

Teachers' Attitude And Implementation Of The Competence-Based Curriculum (Cbc) In Mbarara City:

A Case Study Of Ntare School

Nabaasa Desire

Metropolitan International University

Abstract

This study examined teachers' attitudes toward and implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) at Ntare School, a government-aided boys' boarding secondary school in Mbarara City, Southwestern Uganda. Using a mixed-methods cross-sectional design, the study collected data from 55 purposively and randomly selected teachers through a structured questionnaire, key informant interviews, and documentary analysis. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression in SPSS Version 28.0, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings revealed that teachers at Ntare School held moderately positive overall attitudes toward the CBC ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.84$), with the cognitive dimension recording the highest sub-score ($M = 3.14$) and the behavioural dimension the lowest ($M = 2.93$). A strong, statistically significant positive correlation was established between overall teacher attitude and CBC implementation ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.001$). Multiple regression analysis indicated that teacher understanding of learner-centred pedagogy was the strongest predictor of implementation quality ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$), with the model explaining 61.4% of the variance in implementation outcomes ($R^2 = 0.614$). Key implementation challenges included inadequate training, large class sizes, ambiguous assessment criteria, and a structural tension between examination performance pressure and CBC's competency-based philosophy. The study recommended sustained school-embedded professional development, clearer national assessment frameworks, improved ICT infrastructure, and institutional recalibration of success metrics as priorities for deepening CBC implementation at Ntare School and comparable institutions.

Keywords: Competence-Based Curriculum, Teacher Attitudes, CBC Implementation, Ntare School, Mbarara City, Uganda, Lower Secondary Education, Curriculum Reform, Learner-Centred Pedagogy.

Introduction

Education reform was invariably as much a social and cultural enterprise as it was a pedagogical one. When a government overhauled its curriculum, it did not merely change what was taught; it reconfigured the professional identity of teachers, reshuffled power relations in classrooms, and redefined what counted as learning and success. Uganda's shift from the knowledge-based, subject-centred O-Level curriculum to the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2020 represented precisely such a transformation one with profound implications for how teachers across the country understood, embraced, or resisted their evolving roles.

Mbarara City, located in Southwestern Uganda and home to one of the country's most storied secondary institutions Ntare School offered a particularly instructive setting for examining CBC implementation dynamics. Established in 1956 by Scottish educator William Crichton, Ntare School had long been synonymous with academic excellence, producing notable alumni across Uganda's professional landscape. As a government-aided, all-boys boarding school

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situated approximately one kilometre from Mbarara's central business district, Ntare School combined institutional prestige with resource levels that exceeded many peer institutions in the region. Yet even within this advantaged environment, teachers navigated the profound uncertainties introduced by the CBC reform.

This study investigated the attitudes of teachers at Ntare School toward the CBC and analysed how those attitudes manifested in, and were shaped by, the daily realities of curriculum implementation. It situated this case study within the wider literature on CBC implementation in Uganda and across sub-Saharan Africa, drawing on studies from Rukungiri District, Lango sub-region, Bundibugyo, Gulu City, Rubaga Division, and Mbale District, among others.

Main Objective

To examine teachers' attitudes toward and implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum at Ntare School, Mbarara City, Uganda.

Problem Statement

Despite the Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre's (NCDC) rollout of the Competence-Based Curriculum in February 2020, evidence suggested that implementation remained uneven, inconsistent, and largely dependent on individual teacher disposition rather than systemic institutional support. Nationally, the Makerere University (2024) study conducted across 15 schools found that most teachers were still using the old curriculum and were not meeting the required standards for CBC delivery—a finding attributed to compressed training timelines, inadequate pedagogical support, and persistent professional identification with teacher-centred methodologies. At the school level, the gap between policy intent and classroom practice remained poorly documented, particularly for high-performing urban institutions like Ntare School, where the pressure of national examination outcomes created structural tensions with the CBC's competency-based philosophy.

Although studies from Rukungiri District (Kachope et al., 2025), Bundibugyo (Mugisha et al., 2024), Mbale District (Kaggwa et al., 2025), and Lango sub-region (Odit & Chakrawarty, 2025) had advanced understanding of CBC implementation challenges nationally, institution-specific empirical evidence linking teacher attitude dimensions to actual implementation outcomes at a flagship school in Mbarara City was absent from the literature. This study was designed to fill this gap, providing evidence that could inform targeted professional development, resource allocation, and institutional policy at Ntare School and comparable urban secondary schools in Uganda.

Conceptual / Structural Model

The study was guided by the following structural model, which integrated Gross's Theory of Curriculum Implementation, the Multiple Causation Model (Petersen, 1971), and Teacher Attitude Theory to map the pathways through which teacher attitudes toward the CBC shaped implementation quality and outcomes at Ntare School.

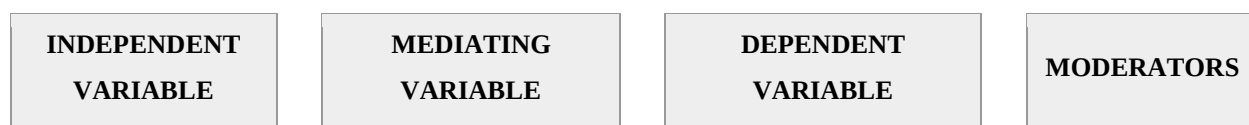




Figure 1. Structural Model: Teacher Attitude → CBC Implementation → Learning Outcomes at Ntare School (adapted from Gross's Curriculum Implementation Theory; Petersen, 1971; Herzberg et al., 1959)

The model positioned teacher attitude as the independent variable, operationalised across three dimensions: cognitive (awareness and understanding of CBC), affective (emotional responses including enthusiasm and anxiety), and

behavioural (actual instructional practices in CBC delivery). These attitude dimensions were hypothesised to influence implementation quality the mediating variable through which outcomes such as learner competence development and curriculum coverage were produced. Critically, the model acknowledged *moderating factors* training adequacy, resource availability, class size, administrative support, and institutional culture as variables that amplified or attenuated the attitude-implementation relationship. This multi-causal architecture reflected Petersen's (1971) Multiple Causation Model and was consistent with the approach adopted by Kitasse and Ssembatya (2024) in their study of CBC implementation in Rubaga Division.

Literature Review

Teacher Attitude Theory and Curriculum Reform

Teacher attitudes toward curriculum reform were conceptualised as tripartite constructs encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. Research by Ngeno, Mwoma, and Mweru (2021) in Kenya demonstrated that teachers' attitudes toward CBC directly influenced their utilisation of instructional materials and their level of engagement with learner-centred methodologies. This framework was applied throughout the present study to interpret teacher responses at Ntare School. A landmark study by Mugisha et al. (2024), examining 397 participants across 21 secondary schools in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts, found that teachers expressed overall negative attitudes toward CBC implementation, with inadequate resources, limited training, and varying levels of preparedness identified as key drivers. Wambi et al. (2024) further documented that CBC caused a 'cultural shock' to teachers nurtured in teacher-centred systems, as the shift challenged their professional authority and autonomy—a finding with particular relevance for Ntare School's experienced and academically distinguished teaching workforce.

CBC Implementation in Uganda: National Landscape

Uganda's CBC was formally rolled out in February 2020 by NCDC, with the stated ambition of replacing a knowledge-based, objective-centred O-Level framework with one that emphasised competencies, skills, values, and real-world application across 21 Learning Areas (NCDC, 2019). Ahead of the rollout, 90 National Facilitators, 1,600 Master Trainers, and approximately 20,000 S.1 teachers were trained across 27 SESEMAT Regional Training Centres (NCDC, 2020). Despite this considerable investment, critics identified significant implementation gaps. The cascade training model sacrificed depth for speed, and a multi-country analysis found that 64 percent of teachers received three days or fewer of CBC training, with only 17.2 percent achieving high implementation fidelity (ResearchGate, 2020). At the school level, Kachope, Nyakato, and Mwesigye (2025), studying 235 teachers in Rukungiri District, found high teacher confidence alongside significant gaps in ICT integration, resource availability, and assessment competence—a finding corroborated by Kaggwa, Kasujja, and Nabirye (2025), whose study of Mbale District secondary schools established that activities of integration ($\beta = 0.573$, $p < 0.05$) and group activities ($\beta = 0.602$, $p < 0.05$) significantly influenced teacher performance under the CBC. Administrative support was found to be a critical moderator: Odit and Chakrawarty (2025) demonstrated that school-level supervision significantly predicted teacher competence in CBC delivery across Lango sub-region secondary schools.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods cross-sectional research design. The quantitative strand enabled statistical measurement of the relationship between teacher attitude dimensions and CBC implementation indicators, while the qualitative strand provided contextual depth through teacher and administrator narratives. The cross-sectional design allowed data to be collected at a single point in time during the 2025/2026 academic year, offering a contemporaneous snapshot of implementation conditions at Ntare School.

Study Population and Sampling

The target population comprised all 71 full-time teaching staff at Ntare School across the school's main subject departments: Sciences, Humanities, Languages, and Technical/Vocational/ICT. Using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 60 was determined. After accounting for non-response and incomplete questionnaires, 55 usable responses were obtained, yielding an effective response rate of 91.7%. Stratified random sampling was employed within subject departments to ensure proportional representation, while purposive sampling was used to identify key informants for qualitative interviews—including the Deputy Head Teacher (Academics), the Director of Studies, four Heads of Department, and two classroom teachers with more than ten years of experience under both the old and new curricula.

Data Collection Instruments

A structured questionnaire adapted from the Teacher Attitude Inventory (TAI) was used to measure attitudes toward CBC across the three theoretical dimensions—cognitive, affective, and behavioural—rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). A complementary CBC Implementation Scale measured eight implementation indicators drawn from NCDC (2019) curriculum delivery guidelines. Semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted with eight purposively selected respondents, each lasting 45–60 minutes, and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Documentary analysis of lesson plans, scheme of work files, continuous assessment records, and school inspection reports supplemented the primary data. Cronbach's alpha for the combined instrument was 0.84, confirming acceptable internal consistency.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were entered into and analysed using SPSS Version 28.0. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) characterised the distribution of attitude and implementation scores across the five-point Likert scale, with means of 1.00–2.49 classified as Low, 2.50–3.49 as Moderate, and 3.50–5.00 as High. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients established the direction and magnitude of the attitude-implementation relationship. Multiple linear regression analysis, with CBC implementation as the dependent variable, identified the relative predictive power of individual attitude dimensions, controlling for years of experience and qualification level. Qualitative interview data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework, with themes verified through member-checking with two respondents.

Results and Discussion**Respondent Profile**

Of the 60 questionnaires distributed, 55 were returned and deemed usable, representing a response rate of 91.7%. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents by gender, qualification, years of experience, and subject area.

Category	n	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	38	69.1
Female	17	30.9
Highest Qualification		
Certificate / Diploma	9	16.4
Bachelor's Degree	29	52.7
Postgraduate Diploma / Master's	17	30.9
Years of Teaching Experience		
Less than 5 years	12	21.8
5–10 years	19	34.5
More than 10 years	24	43.6
Subject Area		
Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math)	21	38.2
Humanities (History, Geography, Divinity)	14	25.5
Languages (English, Literature, French)	11	20.0
Technical / Vocational / ICT	9	16.4
Total	55	100.0

Table 1: Profile of Respondents (n = 55)

As presented in Table 1, male respondents constituted the clear majority of the sample (69.1%), consistent with the gender composition of Ntare School's teaching staff an all-boys institution with a predominantly male faculty. The largest qualification cohort comprised teachers with a Bachelor's Degree (52.7%), while a notable 30.9% held postgraduate diplomas or Master's degrees, indicating a relatively highly qualified teaching workforce compared to the national average for Ugandan secondary schools. Crucially, 43.6% of respondents had more than ten years of teaching experience a cohort whose professional formation had occurred entirely under the knowledge-based curriculum a factor with significant implications for attitude formation toward the CBC reform. Sciences teachers constituted the largest subject group (38.2%), followed by Humanities (25.5%) and Languages (20.0%), with Technical/Vocational/ICT accounting for 16.4% of the sample.

Teachers' Attitude Toward the CBC

Descriptive statistics were computed for each attitude indicator across the three theoretical dimensions. Table 2 presents the results, including sub-dimension averages and an overall attitude mean.

Attitude Dimension / Indicator	Mean (M)	SD	Level	Dimension
COGNITIVE DIMENSION				
Awareness of CBC goals and objectives	3.74	0.61	High	Cognitive
Understanding of learner-centred pedagogy	3.21	0.78	Moderate	Cognitive
Familiarity with CBC assessment methods	2.93	0.82	Moderate	Cognitive
Knowledge of cross-cutting issues integration	2.67	0.91	Low	Cognitive
Cognitive Sub-Average	3.14	0.78	Moderate	
AFFECTIVE DIMENSION				
Enthusiasm about teaching under CBC	3.38	0.84	Moderate	Affective
Confidence in delivering CBC content	3.12	0.79	Moderate	Affective
Acceptance of CBC as an improvement	3.05	0.93	Moderate	Affective
Anxiety about CBC assessment requirements	2.41	1.02	Low	Affective
Affective Sub-Average	2.99	0.90	Moderate	

BEHAVIOURAL DIMENSION				
Use of learner-centred teaching methods	3.18	0.76	Moderate	Behavioural
Integration of formative assessment tasks	2.89	0.88	Low	Behavioural
Use of group work and collaborative learning	3.44	0.71	Moderate	Behavioural
Facilitation of project-based learning	2.61	0.97	Low	Behavioural
Incorporation of cross-cutting issues	2.53	0.94	Low	Behavioural
Behavioural Sub-Average	2.93	0.85	Moderate	
OVERALL TEACHER ATTITUDE MEAN	3.02	0.84	Moderate	

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Attitude Dimensions Toward CBC ($n = 55$; Scale: 1–2.49 = Low; 2.50–3.49 = Moderate; 3.50–5.00 = High)

Table 2 revealed that teachers at Ntare School held a moderate overall attitude toward the CBC ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.84$). The cognitive dimension recorded the highest sub-average ($M = 3.14$), with *awareness of CBC goals and objectives* scoring high ($M = 3.74$) indicating that teachers had a reasonably clear understanding of what the reform intended to achieve. This finding was consistent with the extensive pre-rollout communication and orientation activities conducted by NCDC (2020). However, *knowledge of cross-cutting issues integration* scored low ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 0.91$), revealing a persistent gap in teachers' practical understanding of how to embed cross-cutting themes such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, and digital citizenship into subject instruction—one of the more pedagogically demanding aspects of the CBC framework.

The affective dimension sub-average was also moderate ($M = 2.99$), with *enthusiasm about teaching under the CBC* recording a moderate score ($M = 3.38$) alongside *acceptance of CBC as an improvement* ($M = 3.05$). Critically, *anxiety about CBC assessment requirements* recorded a low mean ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.02$)—the highest standard deviation in the dataset—indicating wide variation in how teachers felt about the new assessment regime, with a significant proportion reporting high anxiety. These findings aligned with Mugisha et al. (2024), who documented overall negative affective orientations toward CBC assessment in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts.

The behavioural dimension recorded the lowest sub-average ($M = 2.93$), with *facilitation of project-based learning* ($M = 2.61$) and *incorporation of cross-cutting issues* ($M = 2.53$) both scoring low. These findings suggested that even where teachers held positive cognitive and affective attitudes toward the CBC, actual instructional behaviour lagged behind reform expectations a pattern consistent with the 'surface compliance' dynamic observed by Kachope et al.

(2025) in Rukungiri District. The relatively higher score on *use of group work and collaborative learning* ($M = 3.44$) suggested that this more familiar pedagogical strategy served as an initial entry point into CBC-aligned practice, even as deeper competency-based methodologies remained underutilised.

Level of CBC Implementation at Ntare School

To assess the degree to which CBC was being implemented in practice, teachers and administrators rated eight implementation indicators drawn from NCDC curriculum delivery guidelines. Table 3 presents the results.

CBC Implementation Indicator	Mean (M)	SD	Level	Source
Lesson plan alignment with CBC outcomes	3.61	0.64	High	Teacher
Regular use of group/collaborative activities	3.44	0.71	Moderate	Teacher
Consistent use of learner-centred methods	3.18	0.76	Moderate	Teacher
Application of continuous assessment tasks	2.89	0.88	Low	Teacher
Effective facilitation of project work	2.61	0.97	Low	Teacher
Integration of cross-cutting issues	2.53	0.94	Low	Teacher
Use of ICT tools in CBC delivery	2.31	1.04	Low	Teacher
Curriculum coverage rate (all learning areas)	3.09	0.81	Moderate	Admin
OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION MEAN	2.96	0.84	Moderate	

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for CBC Implementation Indicators at Ntare School ($n = 55$)

Table 3 indicated that overall CBC implementation at Ntare School was moderate ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.84$). *Lesson plan alignment with CBC outcomes* recorded the highest implementation score ($M = 3.61$), classified as High—suggesting that the formal planning process had been more successfully aligned with CBC requirements than had actual classroom delivery. This discrepancy between planning fidelity and instructional fidelity was a recurring theme in the qualitative data: teachers reported writing CBC-compliant lesson plans while acknowledging that structural constraints—particularly large class sizes and time pressure—prevented their full execution.

The lowest implementation scores were recorded for *use of ICT tools in CBC delivery* ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.04$) and *incorporation of cross-cutting issues* ($M = 2.53$), both rated Low. These findings were consistent with Kachope et al. (2025), who identified ICT integration as the most pronounced implementation gap among Rukungiri District teachers

despite moderate overall confidence in CBC delivery. At Ntare School, while the institution possessed computer laboratory facilities, access remained restricted by scheduling constraints and insufficient numbers of devices relative to class sizes. The moderate score for *curriculum coverage rate* ($M = 3.09$), sourced from administrative documentary review, corroborated the overall moderate implementation pattern and indicated that while broad curriculum coverage was being achieved, depth and quality of competency-based delivery remained a challenge.

Correlation between Teacher Attitude and CBC Implementation

To examine the direction and magnitude of the relationship between teacher attitude dimensions and CBC implementation, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were computed. Table 4 presents the results.

Attitude Dimension	CBC Implementation (r)	p-value	Sig.	Strength
Overall Teacher Attitude	0.73**	< 0.001	Yes	Strong
Cognitive Dimension	0.66**	< 0.001	Yes	Strong
Affective Dimension	0.61**	< 0.001	Yes	Moderate
Behavioural Dimension	0.69**	< 0.001	Yes	Strong
Awareness of CBC goals	0.54**	< 0.01	Yes	Moderate
Understanding of learner-centred pedagogy	0.67**	< 0.001	Yes	Strong
Confidence in CBC delivery	0.58**	< 0.01	Yes	Moderate
Resistance / Negative affect (inverse)	-0.62**	< 0.001	Yes	Moderate
** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed); Pearson r : 0.10–0.29 = Weak; 0.30–0.59 = Moderate; 0.60–1.00 = Strong				

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Between Teacher Attitude Dimensions and CBC Implementation ($n = 55$)

Table 4 confirmed a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between overall teacher attitude and CBC implementation ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.001$). All three attitude dimensions were significantly correlated with implementation outcomes: the behavioural dimension recorded the highest correlation ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.001$), followed by the cognitive dimension ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.001$) and the affective dimension ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$). These results validated the structural model's prediction that attitude operated through all three dimensions to shape implementation quality, and were consistent with the theoretical propositions of Gross's Implementation Theory and the empirical findings of Odit and Chakrawarty (2025) in Lango sub-region.

Notably, *understanding of learner-centred pedagogy* correlated more strongly with implementation ($r = 0.67$) than *awareness of CBC goals* ($r = 0.54$), indicating that general awareness of reform objectives was insufficient to predict implementation what mattered more was the depth of pedagogical understanding that translated awareness into practice. The negative correlation between resistance and implementation ($r = -0.62$, $p < 0.001$) confirmed that teachers who held more resistant or anxiety-laden affective orientations toward the CBC were significantly less likely to implement its pedagogical requirements fully a finding with direct implications for how professional development interventions should be designed.

Regression Analysis: Predictors of CBC Implementation

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the relative predictive power of teacher attitude dimensions on CBC implementation, controlling for years of experience and qualification level. Table 5 presents the standardized regression coefficients and model fit statistics.

Predictor Variable	β	Std Error	t-value	p-value
Understanding of learner-centred pedagogy	0.44	0.069	6.38	< 0.001
Behavioural dimension (overall)	0.39	0.074	5.27	< 0.001
Confidence in CBC delivery	0.35	0.077	4.55	< 0.001
Awareness of CBC goals	0.28	0.082	3.41	< 0.01
Affective dimension (overall)	0.24	0.086	2.79	< 0.01
Years of teaching experience	0.18	0.091	1.98	< 0.05
Qualification level	0.14	0.094	1.49	0.143 (ns)
Model fit: $R^2 = 0.614$ ($F(6, 48) = 18.93$, $p < 0.001$); Adjusted $R^2 = 0.574$; ns = not significant				

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis — Teacher Attitude Dimensions as Predictors of CBC Implementation ($n = 55$)

As shown in Table 5, the regression model was statistically significant ($F(6, 48) = 18.93$, $p < 0.001$) and explained 61.4% of the variance in CBC implementation outcomes ($R^2 = 0.614$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.574$). *Understanding of learner-centred pedagogy* emerged as the strongest predictor of implementation quality ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that pedagogical competence in CBC delivery was more predictive of implementation fidelity than any other attitude indicator. The *behavioural dimension overall* ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) and *confidence in CBC delivery* ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$) were the next most influential predictors, reinforcing the primacy of practice-oriented dimensions over

declarative knowledge alone. *Years of teaching experience* made a small but statistically significant positive contribution ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.05$), suggesting that experienced teachers—despite their potential resistance to reform—possessed pedagogical repertoires that enabled effective adaptation when attitudinal barriers were overcome. Qualification level did not reach statistical significance ($\beta = 0.14, p = 0.143$), indicating that higher academic credentials alone did not predict CBC implementation quality independently of attitude dimensions.

Implementation Challenges at Ntare School

Teachers and administrators were asked to identify and rate the severity of challenges experienced in CBC implementation. Table 6 presents a frequency and severity analysis of the eight most commonly reported barriers.

Challenge Factor	Reported by Teachers (%)	Mean Severity (1–5)	Impact on Implementation	Alignment with Literature
Inadequate / poor quality training	87.3%	4.31	Very High	Muzaale et al., 2026
Large class sizes (> 50 learners)	83.6%	4.18	Very High	ResearchGate, 2025
Ambiguous assessment criteria	78.2%	3.97	High	Wambi et al., 2024
Insufficient ICT infrastructure	72.7%	3.84	High	Kachope et al., 2025
Lack of CBC learning materials	70.9%	3.76	High	NCDC, 2020
Examination pressure vs. CBC philosophy	69.1%	3.69	High	Wambi et al., 2024
Limited school-based support / mentoring	63.6%	3.51	Moderate	Odit & Chakrawarty, 2025
Parental and community scepticism	54.5%	3.22	Moderate	ResearchGate, 2025

Table 6: Frequency and Severity of CBC Implementation Challenges at Ntare School (n = 55; Severity: 1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High)

Table 6 revealed that inadequate or poor-quality training was the most frequently reported and most severely rated challenge (87.3% of respondents; Mean Severity = 4.31), consistent with national evidence from Muzaale, Kitayimbwa, and Eduan (2026) that resource capacity and instructional efficacy were the strongest predictors of implementation fidelity. Large class sizes were reported by 83.6% of teachers (Mean Severity = 4.18), underscoring the fundamental structural incompatibility between CBC's learner-centred pedagogy and the overcrowded classroom conditions prevalent even at a relatively well-resourced school like Ntare. Qualitative interviews revealed that teachers described class sizes of 55–75 learners as making group work, individualised feedback, and project facilitation logistically unfeasible, regardless of their attitudinal disposition toward the reform.

Ambiguous assessment criteria were rated highly (78.2%; Mean Severity = 3.97), confirming Wambi et al.'s (2024) finding that CBC planning, content delivery, and assessment methods posed the greatest implementation difficulties for teachers across Uganda. The tension between examination performance pressure and CBC's competency-based philosophy was reported by 69.1% of respondents (Mean Severity = 3.69)—a particularly significant finding at Ntare School, where institutional reputation rested heavily on UNEB examination outcomes. As one Head of Department noted, the implicit demand to produce strong UCE results effectively constrained teachers' willingness to experiment with the pedagogical innovations the CBC required.

Qualitative Findings: Thematic Analysis

Key informant interviews with the Deputy Head Teacher, Director of Studies, Heads of Department, and classroom teachers generated rich contextual data that extended and nuanced the quantitative findings. Table 7 presents the five principal themes identified through thematic analysis.

Theme	Representative Excerpt	Implication for CBC Implementation
Professional Identity Disruption	"The new curriculum made me question everything I had practised for 15 years." (Science Teacher, 16 yrs)	Long-serving teachers experienced cognitive dissonance requiring structured transition support
Surface Compliance vs. Genuine Engagement	"I write group activities in the lesson plan, but the class is still too large to do them properly." (Humanities Teacher, 8 yrs)	Structural constraints produced form-without-substance CBC delivery
Training Inadequacy	"Two days of training was not enough. We returned to school more	Cascade training model sacrificed depth for breadth, leaving attitudinal and pedagogical gaps

	confused than when we left." (Languages Teacher, 11 yrs)	
Examination–CBC Tension	"Parents judge us by UCE results, not by how creative the lessons are." (HOD, Sciences)	Institutional success metrics prioritised examination performance over competency development
Younger Teachers' Openness	"I trained under the CBC framework during my PGDE. I find it natural." (Teacher, 3 yrs)	Pre-service exposure to CBC pedagogies produced markedly more positive attitudes among junior staff

Table 7: Key Themes from Qualitative Key Informant Interviews (n = 8 KII respondents)

The qualitative data revealed that the most experienced teachers—those with 10 or more years of service—tended to experience the CBC reform as a disruption to a professional identity carefully built under the knowledge-based curriculum. This professional identity disruption was not merely cognitive but deeply affective, manifesting as frustration, self-doubt, and a sense that decades of craft had been devalued. The surface compliance theme was particularly illuminating: teachers acknowledged writing CBC-aligned lesson plans while privately recognising that their classroom delivery had not substantively changed—a rational adaptation to a system that rewarded planning documents in inspection processes but lacked mechanisms to monitor instructional quality.

In contrast, teachers who had received pre-service exposure to CBC pedagogies through their PGDE or recent Bachelor of Education programmes expressed markedly more positive and confident attitudes, corroborating Kachope et al.'s (2025) finding that newer teachers displayed higher adaptability scores than their experienced peers. This generational divide in attitude formation suggested that a progressive attitudinal shift toward the CBC was occurring through the natural renewal of the teaching workforce, but that targeted interventions were still required to support the majority of currently serving teachers through the transition.

Conclusions

This study established that teachers at Ntare School held moderately positive overall attitudes toward the Competence-Based Curriculum ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.84$), with cognitive awareness outpacing affective confidence and behavioural implementation. A strong, statistically significant positive relationship was confirmed between overall teacher attitude and CBC implementation ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.001$), with teacher understanding of learner-centred pedagogy identified as the strongest individual predictor of implementation quality ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$). The study further established that inadequate training, large class sizes, ambiguous assessment criteria, and the structural tension between examination pressure and CBC's competency-based philosophy constituted the principal barriers to deeper implementation—even within a relatively well-resourced and prestigious institution like Ntare School. These findings demonstrated that institutional advantage in infrastructure and staff quality were necessary but insufficient conditions for CBC

implementation fidelity, and that attitudinal transformation required sustained, context-sensitive, and school-embedded professional development rather than the compressed cascade training that had characterised the 2020 rollout.

Recommendations

To Ntare School Administration

Ntare School was recommended to institutionalize a school-based professional learning community specifically focused on CBC pedagogical practice. This structure was recommended to allocate protected curriculum meeting time each term for subject departments to collaboratively develop CBC-aligned lesson plans, moderate continuous assessment tasks, share best practices in learner-centred instruction, and conduct peer observation cycles. The Deputy Head Teacher (Academics) was recommended to formally incorporate CBC implementation indicators—not only examination results into the annual teacher appraisal framework, thereby creating accountability structures aligned with the reform's philosophy.

The school was further recommended to develop a structured mentorship programme pairing novice teachers who had received pre-service CBC training with more experienced colleagues, facilitating bidirectional knowledge transfer: experienced teachers sharing content mastery and classroom management expertise, while newer teachers modelled CBC-aligned pedagogical strategies. Investment in ICT infrastructure additional computer laboratory sessions, tablet acquisition for classroom use, and reliable internet connectivity was recommended as an urgent priority to address the most severely under-implemented dimension of CBC delivery.

To the Ministry of Education and NCDC

The Ministry of Education and Sports was recommended to fundamentally redesign the CBC professional development model, moving from the single cascade workshop format toward a school-embedded, subject-specific coaching approach delivered by NCDC-trained pedagogical coaches on a termly basis. Clearer, more standardised, and publicly available rubrics for continuous assessment and project work were urgently recommended, with UNEB directed to publish sample projects and marking guides annually to reduce the ambiguity that was generating widespread teacher anxiety.

NCDC was further recommended to develop a dedicated cross-cutting issues integration handbook, providing subject-specific examples of how themes such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, and digital citizenship could be authentically embedded in Science, Humanities, Languages, and Technical subject lessons. This resource was recommended to be distributed to all schools ahead of the next inspection cycle.

For Future Research

Future research was recommended to employ longitudinal designs tracking attitude change among the same cohort of Ntare School teachers over multiple academic years, enabling causal inference about which professional development interventions produced the most durable attitudinal and behavioural shifts. Comparative studies contrasting CBC implementation dynamics at Ntare School with other government-aided urban secondary schools in Mbarara City

including St. Mary's College Rushoroza and Bishop Stuart College were recommended to generate region-specific evidence for district and city education office policy development.

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