

Implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum in Early Years Education: Insights from Teachers and Head Teachers in Mathare Sub-County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Early Years Education across public and private primary schools in Mathare Sub-County, Nairobi, Kenya. Guided by a correlational research design, the study involved 85 participants, including head teachers and classroom teachers. Data were collected through questionnaires and observation schedules, focusing on three key dimensions: lesson development, instructional methods, and the classroom environment. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis for quantitative and qualitative data respectively, while inferential statistics were used to further analyze the data to produce relationships between variables. Data were presented using means, percentages, standard deviation, tables, charts, and graphs, qualitative data was categorized and coded according to the topics as indicated by the goals. Findings revealed that both head teachers and teachers demonstrated a strong commitment to CBC principles through diverse instructional strategies such as games, storytelling, role-play, songs, and visual arts. Lesson planning, resource utilization, and integration of outcome-based assessments were recognized as fundamental to effective CBC delivery. Additionally, the physical and aesthetic quality of classrooms particularly the condition of teaching aids, seating arrangements, and cleanliness was seen as crucial in promoting learner engagement and holistic development. While teachers showed a clear understanding of CBC, challenges such as limited resources and continued reliance on traditional assessment practices persisted. The study concludes that successful CBC implementation requires ongoing professional development, enhanced resource support, and collaborative engagement among stakeholders. It recommends targeted teacher training, improved infrastructure, and reflective curriculum practices to ensure quality early learning experiences and lifelong learning foundations for young children.

Key words: Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), Early Years Education, Instructional Strategies, Teacher Preparedness, Holistic Child Development

INTRODUCTION

The increasing globalization of the labor market has heightened the demand for 21st-century skills, prompting many countries to adopt new teaching and learning approaches aimed at enhancing competencies necessary for personal and professional growth (Pamier, 2017; KICD, 2017). Competencies are understood as the essential abilities or knowledge an individual requires to thrive within a professional society (Claro, 2009). As noted by UNESCO (2017), competency entails gaining mastery in a specific domain, enabling individuals to demonstrate proficiency through tangible evidence of expertise.

The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), originally informed by the Spanish education legislation (2006), emphasizes the integration of core competencies into the curriculum design. UNESCO (2019) defines competence-based learning as a model that incorporates diverse instructional approaches, evaluation methods, and performance reports to confirm that a learner has acquired the requisite knowledge and skills for progressive educational development. According to Milkman (2017), Competency-Based Education (CBE)

allows learners to construct their own knowledge, progress at an individualized pace, and engage deeply with content until mastery is achieved. This model aligns with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD, 2019) view that CBE should be tailored to children's needs, interests, and abilities.

Nthulanyane (2004) emphasizes that a teacher's preparedness encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitudes significantly influences learners' acceptance and engagement with the curriculum. Globally, many nations have embraced CBC since its inception in the 1970s, primarily to prepare learners for dynamic labor markets. For instance, in the United States, CBC has significantly influenced education by cultivating student competencies, encouraging reflective practice, and addressing educational challenges based on specific learner needs (Ries, Cabrera, & González-Carriedo, 2016). Nonetheless, disparities in teacher quality continue to affect its implementation (Viviane, Cooley, & Griffin, 2020).

In Zambia, the CBC was launched in 2013 with the goal of equipping learners to face socio-economic and political challenges through relevant knowledge and practical skills. Its implementation commenced in 2017. However, the training duration for teachers was limited, and facilitators lacked comprehensive preparation, resulting in an unsystematic introduction to CBC content (Kabombwe & Mulenga, 2019; Malenga & Kabombwe, 2019).

Tanzania introduced CBC in secondary schools in 2005 and extended it to primary education in 2006. The Ministry of Education and Culture sought to develop a curriculum that would produce competent citizens capable of addressing national issues. Despite the initiative, five years post-adoption, both teachers and curriculum developers reportedly struggled with CBC implementation due to a lack of understanding of its fundamental principles (Paulo & Tilya, 2014). Makunja (2016) further identified obstacles such as insufficient in-service training, limited content mastery, and curriculum overload within short instructional periods. Nevertheless, the transition from content-based to competency-based learning was generally well received by teachers, who demonstrated a favorable perception of CBC reforms.

In Kenya, CBC was piloted in 2017 and officially implemented in January 2019. Its core competencies include communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, citizenship, digital literacy, and self-efficacy (KICD, 2019). Despite these promising elements, studies have highlighted several challenges in its rollout. For example, Isaboke, Wambiri, and Mweru (2021) reported that teachers in Nairobi lacked adequate preparation and skills to effectively implement the CBC. Consequently, recommendations were made to establish structured in-service training programs to equip educators with the necessary competencies. Similarly, Momanyi and Rop (2018) observed that many teachers struggled with lesson planning and assessment, often reverting to traditional pedagogical practices due to inadequate training, insufficient teaching resources, overcrowded classrooms, and teacher shortages.

A spot check by the Teachers Service Commission and pilot findings by KICD revealed that many teachers in Nairobi had not adopted CBC teaching methodologies despite having undergone training (KICD, 2018). Owino et al. (2022) found that teachers who successfully adapted instructional strategies for learners with impairments also performed well in implementing CBC in mainstream settings. Ngeno, Mweru, and Mwoma (2021) emphasized the positive impact of physical infrastructure on CBC implementation in public primary schools in Kericho County.

Isaboke, Wambiri, and Mweru (2021) further reported that early childhood educators in Nairobi encountered numerous implementation barriers, while Owino et al. (2023) found no significant correlation between teachers' levels of special needs education (SNE) training and their ability to implement CBC for learners with impairments. Most teachers had qualifications limited to Primary Teacher Education (PTE) and early years education, which posed challenges when working with learners with special needs.

From the reviewed literature, major barriers to CBC implementation in early childhood settings include inadequate teacher preparedness, insufficient infrastructure, and limited access to in-service training. These persistent challenges provided the basis for this study, which aimed to examine the influence of teacher training and availability of instructional resources on CBC implementation among early years educators. The study was conducted in Mathare Sub-County, Nairobi an area selected for its representative diversity of school

types and varying levels of resource access, reflecting typical conditions in densely populated urban settings in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) has been adopted in various countries including the United States, Zambia, and Tanzania—with the goal of improving educational outcomes through a learner-centered, skills-based approach. Despite its intended benefits, evidence indicates that many instructors remain inadequately informed about the essential features and pedagogical requirements of CBC. As emphasized by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD, 2019), effective implementation of CBC requires that teachers possess sufficient knowledge and competence to facilitate experiential, hands-on learning. However, even after several years since its introduction in Kenya, early childhood educators continue to face significant challenges in executing CBC effectively, particularly in pre-primary settings (Isaboke et al., 2021).

Further compounding the problem is the inadequacy of physical infrastructure in lower primary schools, which undermines efforts to deliver CBC as intended (Ngeno et al., 2022). Additionally, studies have shown that many teachers, especially in Nairobi County, lack training in Special Needs Education (SNE), which limits their ability to adapt CBC for young learners with impairments (Owino et al., 2023). Owino et al. (2022) also found that educators struggled to adjust instructional methods for early learners with diverse needs due to insufficient training.

While these studies have highlighted general challenges in CBC implementation, there is a notable gap in research specifically examining the combined influence of teacher training and the availability of instructional resources in low socio-economic urban settings such as the Mathare slums in Nairobi County. This study, therefore, sought to investigate how teacher training and the availability of instructional resources impact the implementation of CBC among early years educators in schools located in Mathare Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a **correlational research design** to examine the relationships between multiple variables, specifically focusing on teacher training, instructional resource availability, and the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in early years education. This design is appropriate for studies that investigate naturally occurring relationships without manipulation of variables. It allows for the collection of data in a uniform format, enabling researchers to measure associations between factors across diverse respondents. Furthermore, correlational designs are particularly effective for studies involving large populations, as they help identify trends and linkages within various demographic groups.

Study Location

The research was conducted in **Mathare Sub-County**, one of the seventeen constituencies in Nairobi City County. The area was selected due to its unique educational landscape and socio-economic diversity. It includes a mix of public and private schools, making it a suitable site for comparing CBC implementation across different institutional contexts.

Target Population and Sampling

The study targeted **251 respondents** from 70 registered schools, including: 31 public school head teachers, 39 private school head teachers, 63 public school classroom teachers, 117 private school classroom teachers and 1 education officer from Mathare Sub-County

A sample size of **85 respondents** (approximately 30%) was selected, following the guidance of Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), who recommend a 10%–30% sample for populations under 1,000 to achieve reliable generalizations.

Sampling Techniques:

- **Stratified sampling** was used to select 9 public and 12 private schools, ensuring equitable representation.
- **Purposive sampling** identified class teachers for Grades 1–3, with one teacher per class selected.
- In cases where multiple teachers taught a single class, **simple random sampling** was used to ensure fairness.
- The education officer was purposively selected due to their in-depth knowledge of CBC policy and implementation in the sub-county.

Table 1: Sampling Frame

| Category | Population | Sampled |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Head Teachers (Public) | 31 | 9 |
| Head Teachers (Private) | 39 | 12 |
| Class Teachers (Public) | 63 | 27 |
| Class Teachers (Private) | 117 | 36 |
| Education Officer (Sub-County) | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 251 | 85 |

Data Collection Instruments

Two primary instruments were used:

1. **Questionnaires** were administered to teachers and head teachers. They were structured and semi-structured in format. Section A captured demographic details, while Section B focused on items aligned with the research objectives. The teacher questionnaire served as the principal tool for collecting data on CBC implementation practices.
2. **Observation Schedule** was used to assess the presence and use of instructional materials, classroom environments, teaching strategies, and lesson development practices. A checklist was included to guide observations and ensure consistency.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was carried out in three phases:

1. **Questionnaire Administration:** The researcher introduced herself, explained the study objectives and expected benefits, and distributed the questionnaires to head teachers and teachers. These were collected after one week.
2. **Interviews with Head Teachers:** Brief interviews lasting approximately 15 minutes were held in the head teachers' offices. These provided insights into school staffing and infrastructure, and reinforced participant understanding of the study.
3. **Observations:** The researcher conducted classroom observations using a structured schedule to document the physical environment and instructional practices.

Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. Quantitative data were coded, cleaned, and analyzed using SPSS Version 26. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) summarized the data. Inferential statistics assessed relationships among variables. Qualitative data from open-ended questionnaire responses and observations were thematically categorized, coded, and analyzed according to the study objectives.

Logistical Considerations

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Kenyatta University Graduate School, which was cleared by the Kenyatta University Ethics and Review Committee. Subsequently, research permits were secured from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Additional authorization was obtained from the Nairobi City County Education Officer and the County Commissioner.

Letters were sent to participating schools outlining the purpose of the study and requesting permission to collect data. The researcher formally introduced herself to school staff and sought their consent for participation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were upheld throughout the study. Participants were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Personal identifiers were replaced with codes to maintain anonymity. Data were treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. Participants were informed that their responses would not be used against them in any context.

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Competency-Based Curriculum Implementation in Early Years Education

The first objective of the study was to assess how teachers implement the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Early Years Education in public and private primary schools within Mathare Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Data were obtained from head teachers and focused on three key dimensions: lesson development, instructional methods used, and the classroom environment. Respondents rated their agreement with various statements using a five-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Head Teachers Perspective of Competence Based Curriculum

Table 2: Extent of Competency Based Curriculum Implementation According Head Teachers

| Lesson Development | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|-------|-------|------|------|
| Lesson plan/sequence | - | - | - | 45.0% | 55.0% | 4.55 | 0.51 |
| Range of learning and teaching activities | - | - | - | 60.0% | 40.0% | 4.40 | 0.50 |
| Instructional/learning resources | - | - | - | 45.0% | 55.5% | 4.55 | 0.51 |
| Learning outcomes of assessment | - | - | - | 70.0% | 30.0% | 4.30 | 0.47 |
| Total | - | - | - | 55.0% | 45.0% | 4.45 | 0.50 |
| Type of Instructional Method Used | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-------------|----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Question & answer | - | - | - | 45.0% | 55.0% | 4.55 | 0.51 |
| Games | - | - | - | 40.0% | 60.0% | 4.60 | 0.50 |
| Roleplay | - | 10.0% | - | 75.0% | 15.0% | 3.95 | 0.76 |
| Presentation | - | 10.0% | - | 60.0% | 30.0% | 4.10 | 0.85 |
| Poems | - | - | - | 60.0% | 40.0% | 4.40 | 0.50 |
| Stories | - | - | - | 35.0% | 65.0% | 4.65 | 0.49 |
| Songs and dance | - | - | - | 40.0% | 60.0% | 4.60 | 0.50 |
| Painting and coloring | - | - | - | 40.0% | 60.0% | 4.60 | 0.50 |
| Modeling & pattern making | - | - | - | 25.0% | 75.0% | 4.75 | 0.44 |
| Total | - | 2.2% | - | 46.7% | 51.1% | 4.47 | 0.56 |
| Classroom Environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| Teaching aids in good condition | - | - | - | 60.0% | 40.0% | 4.40 | 0.50 |
| Teaching aids are attractive in color | - | - | - | 55.0% | 45.0% | 4.45 | 0.51 |
| Suitable sitting arrangement | - | - | - | 45.0% | 55.0% | 4.55 | 0.51 |
| The learning environment was well displayed | - | - | - | 40.0% | 60.0% | 4.60 | 0.50 |
| Space available for interaction | - | - | - | 65.0% | 35.0% | 4.35 | 0.49 |
| The classroom is kept clean | - | - | - | 45.0% | 55.0% | 4.55 | 0.51 |
| Total | - | - | - | 51.7% | 48.3% | 4.45 | 0.50 |
| Grand Total | - | 0.7% | - | 51.1% | 48.1% | 4.46 | 0.52 |

Lesson Development

Head teachers expressed strong agreement on the presence and quality of structured lesson planning within their schools. The mean score for lesson sequencing was 4.55 (SD = 0.51), indicating high consistency and satisfaction with lesson structure and flow. Similarly, the availability of a wide range of learning and teaching activities was highly rated at 4.40 (SD = 0.50), suggesting that instructional planning is broad-based and responsive to diverse learner needs.

Notably, instructional and learning resources received a mean of 4.55 (SD = 0.51), underscoring the importance placed on supporting materials for lesson delivery. Additionally, the alignment of lesson content with assessment and learning outcomes was affirmed with a mean of 4.30 (SD = 0.47). These findings collectively demonstrate that lesson development, particularly the integration of varied learning activities and assessment-aligned planning, is a critical pillar in CBC implementation. The overall mean for this dimension was 4.45 (SD = 0.50), highlighting strong institutional emphasis on effective pedagogical planning.

Instructional Methods

Instructional methods applied by teachers were diverse, creative, and in alignment with CBC's learner-centered approach. Head teachers reported strong use of interactive techniques such as the question-and-answer method ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.51$) and games ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.50$), which support learner engagement and comprehension. Roleplay and presentations, although still rated positively, showed slightly lower means of 3.95 and 4.10, respectively, which may reflect challenges related to teacher preparedness or access to appropriate space and materials.

Creative and expressive methods such as poems ($M = 4.40$), storytelling ($M = 4.65$), and songs and dance ($M = 4.60$) received favorable ratings, indicating widespread use of performance-based approaches in CBC classrooms. Artistic activities including painting, coloring, modeling, and pattern-making were rated especially high, with modeling and pattern-making both scoring a mean of 4.75 ($SD = 0.44$), reflecting their prominence in early childhood pedagogy.

The mean score for this category was 4.47 ($SD = 0.56$), affirming that schools are actively embracing the CBC's mandate for diverse and participatory instructional strategies that nurture learners' creativity, critical thinking, and communication skills.

Classroom Environment

The physical and pedagogical classroom environment was also evaluated positively by head teachers. Teaching aids were not only available and in good condition ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.50$) but also designed with visual appeal ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.51$), making the learning space more stimulating and learner-friendly. Appropriate seating arrangements ($M = 4.55$) and the creative display of learning resources ($M = 4.60$) further reinforced a supportive learning atmosphere.

Moreover, head teachers noted sufficient space for learner interaction ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.49$) and well-maintained cleanliness in classrooms ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.51$), which contribute to effective learning conditions. The overall mean for the classroom environment was 4.45 ($SD = 0.50$), highlighting the role of well-organized and resource-rich settings in facilitating CBC.

Overall Summary

The overall grand mean across all dimensions—lesson development, instructional methods, and classroom environment was 4.46 ($SD = 0.52$). This suggests that, from the perspective of head teachers, schools in Mathare Sub-County have made significant progress in aligning their instructional practices with the goals of the CBC. The findings reveal high levels of preparedness in pedagogical planning, adoption of diverse instructional approaches, and creation of conducive learning environments.

These results align with previous research by Isaboke et al. (2021), Owino et al. (2022), and Ngeno et al. (2022), who highlighted the centrality of teacher preparedness, instructional resources, and supportive learning environments in successful CBC implementation. However, the relatively lower scores in roleplay and presentation hint at areas requiring further teacher capacity development.

The next section provides an analysis of teachers' self-evaluation of CBC implementation to complement and compare with head teachers' perspectives, as captured in Table 3.

Teachers' Perspectives on Competency-Based Curriculum Implementation

Table 3: Extent of Competency Based Curriculum Implementation by Teachers

| Lesson Development | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Mean | SD |
|----------------------|---|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Lesson plan/sequence | | 1.7% | 1.7% | 41.7% | 55.0% | 4.50 | 0.62 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Range of learning and teaching activities | 1.7% | - | - | 66.7% | 31.7% | 4.27 | 0.63 |
| Instructional/learning resources | 1.7% | - | 1.7% | 53.3% | 43.3% | 4.37 | 0.69 |
| Learning outcomes of assessment | - | 1.7% | - | 43.3% | 55.0% | 4.52 | 0.60 |
| Total | 0.85% | 0.85% | 0.85% | 51.3% | 46.3% | 4.41 | 0.64 |
| Type of Instructional Method Used | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| Question & answer | - | - | - | 31.7% | 68.3% | 4.68 | 0.47 |
| Games | - | - | 1.7% | 68.3% | 30.0% | 4.28 | 0.49 |
| Roleplay | - | 5.0% | 6.7% | 50.0% | 38.3% | 4.22 | 0.78 |
| Presentation | - | 8.3% | 5.0% | 46.7% | 40.0% | 4.18 | 0.87 |
| Poems | - | 3.3% | 1.7% | 50.0% | 45.0% | 4.37 | 0.69 |
| Stories | - | - | 1.7% | 55.0% | 43.3% | 4.42 | 0.53 |
| Songs and dance | - | 1.7% | 3.3% | 48.3% | 46.7% | 4.40 | 0.64 |
| Painting and coloring | - | 1.7% | 3.3% | 48.3% | 46.7% | 4.40 | 0.64 |
| Modeling & pattern making | - | 1.7% | - | 41.7% | 56.7% | 4.53 | 0.60 |
| Total | - | 2.4% | 2.6% | 48.9% | 46.1% | 4.39 | 0.63 |
| Classroom Environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| Teaching aids in good condition | - | - | - | 38.3% | 61.7% | 4.62 | 0.49 |
| Teaching aids are attractive in color | - | 1.7% | - | 55.0% | 43.3% | 4.40 | 0.59 |
| Suitable sitting arrangement | - | - | - | 51.7% | 48.3% | 4.48 | 0.50 |
| The learning environment was well displayed | - | - | - | 60.0% | 40.0% | 4.40 | 0.49 |
| Space available for interaction | - | - | - | 55.0% | 45.0% | 4.45 | 0.50 |
| The classroom is kept clean | - | - | - | 30.0% | 70.0% | 4.70 | 0.46 |
| Total | - | 0.3 | - | 48.3% | 51.4% | 4.51 | 0.51 |
| Grand Total | 0.85% | 1.18% | 1.15% | 49.5% | 47.9% | 4.44 | 0.59 |

Table 3 complements the findings derived from head teachers by presenting classroom teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Early Years Education across public and private schools in Mathare Sub-County. Teachers were asked to self-rate their perceptions on lesson development, instructional methodologies, and the classroom environment using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Lesson Development

Teachers demonstrated strong consensus on the critical role of structured lesson planning in effective CBC implementation. They emphasized the importance of lesson plan design and sequencing, with a high mean score of 4.50 ($SD = 0.62$). Similarly, the inclusion of a range of learning and teaching activities was rated positively ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.63$), reflecting a commitment to diverse instructional approaches that enhance engagement and accommodate varied learning styles.

The recognition of instructional and learning resources as essential components of effective planning was evident, with a mean score of 4.37 ($SD = 0.69$). Moreover, teachers strongly affirmed the integration of learning outcomes and assessment within lesson plans ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.60$), indicating alignment with CBC's outcome-based approach. Collectively, these responses confirm that teachers view effective lesson development as foundational to achieving CBC goals, consistent with best practices in early childhood pedagogy.

Instructional Methods

Teachers expressed a high degree of agreement on the use of multiple instructional strategies aligned with CBC principles. The question-and-answer method received the highest rating ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 0.47$), suggesting its perceived effectiveness in fostering interaction and checking learner understanding. Games were also widely endorsed ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.49$), highlighting their role in promoting active and experiential learning.

Creative methods were equally valued. Poems ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.69$), stories ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.64$), and songs and dance emerged as key tools in delivering content and developing communication skills. Roleplay and presentations, while slightly lower in ratings ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.78$; $M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.87$), were still positively regarded, indicating teachers' openness to interactive and expressive pedagogies.

Art-based approaches such as painting and coloring ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.64$) and modeling and pattern-making ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.60$) were strongly endorsed, confirming their relevance in developing fine motor skills and cognitive abilities in early learners. These results affirm that teachers are incorporating diverse, learner-centered instructional methods to meet the developmental needs of children and to effectively deliver the CBC.

Classroom Environment

Teachers also rated various aspects of the classroom environment as essential enablers of CBC implementation. There was strong consensus that teaching aids in good condition support effective learning ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 0.49$). Visual aesthetics, such as the use of attractive colors, were also acknowledged ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.59$) as enhancing learners' engagement and attention.

The availability of appropriate seating arrangements was rated highly ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.50$), underscoring the importance of comfort and mobility in classroom interactions. Additional indicators of a supportive environment included well-displayed learning materials ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.50$), ample space for learner interaction ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.50$), and a clean classroom environment ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.46$), all of which contribute to positive learning outcomes.

Together, these findings reinforce the notion that a stimulating, organized, and hygienic classroom setting is crucial for implementing CBC, particularly in early childhood education settings.

Interpretation and Implications

The findings from Table 3 reveal a clear alignment between teacher perceptions and the CBC framework, particularly regarding lesson planning, active instructional strategies, and enabling classroom environments. These results are consistent with the observations of Ngeno, Mweru, and Mwoma (2021), who highlighted the importance of positive teacher attitudes and resource readiness in driving CBC success.

However, the study also echoes previous concerns raised by Paulo and Tilya (2014) and Momanyi and Rop (2019), who reported that despite CBC training, some teachers continue to revert to traditional teaching and assessment practices such as recall-based questioning and standardized paper quizzes. These entrenched habits pose a challenge to fully realizing CBC objectives.

The reliance on diverse instructional strategies such as games, role play, and creative arts demonstrates an effort by teachers to align with CBC ideals, though challenges persist—particularly regarding access to materials and the translation of training into practice. These findings support KICD's (2018) observation that the absence of adequate instructional resources impedes the full realization of CBC.

Furthermore, structural and systemic gaps in teacher preparation and in-service training, as also identified by Tarmo (2014) and Hogan et al. (2007), continue to undermine the consistency and quality of CBC implementation. Many teachers still struggle to translate CBC-aligned assessment approaches into daily classroom practice, indicating a need for targeted, ongoing professional development.

SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS

The study revealed that teachers widely employ a variety of instructional strategies aligned with the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), including games, role-play, presentations, poems, storytelling, songs, dance, painting, and coloring. This diversity in pedagogical approaches underscores a unified effort among educators to accommodate different learning styles and preferences, thereby fostering inclusivity in the learning process.

Pedagogical planning, resource utilization, and outcome-based assessment were identified as critical components that support holistic development in early childhood education. Both public and private school teachers acknowledged the importance of using well-maintained teaching aids, visually appealing classroom environments, suitable seating arrangements, and organized learning spaces. These factors were seen as essential in creating learning environments that encourage active participation, collaboration, creativity, and exploration.

Additionally, the development of structured lesson plans emerged as a foundational element in CBC implementation. Teachers emphasized that instructional methods must align with curriculum objectives and the developmental needs of learners to cultivate meaningful and engaging learning experiences. The overarching theme of the findings suggests that CBC, when implemented with intentional planning and resource support, contributes significantly to the development of critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning skills among young children.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that successful implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in early childhood education relies heavily on the integration of varied, inclusive, and learner-centered teaching strategies. Teachers highlighted that CBC is inherently dynamic and responsive to the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of learners.

Key elements contributing to effective CBC implementation include: Comprehensive pedagogical planning, adequate instructional resources, learner-friendly classroom environments and ongoing assessment aligned with learning outcomes.

Moreover, teachers emphasized the importance of nurturing environments that support emotional and social development, cooperation, and cognitive growth. The findings affirm that CBC practices, when well-supported, can significantly improve the quality of early learning experiences and lay a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

To ensure continued success, the study calls for sustained collaboration among educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers. Reflective practices and stakeholder engagement are essential for refining CBC

strategies and ensuring they remain relevant, innovative, and responsive to the evolving needs of early learners in the 21st century.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Enhance Teacher Training and Professional Development:** Policymakers should allocate targeted funding toward comprehensive training programs and continuous professional development to equip educators with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to effectively implement CBC. These programs should focus on curriculum delivery, assessment techniques, inclusive pedagogical practices, and the use of diverse instructional materials.
2. **Foster Collaborative Platforms for Stakeholders:** Opportunities should be created for collaboration and dialogue among teachers, curriculum developers, education officers, and other stakeholders involved in CBC implementation. Such collaboration will promote the exchange of best practices, identification of challenges, and collective problem-solving, ensuring a more cohesive and innovative approach to curriculum delivery.
3. **Improve Resource Allocation and Learning Environments:** Investments should be directed towards improving the availability and quality of instructional materials, classroom infrastructure, and learner support systems. Emphasis should be placed on providing visually stimulating, safe, and interactive learning environments that align with the CBC framework and promote holistic child development.
4. **Strengthen Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms:** Educational authorities should institute regular monitoring, evaluation, and feedback systems to track the effectiveness of CBC implementation. Insights from these evaluations should inform policy adjustments and teacher support programs to enhance alignment between policy intentions and classroom practices

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