ISSN 2348-3156 (Print)
International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research ISSN 2348-3164 (online)
Vol. 14, Issue 4, pp: (527-540), Month: October - December 2026, Available at: www.researchpublish.com

INVESTIGATION OF TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NGORONGORO DISTRICT COUNCIL, TANZANIA

[1]Severini Erasto, [2]Wadrine Maro, [3]Eugenia Wandela

Jordan University College

A Constitute of St. Augustine University of Tanzania

P.O. Box 1878, Morogoro, Tanzania - East Africa

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24136289

Published Date: 11-November-2026

Abstract: **This study investigated teachers' instructional experiences in implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in public primary schools in Ngorongoro District Council, Tanzania. The study was informed by Fullan's Educational Change Theory and was conducted using the interpretive philosophy and qualitative research methodology with phenomenology research design. Data were gathered from 44 respondents consisting of 35 teachers, 5 headteachers, 2 Ward Education Officers (WEOs), and 2 School Quality Assurers (SQAs). The respondents were selected using the technique of purposive and convenient sampling following the idea of data saturation. Methods of data gathering were semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, classroom observation, and documentation analysis. The findings suggested that teachers were conversant with the concepts of CCB and were aware of the need for learner-centeredness, learner involvement, critical thinking, problem solving, practical activities, and application of knowledge in real life. The observations made in classrooms, on the other hand, indicated that there was inconsistence in the use of the concepts. Though there were competency-based elements used in lesson plans and instructional documents, there was a gap between what had been planned and what happened in the classroom. It was found that the implementation of learner-centeredness, collaboration, practical activities, and assessment of competencies varied from one school to another. The experiences of teachers in classroom instruction were affected by contextual issues such as lack of adequate instructional and teaching materials, lack of professional support, language barriers resulting from the shift from Maa to Kiswahili and English, and pupil absenteeism. The study concluded that despite the positive attitudes of the teachers towards CBC and their general understanding of the theory of learner-centeredness, the context and institution-based factors hindered the effective implementation of CBC in the classrooms. The study recommended that the following should be considered for successful implementation of CBC in marginalized rural areas: improved professional development, enhanced provision of CBTL materials, and culturally responsive pedagogy and supervision.**

Keywords: **Competency-Based Curriculum, instructional experiences, learner-centred teaching, curriculum implementation, public primary schools.**

ISSN 2348-3156 (Print)
International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research ISSN 2348-3164 (online)
Vol. 14, Issue 4, pp: (527-540), Month: October - December 2026, Available at: www.researchpublish.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Transformations of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in the Global South relate to shifting from teacher-centered and memorization-based approaches of teaching and learning to learner-centered and activity-based approaches of teaching and learning. In this regard, national curricula in Asia, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa seek to cultivate skills and abilities in practical, critical, and digital competencies as well as problem-solving skills relevant to current socio-economic demands (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2021). At the same time, the implementation of the constructivist approach in practice among developing countries faces considerable structural resistance between policy and practice (World Bank, 2022).

In India, the implementation of NEP 2020 is the move from the current approach towards competency-based education in primary education based on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills. The dilemma that exists for teachers in Indian government-run primary schools is between what is required by policy and how teaching takes place in the classroom (Singh & Kumar, 2022). Although the focus of the policy is practical learning and assessment, the teachers have to conduct their lessons in large groups without sufficient availability of technology to aid activities in the classroom (Sharma & Rani, 2023).

National Basic Curriculum of Teaching Competencies and Skills (NBCTCS) in Brazil necessitates competency-based learning to instill socio-emotional and academic competences in the students through basic education (Silva et al., 2022). The shortage of resources is critical for the public primary schools in regard to infrastructure (Santos & Oliveira, 2021). Though urban public schools have been successful in incorporating the concept of project-based learning in their system, the rural and underprivileged public primary teachers are not able to incorporate such competency-based classes due to the pressure of administrative tasks and professional development (Ferreira & Souza, 2023).

The Standards-Based Curriculum of Ghana, which is an important part of CBC in the country's primary education, was introduced with the intention of encouraging students to think critically, work collaboratively, and be digitally literate (Edusei & Mensah, 2022). From the perspective of the teaching experience, it can be stated that although teachers approve the concept of the change, they cannot implement it because of the lack of learner-centered textbooks, guidebooks, and assessment tools for teachers (Amponsah et al., 2023).

The fundamental educational policies in Nigeria are also competency-based to promote functional literacy and vocational skills (Adeyemi & Okeke, 2021). Actually, there are lots of structural barriers for the teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria when employing such an approach to the learning process (Ibrahim & Bello, 2023). The poor physical state of school buildings, the high ratio of pupils to teachers, and the absence of pedagogical technologies do not allow for employing group and individual work by the teachers (Eze & Nwosu, 2022).

The South African educational policy, known as Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), has a few principles of outcome-based and competency-based education (Dlamini & Naidoo, 2022). The teachers in state-owned primary schools face problems associated with the assessment and administrative burden associated with the control of the learners' competencies (Mokoena & Van der Merwe, 2021). In addition, there are linguistic barriers in multi-lingual classrooms and bad distribution of resources in previously townships schools (Sithole & Reddy, 2023).

Zambia has introduced the Revised Education Curriculum Framework that involved the use of outcomes and competency-based approaches to ensure that basic education responds to socio-economic needs (Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2021). Research shows that majority of the teachers in primary and secondary schools have faced problems implementing CBC due to inadequate initial training (Banda & Phiri, 2022). This is because teachers use teacher-centered approach of teaching because they lack appropriate guidelines for assessing practical skills among many pupils (Chisanga et al., 2023).

Competence-based learning is one of the important areas that have been given much attention in the lower primary and lower secondary curricular reforms in Uganda (Ssentanda & Nakayiza, 2022). The challenge faced by primary teachers relates to the balance between the demands of learner-centred learning and high-stake national exams (Kaguhangire & Otaala, 2021). In addition, shortage of learning resources and ICTs in rural public primary schools poses challenges (Tumwesigye et al., 2023).

Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) adoption through the 2-6-3-3-3 system in Kenya can be considered one of the most comprehensive education reforms in the region, with the focus on developing communication, critical thinking, creative, and digital literacies skills (Waweru, 2021). Teachers working in public primary schools in Kenya have numerous

challenges in their instructional activities, such as a large student-teacher ratio, expensive project learning materials paid by parents, and lack of retraining of the teaching personnel (Onyango & Ondiek, 2022). Though teachers have a positive attitude to the learner-centered approach, administrative duties and large groups do not allow applying it regularly (Kiptoo & Kitainge, 2023).

However, CBC implementation in remote and pastoral regions like Ngorongoro District, in Arusha region, is difficult due to the socio-economic and geographical nature of these areas (Leringato et al., 2023). There are infrastructural deficiencies at the primary schools of Ngorongoro public schools since the schools are not provided with facilities for learning, lack access to water and electricity, travel lengthy distances to school, and lack teaching materials (Sanka & Mollel, 2021). Semi-nomadic nature of the pastoralists may be impacted by schooling, thus making it challenging in terms of formative assessment and competence development (Oluoch & Ole-Lengis, 2022). Moreover, language issues, in which children will have to learn from Maa to Swahili and English, makes it difficult (Kishindo & Laizer, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

In response to the social issues, the provision of primary education is one of the most significant ways through which poverty alleviation, equality, and sustainable socio-economic development are achieved among vulnerable and marginalized groups. In inaccessible rural settings, like those of Ngorongoro District Council, the role of public primary schools is crucial in preparing children from mainly semi-nomadic pastoralist communities with the requisite skills to deal with the socio-economic issues (Nyahonge & Mwalongo, 2021). Whenever public primary school teachers face recurrent challenges in teaching competencies, young students lack important basic skills, leading to educational disparity, higher dropout rates from primary schools, and underdevelopment in marginalized pastoralist communities (Leringato et al., 2023).

Although the significance of CBC is acknowledged, an important knowledge gap remains in relation to the specific classroom instructional challenges that face teachers working in geographically peripheral and culturally diverse locations such as Ngorongoro District Council. Even though some empirical studies in Tanzania have identified problems of classroom overcrowding, poor teaching and learning materials, and lack of in-service training in urban and accessible rural areas (Kessy et al., 2020; Mtitu, 2014), not much research attention has been paid to how teachers struggle to deliver CBC in inaccessible pastoral regions. The literature fails to address how teachers deal with contextual challenges that include high levels of pupil absenteeism due to seasonal migration of livestock, poor infrastructure, and transition from local languages (e.g., Maa) to Kiswahili and English (Leringato et al., 2023).

Hence, the purpose of the research of this study is to examine the actual teaching experiences of teachers in the implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum in public primary schools in Ngorongoro District Council, Tanzania. This is done through analysis of teachers' pedagogies, assessment techniques in the classroom, and coping mechanisms in the local environment in order to obtain evidence-based findings from the actual situation. The findings are meant to provide policy makers, educational administrators, and curriculum developers with solutions that will work for marginalized educational settings.

Research Objective

To investigate teachers' instructional experiences during implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in public primary schools in Ngorongoro District Council, Tanzania

Research Question

What are the teachers' instructional experiences implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in public primary schools in Ngorongoro District Council, Tanzania?

Significance of the Study

The government, especially the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the President's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG), gained empirical knowledge on the challenges encountered by public primary school teachers in terms of implementation in pastoralist hard-to-reach districts from the study. The data obtained was very important in improving the national educational policies, revising the strategy of curriculum implementation, and reallocating educational resources in order to narrow the gap of educational inequalities between urban areas and rural marginalised communities. Additionally, the findings informed government agencies like the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) in developing CPD programmes and teaching-learning materials that were relevant to the social-cultural setting of the hard-to-reach pastoralists.

For educational partners such as quality assurance officers, DEOs, WEOs, headteachers, and NGOs providing assistance in basic education, this research provided insights into the need for guidance and pedagogy in public primary schools. Quality assurance officers and DEOs received empirical insight about the ways in which primary school teachers conducted formative assessment, dealt with language challenges, and handled large classes with very limited resources. This helped school supervisors to focus on constructive instructional and mentoring efforts rather than a punitive mode of supervision. Furthermore, the partners for educational development were provided with contextual knowledge to guide their interventions, such as provision of appropriate instructional technology and learning materials to remote areas.

The community in the Ngorongoro District Council was educated through this study regarding the importance of having a culturally effective teaching approach that empowers learners to develop necessary skills and literacy competencies. Through this study, the community members understood the socio-cultural and linguistic barriers that were impeding primary education. As a result, the study helped create more collaboration between schools and pastoralist families. This study helped educate the community about the need for them to encourage pupils' attendance at school. This way, children in the marginalized rural areas would get a good primary education.

The study has made significant contributions to the literature on CBC implementations in developing countries, and hence, to curriculum development, educational management, and comparative pedagogy for future scholars in the same field. First, it contributed immensely to knowledge regarding the implementation of curriculum reforms in marginalized and seminomadic communities that are also socially and culturally different from the mainstream in the Global South. In addition, the research concepts and findings from this study set the stage for future research comparisons in other pastoralist districts or policy interventions for basic education.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of Educational Change proposed by Michael Fullan was developed in 1982 (and then considerably modified in editions from 1991, 2001, 2007). It is based on the basic premise that the change in education is an intricate and dynamic process which is not just a technological event of the policy mandate. The assumptions of this theory suggest that the implementation of any curriculum is determined by the subjective perception of such change by individual practitioners (in particular, teachers), as well as by the congruence between local classroom situations and more general organizational structure. According to Fullan, change should be considered along the three dimensions: the use of new or altered material, the new approach to teaching (new pedagogy), and the change in beliefs and theories behind pedagogy. Moreover, the theory claims that implementation does not succeed due to the ignoring of the experience, professional interest, capacity, and socio-cultural situation of practitioners who implement the policy mandate.

The relevance of Fullan's Educational Change Theory to this particular research is that it offers an approach to understanding how teachers at public primary schools within Ngorongoro District Council perceive, experience and implement CBC within the classroom context. As such, in assessing the process of implementing CBC, Fullan's educational change theory offers a diagnostic tool that can help to identify whether teachers are able to effectively integrate the new teaching aids, teaching approaches and beliefs which are necessary for competency-based education. In addition, considering the unique socio-cultural context, infrastructural deficits and language barrier common in Ngorongoro District, Fullan's theory helps to understand why there exists a gap between what is intended to be accomplished through national policies and the realities of teaching in the classroom.

2. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

The adoption of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) requires the teachers to modify their instruction to encourage the involvement of the learners and help them develop practical skills. The teachers need to adopt the use of the learner-centered instruction, practical activities, collaboration, problem-solving, and competency-based assessment in teaching. Consequently, the analysis of the instructional experiences of teachers will be instrumental in the determination of the ways CBC principles have been transformed in the process of classroom instruction.

On a global scale, according to the findings of Smart (2024), in a research paper investigating competency-based curriculum implementation in Kenya and Ghana, the teachers were experiencing problems in transforming competency-oriented curricular goals into classroom instruction. In particular, it was determined that the curricular documents and instructional materials did not always offer sufficient practical information on how to employ competency-based approaches.

The study conducted by Maluha, Mackatiani, and Gakunga (2025) in Kenya investigated the impact of teachers' pedagogical practices on the implementation of the CBC curriculum in public and private primary schools in Vihiga County, Kenya. Questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations involving teachers, head teachers, curriculum support officers, and education officers were used to conduct the study. The findings from the research revealed a strong positive correlation between teachers' pedagogical practices and CBC implementation.

Likewise, Olum and Mwoma (2025) carried out a study investigating the CBC curriculum implementation in early year's education in Mathare Sub-County, Kenya. The study centered on the lesson development, teaching method, and classroom learning environment. From the findings, it can be concluded that the teachers' experience with the implementation of CBC was demonstrated in how they developed their lessons, chose instructional strategies, and developed classroom learning environment for competency development.

Ngusa, Begi, and Ndani (2026) studied the practice of competency-based assessment by teachers in pre-primary schools in Makueni County in Kenya. The focus of the study was on the necessity of assessing the learners' ability to use knowledge and skills in real life contexts. It can be seen from the results that CBC necessitates that teachers go beyond traditional assessment strategies, which are mostly based on memorization, and use assessment strategies that will prove learners' competencies. Therefore, assessment is an important element of the teachers' teaching experiences under CBC.

Addai-Mununkum and Setordzi (2023) studied teachers' experiences with the competency-oriented curriculum reforms in Ghana. The authors have found out that teachers have been using such instructional strategies as cooperation, inquiry learning, learner engagement, and teaching of 21st-century skills. It shows the orientation of competency-based education towards the learners. Nevertheless, teachers used these strategies to different degrees depending on their training and support. It can be concluded that the implementation of CBC entails changes in teachers' roles and organization of learning activities.

In the Tanzanian context, Semlugu (2018) investigated the practice of CBC in some selected secondary schools in Tabora and Nzega districts. Questionnaire, document analysis, and classroom observation were utilized as research methods. From the findings, it is noted that even though teachers were familiar with CBC, the familiarity did not show consistency in classroom teaching and learning practice since traditional methods such as lectures and note-taking were utilized. Therefore, from this study, we see how teachers can know the principles of CBC but find it difficult to implement them in classrooms.

Secondly, Kinyunyu (2020) studied the implementation of CBC in selected secondary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. The study revealed that teachers have a general idea about competency-based teaching and realize the need to consider learners' reflection and backgrounds. The problem faced by the teachers was that they could not translate the principles into effective classroom practice. In this study, it was emphasized the importance of teachers having skills on lesson planning and designing activities related to competency development.

Additionally, a study carried out on History teachers in Tanzania explored the experience of teachers in the implementation of CBC and indicated that the teachers had different perceptions of the curriculum and tried to introduce competence-based approaches in History instruction. Nonetheless, teachers were not always capable of integrating CBC principles into subject instruction in a manner that would foster development of competency among the learners. The results showed that the experience of teachers in their instruction was determined by how well they integrated the principles of the curriculum into teaching the subjects.

Also, Mwakyobwe and Shawa (2023) carried out a study of the pedagogical and assessment practices related to CBC in the teacher colleges in Tanzania. The study explored the perceptions that tutors held regarding the subject competencies, competency-based approaches in teaching and learning, and assessment practices utilized to assess the mastery of competencies by learners. The results indicated the significance of ensuring that teaching and assessment practices were aligned with the competencies that the learners were expected to learn.

In the case of Zakaria, Mwamakula, and Mkulu (2026), teachers' ability to use student-centered instruction techniques in public secondary schools within Geita District Council, Tanzania was investigated. The results showed that most teachers took conscious steps towards implementing student-centered instruction, but others still used the teacher-centered method. This study thus revealed that teachers' teaching experience during the curriculum implementation may involve a transition process from one approach to another, i.e., from traditional to competency oriented.

Concerning the study conducted by Nderego (2026), which explored teachers' pedagogical competence in developing higher order thinking skills through CBC in public secondary schools in Bariadi Town Council, Tanzania, the result of the study revealed that the teachers were competent in designing activities that facilitate development of higher order thinking, learner-centered approach, and incorporation of real-life situations in instruction. However, teachers' application of these approaches was inconsistent, especially in inquiry-based activities.

In more recent times, Lema (2026) investigated the early adoption of the revised primary school curriculum that was implemented in 2023 in Tanzania. The study made use of the national monitoring and evaluation data gathered from 622 Standard One and Standard Three teachers in Tanzania Mainland. The focus of the study was on the curriculum implementation, teacher readiness, learner-centered teaching, and continuous professional development. The reviewed article offers relevant evidence about teachers' experiences when switching to the revised primary curriculum and the extent to which they adapt their teaching to the revised curriculum.

Thus, the reviewed studies provide evidence that teachers' instructional experiences related to CBC implementation involve changes in lesson preparation, teaching techniques, learner involvement, practical learning activities, interaction within the classroom, and assessments. Nevertheless, there are differences in teachers' experiences in various settings, with some teachers adopting learner-centered and competency-based approaches more than others. With respect to the current study, these findings allow investigating teachers' experiences in applying the principles of CBC in the practice of teaching and learning in the Ngorongoro District Council in public primary schools.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this research, an interpretivist philosophy was used alongside the qualitative approach and phenomenology as the methodology for studying the instructional experience of teachers in the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in public primary schools in Ngorongoro District Council in Tanzania. The participants consisted of 44 individuals, including 35 teachers who were to be involved in the focus group discussions and classroom observations, 5 headteachers, 2 Ward Educational Officers, and 2 School Quality Assurers. Purposive and convenience sampling was used in sampling the participants on the basis of data saturation. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis were used in collecting the data which was analyzed using thematic analysis. To maintain the rigour and academic integrity of the research, trustworthiness was strictly maintained through methodological triangulation, prolonged engagement, member checking, thick contextual descriptions, thorough audit trail, and researcher reflexivity.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Information was collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews of Head Teachers, Wards Education Officers (WEOs), and School Quality Assurers (SQAs), Focus Group Discussions with teachers, and from document analysis. This multiple sources of information contributed to triangulation, which increased the credibility and reliability of the findings. Analysis of the collected information indicated several related instructional experiences with regard to CBC implementation. These instructional experiences are discussed under the following sub-themes: learner-centred teaching and learner participation, collaborative learning and group work, critical thinking and problem solving, practical activities and application in real life, and lesson planning and discrepancy between planned and enacted CBC.

4.1 Learner-Centred Teaching and Learner Participation

From the discussions with teachers in focus group discussion and the headteachers' interviews, it emerged that learner-centered teaching and participation of the learners were two essential themes of the experience of teachers in implementing the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). The teachers were aware that in order to implement CBC, there needed to be a change in the approach of teaching from being teacher-centered to being one where learners could participate actively in the teaching and learning process. However, classroom observations indicated that there was inconsistency in the use of the learner-centered approach in the observed classes.

According to the Focus Group Discussion findings, teachers were trying to create conditions that could allow learners' participation in the process of learning.

For instance, one of the teachers from School B noted:

"Our strategy involves working in groups during the teaching and learning process." (Teachers, School B, FGD, 25 May, 2026).

It can be noticed that teachers understood the significance of learners' involvement into the process of learning, rather than just explanation by teachers. Working in groups allowed learners to communicate with each other and engage in various classroom activities, which was characteristic of CBC.

Interviews with the Head Teacher gave more proof of the importance of learner-centered pedagogy.

The Head Teacher from School C commented that:

> "The Competency-Based curriculum is centered on the learner with creativity where the teacher should not be expected to control the classroom.." (Head Teacher, School C, Interview, 26 May, 2026).

It is evident from this response that learner-centredness was also considered by the school leaders as one of the crucial characteristics of CBC. The use of the term "creativity" suggests that teachers not only had to involve the learners in class activities but also create situations in which learners can react in various ways.

The document analysis gave additional insight into how teachers tried to apply learner-centredness in the process of lesson planning. For instance, the lesson plan analyzed contained learner activities, practical work with the plant, and assessment rubrics to assess learners' abilities to recognize and describe plant part functions. It means that learner involvement was considered at the lesson planning stage. Nevertheless, classroom observations revealed that learner-centred practices were not consistently applied during the lesson delivery process.

Thus, the gap between the stated instructional intentions and observed classroom interactions shows that the integration of the principles of learning into lesson planning did not necessarily ensure their application in class interactions.

The connection between the teachers' reports and observations made in the classroom environment showed that the key problem was not the total lack of knowledge regarding learner-centred CBC but the ability to apply it consistently in pedagogical practices. It should be highlighted that the distinction of the two perspectives is very important as it changes the perception of the issue from the one related to knowledge to the problem of implementation.

The results obtained in the current study are similar to the data provided by Ndimbo and Kessy (2023) who stressed the role of the instructional competencies of teachers in the implementation of CBC approach. At the same time, Nkya (2021) stated that teachers were able to show their awareness and positive attitude towards CBC while still having problems with its implementation.

The results further strengthen the validity of Fullan's Educational Change Theory in the sense that they show how teachers play an important role as agents of educational change and that the change process is dependent on knowledge, professional capability, and collaboration. From this particular study, the experience of teachers shows that learner-centred teaching requires a process of adaptation from known teacher-centred practices to learner-centered teaching.

In summary, it can be said that the results show how learner-centred teaching and learner participation are important aspects of CBC according to teachers and Head Teachers. However, class room observations have shown that the adoption of the concept has been inconsistent. Therefore, it can be concluded that professional development is needed for teachers to implement learner-centred teaching.

4.2 Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

In this study, it is observed that the themes which emerged from the focus group discussion with teachers indicated that critical thinking and problem solving were considered as key elements of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). The idea behind the CBC was that learners would engage in learning exercises in which they would be able to think independently and come up with ideas using their knowledge in various contexts.

The Focus Group Discussion carried out with teachers from School A indicated that teachers perceived CBC in terms of critical thinking and creativity.

Teachers explained:

> "By CBC, we mean a curriculum which is focused on the learner-centered approach instead of teachers teaching everything by themselves and which encourages critical thinking, creativity, ICT skills and ethics." (Teachers, School A, FGD, 22 May, 2026).

Similarly, teachers from School B stated:

> "CBC promotes critical thinking, creativity, ICT use and ethics." (Teachers, School B, FGD, 25 May, 2026).

Teachers understood that CBC encourages critical thinking, creativity, and active participation from the learners. These responses show that the teachers acknowledged the significance of higher order thinking skills in CBC.

The viewpoint of WEO supported the teachers' opinions.

WEO 01 explained:

> "A learner-centered approach that involves building learners' skills and competencies necessary to solve practical problems in real life situations." (WEO 01, Interview, 26 May, 2026).

This answer shows that problem solving was one of the objectives of CBC, and this was through the use of knowledge and skills to solve real-life problems. There is consistency of information from both the teachers and the WEO, indicating that CBC is viewed as a process that encourages high-level thinking and problem solving.

These findings show that teachers and the WEO appreciated critical thinking and problem-solving as key aspects of CBC. These findings corroborate with the claims of Ndimbo and Kessy (2023), who stressed the importance of instructional competency on the part of teachers in adopting competence-based learning. The findings also support Fullan's Educational Change Theory, which highlights the importance of knowledge and skills of teachers as key conditions for curricular change.

In general, these findings highlight that critical thinking and problem-solving were considered important CBC competencies, making it necessary to build up the practical skills of teachers for organizing such learning tasks.

4.3 Practical Activities and Real-Life Application

From the findings of the FGDs, it came out clearly that teachers recognized the importance of practical activities and use of knowledge in real life situations as one of the aspects of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). CBC is seen as the type of curriculum where learners get knowledge, skills, and values which are applicable outside the classroom setting. From FGD findings, then evidence from Head Teacher Interviews and classroom observations were taken into consideration as secondary sources. The findings indicated that teachers' understanding of the practical aspect of the CBC was quite clear but not always consistent in classroom instructions.

The FGD participants from different schools emphasized the importance of applying learning in practical situations.

Teachers from School C explained:

> "A curriculum designed to build a person's knowledge, skills, and values and apply their learning experience." *(*Teachers, School C, FGD, 26 May 2026).

This response indicates that the teacher realized that CBC is not just about gaining theoretical knowledge. The importance of application of what the learner learns indicates that the teachers felt that application was an important measure of learning within CBC.

This perception was shared by teachers from School B during the focus group discussion held on 25 May 2026.

The teachers said that:

> "This is a curriculum designed to develop knowledge, skills, values and application of knowledge in a student." (Teachers, School B, FGD, 25 May 2026).

In this regard, the analysis of the two FGD reveals a certain degree of consistency in the perception of CBC among the teachers participating in the discussion. In both sessions, the participants associated CBC with the acquisition of knowledge,

skills, and values that can be utilized beyond the immediate classroom environment. It is clear that teachers perceived CBC not merely as the transfer of academic knowledge, but rather as a method of equipping students with practical competence.

Interview evidence from school leadership further supported the views expressed by teachers. The Head Teacher from School D explained:

> "It is a mode of instruction and learning where the goal is for the learner to become actively involved in what he or she has learned and to gain knowledge and skills to use in daily activities." (Head Teacher, School D, Interview, 28 May 2026).

It underscores the FGD findings regarding the importance of practice as one of the goals of CBC. In particular, it highlights the link between classroom and everyday practices. The similarity in the viewpoints of the teacher and the Head Teacher indicates that CBC was viewed as practically oriented at both classroom and school administration levels.

Yet classroom observation revealed that such understanding was not always demonstrated in practice. The integration of practical activities as well as the link between the lesson material and everyday life varied from class to class. In some classes, there was some relation established between what the learners learned and their everyday lives, though there were no practical activities involved. In others, there were few practical activities involved. It implies that teachers' theoretical understanding of practical learning does not always guarantee that learners will have an opportunity to practise their competences.

The results are also aligned with Nkya (2021), which indicated that teachers encountered challenges in developing and implementing competency-based teaching and learning activities. Similarly, the findings from Mpate (2025) show that insufficient facilities and resources were a constraint for the practical activities in CBC. The findings from Kasuga and Kalolo (2025) also highlighted that the practical nature of CBC necessitates the existence of relevant resources and professionals. Thus, the current findings imply that teachers understood what practical learning entailed, but implementation was possible based on teachers' conditions at work.

In terms of the theory of educational change developed by Fullan, it can be noted that understanding the reforms in the curriculum does not ensure their successful implementation. The teachers are key players in this process, but their efforts depend on the professional competencies and conditions.

In summary, the results showed that the teachers in all the FGDs had an understanding of CBC as involving the development and use of knowledge, skills, and values in practical contexts. There was support for this understanding from interviews done with the Head Teacher in School D. However, classroom observations showed that there was no consistent engagement in practical activities. Therefore, the results show a discrepancy between the teachers' understanding of the practical nature of CBC and how much of it is experienced by the learners in the classroom.

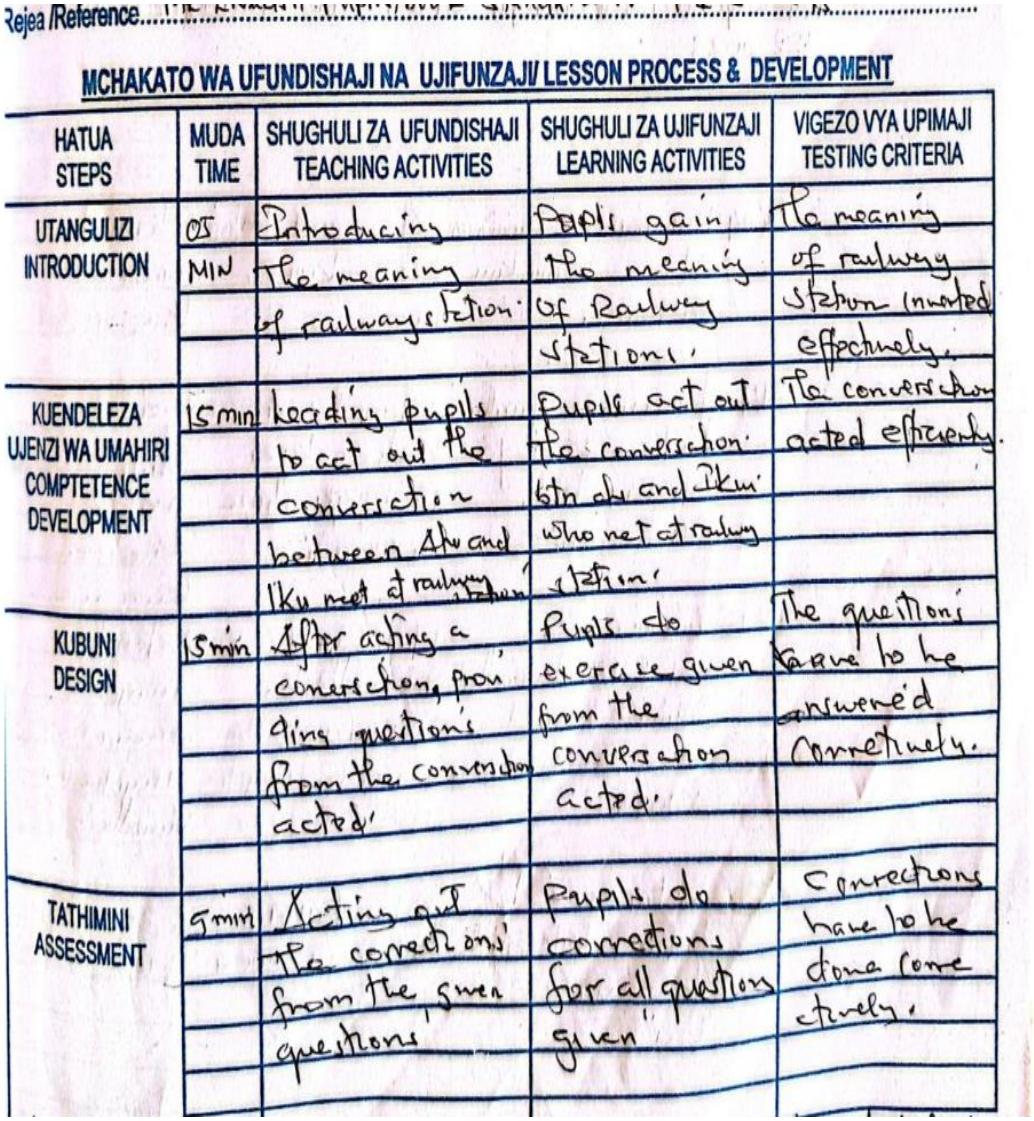
4.4 Lesson Planning and the Gap between Planned and Enacted CBC

Lesson planning formed one of the findings that emerged from the analysis of Document Analysis and observations in classrooms as an aspect of teachers' instructional experiences while implementing the CBC. Evidence of this finding was derived mostly from the Document Analysis and classroom observations, supplemented by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Head Teacher interviews. From the lesson plans and schemes of work analyzed, it was observed that teachers had embraced a number of CBC aspects in their instructional planning. However, classroom observations indicated that there were discrepancies between teachers' instructional plans and the instructional process.

From Document Analysis, it was evident that teachers integrated CBC components in the preparation of their lessons. From the analyzed lesson plans, there were learning objectives, learner activities, and competency-based components, which imply that the teachers attempted to incorporate the lesson preparation in line with the expectations of the curriculum. For instance, the analyzed lesson plan from School A shows the integration of CBC components in lesson preparation. Lesson planning in the selected schools also shows that teachers were making attempts to structure the lessons in terms of learner activities and competencies.

ISSN 2348-3156 (Print)
International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research ISSN 2348-3164 (online)
Vol. 14, Issue 4, pp: (527-540), Month: October - December 2026, Available at: www.researchpublish.com

Figure 4.3: Sample of Teacher's Lesson Plan from School A Showing Integration of CBC Principles in Lesson Preparation



Rejea /Reference.....

MCHAKATO WA UFUNDISHAJI NA UJIFUNZAJI/ LESSON PROCESS & DEVELOPMENT

HATUA STEPS	MUDA TIME	SHUGHULI ZA UFUNDISHAJI TEACHING ACTIVITIES	SHUGHULI ZA UJIFUNZAJI LEARNING ACTIVITIES	VIGEZO VYA UPIMAJI TESTING CRITERIA
UTANGULIZI INTRODUCTION	05 MIN	Introducing The meaning of railways station.	Pupils gain the meaning of Railway station.	The meaning of railway station (noted effectively.
KUENDELEZA UJENZI WA UMAHIRI COMPTETENCE DEVELOPMENT	15 min	leading pupils to act out the conversation between Aku and Iku met at railway station.	Pupils act out the conversation btn Aku and Iku who met at railway station.	The conversation acted effectively.
KUBUNI DESIGN	15 min	After acting a conversation, pose giving questions from the conversation acted.	Pupils do exercise given from the conversation acted.	The questions have to be answered correctively.
TATHIMINI ASSESSMENT	5 min	Acting out the corrections from the given questions	Pupils do corrections for all questions given	Corrections have to be done correctively.

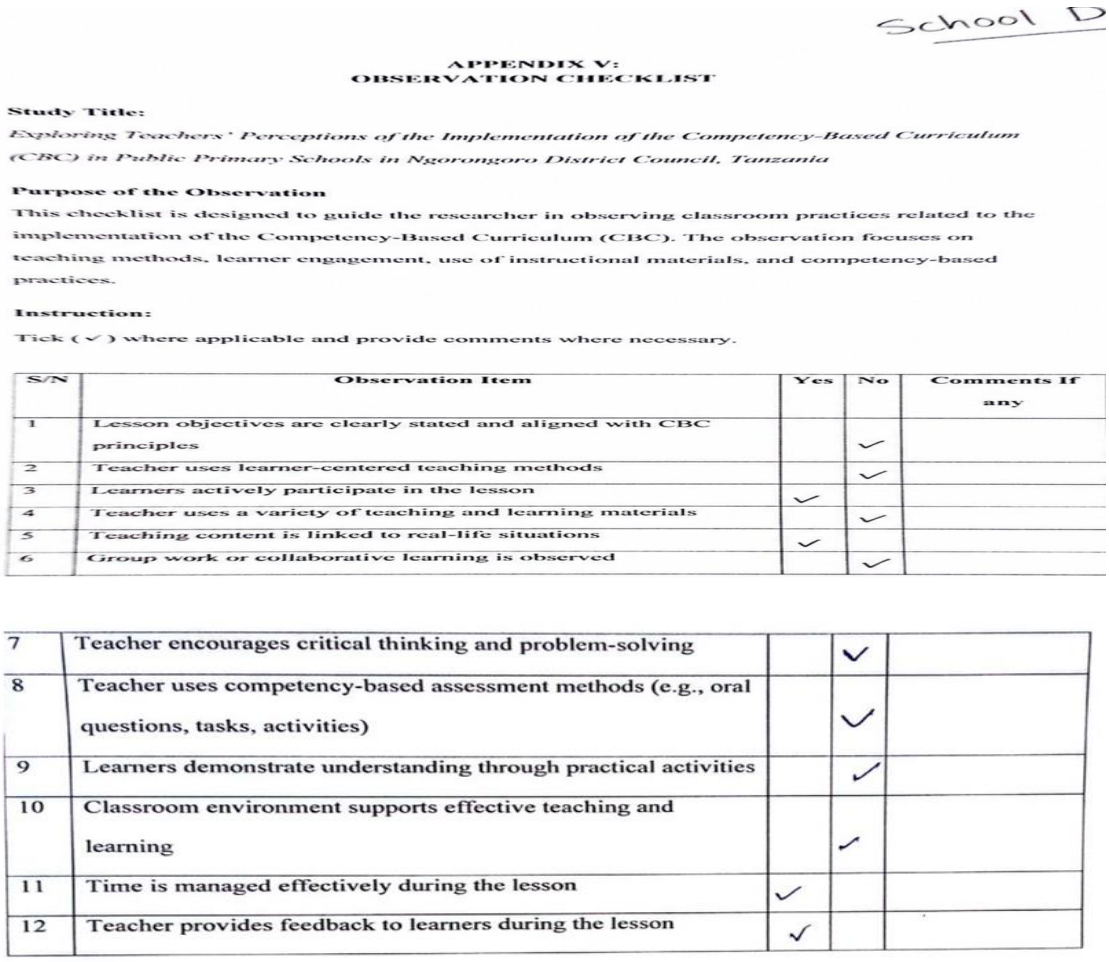
Source: Field data, 2026.

Nevertheless, from observations made in the five participating schools, it was realized that the implementation of the CBC approach was not always consistent with the intended way of teaching. There were lessons whereby teachers used some CBC methods, such as learner participation, collaboration, competency-based assessment, feedback, practical work, critical thinking and problem solving; however, other CBC methods were missing. Moreover, it was realized from the observations that there were differences among the schools, since some lessons contained CBC-aligned objectives and some CBC practices while other lessons lacked the use of teaching and learning resources, real life application, collaboration, and learner-centeredness.

This can be seen through classroom observation at School E where it was observed that some CBC principles were implemented in the class. The teacher made clear the objectives of the lesson that were in line with the CBC principles and integrated group or collaborative learning in the teaching process. Practical activities were also done by the learners. But, it was not observed that there was any learner centered teaching approach, learner engagement, use of different teaching/learning materials, and linking of the teaching content to the real world situation.

ISSN 2348-3156 (Print)
International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research ISSN 2348-3164 (online)
Vol. 14, Issue 4, pp: (527-540), Month: October - December 2026, Available at: www.researchpublish.com

Figure 1: Sample of Classroom Observation Checklist from School E Showing Selected CBC Practices During Classroom Teaching



School D

APPENDIX V:
OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Study Title:
Exploring Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Public Primary Schools in Ngorongoro District Council, Tanzania

Purpose of the Observation
This checklist is designed to guide the researcher in observing classroom practices related to the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The observation focuses on teaching methods, learner engagement, use of instructional materials, and competency-based practices.

Instruction:
Tick (✓) where applicable and provide comments where necessary.

S/N	Observation Item	Yes	No	Comments If any
1	Lesson objectives are clearly stated and aligned with CBC principles		✓	
2	Teacher uses learner-centered teaching methods		✓	
3	Learners actively participate in the lesson	✓		
4	Teacher uses a variety of teaching and learning materials		✓	
5	Teaching content is linked to real-life situations	✓		
6	Group work or collaborative learning is observed		✓	
7	Teacher encourages critical thinking and problem-solving		✓	
8	Teacher uses competency-based assessment methods (e.g., oral questions, tasks, activities)		✓	
9	Learners demonstrate understanding through practical activities		✓	
10	Classroom environment supports effective teaching and learning		✓	
11	Time is managed effectively during the lesson	✓		
12	Teacher provides feedback to learners during the lesson	✓		

Source: Field observation, School E, 19 May 2026

From the results, a disparity existed between what was planned for in CBC and the CBC that took place. In spite of CBC principles being integrated into the teachers' lesson planning, it emerged that the same principles were not fully practiced in the classroom environment. The difference could be noted from how much learners centred, collaborative learning, practical work, assessment and other CBC principles were practiced in class by teachers.

The results are in line with Mokoro (2020) and Nkya (2021) that teachers' knowledge and positive attitudes towards competency-based education do not necessarily translate into effective implementation of the approach in the classroom. Ndimbo and Kessy (2023) also highlighted the significance of teachers' instructional competencies in ensuring translation of the curriculum expectations into practice. Thus, the current findings support the notion that effective implementation of CBC depends on teachers going beyond document preparation and acquiring the capacity to implement the principles of the approach.

In relation to Fullan's theory of Educational Change, the results indicate the complexity of educational change, where planning and implementation by teachers are not enough for successful transformation.

In summary, the findings suggest that teachers were aware of CBC principles based on the instructional documents assessed, although observations from the classroom indicated that CBC principles were not always implemented consistently in classroom settings. This means that there is a marked difference between CBC planning and CBC enactment. It can be deduced that effective CBC enactment is contingent upon both the alignment of instructional documents and CBC principles, as well as the provision of adequate professional and classroom environment support for teachers to implement CBC principles.

5. CONCLUSION

This research explores teachers' experiences in the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in public primary schools in Ngorongoro District Council, Tanzania. Underpinned by an interpretivist epistemology and Fullan's Educational Change Theory, the results reveal an existing gap between the requirements of the national curriculum and the actual situation. Teachers exhibit a positive attitude towards the aims of CBC, which include fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and other skills; however, their capacity to implement learner-centered instruction is significantly impeded.

For peripherally located and socio-culturally distinctive areas such as Ngorongoro District, general system-wide problems (for example, lack of continuous professional development and teaching/learning resources) are compounded by local factors including lengthy journeying, infrastructure deficiencies, the shift from Maa language to Kiswahili language, and absenteeism among pupils, due to pastoral lifestyle. As a result, primary school teachers find themselves compelled to employ traditional teacher-centered approaches of instruction as well as summative assessment. In conclusion, effective implementation of the curriculum requires going beyond top-down approaches and adopting responsive support structures.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the empirical results of the study, the following are some practical recommendations that can be considered for CBC implementation in marginalized rural public primary schools:

1. Suggestions for Policy Makers & Education Administrators (MoEST and PO-RALG)

Professional Development Contextualization: Move from sporadic, cascade workshops to ongoing mentoring and teacher training clusters in pastoralist areas.

Facilities for Teaching and Learning Materials: Expedite the publishing and distribution of CBC textbooks and other learning and teaching aids for public primary schools in rural areas, thus decreasing the use of self-purchased or missing materials by teachers.

Reforming Assessment and Supervision Structures: Make the national examination system match formative assessment criteria, and shift Ward Education Officers (WEOs) and School Quality Assurance Agents (SQAs) towards developmental mentorship.

2. Recommendations for Practice and School Level Leadership

Integration of localized and culturally responsive pedagogical practices: The integration of locally available and cost-effective teaching materials and adjustment of the learning activities based on socio-cultural environments and pastoral realities.

Language Transition: Introduce language transition remediation programs (bridging from Maa to Kiswahili) at the school level, at least up to the early years of primary levels, in order to ensure that children have adequate literacy skills to engage in activity-based teaching and learning.

Flexible school calendars: Develop flexible academic calendars together with pastoralist communities and school management teams.

3. Recommendations for Future Research

Conduct Comparative Regional Research: Extend the scope of research to carry out qualitative analysis in other regions that are pastoralist and marginalized in rural Tanzania to establish the wider applicability of these findings.

Conduct Longitudinal Studies of Learner Competency Acquisition: Carry out longitudinal quantitative or mixed method studies investigating the competency of learners being acquired through current CBC framework.

Declaration of AI Use

In compliance with the guidelines and policies on integrity in research set by the institution, the author declares the employment of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies during the writing process of this manuscript. In particular, generative AI language models were employed in writing as tools for structural editing, language enhancement, formatting optimization (such as APA 7th edition citation formats), and proofreading drafts of the manuscript.

The author assures that AI technologies have not been used in generating research evidence, analysis of empirical data, or qualitative data or substituting scholarly reasoning. The conceptualization, empirical evidence collection, qualitative thematic analyses, conclusion, and recommendations for context have been done by the author exclusively.

Competing Interests

The author states that there are no competing interests financially, personally, professionally, and institutionally which may improperly influence, bias or affect the design, conduct, data interpretation and reporting of this study. The study was done independently as an academic exercise on teachers' experiences in teaching the CBC in public primary schools in Ngorongoro District Council, Tanzania. There is no financial support received from any commercial, governmental or non-governmental agencies which may improperly influence this study.

REFERENCES

[1] Addai-Mununkum, R., & Setordzi, M. (2023). Teachers' experiences with competency-oriented curriculum reforms in basic education. *International Journal of Educational Development, 98*, 102748.

[2] Fullan, M. (1982). *The meaning of educational change*. Teachers College Press.

[3] Fullan, M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.

[4] Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.

[5] Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (4th ed.). Teachers College Press.

[6] Kasuga, R., & Kalolo, J. F. (2025). Practical orientation of competency-based curriculum implementation in Tanzanian schools. *Journal of Education and Practice, 16*(2), 45-58.

[7] Kessy, A. T., Kaaya, E., & Mwakalonge, J. (2020). Challenges facing implementation of competence-based curriculum in Tanzania: Perspectives from public secondary schools. *African Journal of Educational Studies, 8*(2), 55-70.

[8] Kinyunyu, J. M. (2020). Implementation of competence-based curriculum in selected secondary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania (Master's thesis, University of Dar es Salaam).

[9] Lema, P. M. (2026). Early implementation of the revised primary school curriculum in Tanzania: Evidence from national monitoring and evaluation data. *Tanzania Institute of Education Research Report*.

[10] Leringato, P. M., Seki, A. J., & Komba, S. C. (2023). Educational challenges among pastoralist communities and school participation in northern Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Research Review, 8*(3), 412-425.

[11] Maluha, S. W., Mackatiani, C. W., & Gakunga, D. (2025). Influence of teachers' pedagogical practices on the implementation of competency-based curriculum in public and private primary schools in Vihiga County, Kenya. *African Educational Research Journal, 13*(1), 85-98.

[12] Mokoro, E. J. (2020). Teachers' perceptions and implementation of competency-based curriculum in Tanzania secondary schools. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching, 9*(3), 35-48.

[13] Mpate, A. M. (2025). Resource availability and its influence on practical implementation of competence-based curriculum in public schools in Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 6*(1), 112-124.

[14] Mtitu, E. A. (2014). Learner-centred teaching in Tanzania: Geography teachers' perceptions and experiences. *Journal of Education and Practice, 5*(37), 26-37.

[15] Mwakyobwe, A., & Shawa, L. B. (2023). Pedagogical and assessment practices associated with competence-based education in Tanzanian teacher colleges. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 22*(4), 201-220.

[16] Nderego, M. J. (2026). Teachers' pedagogical competence in promoting higher-order thinking skills under competency-based curriculum in public secondary schools in Bariadi Town Council, Tanzania. *Journal of Education and Learning, 15*(2), 77-91.

[17] Ndimbo, T. T., & Kessy, A. T. (2023). Teachers' instructional competencies and implementation of competence-based curriculum in Tanzania secondary schools. *Tanzania Journal of Education, 41*(1), 56-74.

[18] Ngusa, P. M., Begi, N. J., & Ndani, M. N. (2026). Teachers' practices in competency-based assessment in pre-primary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice, 17*(1), 24-39.

[19] Nkya, H. M. (2021). Challenges facing the implementation of competence-based curriculum in Tanzania secondary schools. *Huria: Journal of Open University of Tanzania, 28*(1), 112-128.

[20] Nyahonge, J. M., & Mwalongo, A. I. (2021). Access and equity in primary education among pastoralist communities in Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 2*(4), 45-58.

[21] Olum, V. A., & Mwoma, T. (2025). Implementation of competency-based curriculum in early years education in Mathare Sub-County, Kenya. *International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review, 12*(1), 14-29.

[22] Semlugu, J. K. (2018). Practice of competence-based curriculum in selected secondary schools in Tabora and Nzega districts, Tanzania (Master's thesis, University of Dodoma).

[23] Smart, R. (2024). Competency-based curriculum implementation in Kenya and Ghana: Teacher experiences and classroom realities. *Journal of Comparative Education and Development, 9*(2), 101-119.

[24] United Republic of Tanzania. (2023). *The revised curriculum for pre-primary, primary, secondary and teacher education*. Tanzania Institute of Education.

[25] Zakaria, S., Mwamakula, R., & Mkulu, D. G. (2026). Teachers' proficiency in applying student-centred teaching methods in public secondary schools in Geita District Council, Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Studies, 18*(2), 133-149.