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Perceptions of Teachers on the Implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts, Uganda

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The Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), introduced to enhance learners' skills and competencies, has undergone nationwide adoption, prompting the need to assess its effectiveness at the grassroots level. This study delves into the perceptions of teachers regarding CBC implementation in secondary schools within the Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts. Employing a mixed methods approach through descriptive survey research, data was collected via interviews, group discussions, and questionnaires. The study's sample size comprised 397 participants, including 365 teachers selected via simple random sampling and 32 purposefully selected school administrators from twenty-one secondary schools in the target districts. Study findings indicate diverse perspectives among teachers regarding the CBC's implementation, highlighting positive aspects like enhanced skill development and learner-centred approaches, alongside challenges such as resource constraints, limited training, and varied levels of preparedness among educators. Notably, teachers expressed an overall negative attitude toward the lower secondary school CBC implementation. The study reveals a variety of perspectives among teachers regarding the implementation of the CBC. Positive aspects include the emphasis on skill development, learner-centred approaches, and the potential to provide real-world applications. However, challenges such as inadequate resources, limited training, and varying levels of preparedness and attitude among educators are identified as potential hindrances to the successful implementation of the curriculum. Notably, teachers expressed an overall negative attitude toward the lower secondary school CBC. The findings have implications for educational policymakers, curriculum developers, and school administrators seeking to refine the implementation strategies and address the challenges faced by teachers in delivering the Competence-Based Curriculum. The study recommends initiatives such as professional development and training for teachers, adequate supply of instructional materials, strategic teacher recruitment, and the establishment of peer learning networks. Furthermore, involving various stakeholders like parents, community leaders, and local authorities is

crucial for fostering a supportive ecosystem conducive to effective CBC delivery.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role in societal change and development, necessitating a curriculum that aligns with the evolving needs and dynamics of the population (Awuonda et al., 2023). The fact that education is one of the most powerful tools that can be used to transform the world, the introduction and integration of the competence-based curriculum (CBC) became inevitable in order to meet the increasingly changing needs of society. Recognizing education as a powerful tool for global transformation, Uganda introduced the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in lower secondary schools through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) in 2020. The CBC addresses the growing demand for skills-based and practical education, aiming to instil self-esteem, confidence, and critical thinking – essential 21st-century skills for the workforce (New Vision, 2022). Numerous studies advocate for the CBC as a viable solution in the current complex economy, emphasising the need for individuals to possess essential skills for productivity (Nyikadzino, 2023; Awuonda et al., 2023; Pluff & Weiss 2022; Ondimu, 2018). Previous research indicates that CBC implementation leads to improvements in problem-solving, critical thinking, self-efficacy,

and engagement among students (Choi & Woo, 2020; Koo, 2020; Kwak, 2019).

The primary objective of the CBC is to equip learners with attitudes, skills, and values necessary for solving everyday problems and thriving in the competitive global economy shaped by technological advancements (KICD, 2019). In Uganda, both public and private schools are undergoing rapid and frequent changes in CBC implementation, requiring teachers to possess the skills and knowledge to implement it effectively (Atuhaire and Turyagyenda, 2023). However, since its introduction, the CBC has evoked mixed reactions among teachers in various parts of the country (New Vision, 2022; Sendagire, 2023). Recognizing the crucial role of teachers in curriculum implementation, positive teacher perception becomes vital for the success of the CBC (Msamba, 2023), emphasizing the teacher's core responsibility in curriculum development (Majani, 2023; Atuhura & Nambi, 2024).

The introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in both public and private schools in Uganda has led to ongoing and rapid changes, demanding teachers acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for its faithful implementation (Atuhaire and Turyagyenda,

2023). Since its initiation at the lower secondary level, the CBC has generated mixed reactions among teachers across the country (New Vision, 2022; Sendagire, 2023). Recognizing the pivotal role of teachers in shaping the success of the new curriculum, it is crucial to highlight the significance of their mindset, as a positive perception is deemed essential for the effective implementation of instructional techniques (Msamba, 2023). Emphasizing the teacher's centrality, various sources underscore the critical responsibility teachers bear in curriculum development, indicating their indispensable role in both its implementation and design (Majani, 2023; Atuhura & Nambi, 2024). This perspective underscores the vital contribution of teachers as key implementers who play a crucial role in shaping the curriculum.

Omboto (2022) emphasizes that teachers who are open to change, particularly when they are actively involved and adequately prepared, tend to have positive attitudes. These positive attitudes correlate with higher levels of instructional content application compared to teachers who have negative attitudes (Najjuma, 2024; Wwango et al., 2024). Recognizing the importance of teachers' perceptions in the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), this study investigates the perspectives of teachers in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts.

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in secondary schools within Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts is facing significant challenges, as evidenced by reports of trial-and-error approaches and a lack of clarity among teachers on the curriculum guidelines (DEO, 2023; New Vision, 2023). Despite efforts by the District Education Officer (DEO) and other stakeholders to address these issues through training sessions, resource distribution, and other interventions, a considerable portion (over 45%) of teachers continue to exhibit reluctance towards embracing the CBC (DEO, 2023). Existing research by Ngeno (2023) and Ngwacho (2019) underscores the importance of the CBC for fostering innovation and self-reliance in

graduates, pointing to the need for successful implementation.

However, there is a gap in the literature concerning the specific perceptions of teachers in secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts regarding the CBC. This study aims to address this gap by exploring and documenting the perspectives of teachers on the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum. The primary objective is to identify the factors contributing to teachers' reluctance and dissatisfaction with the CBC, with the ultimate goal of proposing effective strategies to enhance teacher training. By understanding teachers' perceptions, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights that can inform policy adjustments and improve the overall quality of education in secondary schools within Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts.

Research Objectives

- To find out the level of implementation of the Competence based curriculum in secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts.
- To explore the attitudes and perceptions of secondary school teachers on the implementation of Competence-Based Curriculum in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts
- To identify potential strategies and recommendations for improving the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum in secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts.

Research Questions

- What is the level of implementation of the Competence based curriculum in secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts?
- What are the perceptions of teachers on the implementation of the CBC in secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts?
- Which practical strategies and recommendations should be advanced to

enhance the effective implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum in secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceptions of Teachers on the Implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum

Nsengimana et al. (2022) conducted a study exploring how Rwandan science teachers viewed the competency-based curriculum (CBC) through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The findings revealed a spectrum of teacher perceptions, with some expressing positive views on the relevance of the educational reforms aligned with national expectations, while others held negative perceptions. Akinrinola et al. (2020) similarly reported that teachers displayed a positive outlook toward competency-based approaches, despite facing challenges such as a lack of professional training and support, which impacted the quality of teaching and assessment practices aligned with CBC.

In a study conducted by Awuonda et al., (2023) in Kenya, mixed methods to investigate teachers' perceptions of competency-based curriculum implementation and government support among grade 1-5 teachers in Homabay County. The research highlighted that effective CBC implementation and positive teacher perceptions were influenced by factors such as a desire for professional development, peer collaboration, and access to curriculum resources. The study emphasized the importance of rigorous professional development in fostering positive teacher perceptions, with Getecha (2023) suggesting that the reverse is also true, indicating the critical role of ongoing teacher training in shaping attitudes towards the CBC.

According to Olema et al., (2021), transitioning from a knowledge-based to a competency-based education system in Uganda necessitates continuous professional development for teachers. This shift aims to equip educators with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values essential for both the school environment

and various professional fields. The primary objective is to enhance teachers' perceptions and understanding, fostering effective implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC). Atuhura and Nambi (2024) highlight challenges associated with the shift to competency-based education, including inadequate preparation among stakeholders, negative teacher attitudes, insufficient resources, and challenging requirements for teacher training. Addressing the unfavourable attitudes of teachers toward CBC implementation is crucial and can be achieved through consistent and rigorous professional training workshops, as emphasized by Msamba (2023).

Ngeno et al. (2021) conducted a study in Kericho County, Kenya, to investigate teachers' attitudes toward the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in primary schools. Utilizing the social constructivism theory and a descriptive correlation design, the study emphasized that positive attitudes from teachers, headteachers, and stakeholders are crucial for effective CBC implementation. Similarly, Mokoro (2020) conducted research in Tanzania, revealing that only 34% of teachers had received CBC training, with predominantly negative perceptions suggesting a potential obstacle to successful implementation. This underscores the critical role of teachers' attitudes in CBC implementation, with negative perceptions potentially impeding success (Kikwei, 2023).

Okeyo and Mokuia (2023) highlighted that successful CBC adoption in secondary schools relies on teachers' confidence in understanding and delivering the curriculum materials. Ensuring accurate implementation is essential for the curriculum's effectiveness. Nyakito, Amimo, and Alida (2021) stressed the need to identify factors that facilitate or hinder effective curriculum changes. Getecha (2023) emphasized the central role of teachers in delivering the curriculum consistently and effectively, noting that negative attitudes toward curriculum changes can impede successful implementation. Teachers' perceptions are pivotal, as they directly influence how well the CBC is executed in the classroom. Positive

attitudes among educators lead to better implementation and student outcomes, while negative attitudes create significant barriers to achieving the curriculum's goals. This collective body of research highlights the necessity of targeted interventions to foster positive attitudes and ensure comprehensive training for teachers to facilitate effective CBC implementation.

Certainly, Adila et al. (2023) assert that teachers play a crucial role in enhancing students' learning and achieving the desired outcomes of the curriculum. Consequently, it is imperative to investigate teachers' knowledge, comprehension, and attitudes toward any educational innovation. Therefore, this current research aims to assess teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts, contributing to the existing body of literature. Existing research indicates varying opinions among teachers regarding the CBC implementation in different locations (Akhwesa, 2023; Charles, et al., 2022; Tumuheise et al., 2023). However, there is a gap in the documentation of teachers' perceptions specifically in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts, being that they are remote and heavily affected with poor educational standards (Muhindo, 2024). This study focuses on exploring teachers' views on the CBC implementation in these districts, aiming to enhance their educational and instructional capabilities. The goal is to support learners in acquiring 21st-century skills such as problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking, which are central components emphasized in the CBC.

METHODOLOGY

The research focused on secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts due to their significant challenges in implementing the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) and maintaining educational standards (Muhindo, 2024). The research methodology employed a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, to comprehensively explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the implementation of the Competence-Based

Curriculum (CBC) in secondary schools within Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts. The qualitative aspect of the study utilized a descriptive survey research design to delve deeply into teachers' experiences, challenges, and perceived benefits associated with the CBC. This qualitative approach aimed to provide rich and detailed insights into teachers' perspectives, allowing for a thorough understanding of the curriculum's impact on teaching and learning processes.

In addition to the qualitative approach, the study incorporated quantitative methods to gather numerical data that complemented and strengthened the qualitative findings. The two districts have an estimated population of 1275 teachers. A sample size of 397 participants was selected, comprising 365 teachers chosen through simple random sampling using proportions and Morgan and Krejcie (1970) table and 32 school administrators purposefully selected from twenty-one secondary schools in the target districts. This sample size was carefully determined to ensure representation of diverse perspectives while maintaining the feasibility of data collection and analysis within the study's parameters.

Structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide intended to elicit comprehensive informative responses from the participants regarding various aspects of the CBC implementation. The interview guide covered areas such as challenges faced, perceived benefits, readiness levels, and suggestions for improvement. The qualitative data collected from these interviews underwent thematic analysis, a systematic approach that allowed for the identification of common themes, patterns, and variations in teachers' perceptions. Furthermore, inferential analysis was applied to the survey results to draw meaningful conclusions and make informed inferences about the broader implications for CBC implementation in secondary schools within the study area. This methodological combination facilitated a holistic and elaborative understanding of teachers' attitudes and experiences related to the Competence-Based Curriculum.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Implementation of the CBC

The research revealed that secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts have actively adhered to the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) since its announcement by the NCDC in 2020. These schools are making concerted efforts to align with the guidelines outlined in the NCDC circular from 2020. To this effect, one of the respondents had this to say:

“Yes the students study in groups, projects are handled in lower classes, there is continuous assessment through activities of integration after every topic covered and the teachers are also managing to cope” (R4, 2024)

Again regarding the level of implementation, one of the respondents was not contented with the way

the way the CBC was handled, to illustrate her dissatisfaction, she narrated:

“According to me, the new curriculum has been implemented to a smaller extent in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko districts due to inadequately trained teachers with the skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum, inadequate resources and time-consuming that is encountered during the implementation” (R11, 2024).

At the lower secondary level, students are engaged in eleven mandatory subjects, encompassing Mathematics, English Language, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, History & Political Education, Religious Education (CRE or IRE), Entrepreneurship Education, Kiswahili, and Physical Education. Additionally, students have the flexibility to choose two elective subjects from specified categories as indicated in *Table 1* below.

Table 1: Elective subjects for lower secondary school competency-based curriculum

Elective 1	Elective 2
1. Foreign languages (French, German, Chinese)	1. Agriculture
2. Local Languages / Uganda Sign Language	2. Art and Design.
3. Literature in English.	3. Performing Arts
	4. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
	5. Nutrition and Food Technology.
	6. Technology and Design.

The curriculum mandates senior three and four students to engage in seven compulsory subjects, adhering to the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) guidelines of 2020. Emphasis is placed on project work and activities of integration and formative evaluation, with 20% allocated to total activities and 80% to final state examinations. To facilitate self-guided learning, school timetables include provisions for library work, debates, morning and evening parades, and project work. Overall, the findings suggest a comprehensive and structured approach to curriculum implementation, aligning with the goals of the Competence-Based Curriculum in the specified districts.

It was discovered that teachers receive support through curriculum materials, particularly

textbooks, for training students under the CBC. The Ministry of Education in Uganda introduced the CBC in lower secondary education and provided materials to aid teachers in the process. However, teachers noted a lack of resource books for seniors at three and four levels. The study highlighted a shortage of essential resources such as textbooks, computers, and reading materials, posing challenges to the effective implementation of the curriculum. This is evidenced by the revelation made by one of the respondents indicating that:

“The CBC would have been very good, but its implementation is difficult because there are insufficient learning materials like textbooks, limited training of staff. Teachers have little knowledge of project work and are still using

the old methodologies in implementing the CBC due to limited training and resources” (R9, 2024).

This resource inadequacy is not limited to Bundibugyo and Ntoroko but extends to numerous secondary schools across Uganda and other developing countries. The findings underscore the importance of accurate and relevant instructional materials for teachers to deliver optimal services in effectively implementing the CBC.

The research uncovered noteworthy insights into teachers' perspectives on the execution of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in secondary schools within Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts. One prominent observation pertained to the considerable challenges posed by the teacher-student ratio, reaching 1:70 and sometimes even 1:90. This high ratio resulted in a substantial workload for teachers, aligning with Munyasia & Olel's (2020) assertion that such heavy workloads impede the effective implementation of the CBC. Additionally, the large number of students strained the available classroom space, which was frequently reported as insufficient. In regard to this, one of the respondents declared thus:

“It has been implemented with a lot of difficulties like limited classrooms, yet the number of learners is big” (R25, 2024).

In line with the above, another respondent declared thus:

CBC is a good curriculum since teaching and learning are learner-centred and it encourages producing S.4 graduates with employable skills. But the goal may not be achieved due to limited classrooms and insufficient teaching and learning materials” (R12, 2024).

The study therefore revealed the pressing need for the construction of more classrooms in both private and government schools to accommodate the growing student enrolment and enhance learning environments. This finding echoed Sitienei's (2020) observations in a Tanzanian context, pinpointing the common challenge of inadequate classroom space.

The research revealed that students in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts are successfully acquiring 21st-century skills, aligning with the primary objectives of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) implementation. The curriculum received commendation for fostering the development of crucial skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, innovation, communication, cooperation, and proficiency in calculation and ICT. These findings support the assertions made by Nyikadzino (2023) and Awuonda et al. (2023), who also highlighted the CBC's effectiveness in enhancing essential skills for productivity in the contemporary world, as emphasised by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) in 2021. While there is limited evidence from Kenya regarding the impact of CBC models on learners' key competencies, evidence from the USA and South Korea suggests that the implementation of CBC has led to improvements in problem-solving skills, lifelong learning abilities, self-efficacy, and autonomy among learners, as documented by Muchira and others in 2023.

Perception of Teachers about the CBC

The research aimed to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts.

The results of the survey are indicated in *Table 2* below

Table 2: Survey Results

Item	SD	D	N	A	SA
The Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) has improved students' critical thinking skills.	3	10	5	108	239
I feel adequately trained to implement the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) effectively.	142	104	2	65	52
The availability of resources (e.g., textbooks, teaching aids) supports the implementation of the CBC in my classroom.	4	17	6	40	298
My school has adequate instructional materials to enhance the implementation of the CBC	97	164	4	77	23
The Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) encourages student-centred learning approaches.	0	3	6	13	343
I believe the CBC aligns well with the current needs of our society and economy.	11	36	67	156	95
The CBC has positively impacted students' problem-solving abilities.	21	59	80	126	79
Collaboration among teachers has enhanced the implementation of the CBC in our school.	40	71	33	138	83
I have noticed an improvement in students' practical skills since the adoption of the CBC.	11	39	25	56	234
The CBC has increased student engagement in learning activities.	41	73	15	149	87
Professional development opportunities related to the CBC have been beneficial for me.	10	22	0	144	189
Challenges such as limited resources have hindered the effective implementation of the CBC.	0	2	4	248	111
The CBC has led to a better integration of real-world applications in our lessons.	9	37	51	183	85
Continuous support from school administrators has facilitated the implementation of the CBC.	99	183	43	24	16
The CBC has helped in fostering students' self-confidence and self-esteem.	37	65	27	148	88
More collaboration with parents and community leaders would improve the implementation of the CBC in our school.	0	2	1	199	163
I believe that the CBC adequately prepares students for future career opportunities.	3	11	7	216	128
Additional training and workshops are needed to address challenges in implementing the CBC.	0	0	1	53	311
The CBC has improved the overall quality of education in our school.	2	9	68	177	109
Regular feedback from students helps in refining our approach to implementing the CBC.	4	16	5	228	112
I am optimistic about the long-term benefits of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) for students.	12	47	146	87	73

Source: Primary data

As shown in *Table 2*, a significant majority of the respondents, accounting for 347 individuals (95%), concur that the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) contributes to enhancing learners' critical thinking skills. This aligns with the discoveries made by Charles, Song & Khaing (2022), who also observed an increase in critical

thinking abilities and 21st-century skills among learners. Similarly, there is a notable positive effect of the CBC on students' problem-solving capabilities, with 205 respondents (56%) attesting to this aspect.

In terms of teachers' preparation for implementing the CBC, a notable portion of respondents (117,

32%) expressed confidence in feeling sufficiently trained for effective CBC implementation. Indeed, the study found that only six teachers per secondary school received training. Nonetheless, the majority (246, 67%) indicate a lack of adequate training. Further, findings in Table 2 above indicate that 364 (99.9%) respondents agree to the fact that training and workshops are needed to address challenges in implementing the CBC. This discrepancy is substantial, considering that teachers play a central role as the primary executors of the curriculum, making their preparation critical for the successful implementation of the CBC (Najjuma, 2024).

A significant gap identified in this study pertains to the deficiency in teacher training, despite the crucial role outlined by Atuhaire and Turyagyenda (2023) and New Vision (2023), asserting that teachers must possess the requisite competencies for the successful execution of the CBC. This points to a salient need for a comprehensive training program for teachers to equip them with the necessary competencies. The research findings, therefore, suggest a misalignment between the perceived importance of teacher training and the actual provision of training opportunities in the studied districts. In light of these findings, the research recommends a comprehensive training program for teachers in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts. Such a program would not only address the identified deficiency in teacher training but also align with the broader call for effective CBC implementation. By ensuring that teachers are well-equipped with the necessary competencies and support systems, the education authorities can improve teacher perceptions, thereby fostering a more positive environment for the successful implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum in secondary schools.

The findings revealed a notable variation in teachers' attitudes toward the CBC, with a mix of positive and predominantly low attitudes. One of the respondents illustrated this finding when he made the following narration:

“There is a poor attitude of different stakeholders like the parents, teachers, and the community since they were not engaged right from its development” (R17, 2024).

In addition one of the respondents asserted that:

“CBC would be a good curriculum for all Ugandans since it equips them with employable skills, but the government has failed to support it fully. This is seen through limited learning resources and limited motivation of teachers and because of all the above, the CBC will not benefit all Ugandans as expected but rather to cripple the education system as a whole” (R2, 2024).

This disparity in perceptions aligns with a similar trend reported by Mokoro (2020) in the context of secondary schools in Tanzania, indicating that the issue may extend beyond regional boundaries. The prevalence of low attitudes among teachers raises concerns about the effective execution of the CBC, as teachers play a pivotal role in its implementation (Mohamed, (2023).

With evidence from the interviews conducted, respondent 31 had this to say:

“My thinking about the Competency-Based Curriculum is that it will not be fully implemented and will not yield much due to the fact that the government did not equip teachers with adequate skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum nor did they avail the required resources most especially in schools in rural areas” (R31, 2024).

The study revealed a concerning low level of teacher enthusiasm attributed to various inconsistencies in the curriculum implementation. One striking finding was that only six teachers from each secondary school had received training in 2023, a program facilitated by the Government through the District Education Officer (DEO) and the Secondary Science and Mathematics (SESEMAT) programme. This limited training could be a significant factor contributing to the observed lack of enthusiasm among teachers.

The correlation coefficient, r , between teachers' perception of the Competence-Based Curriculum

(CBC) and its implementation is approximately 0.485. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that as teachers' perception of the CBC improves, the implementation of the CBC also tends to improve, and vice versa. The coefficient of determination, R^2 , is approximately 0.235. This means that about 23.5% of the variance in the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) can be explained by teachers' perception of the CBC, leaving room for other factors.

The findings indicate the necessity for proactive steps to boost teacher engagement, thereby increasing enthusiasm for the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts and throughout Uganda. This could be achieved through targeted professional development, maintaining open communication channels, and adopting a collaborative approach that addresses the specific challenges and concerns raised by teachers. The study recommends organizing deliberate workshops and seminars aimed at equipping teachers with the necessary competencies for effective implementation of the CBC.

The successful implementation of the CBC hinges on the willingness and positive attitudes of teachers (Nyikadzino, 2023), making it imperative to address their concerns and foster a supportive environment for effective curriculum delivery. The research findings underscore the urgency of developing strategies to address the identified challenges and engage teachers more effectively in the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum.

It is crucial to recognize and understand the factors contributing to the low attitudes among teachers, as this insight can guide the development of targeted interventions (Cherotich, 2023). By addressing teachers' concerns, providing adequate support, and training, education authorities can foster a more positive reception and successful implementation of the CBC in secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts. The emphasis should be on

collaboration and communication to create a conducive environment for teachers to embrace and effectively implement the new curriculum. Drawing on insights from Awuonda, Jung & Lee (2023) in Kenya, the research emphasised the importance of providing professional development, encouraging peer collaboration, and ensuring access to curriculum resources to foster a positive teacher perception and enhance the effective implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC). The findings point to a positive correlation between rigorous professional development and positive teacher attitudes, echoing the perspective of Getecha (2023).

Strategies to Enhance Level of Implementation

Teachers in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts expressed several insights regarding the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in secondary schools. They emphasised the necessity for increased government funding, specifically earmarked for acquiring essential materials for hands-on and practical project work integral to the curriculum. Additionally, teachers highlighted the importance of augmenting the number of computers in schools to facilitate enhanced research opportunities for students as illustrated by one of the respondents who suggested that:

“The government should provide enough learning materials to all schools like more textbooks, computers, and others” (R30, 2024).

Additionally, respondent 6 emphasised the need for more classrooms as a way of catering to the large numbers of learners.

“Enough classrooms should be built in all government schools to cater for increasing enrolments because the kind of sitting with the CBC requires big space” (R6, 2024).

Teachers acknowledged the CBC's emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, and innovation, citing its alignment with NCDC guidelines (2021) and the views of Charles, Song, and Khaing (2022). However, they stressed the need for comprehensive retooling among educators and

administrators to ensure CBC's effective implementation, echoing sentiments shared by New Vision in 2023. Notably, teachers highlighted the minimal involvement of parents and grassroots stakeholders in CBC development, urging active engagement from parents, employers, and relevant stakeholders for a more holistic implementation process. Moreover, teachers emphasized the government's role in providing adequate teaching and learning materials to facilitate successful CBC implementation across all schools.

The study revealed teachers' limited participation during the initial stages of CBC implementation in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts, hindering its effective execution. To remedy this, the study recommends involving teachers throughout the implementation process, including their participation in technical working groups to identify curriculum gaps. This inclusive approach aims to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills, making them catalysts for pedagogical change and connecting classroom experiences to real-world contexts, thereby improving education's relevance. Encouraging activities that foster meta-cognitive skills, critical thinking, and deeper understanding among students can further enhance learning experiences and boost teachers' confidence in teaching creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, as expressed by one of the respondents.

“In my opinion, the government should recruit enough teachers in all schools. Retooling of all teachers on the implementation of the CBC in all secondary schools of Bundibugyo and Ntoroko districts should be done” (R24, 2024).

The study advocates for aligning the curriculum with the demands of the labour market to ensure a demand-driven approach to CBC implementation. Collaboration between the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and labour unions is recommended to identify and incorporate the skills needed for graduates to be relevant in both their communities and the job market. The suggested approach involves adapting

pedagogical strategies and assessment criteria based on the needs of the labour market, fostering effective learning processes. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of continuous curriculum reforms to address emerging needs in the rapidly changing economy. This aligns with the perspective presented by Muchira et al. (2023), highlighting the necessity of adapting educational structures to keep pace with evolving economic requirements.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the complexities and challenges surrounding the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in secondary schools within Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts. While there are notable efforts by schools to adhere to CBC guidelines and incorporate innovative teaching methods such as project-based learning, resource inadequacy emerges as a significant hurdle. The shortage of essential materials like textbooks, computers, and classroom space, particularly at higher levels, impedes the full realization of CBC's potential to foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills among students. This calls for urgent attention from education authorities to allocate sufficient resources and improve infrastructure to support effective curriculum delivery.

Moreover, the study underscores the crucial role of teacher perceptions and attitudes in shaping CBC implementation outcomes. While some teachers acknowledge the benefits of CBC in enhancing student skills and aligning with contemporary educational needs, a majority express concerns about limited training, insufficient resources, and the heavy workload resulting from high student-to-teacher ratios. This disparity in perceptions highlights the need for comprehensive teacher training programs, increased support systems, and active engagement of educators in curriculum development and implementation processes. By addressing these concerns and fostering a positive environment for teachers, education authorities can enhance CBC implementation effectiveness and ensure a more meaningful learning experience for students. With

strategic interventions and a focus on addressing teacher concerns and resource challenges, secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts can realize the full potential of the Competence-Based Curriculum, preparing students with the essential skills and competencies for success in the 21st-century workforce and society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations directed to the different key stakeholders.

Teachers

- Engage actively in professional development activities and training programs to improve CBC implementation skills, pedagogical techniques, and classroom management strategies in secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts.
- Collaborate with colleagues, share best practices, and participate in peer learning networks to exchange ideas, resources, and innovative teaching methods.

Headteachers and School Administrators

- Allocate resources and prioritize procurement of textbooks, teaching aids, computers, and classroom infrastructure for CBC implementation.
- Establish robust communication channels for feedback from teachers, students, and parents regarding CBC challenges and successes. Regular forums between teachers, parents, and officials are vital for addressing concerns and improving CBC implementation.

Policy Makers and Education Authorities

- Review and refine curriculum guidelines, assessment frameworks, and implementation strategies to address challenges and align with educational goals.
- Allocate funding and resources for CBC implementation, focusing on infrastructure, teacher training, and materials.

- Foster partnerships with stakeholders, including parents, community leaders, industry representatives, research institutions, to enhance collaboration and curriculum relevance.

Other Researchers

- Conduct further studies and evaluations to explore the long-term effects of CBC implementation on student learning outcomes, skill development, and preparedness for the workforce.
- Investigate innovative pedagogical approaches, assessment methods, and curriculum adaptations to optimize CBC delivery and address emerging educational challenges.

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