagogical shift, competency-based curricula risk being reduced to old practices under new terminology. In our study, classrooms dominated by lecture approaches reflected this risk, where CBE devolved into routine, content-focused instruction rather than competency development.

Conversely, classrooms where teachers demonstrated pedagogical planning, pacing, and differentiation showed more effective CBE implementation. These teachers managed diverse learner abilities, ensuring inclusivity and equity. Such findings are consistent with Fullan's (2020) Curriculum Implementation Theory, which stresses that teacher adaptability and professional competence are prerequisites for meaningful reform. Differentiation, in particular, resonates with constructivist principles where learners' prior knowledge, interests, and abilities are taken into account (Bruner, 1996).

The study also highlighted the centrality of assessment within CBE. Observations confirmed that only teachers with strong pedagogical grounding conducted effective formative assessments, incorporating rubrics, performance tasks, and learner feedback. This is in line with literature emphasizing that assessment under CBE should extend beyond cognitive recall to include collaboration, creativity, and communication skills (KICD, 2020; Tam, 2020). Where teachers lacked pedagogical training in assessment, they defaulted to summative, test-driven practices, echoing Dailey and Robinson's (2022) observation that teachers often experience stress and uncertainty when adapting to continuous assessment systems.

The findings reinforce the argument that teacher preparedness for CBE is inseparable from pedagogical competence. Theories of Social Constructivism and Curriculum Implementation converge on the idea that learners construct knowledge more effectively when guided by teachers who employ facilitative, learner-centered approaches and authentic assessment practices. This theoretical stance is supported by empirical studies: Ndiokubwayo et al. (2019) underscore that CBE thrives where teachers adopt participatory pedagogies; Abdullahi (2020) stresses that competency development is contingent upon continuous, meaningful assessment; Silas (2020) highlights the need for contextualized, learner-centered teaching strategies; and Wamuyu (2020) affirms that teacher facilitation skills are central to shifting from exam-oriented instruction to competency-driven learning.

Taken together, the evidence shows that without learner-centered pedagogy, differentiation, and strong assessment literacy, the CBE's promise of nurturing critical thinkers, problem solvers, and creative learners cannot be realized. This points to the urgent need for continuous professional development (CPD), particularly in learner-centered methodologies, differentiation strategies, and competency-based assessment practices, to bridge the gap between policy intentions and classroom realities.

1.8 Conclusion

The study concluded that pedagogical competence is central to the successful implementation of CBE. Teachers with strong skills in learner-centered instruction, task design, and formative assessment were better positioned to achieve curriculum goals. However, gaps in differentiation and inclusive teaching highlighted the need for targeted professional development to strengthen teacher capacity.

1.9 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the study recommended that Ministry of Education, through the Teachers Service Commission, should intensify and institutionalize continuous professional development for Junior School teachers. The study identified gaps in pedagogical preparedness, particularly in learner-centered instruction, differentiated teaching, and assessment for learning. Professional development programs should be held annually, with a strong focus on practical classroom application. Workshops, coaching, and in-school mentorship should be coordinated through regional teacher training centers and monitored by Curriculum Support Officers to ensure quality, consistency, and sustainability.

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