

**EXPLORING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING METHODS FOR
ENHANCING PERCEPTION IN THE COMPETENCE-BASED CURRICULUM IN
UGANDA: A CASE OF MENGGO SECONDARY SCHOOL IN KAMPALA
DISTRICT, UGANDA**

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DECLARATION

I, Sabiiti James Magambo, declare that this thesis titled Exploring Students' Perceptions of Teaching Methods in Competence Based Curriculum in Uganda: A Case of Mengo Secondary School in Kampala District, Uganda is my original piece of work and has not been submitted to any other institution for any award.

Signature:  Date: 18th.June..2026.....

SABIITI JAMES MAGAMBO

APPROVAL

I, the supervisor, hereby confirm that this dissertation has met the accepted minimum research requirements and ethics, and is ready for examination with my approval.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Namulondo', is placed over a rectangular area.

Signiturure..

Date...18th.June.2026.

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explored students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) at Mengo Secondary School in Kampala District, Uganda. The Competence-Based Curriculum was introduced to promote learner-centred teaching approaches aimed at enhancing learner participation, motivation, critical thinking, and practical skills acquisition. However, concerns have been raised regarding the continued use of teacher-centred approaches, which may limit effective implementation of the curriculum. The purpose of the study was to explore students' perceptions of teaching methods used under the Competence-Based Curriculum. A qualitative case study design was employed. Data were collected from students and teachers through interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. Data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that learner-centred teaching methods, including group discussions, project work, classroom presentations, and practical activities, enhanced students' classroom participation. The findings further indicated that interactive teaching approaches increased learner motivation by making learning more engaging and relevant to real-life experiences. In addition, practical and activity-based teaching methods were perceived to promote the acquisition of practical skills, problem-solving abilities, and collaborative competencies. However, challenges such as large class sizes, inadequate instructional materials, and limited time for practical activities constrained effective implementation of learner-centred approaches. The study concluded that students generally perceived learner-centred teaching methods positively and considered them important in achieving the goals of the Competence-Based Curriculum. The study recommends increased teacher support, continuous professional development, and provision of adequate instructional resources to strengthen effective CBC implementation.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction:

Revolutionizing education for a dynamic future: The implementation of a competence-based curriculum in Uganda represents a significant shift in the education system, aiming to equip students with the practical skills and competencies needed for success in a rapidly evolving global economy. Introduced in 2020, the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Uganda's lower secondary schools transitions from traditional content-focused education to a learner-centered approach, emphasizing critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and practical skills (Government of Uganda, 2019; Masembe et al., 2024). This reform, outlined in the National Curriculum Development Centre's Lower Secondary Curriculum Framework, aligns with global educational trends to prepare students for the 21st-century workforce, where adaptability and innovation are paramount (Wabule et al., 2023).

Despite policy support from the Uganda Education Sector Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and enthusiasm among educators, the CBC's implementation faces challenges in aligning teaching methods with its competency-driven objectives (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2021). Many classrooms still rely on lecture-based approaches, which hinder student engagement and undermine the curriculum's goals of fostering interactive, practical learning (Masembe et al., 2024; Namuddu & Achan, 2022). These misalignments highlight the need to explore students' perceptions to assess how teaching methods influence their learning experiences and the CBC's effectiveness.

This qualitative case study examines students' perceptions of teaching methods within the CBC at Mengo Secondary School in Kampala, Uganda, using interviews and focus groups. By capturing students' perspectives, the research identifies barriers to effective implementation and proposes strategies to align teaching practices with the CBC's objectives, as envisioned in the National Curriculum Development Centre Regulations, 2020. The findings aim to inform Uganda's educational reforms, ensuring students acquire skills for a competitive global landscape.

1.2 Background of the study

1.2.1 Historical Background

Competence-based education (CBE) emerged globally in the mid-20th century, initially within vocational training in the United States and Europe, focusing on measurable skills over rote learning (Hodge, 2022). The 1990s saw broader adoption through initiatives like the OECD's Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) project, which outlined key competencies for lifelong learning in a knowledge-driven economy (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). Recent scholarship highlights CBE's adaptability across contexts, emphasizing critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving to meet 21st-century workforce demands (Voogt & Roblin, 2012; Wabule et al., 2023). In fields like health and occupational therapy, CBE frameworks underscore the importance of preparing professionals for complex, real-world challenges (Frenk et al., 2010).

In Africa, competence-based curricula gained traction in the post-colonial era, particularly in the 1990s and 2000s, as countries like South Africa and Tanzania sought to align education with local development needs (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008).

Influenced by global models, these reforms faced critiques for neocolonial tendencies, yet they prioritized learner-centered approaches to foster practical skills amid rapid socioeconomic changes (Tikly, 2011). Recent studies in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya and Rwanda, highlight challenges in implementing CBC in science and language education, emphasizing the need for decolonial and inclusive pedagogies (Ngware et al., 2021; Tabulawa, 2013). Stakeholder perspectives in nursing and primary healthcare further stress context-specific adaptations to enhance quality education (Macha et al., 2022).

In Uganda, the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) builds on reforms initiated with Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997, followed by the thematic curriculum for primary education in 2007 and the CBC rollout in lower secondary schools in 2020 (Government of Uganda, 2019). This shift, guided by the National Curriculum Development Centre's Lower Secondary Curriculum Framework, aims to enhance student outcomes by prioritizing practical skills, critical thinking, and student-centered methods over rote memorization (Masembe et al., 2024). However, implementation faces challenges, including inadequate teacher training, resource shortages, and reliance on traditional lecture-based methods, which misalign with CBC goals and affect student engagement (Okitsu, Edwards, Mwanza, & Miller, 2023); Okiror & Oonyu, 2021). Students' perceptions of teaching methods are critical to addressing these gaps and ensuring the CBC's success in preparing learners for a dynamic global economy.

1.2.2 Theoretical Perspective:

This study is anchored on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by Albert Bandura, complemented by the principles of constructive alignment and multimedia learning, to investigate students' perceptions of teaching methods in the implementation of Uganda's Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) at Mengo Secondary School. These theories provide a robust framework to explore classroom perception, student motivation, and practical skill acquisition under the CBC.

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed in the 1970s, posits that learning occurs through the interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors, with observational learning, modeling, and self-efficacy as core components (Bandura, 1986, 1997). SCT informs how students' perceptions of CBC teaching methods are shaped by observing teachers' practices and peers' engagement. It highlights how modeled interactive methods, like group discussions, enhance classroom perception. It underscores how observing motivated peers and teachers boosts students' self-efficacy and motivation. And lastly illustrates how teachers' demonstration of practical tasks supports students' acquisition of CBC competencies.

The concept of constructive alignment, proposed by Biggs (2003), emphasizes aligning teaching methods, learning activities, and assessments with intended learning outcomes to promote deep learning. In the CBC, which prioritizes practical skills and competencies, constructive alignment guides the design of teaching methods that foster hands-on, student-centered learning experiences (Biggs & Tang, 2011). For instance, project-based tasks and collaborative activities should directly support the

development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This study uses constructive alignment to assess whether teaching methods align with the CBC's competency-driven objectives and how students perceive the effectiveness of these methods in achieving desired outcomes.

Mayer's (2008) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning posits that effective learning occurs when instructional materials engage multiple sensory modalities, such as visual and auditory channels, to enhance cognitive processing. In the context of the CBC, multimedia learning theory supports the integration of technology-enhanced tools, such as digital resources and interactive platforms, to make abstract concepts more concrete and engaging (Mayer, 2009).

This theory guides the study in exploring how multimedia and technology-based teaching methods influence students' perceptions of the CBC, particularly in fostering practical skill development and engagement in a learner-centered environment.

Subsequently, together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens to investigate students' perceptions of teaching methods in the CBC. SCT illuminates how observational learning and self-efficacy shape students' engagement with new pedagogies, while constructive alignment evaluates the coherence between teaching methods and CBC goals. Multimedia learning theory highlights the role of technology in enhancing student experiences. By applying these frameworks, the study seeks to identify gaps in teaching practices, understand students' perceptions, and propose recommendations to align instructional strategies with the CBC's objectives,

ultimately enhancing educational outcomes at Mengo Secondary School (Masembe et al., 2024; Namuddu & Achan, 2022).

1.2.3 Conceptual Perspective:

The Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), introduced in Uganda in 2020, represents a significant shift from content-based education to a learner-centred approach that emphasizes the acquisition and application of competencies required for lifelong learning, employability, and responsible citizenship (National Curriculum Development Centre [NCDC], 2019). The curriculum seeks to equip learners with critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, self-directed learning, and problem-solving skills necessary for effective participation in contemporary society and the world of work (Ministry of Education and Sports [MoES], 2023).

The conceptual perspective of this study is anchored on the assumption that students' perceptions of teaching methods are shaped by the extent to which these methods promote active participation, motivation, and practical skills acquisition. According to Mulder (2014), competence-based education focuses on learners' ability to apply knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in authentic situations rather than merely reproducing theoretical content. Similarly, Adjetey (2017) argues that competence-based learning enhances employability by emphasizing practical competencies and learner engagement.

Within the CBC framework, teaching methods constitute the independent variable and are categorized into learner-centred instructional approaches recommended by the National Curriculum Development Centre. These include

classroom discussions, inquiry-based learning, group work, collaborative learning, project-based learning, demonstrations, practical activities, problem-solving tasks, simulations, role play, and field-based learning experiences (NCDC, 2019; MoES, 2023). These approaches differ from traditional teacher-centred methods because they position learners as active participants in the learning process, enabling them to construct knowledge collaboratively and apply learning to real-life situations (UNESCO, 2023).

The first category of teaching methods comprises classroom discussions and inquiry-based learning activities, which encourage learners to ask questions, share ideas, engage in dialogue, and develop critical thinking skills. Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and collaborative meaning-making (Vygotsky, 1978). Recent studies have shown that discussion-based learning enhances learner participation, engagement, and deeper understanding of concepts (Mercer et al., 2021; Nabukenya et al., 2024).

The second category consists of collaborative learning approaches, including group work, peer learning, cooperative learning, and project-based activities. These methods promote teamwork, communication, leadership, and interpersonal competencies that are central to CBC implementation (NCDC, 2019). Research by Wabule et al. (2023) found that collaborative learning environments improve learner engagement and participation, while UNESCO (2023) reported that cooperative learning enhances competency development and learner motivation.

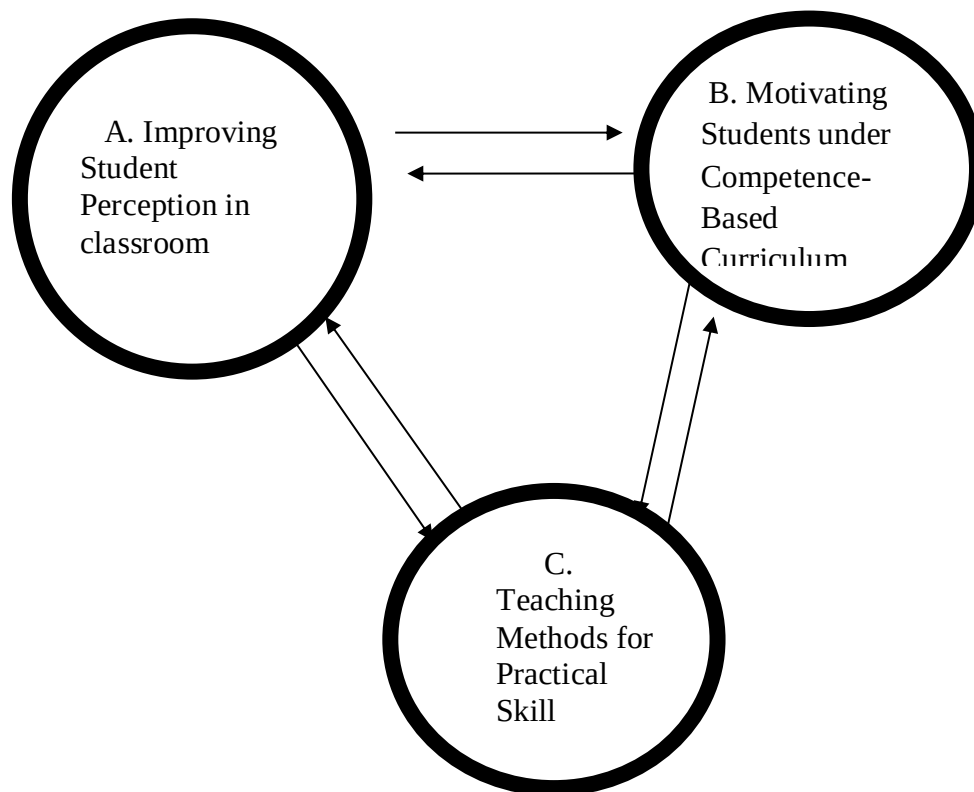
The third category includes practical and experiential learning methods, such as demonstrations, practical exercises, experiments, simulations, projects, and fieldwork activities. These approaches are grounded in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which argues that learners acquire competencies through concrete experiences, reflection, and application of knowledge (Kolb, 1984). Recent studies indicate that practical learning activities improve skills acquisition, problem-solving abilities, and learner engagement under competence-based education systems (Hmelo-Silver & Eberbach, 2022; Okitsu et al., 2023).

Students' perceptions constitute the dependent variable and are examined through three dimensions: participation in learning activities, motivation towards learning, and practical skills acquisition. Participation refers to the extent to which learners actively engage in classroom discussions, collaborative learning, and inquiry-based activities. Motivation refers to learners' interest, enthusiasm, and willingness to engage in learning activities. Practical skills acquisition refers to learners' ability to apply knowledge and demonstrate competencies through practical tasks and real-life problem-solving activities (Ryan & Deci, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

The study assumes that effective implementation of learner-centred teaching methods under CBC positively influences students' participation, motivation, and practical skills development. However, this relationship may be affected by intervening variables such as teacher competence, class size, availability of instructional resources, school environment, and administrative support (Masembe et al., 2024; MoES, 2024). Consequently, the conceptual framework guides the study in

examining how students perceive the effectiveness of CBC teaching methods in promoting learner participation, motivation, and competency acquisition at Mengo Secondary School.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for CBC



The conceptual framework for this study integrates three core teaching components of Uganda's Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) student perception,

motivation, and practical skill acquisition to explore students' perceptions of teaching methods. These components are interdependent, forming a dynamic learning ecosystem that shapes students' experiences and perceptions of the CBC (Mulder, 2014). Student perception, grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory, is fostered through collaborative methods like group discussions, which enable students to co-construct knowledge, enhancing engagement (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Slavin, 2014). Motivation, informed by Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, is driven by teaching methods such as goal-setting and real-world tasks, which increase students' intrinsic motivation and willingness to engage (Blumenfeld, 1991; Dörnyei, 2001). Practical skill acquisition, supported by Kolb's (1984) experiential learning and Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theories, is facilitated by hands-on methods like project-based learning, which provide contextual relevance (Billett, 2011). These components reinforce each other: active perception enhances motivation through inclusion, while motivated students are more likely to engage in practical skill development, which in turn contextualizes and enriches classroom discussions. Biggs' (1999) constructive alignment ensures that teaching methods, learning activities, and assessments align with CBC's competency-driven goals, shaping students' perceptions of the curriculum's relevance and effectiveness (Masembe et al., 2024). This framework guides the study to assess how teaching methods influence perception, motivation, and skill acquisition, informing recommendations to optimize CBC implementation.

1.2.4 Contextual Perspective:

The introduction of the Competence-Based Curriculum in Uganda in 2020 marked a significant shift from content-based instruction to competency-based learning. The curriculum requires teachers to facilitate learning through learner-centred approaches such as classroom discussions, group work, project-based learning, demonstrations, practical activities, role play, and inquiry-based learning (NCDC, 2019). These approaches are intended to develop learners' competencies in critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, self-directed learning, and problem-solving. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (2023), effective implementation of CBC depends on active learner participation in classroom activities rather than passive acquisition of knowledge.

Mengo Secondary School in Kampala is an ideal case study due to its strong academic performance and effective CBC adoption. In the 2024 Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) examinations, Mengo SS achieved notable success, with a number of candidates qualifying for certificates nationwide, reflecting the CBC's broader impact (Uganda National Examinations Board , 2025). At Mengo SS, the 2023 UCE results many candidates earning 1st Grade, a significant improvement candidates performance in 2016, with consistent gains post-2020 CBC implementation, particularly in subjects like Mathematics and Biology (Mengo Secondary School, 2024). These outcomes demonstrate the school's success in leveraging CBC methodologies to enhance student competence and motivation.

Mengo SS's academic excellence provides a rich context to explore students' perceptions of CBC teaching methods, focusing on perception, motivation, and

practical skill acquisition. This study aims to address implementation challenges, such as teacher preparedness and resource availability, and offer evidence-based recommendations to optimize CBC delivery. By building on scholarly research and empirical data, the study contributes to Uganda's educational reform dialogue (Masembe et al., 2024).

1.3 Problem statement.

The Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), introduced in Uganda's lower secondary schools in 2020, seeks to transform teaching and learning from teacher-centred approaches to learner-centred pedagogies that promote active student perception, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and practical skills development (NCDC, 2019). The curriculum requires learners to actively participate in classroom discussions, group work, project-based learning, demonstrations, and problem-solving activities to acquire competencies necessary for lifelong learning and employability. Globally, learner-centred approaches have been associated with improved learner engagement, academic achievement, and skills acquisition, making active perception a key indicator of successful CBC implementation (UNESCO, 2023).

However, evidence from Uganda suggests that the implementation of learner-centred teaching and learning practices remains challenging. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (2024), Uganda's secondary school enrolment increased from approximately 1.2 million learners in 2020 to over 1.5 million learners in 2024, creating pressure on classroom space, instructional materials, and teacher capacity. Furthermore, the Education Sector Performance Report (MoES, 2024) indicates that

many public and private secondary schools continue to face shortages of teaching and learning resources required for effective CBC implementation. Studies conducted in Uganda have reported that teachers frequently struggle to implement participatory teaching methods due to inadequate training, large class sizes, limited instructional resources, and persistence of traditional lecture-based approaches (Namuddu & Achan, 2022; Okitsu et al., 2023; Masembe et al., 2024). As a result, students may not be participating in learning activities to the extent envisaged by the Competence-Based Curriculum.

Although several studies have examined teacher preparedness, curriculum implementation challenges, and institutional readiness for CBC implementation in Uganda, most have focused on teachers, school administrators, and policy perspectives. Limited empirical evidence exists regarding students' own perceptions and experiences of perception in classroom discussions, collaborative learning activities, project work, and practical learning experiences under the Competence-Based Curriculum, particularly in urban secondary schools (Wabule et al., 2023; Nabukenya et al., 2024). Consequently, there remains insufficient understanding of whether learners perceive themselves as actively participating in learning activities as intended by CBC and how such perception influences the attainment of curriculum competencies.

Without evidence from students, who are the primary beneficiaries of the curriculum reforms, policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators may lack adequate information to evaluate the effectiveness of learner-centred teaching approaches and address barriers to meaningful perception. Therefore, this study will seek to explore

students' perceptions of perception in learning activities under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School in Kampala District, Uganda, with the aim of generating evidence to support effective implementation of learner-centred education and competence development.

1.4 Research Objectives:

1.4.1 Main objective.

Exploring Students' Perceptions of Perception in Learning Activities under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School, Kampala District, Uganda.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- 1) To examine students' perceptions of teaching methods used to promote perception in classroom discussions under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School.
- 2) To assess students' perceptions of teaching methods used to motivate learners under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School.
- 3) To explore students' perceptions of teaching methods used to facilitate acquisition of practical skills under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School

1.5 Research questions:

- 1) What are students' perceptions of teaching methods used to promote perception in classroom discussions under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School?
- 2) What are students' perceptions of teaching methods used to motivate learners under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School?

- 3) What are students' perceptions of teaching methods used to facilitate acquisition of practical skills under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on exploring students' perceptions of teaching methods used in the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) at Mengo Secondary School in Kampala District, Uganda. It was limited to selected classes within the school, particularly students in Senior One to Senior Four, since these are the classes most directly affected by the new curriculum reforms. The study concentrated on students' views and experiences regarding how teaching methods under CBC influence their learning, perception, and acquisition of competencies.

1.6.1 Geographical Scope

The research was geographically confined to Mengo Secondary School, located in Kampala District, Uganda. This school was chosen because it is one of the pioneer institutions implementing the Competence-Based Curriculum and provides a practical context for examining how students perceive the teaching approaches adopted by their teachers.

1.6.2 Content Scope

The content of the study was restricted to examining students' perceptions of different teaching methods within the CBC framework. Specifically, it investigated how methods such as learner-centered approaches, group discussions, project-based

learning, demonstrations, and problem-solving strategies are applied. The study did not cover other aspects of the curriculum such as assessment procedures, policy formulation, or teacher training, but strictly focused on teaching methods and how students perceive their effectiveness.

1.6.3 Time Scope

This study was conducted over two months, from July to August 2025, during which data were collected from students at Mengo Secondary School. This period aligned with the academic term, enabling the researcher to gather comprehensive insights into students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), specifically regarding classroom perception, motivation, and practical skill acquisition.

1.7 Justification:

1.7.1 Addressing Implementation Challenges

Uganda's Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), introduced in 2020, aims to improve educational quality and employability but faces challenges like teacher preparedness and resource shortages (Kidega et al., 2024). This study investigates these issues to assess CBC's effectiveness. It offers practical and theoretical contributions to Uganda's education system.

1.7.2 Exploring Student Perspectives

The study examines students' perceptions of CBC teaching methods at Mengo Secondary School, focusing on perception, motivation, and skill acquisition. While prior research emphasizes teachers' challenges, student voices are underexplored,

yet critical for learning outcomes (Nabukenya et al., 2024). This focus highlights how engagement drives curriculum success.

1.7.3 Bridging Methodological Gaps

Using a qualitative case study, the research captures nuanced student experiences, unlike quantitative-heavy studies (Kidega et al., 2023). This approach addresses calls for context-specific research in resource-constrained settings (Mugo, 2019). The Mengo case offers a scalable model for urban schools.

1.7.4 Informing Policy and Practice

Findings will guide Uganda's Ministry of Education and NCDC in improving teacher training and resource allocation. Insights can address pedagogical challenges, like teachers' transition to competency-based methods (Wambi, 2024). This could enhance student outcomes, supporting high national pass rates (UNEB, 2025).

1.7.5 Theoretical Contributions

The study enriches Social Cognitive Theory and Constructive Alignment in CBC contexts, linking self-efficacy and instructional strategies to outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Biggs & Tang, 2011). It contributes to global discussions on competency-based education in low-resource settings. This research supports equitable reforms for Uganda's socioeconomic development..

1.8 Significance:

1.8.1 Insights for Mengo Secondary School

This research provides new insights into students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum. It aims to enhance teaching and

learning experiences at Mengo Secondary School. By focusing on student feedback, it supports targeted improvements in classroom practices.

1.8.2 Broader Impact on Uganda's Education

The findings address challenges in implementing the revised lower secondary curriculum, contributing to overall educational quality in Uganda. Recommendations will help overcome barriers and enhance teaching methods to better align with student needs. This promotes more effective and student-centered education nationwide.

Operational definitions of the study

Students' Perceptions: In this study, students' perceptions refer to learners' views, opinions, and interpretations of teaching methods used by their teachers under the Competence-Based Curriculum. These are measured using students' responses to structured questionnaire items and interview questions.

Teaching Methods: Teaching methods refer to the instructional strategies and approaches used by teachers to facilitate learning, such as group discussions, project-based learning, demonstrations, and learner-centered activities. These are assessed through students' reported experiences and observations in the classroom.

Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC): The Competence-Based Curriculum refers to Uganda's secondary school curriculum that emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for real-life application. In this study, CBC is operationalized through learner-centered teaching practices, practical activities, and continuous assessment as perceived by students.

Student Perception: Student perception refers to the extent to which learners actively engage in classroom activities, including asking questions, contributing to discussions, working in groups, and participating in practical tasks. It is measured through students' self-reported levels of involvement during lessons.

Learner-Centered Teaching: Learner-centered teaching refers to instructional practices that place students at the center of the learning process, allowing them to actively construct knowledge through interaction and collaboration. In this study, it is measured by students' perceptions of opportunities to express ideas, work collaboratively, and make learning decisions.

Student Motivation: Student motivation refers to learners' interest, enthusiasm, and willingness to engage in learning activities. In this study, motivation is measured through students' perceptions of lesson relevance, teacher encouragement, and the level of interest generated by teaching methods used.

Practical Skills Development: Practical skills development refers to students' ability to apply learned knowledge to perform tasks, solve problems, and demonstrate competencies. It is measured through students' perceptions of hands-on activities, projects, and real-life applications emphasized during teaching.

Collaborative Learning: Collaborative learning refers to instructional practices where students work together in pairs or groups to achieve shared learning goals. In this study, it is operationalized by the frequency and quality of group work activities as perceived by students.

Continuous Assessment: Continuous assessment refers to the ongoing evaluation of learners' progress through activities such as assignments, projects, presentations, and

practical tasks rather than reliance on final examinations alone. In this study, it is measured through students' perceptions of regular feedback and performance-based assessments.

Student-Teacher Interaction: Student-teacher interaction refers to the level and quality of communication and engagement between teachers and students during lessons. It is operationalized through students' perceptions of teacher approachability, feedback, and responsiveness to learners' questions.

Real-Life Learning Contexts: Real-life learning contexts refer to the integration of everyday experiences, community issues, and practical situations into classroom teaching. In this study, this is measured by students' perceptions of how often teachers relate lesson content to real-world situations.

Learning Environment: The learning environment refers to the physical, social, and psychological conditions under which learning takes place, including classroom atmosphere, availability of learning materials, and freedom to participate. It is operationalized through students' perceptions of classroom supportiveness and resource availability.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature on students' perceptions of teaching methods within the framework of a competence-based curriculum (CBC). The competence-based approach emphasizes the development of practical skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable learners to apply what they have learned in real-world contexts.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Improving Students' Perception in Classroom Discussions under the Competence-Based Curriculum.

Classroom discussion is one of the key learner-centred pedagogical approaches promoted under the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC). The curriculum emphasizes

active learner engagement through questioning, dialogue, collaboration, and critical reflection rather than passive reception of information (NCDC, 2019). Students' perceptions of classroom discussions are therefore important indicators of the extent to which CBC principles are being implemented in schools.

Studies from developed countries indicate that classroom discussions significantly enhance learner engagement and competence development. Mercer, Hennessey, and Warwick (2021) found that dialogic teaching improved students' participation, communication skills, and critical thinking in secondary schools in the United Kingdom. Similarly, Alexander (2022) reported that discussion-based instructional approaches promoted learner confidence, collaborative learning, and deeper conceptual understanding. Research by Howe and Abedin (2023) further demonstrated that structured classroom discussions positively influence learners' academic achievement and active participation.

In Africa, competence-based education reforms have increasingly emphasized classroom discussions as a strategy for promoting learner participation. Ngussa and Makewa (2022) found that discussion-centred teaching approaches enhanced student engagement and critical thinking among secondary school learners in Tanzania. Similarly, Maphosa and Maphosa (2023) reported that learner-centred classroom discussions improved communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and active participation among learners in South Africa. However, these studies also highlighted challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and inadequate teacher preparation.

In Uganda, the Competence-Based Curriculum promotes classroom discussions as a means of enhancing learner participation and competency acquisition (NCDC,

2019). Wabule et al. (2023) found that classroom discussions increased learner engagement and collaborative learning during CBC implementation. Likewise, Nabukenya et al. (2024) reported that students perceived discussion-based lessons as more interactive and beneficial for understanding concepts than traditional lecture methods. Nevertheless, challenges such as large class sizes, limited instructional resources, and teacher dominance continue to affect effective learner participation.

2.2.2 Motivational Teaching Methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum

Motivation plays a crucial role in learner engagement and achievement under the Competence-Based Curriculum. CBC promotes learner-centred instructional approaches that encourage autonomy, participation, collaboration, creativity, and practical application of knowledge, all of which are expected to enhance learner motivation (NCDC, 2019).

Research from developed countries indicates that learner-centred instructional approaches positively influence learner motivation. Ryan and Deci (2022) observed that learning environments supporting autonomy, competence, and relatedness significantly increase students' intrinsic motivation. Kember et al. (2021) found that project-based learning and inquiry-based learning enhanced learners' interest, engagement, and persistence in academic activities. Similarly, Hattie (2023) reported that active learning approaches improve learner motivation and academic performance.

In Africa, competence-based education reforms have emphasized contextualized and participatory learning as a means of improving learner motivation. UNESCO (2023) reported that learners demonstrate higher motivation when teaching

approaches are interactive, practical, and connected to real-life experiences. Mudzielwana and Netshifhefhe (2022) found that collaborative learning and project-based activities increased learner motivation and participation among secondary school students in South Africa. However, motivation was found to decline where teachers continued using teacher-centred instructional approaches.

In Uganda, recent studies indicate that learner-centred teaching approaches positively influence student motivation. Mugisha and Ssempala (2023) found that students were more motivated when teachers used practical activities, group work, project assignments, and continuous feedback. Similarly, Nansubuga et al. (2024) reported that CBC teaching approaches increased learner interest and classroom participation compared to traditional teaching methods. However, inadequate teacher training and limited instructional resources remain barriers to the effective implementation of motivational learning activities.

2.2.3 Teaching Methods for Acquiring Practical Skills

The Competence-Based Curriculum places strong emphasis on practical competence, experiential learning, and application of knowledge in real-life situations. Learners are expected to develop competencies through practical activities, projects, demonstrations, experiments, and problem-solving tasks rather than relying solely on theoretical instruction (NCDC, 2019).

Studies from developed countries indicate that practical learning activities significantly enhance skills acquisition and competence development. Bell (2021) found that project-based learning improved learners' practical problem-solving skills and ability to apply knowledge in real-world situations. Hmelo-Silver and Eberbach

(2022) reported that inquiry-based learning strengthened learners' analytical and practical competencies. Furthermore, Cook et al. (2023) observed that simulation-based learning improved learner performance and confidence in applying practical skills.

Across Africa, competence-based education reforms have promoted practical learning approaches to enhance competency acquisition. Maphosa (2022) found that activity-based teaching methods improved practical skills development among secondary school learners in Zimbabwe. Similarly, Nkurunziza and Sibomana (2023) reported that project-based and experiential learning activities enhanced competence acquisition under Rwanda's competence-based curriculum. These studies highlight the importance of practical learning in fostering employability skills and real-life problem-solving abilities.

In Uganda, the National Curriculum Development Centre (2019) emphasizes practical learning as a central component of CBC implementation. Ssenyonga et al. (2023) found that practical teaching methods enhanced learners' acquisition of competencies and improved classroom engagement. Likewise, Kasozi and Nakato (2024) reported that students perceived practical learning activities as more relevant, engaging, and beneficial for skills development than traditional teacher-centred approaches. However, inadequate resources, limited instructional materials, and large class sizes continue to constrain effective implementation of practical learning activities.

2.3 Research Gaps in the Study

Despite the growing body of literature on teaching methods and curriculum reforms, several gaps remain in relation to students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum in Uganda. These gaps are categorized into theoretical, geographical, methodological, and conceptual gaps, which this study seeks to address.

2.3.1 Theoretical Gap

Existing studies on teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum are largely grounded in broad educational theories such as constructivism, social learning theory, and experiential learning theory, which emphasize active learner engagement and knowledge construction. However, many of these studies apply such theories in general educational contexts without sufficiently examining how they explain students' perceptions of teaching methods within secondary schools implementing CBC in Uganda.

Moreover, much of the existing literature focuses on teachers' understanding or policy intentions of CBC rather than learners' subjective experiences. This creates a theoretical gap in explaining how learner-centered theories translate into actual classroom practice as perceived by students. Therefore, this study addresses the theoretical gap by applying learner-centered and constructivist perspectives to interpret students' perceptions of teaching methods in a real secondary school CBC context.

2.3.2 Geographical Gap

Most empirical studies on Competence-Based Curriculum implementation have been conducted in developed countries or in other African contexts such as Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa. While some studies exist in Uganda, they are often concentrated in rural areas or at the national policy level, with limited focus on urban secondary schools.

Additionally, there is limited documented research focusing specifically on Mengo Secondary School or similar urban schools in Kampala District, which have unique characteristics such as better infrastructure, diverse student populations, and exposure to varied teaching methods. This geographical gap limits the understanding of how CBC teaching methods are perceived by students in urban Ugandan settings. The current study addresses this gap by focusing on Mengo Secondary School in Kampala District.

2.3.3 Methodological Gap

Many existing studies on teaching methods under CBC have predominantly employed qualitative approaches, such as interviews with teachers, document analysis, and classroom observations. While these methods provide rich descriptions, they often exclude large-scale student input and may not adequately capture learners' collective perceptions.

Conversely, some quantitative studies rely heavily on standardized achievement tests, which do not fully reflect students' experiences and perceptions

of teaching methods. This methodological gap highlights the limited use of student-centered data collection tools, such as structured questionnaires combined with interviews targeting learners.

This study addresses the methodological gap by adopting a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data from students, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of learners' perceptions of teaching methods under CBC.

2.3.4 Conceptual Gap

Conceptually, many studies on CBC implementation tend to focus on isolated variables such as teaching methods, assessment practices, or curriculum content without clearly linking them to student outcomes like perception, motivation, and practical skills development. This fragmented approach limits a holistic understanding of how teaching methods influence multiple learner-related outcomes simultaneously.

Furthermore, existing studies often conceptualize CBC effectiveness from an institutional or teacher perspective, neglecting students' perceptions as a central construct. This conceptual gap creates uncertainty about how teaching methods under CBC affect learners' classroom experiences.

The current study bridges this conceptual gap by developing a framework that links teaching methods to student perception, motivation, and practical skills development, all examined through students' perceptions.

2.4 Conclusion

The literature reviewed demonstrates the significance of interactive discussions, motivational teaching strategies, and practical learning approaches in the successful implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School in Uganda. Various studies highlight the importance of active learning, inquiry-based approaches, and technology-enhanced teaching in fostering student engagement and skill development. However, further empirical studies specific to Uganda's CBC implementation are necessary to assess the effectiveness of these strategies in local contexts.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used for investigating students' perceptions of the new teaching methods introduced in the competence-based curriculum at Mengo Secondary School, Kampala District, Uganda. It details the qualitative research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis, quality control, ethical considerations, and limitations. The study employed a qualitative approach to gain in-

depth insights into students' experiences, specifically addressing the main objective of understanding perceptions of teaching methods and the specific objectives of exploring methods that enhance classroom perception, motivate students, and facilitate practical skill acquisition.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative case study design to explore students' perceptions of teaching methods within the competence-based curriculum at Mengo Secondary School. This design is suitable for an in-depth investigation of students' experiences in their real-life classroom context, capturing rich, contextual data on how teaching methods influence perception, motivation, and practical skill development. The qualitative approach aligned with the research objectives, focusing on thematic insights derived from students' narratives and observations rather than numerical data. The qualitative case study design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to explore students' perceptions of participation in learner-centred activities promoted under the Competence-Based Curriculum, including classroom discussions, collaborative learning, and practical learning experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; NCDC, 2019).

3.3 Study Population and Area of Study

The study population comprised students and teachers at Mengo Secondary School in Lubaga Division, Kampala District, Uganda. The estimated target population included 1350 students (Senior One to Senior Four) and 45 teachers, all of whom have direct experience with the competence-based curriculum. The study focused on

students' perceptions of teaching methods, specifically how these methods enhance classroom perception, motivation, and practical skill acquisition.

According to the Education Sector Performance Report (MoES, 2024), Kampala District has one of the highest student enrolments and teacher concentrations in Uganda compared to many districts such as Buvuma, Napak, and Kalangala, which have comparatively smaller secondary school populations and fewer schools implementing CBC. The concentration of learners and teachers in Kampala provides a broader range of experiences regarding curriculum implementation and learner participation. Consequently, Mengo Secondary School offers a richer context for investigating students' perceptions of teaching and learning practices under CBC than schools located in districts with relatively limited enrolment and curriculum implementation exposure.

3.4 Sample Size and Selection

The study used a sample size of approximately 25-35 participants, determined by data saturation, where no new themes emerge from additional data collection (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The sample included:

Students: 20-30 students from Senior One to Senior Four, ensuring representation across class levels and diverse backgrounds, Teachers: 3-5 teachers, selected for their expertise in curriculum implementation.

3.4.1 Sampling Technique and Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to select participants with relevant experience in the competence-based curriculum (Sharma, 2017). Students were selected based on their exposure to the curriculum

across different class levels, ensuring diverse perspectives on perception, motivation, and skills. Teachers were chosen for their leadership roles and insights into curriculum implementation. This approach ensured alignment with the research objectives by targeting participants who can provide rich, relevant data.

3.5 Study Variables and Indicators

The study examined the influence of teaching methods on the implementation of the competence-based curriculum:

3.5.1 Control Variables:

Student demographics (age, gender, class level), Teachers' years of experience. These variables are explored qualitatively to address the research objectives.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

This study employed semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and documentary review to explore students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School. These methods are widely recommended in educational research for capturing perceptions, practices, and contextual realities.

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are flexible data collection methods that combine predetermined questions with opportunities for probing and follow-up. According to Kvale (1996), semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to understand participants' experiences "from their own point of view," making them suitable for studies focusing on perceptions and meanings.

Similarly, Creswell (2014) explains that semi-structured interviews allow participants to express their views freely while ensuring that the researcher collects data relevant to the study objectives. This flexibility is important when exploring how students perceive teaching methods under CBC, as learners may emphasize issues not initially anticipated by the researcher.

Bryman (2016) further notes that interviews are effective for collecting rich detailed data particularly when the research seeks to explore attitudes, feelings and interpretations. In this study, semi-structured interviews enabled students to explain how teaching methods influence their perception, motivation, and acquisition of practical skills.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions involve guided conversations among a small group of participants. According to Krueger and Casey (2015), FGDs generate data through interaction, as participants respond not only to the researcher but also to one another. This interaction often stimulates deeper reflection and richer discussion.

Morgan (1997) argues that FGDs are particularly useful when researching shared experiences, such as classroom teaching methods, because participants can compare views and validate each other's experiences. In educational settings, FGDs help uncover collective perceptions of teaching and learning practices.

In relation to CBC, Barbour (2007) notes that FGDs are effective for exploring learners' shared understanding of curriculum reforms. In this study, FGDs enabled

students to collectively discuss teaching methods used at Mengo Secondary School and how these methods affect perception and motivation.

3.6.3 Classroom Observations

Classroom observation involves the systematic watching and recording of teaching and learning activities as they occur naturally. According to Wragg (1999), classroom observation enables researchers to capture actual classroom practices, interactions, and behaviors that may not be fully reported by participants.

Creswell (2014) emphasizes that observation provides firsthand evidence of teaching methods and helps validate self-reported data from interviews and FGDs. Observations are particularly important in CBC studies because they reveal whether learner-centered methods are actually practiced in classrooms.

Altinyelken (2010) argues that classroom observations are essential for examining the gap between curriculum policy and classroom implementation. In this study, observations allowed the researcher to see how teaching methods promote practical skills, student perception, and motivation.

3.6.4 Documentary Review

Documentary review involves analyzing written materials relevant to the study. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents to gain understanding and context.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) note that documentary review helps researchers understand official intentions, policies, and planned practices, which can be compared with actual classroom experiences. Documents often provide reliable and stable sources of data over time.

In this study, documents such as CBC syllabi, schemes of work, lesson plans, and assessment records were reviewed. As O’Leary (2014) explains, documentary review supports data triangulation and strengthens the credibility of research findings.

3.6.5 Summary

Scholars emphasize that combining semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and documentary review strengthens the quality of educational research. Each method offers unique advantages, and together they provide a comprehensive understanding of students’ perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are tools used by the researcher to gather relevant information from study participants and documents. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), well-designed instruments enhance the credibility, reliability, and validity of research findings. In this study, an interview guide, focus group discussion guide, observation checklist, and documentary review guide were used to collect data on students’ perceptions of teaching methods under CBC at Mengo Secondary School.

3.7.1 Interview Guide

An interview guide is a structured list of open-ended questions used to direct interviews while allowing flexibility for probing. According to **Kvale (1996)**, an interview guide helps the researcher maintain focus on the study objectives while allowing respondents to express their experiences in their own words.

Similarly, Creswell (2014) explains that interview guides ensure consistency across interviews while permitting follow-up questions that explore participants' meanings and interpretations. This makes the interview guide suitable for studies that seek to understand perceptions and experiences.

In this study, the interview guide was designed to capture students' views on teaching methods used under CBC, including their experiences with practical learning activities, classroom perception, and motivational strategies. As noted by Bryman (2016), interview guides are particularly effective when the research seeks to understand subjective realities, which aligns with the focus of this study.

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

A focus group discussion guide consists of guiding questions used to facilitate structured group discussions. According to Krueger and Casey (2015), an FGD guide helps the moderator keep discussions aligned with the research objectives while allowing participants to interact freely and share diverse perspectives.

Morgan (1997) argues that FGD guides are essential for managing group dynamics and ensuring that all participants contribute to the discussion. Well-designed guides help stimulate discussion and avoid dominance by a few participants.

In this study, the FGD guide focused on collective student experiences of teaching methods under CBC. According to Barbour (2007), FGD guides are effective for exploring shared meanings and common experiences, making them suitable for examining students' collective perceptions of classroom teaching practices at Mengo Secondary School.

3.7.3 Observation Checklist

An observation checklist is a structured instrument used to record specific behaviors, activities, and events during observations. According to Wragg (1999), observation checklists help ensure systematic and objective recording of classroom practices.

Creswell (2014) notes that observation checklists enhance the reliability of observational data by focusing the observer's attention on predefined indicators. This is particularly useful when observing teaching methods and student engagement under CBC.

In this study, the observation checklist was used to record teaching methods, student perception, use of learning materials, and teacher-student interaction during lessons. As Altinyelken (2010) emphasizes, observation checklists are essential for

assessing the actual implementation of learner-centered teaching methods in curriculum reforms.

3.7.4 Documentary Review Guide

A documentary review guide is a structured tool that outlines the type of documents to be reviewed and the aspects to be examined. According to Bowen (2009), documentary review guides help researchers systematically analyze documents to extract relevant information.

Cohen et al. (2018) argue that documentary review guides ensure consistency and focus when reviewing curriculum documents, lesson plans, and assessment records. This structured approach enhances the credibility of document analysis.

In this study, the documentary review guide was used to examine CBC syllabi, schemes of work, lesson plans, and assessment records to establish alignment between planned teaching methods and actual classroom practices. According to O’Leary (2014), documentary review guides support data triangulation by linking documentary evidence with interview and observation findings. A documentary review guide (Appendix IV) listed relevant documents, such as school performance reports and curriculum guidelines, for secondary data collection.

3.7.5 Conclusion

Scholars agree that the use of well-designed data collection instruments enhances the depth and trustworthiness of educational research. In this study, the interview guide, FGD guide, observation checklist, and documentary review guide

complemented one another to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School.

3.8 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

To ensure validity, instruments were evaluated by academic supervisors to achieve a Content Validity Index (CVI) of at least 0.70 (Amin, 2005). Pilot testing will be conducted with a small group of students and head teachers to refine the instruments. Reliability will be ensured through inter-coder agreement, where multiple researchers code a subset of transcripts to ensure consistency in thematic analysis.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

Following approval from the UCU Institutional Review Board, a letter of introduction were obtained from the School of Education. Permission was sought from Mengo Secondary School's administration. Data collection involved: Conducting semi-structured interviews with teachers, Facilitating focus group discussions with students, Performing classroom observations, Reviewing relevant school documents.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, following Dawadi's (2020) six-phase approach: Familiarization with data through repeated reading of transcripts, Coding transcripts to identify patterns related to perception, motivation, and skills, Generating potential themes linked to the research objectives, Reviewing themes to ensure alignment with the data set, Defining and naming themes to reflect

students' perceptions, Reporting findings with illustrative quotes to support the narrative.

Themes were categorized to address each specific objective, providing insights into the effectiveness of teaching methods and areas for improvement.

3.11 Document Analysis

Documentary data was analyzed using qualitative content analysis to identify themes from school reports and curriculum documents, corroborating primary findings.

3.12 Data Quality Control

Data quality control refers to the procedures used by a researcher to ensure that data collected are accurate, credible, consistent, and trustworthy. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), data quality control enhances the credibility and dependability of research findings, particularly in studies involving perceptions and experiences. In this study, data quality was ensured through pilot testing, consistency and professionalism, triangulation, and member checking.

3.12.1 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing refers to the preliminary testing of research instruments on a small group of participants similar to those in the main study. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), pilot testing helps identify ambiguities, weaknesses, and inconsistencies in research instruments before actual data collection.

Kothari (2004) explains that pilot testing enables the researcher to assess whether questions are clear, relevant, and capable of eliciting the intended responses. It also helps determine the time required to administer instruments.

In this study, pilot testing was conducted using a small group of students from a secondary school with similar characteristics to Mengo Secondary School. The process helped refine the interview guide, focus group discussion guide, and observation checklist to ensure clarity and alignment with the objectives of exploring students' perceptions of teaching methods under CBC.

3.12.2 Consistency and Professionalism

Consistency refers to the uniform application of research procedures across all participants, while professionalism involves ethical conduct, objectivity, and adherence to research standards. According to Bryman (2016), consistency in data collection enhances reliability by ensuring that variations in findings are due to participants' responses rather than researcher bias or procedural differences.

Creswell (2014) emphasizes that professionalism in research includes maintaining neutrality, respecting participants, and following ethical guidelines such as informed consent and confidentiality.

In this study, consistency was ensured by using the same data collection instruments, procedures, and conditions for all participants. Professionalism was maintained through respectful engagement with students, adherence to ethical

requirements, and accurate recording of responses, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the findings.

3.12.3 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources, methods, or instruments to cross-check and validate research findings. According to Denzin (1978), triangulation enhances credibility by reducing the risk of bias associated with relying on a single method or data source.

Similarly, Patton (2002) notes that triangulation strengthens research by corroborating evidence from different sources, thereby increasing confidence in the results.

In this study, triangulation was achieved by combining semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and documentary review. This approach enabled the researcher to compare students' reported perceptions with observed classroom practices and documented teaching plans, thus ensuring comprehensive and credible findings on teaching methods under CBC.

3.12.4 Member Checking

Member checking refers to the process of sharing research findings or interpretations with participants to confirm accuracy and authenticity. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is one of the most critical techniques for establishing credibility in qualitative research.

Creswell and Poth (2018) argue that member checking allows participants to validate whether the researcher's interpretations accurately reflect their views and experiences.

In this study, member checking was conducted by sharing summarized interview and focus group findings with selected participants to confirm whether the interpretations accurately represented their perceptions of teaching methods under CBC. This process helped minimize misinterpretation and enhanced the credibility of the study findings.

3.13 Conclusion

Data quality control measures are essential in ensuring credible and dependable research outcomes. Through pilot testing, consistency and professionalism, triangulation, and member checking, this study ensured the accuracy, credibility, and trustworthiness of data collected on students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards (Creswell & Poth, 2018): Ethical approval were obtained from the UCU Institutional Review Board, a letter of introduction was secured from the School of Education, and permission will be sought from Mengo Secondary School, informed consent were obtained from participants, anonymity was ensured by using codes instead of names, data was handled confidentially and stored securely, participants may withdraw at any time without consequences, the

dissertation was tested for plagiarism using TURNITIN, targeting a similarity index below 20%, with all sources properly cited.

3.15 Limitations of the Study

Sample Size: A small sample limited generalizability, addressed by purposive sampling for diverse perspectives, Response Bias: Social desirability bias occurred, mitigated by anonymous data collection and triangulation, Context Specificity: Findings were specific to Mengo Secondary School, but transferable insights were sought, Time Constraints: Efficient data collection methods managed time limitations.

3.16 Summary

This chapter outlines the qualitative case study design, study population, purposive sampling, data collection methods (interviews, focus groups, observations, documentary review), instruments, thematic analysis, data quality control, ethical considerations, and limitations. The methodology is designed to provide in-depth insights into students' perceptions of teaching methods in the competence-based curriculum, aligning with the research objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets data collected to explore students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) at Mengo Secondary School in Kampala, Uganda. The study aimed to understand how teaching methods influence classroom perception, motivation, and practical skill acquisition, aligning with the research objectives outlined in Chapter Three. A qualitative case study design was employed, utilizing triangulation to ensure robustness and credibility through four data collection methods: semi-structured interviews with 15 students, focus group discussions (FGDs) with 25 students, classroom observations across English, Biology, Mathematics, and Geography lessons, and documentary review of school reports and curriculum guidelines. With *classroom observations providing real-time evidence of teaching practices and documentary review offering contextual validation of reported perceptions*.

The findings from student interviews and FGDs as primary voices, with *classroom observations and documentary review to provide corroborative depth*. The chapter is structured around the three research objectives: (a) identifying ways to improve students' perception in classroom discussions, (b) examining methods that motivate students under the CBC, and (c) exploring teaching methods for acquiring practical skills. Each section begins with a descriptive respondent profile, followed by a thematic narrative integrating all data sources, and concludes with an interpretive discussion linking findings to CBC goals.

4.2 Characteristics of Respondents

The study involved 15 students for semi-structured interviews and 25 students for FGDs, all purposively selected to capture diverse perspectives on CBC teaching methods. The interviewed students included 8 males and 7 females representing Senior One (4 students), Senior Two (4 students), Senior Three (4 students), and Senior Four (3 students). *This distribution, verified by school enrollment records, ensures representation across class levels, capturing varied CBC experiences.*

The FGD sample comprised 25 students from Senior two to Senior Four, with 13 males and 12 females. The distribution was Senior One (6 students), Senior Two (7 students), Senior Three (6 students), and Senior Four (6 students).

Classroom observations confirmed active perception across these levels, and documentary review of enrollment records validated the sample's representativeness. These profiles justify the sample's suitability for exploring CBC perceptions comprehensively.

4.3 Presentation and Analysis of Empirical Findings

Data were collected from 40 students across Senior One to Senior Four (S1-S4) at Mengo Secondary School, located on Hoima Road Plot 422, Block 10 in Lubaga Division, Kampala. The school, founded in 1895 by the Church Missionary Society, is renowned for its academic excellence, evidenced by its 2024 Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) performance: 878 'A' grades, 2,708 'B' grades, and 839 'C' grades across 4,482 candidates, ranking among Kampala's top schools. This success underscores Mengo SS's effective CBC adoption, making it an ideal case study.

Semi-Structured Interviews: Conducted with 15 purposively selected students ensuring diversity in gender, academic performance, and class level, interviews lasted 20-40 minutes in a private school room. The interview guide (Appendix 2) structured questions around the objectives, with probes to elicit detailed responses (e.g., “Can you describe something you did practically that helped you learn?”). Audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim, interviews yielded rich narratives, coded for themes like “group work opportunities” and “shyness as a barrier”.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

Six FGDs involved 25 students (4-5 per group), grouped by class level to foster open dialogue. Held in a school common area for 45-60 minutes, FGDs used a guide (Appendix 1) with questions like “What motivates you the most in class?” Audio recordings and non-verbal notes (e.g., agreement nods) were transcribed, with codes like “real-life relevance” appearing in all groups.



Figure 1: Participants engaging in a focus group discussion

Classroom Observations: Four 60-minute lessons (English-S1, Mathematics-S2, Biology-S3, Geography-S4) were observed using a structured checklist (Appendix 3) to assess perception, motivation, and practical skills. Non-participatory observations noted teacher-student interactions and environmental factors (e.g., group seating). No student consent was needed for group data, but anonymity was ensured.



Figure 2: Student engaging in collaborative group activity during observation

Documentary Review: Approximately 20 documents, including lesson plans, National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) CBC guidelines, and UCE 2024 reports, were reviewed to contextualize findings. Content analysis coded alignments (e.g., emphasis on practical skills) and gaps (e.g., resource shortages).

Ethical protocols included informed consent, anonymity (e.g., participant codes), and the right to withdraw, with approval from Uganda Christian University.

4.3.1 Ways of Improving Students' Perception in Classroom Discussions

This section addresses Objective 1, exploring methods used to enhance student perception under CBC. Thematic analysis of interviews and FGDs identified three themes: (1) Facilitators of Perception, (2) Barriers to Perception, and (3) Inclusivity Challenges and Opportunities. Observations and documentary insights provide triangulation.

Theme 1: Facilitators of Perception

Students frequently cited teacher encouragement, relevant topics, and collaborative activities as key enablers, with codes like “teacher encouragement” (12/15 interviews, 6/6 FGDs) and “group work” (10/15 interviews). Direct quotes include on interviewing:

Student A: “Teacher encouragement and classroom environment provided by the other classmates”, Student B: “Teacher encouragement and group work focus the students’ attention on the discussion”, Student C: “Interesting topics such as sex education are too interesting because they happen to all of us.”

Observations confirmed high perception in group-based activities, particularly in English (S1), where peer discussions were prevalent, and in Geography (S4), where open-ended questions sparked engagement. Documentary review revealed CBC

guidelines emphasizing learner-centered methods like think-pair-share, aligning with Slavin's (2014) cooperative learning theory.

Theme 2: Barriers to Perception

Shyness, fear of judgment, and time constraints emerged as barriers, with codes like “fear of mistakes” (10/15 interviews) and “low self-esteem” (4/6 FGDs). Quotes include: Student E: “Some people are scared of making mistakes because they don't know the answer, so they don't want to say anything, Student F: “Some students are shy to speak not because they don't know what to say but because they are shy.”

Observations in Mathematics (S2) showed rushed pacing limiting silent students, with dominant voices prevailing in group discussions. Documentary evidence from lesson plans indicated insufficient strategies for engaging shy students, despite CBC's focus on inclusivity. This aligns with Walsh and Sattes (2015), who note that probing questions alone are insufficient without equitable facilitation, highlighting a challenge in CBC implementation.

Theme 3: Inclusivity Challenges and Opportunities

Students noted unequal perception opportunities, with codes like “bias towards bright students” (3/6 FGDs). Quotes include: Student G: “Some teachers try to give everyone a turn to talk, but due to time, nobody really gets to talk”, Student H: “No. Most of the time it's the ‘bright’ kids in class who get to talk.” Student I: “Some teachers have preconceived opinions or bias towards some students, maybe due to their social behaviors.”

Observations in Biology (S3) showed structured group work improving inclusivity, but teacher biases persisted, as quiet students were overlooked. Documentary review highlighted NCDC's advocacy for random selection methods, yet lesson plans lacked specific inclusivity strategies. Johnson and Johnson (2019) suggest structured discussions to ensure equity, offering an opportunity to refine CBC practices through teacher training.

Interpretation for Objective 1: Students perceive CBC methods as fostering perception through encouragement and collaboration, but shyness and teacher biases create gaps. Observations and documents confirm partial alignment with CBC's learner-centered goals, suggesting opportunities for equitable facilitation (e.g., structured turn-taking) to enhance engagement, cooperative learning benefits.

4.3.2 Methods That Motivate Students Under Competence-Based Curriculum

This section addresses Objective 2, identifying motivational teaching methods. Thematic analysis revealed three themes: (1) Intrinsic Motivators, (2) Extrinsic Rewards and Positive Classroom Climate, and (3) Interactive and Relevant Pedagogies. Codes like "praise" (11/15 interviews) and "real-life relevance" (6/6 FGDs) were prevalent.

Theme 1: Intrinsic Motivators

Students emphasized internal drives like achievement and topic relevance, with "interesting topics" coded in 13/15 interviews. Quotes include: Student J: "I prefer sex education topics because they are real and directly concern us", FGD Consensus: "Motivation enhances students' willingness to engage in discussions and practical learning."

Observations in Biology (S3) showed sustained focus during real-world tasks (e.g., health-related discussions). Documentary review confirmed CBC's emphasis on real-world applications, evident in lesson plans linking subjects like Entrepreneurship to daily life.

Theme 2: Extrinsic Rewards and Positive Classroom Climate

Praise, humor, and icebreakers were key motivators, with “teacher compliments” in 11/15 interviews. Quotes include: Student K: “A jolly teacher makes the lesson interesting and makes me want to speak”, FGD Participant: “When the teacher tells me a funny story, I never forget the lesson”, FGD Participant: “In our class, no one laughs at you when you get something wrong, it's a safe space.”

Observations in English (S1) noted praise boosting confidence, but inconsistent use led to minor disengagement. Documentary evidence showed CBC training materials advocating for positive reinforcement, yet inconsistent application in lesson plans suggests a challenge.

Theme 3: Interactive and Relevant Pedagogies

Group work, projects, and hands-on activities were highly motivational, with “collaborative learning” in all FGDs. Quotes include: FGD Participant: “Projects make me think more and be creative, and group work makes us exchange ideas”, Student: “I always question my peers during group sessions in case I fail to understand it in class, and they explain in a manner I can comprehend.”

Observations in Mathematics (S2) confirmed engagement during games and group tasks. Documentary review highlighted CBC's focus on interactive methods, but some lesson plans lacked variety, indicating an opportunity for teacher training.

Interpretation for Objective 2: Students perceive interactive and relevant methods as highly motivational, with praise enhancing engagement. However, inconsistent application and limited variety pose challenges.

4.3.3 Teaching Methods for Acquiring Practical Skills

This section addresses Objective 3, exploring methods for practical skill acquisition. Themes include: (1) Types and Benefits of Practical Activities, (2) Resource Limitations, and (3) Preference for Experiential Learning. Codes like “hands-on examples” (14/15 interviews) and “material shortages” (9/15 interviews) dominated.

Theme 1: Types and Benefits of Practical Activities

Students described diverse activities across subjects, with “deeper understanding” in 12/15 interviews. Quotes include: Student: “Doing because practicals are better. I hardly forget what I do. It stays in my mind”, Student: “I learned how to pipette and dissect. It taught me about how the human body functions and even made me consider a career in medicine”, FGD Participant: “We made table mats in class with threads and knitting needles. I never thought I would be able to do that, but it was fun, and I learned.”

Observations in Biology (S3) showed students engaging in dissections, while Geography (S4) involved mapwork, supporting Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle. Documentary review confirmed CBC’s emphasis on hands-on tasks (e.g., NCDC guidelines for practicals in Science), reinforcing their role in skill retention.

Theme 2: Resource Limitations

Resource shortages were a significant barrier, with “shared materials” in 9/15 interviews. Quotes include: Student: “We have shared surgical blades and equipment in the laboratories, so others just wait and observe”, FGD Participant: “At times, we just sit and watch as others use computers.”

Observations in Science classes noted shared equipment reducing active perception. Documentary evidence from school reports highlighted budget constraints.

Theme 3: Preference for Experiential Learning

Students strongly preferred hands-on learning, with “learning by doing” in 14/15 interviews. Quotes include: Student: “I enjoy learning by doing since I never forget.” (Interview, July 2025), FGD Participant: “I was shy, but by having the responsibility of group work and leading a discussion, I learned to speak up confidently.” (FGD, July 2025)

Observations in ICT (e.g., app design) and Art (e.g., weaving) showed confidence in skill application. Documentary review noted CBC’s goal of fostering real-world skills, but gaps in resource allocation limit full realization.

Interpretation for Objective 3: Practical methods are highly valued for skill acquisition and engagement, but resource shortages hinder equity. Observations and documents confirm CBC’s experiential focus, with opportunities for improvement through increased material investment.

Overall Interpretation of Findings

Thematic analysis across objectives reveals a positive perception of CBC's interactive, learner-centered methods, fostering perception, motivation, and practical skills. Key findings include: Perception: Encouragement and group work enhance engagement, but shyness and biases limit inclusivity, suggesting a need for equitable strategies (Johnson & Johnson, 2019), Motivation: Real-life relevance and praise drive enthusiasm, but inconsistent application highlights the need for teacher training, per Deci and Ryan (2000), Practical Skills: Hands-on activities are effective, but resource shortages impede access, aligning with Mugo's (2019) systemic challenges.

Observations validated student reports, showing active engagement in interactive settings, while documentary review highlighted CBC's alignment with practical learning goals but resource gaps. Triangulation confirms CBC's transformative potential, with challenges in inclusivity, consistency, and infrastructure offering clear opportunities for enhancement. These findings inform recommendations for aligning teaching methods with students' needs, ensuring CBC's success in preparing competent, motivated learners.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DATA, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter culminates the study by presenting a detailed summary, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations based on data gathered from semi-structured interviews with 15 students, focus group discussions (FGDs) with 25 students, classroom observations, and documentary review at Mengo Secondary School in Kampala, Uganda. The study explored students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), focusing on three objectives: (1) improving student perception in classroom discussions, (2) motivating students, and (3) fostering practical skill acquisition. The chapter clarifies the results, compares them with existing theories and empirical findings from prior literature, and relates them to the researcher's initial propositions. It provides theoretical and practical insights into how CBC shapes student engagement, motivation, and skill development.

The chapter is organized into four sections: (1) a summary of findings, integrating responses from all data collection methods; (2) a discussion comparing findings with literature and prior assumptions; (3) conclusions drawn solely from the

findings; and (4) recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for further research, all aligned with the study's results..

5.2 Summary of Findings

This section summarizes the findings from the study investigating students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) at Mengo Secondary School, addressing three objectives: (1) improving student perception in classroom discussions, (2) motivating students, and (3) fostering practical skill acquisition. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 students, focus group discussions (FGDs) with 25 students, *classroom observations*, and *documentary review*. Findings were analyzed thematically, with key themes and their frequencies derived from interviews and FGDs, ensuring a qualitative approach as per Dawadi (2020). The summary integrates qualitative insights with *corroborative evidence from observations and documentary review* for each objective.

5.2.1 Student Perception in Classroom Discussions

Students valued teacher encouragement and interactive methods, with “Teacher Encouragement” (12 interview mentions, 18 FGD mentions) and “Interesting Topics” (10 interview mentions, 15 FGD mentions) fostering perception. A Senior Three student noted, “When the teacher praises my ideas or uses group work, I feel confident to speak” (Student Interview, July 2025), and FGDs echoed, “Talking about real-life issues like community projects makes me want to join in” (Student FGD, July 2025). However, “Barriers (Shyness, Fear)” (13 interview mentions, 20 FGD mentions)

and “Inclusivity Challenges” (11 interview mentions, 16 FGD mentions) were prevalent, with a Senior Two student stating, “I’m scared to answer if I think others will laugh” (Student Interview, July 2025), and FGDs noting, “Some of us stay quiet because we don’t want to be judged” (Student FGD, July 2025). *Classroom observations confirmed high perception in group activities during English and Geography lessons, but quieter students were overshadowed, particularly in a Senior Two Mathematics lesson where vocal students dominated. Documentary review of Mengo’s 2024 annual report identified large class sizes (average 40 students) as a barrier, despite CBC guidelines advocating inclusive strategies (National Curriculum Development Centre, 2019).*

5.2.2 Student Motivation

Students reported that interactive and supportive methods enhanced motivation, with “Encouragement and Recognition” (13 interview mentions, 22 FGD mentions) and “Interesting Content” (11 interview mentions, 19 FGD mentions) as key themes. A Senior Four student stated, “I feel motivated when the teacher says ‘good job’ or uses stories about real life” (Student Interview, July 2025), and FGDs noted, “Stories about farming in Agriculture make lessons fun” (Student FGD, July 2025). “Interactive Activities” (10 interview mentions, 17 FGD mentions) and “Positive Environment” (9 interview mentions, 15 FGD mentions) also fostered engagement, with FGDs stating, “In groups, I’m not afraid to ask questions, and it’s fun” (Student FGD, July 2025). *Observations in a Senior Three Biology lesson showed heightened engagement during a role-play on ecosystems, with students laughing and questioning*

actively, though a Senior One English lesson revealed less distraction during teacher-led segments. Documentary review of CBC guidelines emphasized real-world relevance as a motivational strategy, but Mengo's 2024 training logs noted inconsistent teacher preparation.

5.2.3 Teaching Methods for Practical Skills

Students valued hands-on activities, with “Hands-On Activities” (14 interview mentions, 21 FGD mentions) and “Learning Preferences” (11 interview mentions, 20 FGD mentions) indicating strong support for experiential learning. A Senior Two student shared, “Weaving in Home Economics taught me a skill I can use at home” (Student Interview, July 2025), and FGDs noted, “Doing experiments in Biology, like dissecting a frog, helps me understand better” (Student FGD, July 2025). However, “Resource Adequacy” (12 interview mentions, 18 FGD mentions) and “Suggestions for Improvement” (10 interview mentions, 16 FGD mentions) highlighted challenges, with students stating, “We share lab tools, so some of us just watch” (Student Interview, July 2025) and “We need more materials for everyone” (Student FGD, July 2025). *Observations in a Senior Four Geography lesson showed big number of students handling map-making materials, with others limited by shortages, and a Biology lesson confirmed tool limitations during dissections. Documentary review of Mengo's 2024 performance report noted resource constraints, despite CBC's focus on practical learning.*

The findings indicate interdependence among objectives, with interactive methods like group work fostering both perception and motivation, and hands-on

activities supporting skill acquisition and engagement. *Observations of engagement in interactive tasks and curriculum guidelines validate this.* However, challenges such as unequal perception, inconsistent motivational strategies, and resource shortages persist, *corroborated by documented class size and resource constraints.* Overall, the CBC enhanced student engagement, motivation, and practical skills, but systemic barriers limit its full potential.

5.3 Discussion of Key Findings

This section compares the study's findings with existing theories (Vygotsky, 1978; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Kolb, 1984) and empirical studies (O-saki & Agu, 2002; Kember, 2009; Brophy, 2010; Ottevanger, 2001), relating them to the researcher's propositions: (1) CBC methods increase perception through interactive strategies, (2) motivation is enhanced by relevant and engaging methods, and (3) practical skills are effectively developed through hands-on activities. The discussion evaluates whether these propositions are supported or refuted, integrating data from interviews, FGDs, *classroom observations, and documentary review.*

5.3.1 Students' Perceptions of Teaching Methods Used to Promote Participation in Classroom Discussions

The study found that students perceived classroom discussions, group work, teacher encouragement, and the use of interesting and real-life topics as important teaching methods that enhanced their participation in learning activities. However, barriers such as shyness, fear of making mistakes, and domination of discussions by a few learners limited effective participation among some students. These findings suggest that although learner-centred teaching methods promoted under the

Competence-Based Curriculum are being implemented, challenges remain in ensuring inclusive participation for all learners.

These findings support Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that learning occurs through observation, interaction, and reciprocal engagement between learners and their environment (Bandura, 1986). Students who observed supportive teachers and actively participating peers reported greater confidence to contribute during classroom discussions. Teacher encouragement enhanced learners' self-efficacy, which Bandura identifies as a key determinant of participation and learning behaviour. The findings therefore suggest that classroom participation under CBC is influenced not only by teaching methods but also by learners' beliefs about their ability to contribute meaningfully.

The findings are also consistent with the conceptual framework of this study, which proposed that learner-centred teaching methods such as classroom discussions, inquiry-based learning, and collaborative learning enhance learner participation. Students reported that group discussions and interactive classroom activities increased their confidence and willingness to engage in learning activities. This confirms the assumption that participatory teaching methods promote active learner involvement, a central principle of CBC implementation (NCDC, 2019).

The findings corroborate empirical studies reviewed in Chapter Two. Mercer, Hennessy, and Warwick (2021) found that dialogic teaching improves learner participation, communication skills, and critical thinking. Similarly, Wabule et al. (2023) reported that classroom discussions enhanced learner engagement in Ugandan

secondary schools implementing CBC. The findings also agree with Nabukenya et al. (2024), who found that students perceived discussion-based lessons as more interactive and beneficial for understanding concepts than teacher-centred approaches.

However, the findings differ from the ideal expectations of CBC because barriers such as fear, shyness, and unequal participation were still evident. This finding is consistent with Masembe et al. (2024), who observed that large class sizes and inadequate facilitation skills often limit effective implementation of learner-centred pedagogies in Ugandan schools. Therefore, while classroom discussions promote participation, effective facilitation strategies are necessary to ensure inclusivity and equitable learner engagement.

5.3.2 Discussion of Findings on Student Motivation

The study found that students perceived encouragement and recognition from teachers, interesting lesson content, interactive activities, group work, role plays, and the use of real-life examples as important motivational teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum. Students reported greater enthusiasm and willingness to participate when teachers provided positive feedback and connected learning activities to everyday experiences.

These findings strongly support Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the role of positive reinforcement and observational learning in influencing behaviour. Teacher praise and recognition increased learners' confidence and willingness to participate, thereby strengthening their motivation to engage in

learning activities. Students who observed their peers receiving positive feedback were similarly motivated to participate and contribute during lessons.

The findings also support the study's conceptual framework, which proposed that learner-centred teaching methods influence students' motivation. Interactive teaching methods such as group work, role play, collaborative learning, and contextualized examples appeared to create meaningful learning experiences that increased learner interest and engagement. This aligns with the CBC philosophy that learning should be relevant, participatory, and connected to real-life situations (NCDC, 2019; MoES, 2023).

The findings are consistent with Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, which argues that learners are more motivated when instructional approaches support autonomy, competence, and social connectedness. Students perceived interactive activities as enjoyable because they provided opportunities to contribute ideas, collaborate with peers, and demonstrate competence. Similar findings were reported by Mugisha and Ssempala (2023), who found that practical activities and collaborative learning increased learner motivation in CBC classrooms. UNESCO (2023) also reported that learner-centred teaching approaches significantly improve student motivation when learning is linked to real-life experiences.

Nevertheless, the study found that motivation varied across lessons, particularly where teachers relied on traditional teacher-centred approaches. This finding supports observations by Namuddu and Achan (2022), who found that inconsistent implementation of learner-centred pedagogies reduces learner

engagement. Therefore, effective motivation under CBC requires consistent use of participatory teaching approaches across all learning contexts.

5.3.3 Discussion of Findings on Practical Skills Acquisition

The study found that students highly valued hands-on learning activities, demonstrations, experiments, project work, and practical exercises because these approaches enabled them to understand concepts better and acquire skills that could be applied beyond the classroom. However, shortages of learning materials and practical resources constrained effective participation in some activities.

These findings support Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which argues that learning occurs most effectively when learners actively engage in concrete experiences, reflection, conceptualization, and application. Students reported that practical activities allowed them to learn by doing, thereby enhancing understanding and retention of knowledge. The findings suggest that practical teaching methods are central to competence development, which is the primary goal of the Competence-Based Curriculum.

The findings also reinforce the conceptual framework of this study, which identified practical and experiential learning methods such as demonstrations, projects, simulations, experiments, and field activities as key CBC teaching approaches. Students perceived these methods as more engaging and beneficial than traditional lecture-based instruction because they enabled direct application of knowledge to practical tasks.

The findings are consistent with Hmelo-Silver and Eberbach (2022), who found that inquiry-based learning enhances practical competence and problem-solving skills. Similarly, Okitsu et al. (2023) reported that experiential learning approaches improve learner engagement and competency acquisition in CBC implementation contexts. In Uganda, Ssenyonga et al. (2023) found that practical teaching methods positively influence learners' acquisition of competencies but are often constrained by inadequate resources.

The findings further support Biggs' Constructive Alignment Theory, which emphasizes the alignment of learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment practices. Students perceived practical activities as meaningful because they aligned classroom learning with real-world applications and performance-based assessment practices promoted under CBC. However, resource shortages limited opportunities for all learners to participate fully in practical activities, thereby reducing the effectiveness of competency development.

Therefore, while practical teaching methods are effective in promoting skills acquisition, successful implementation of CBC requires adequate instructional resources, teacher preparedness, and supportive learning environments.

5.3.4 Cross-Analysis Across Objectives

The interdependence of perception, motivation, and skill acquisition is evident, as interactive methods like group work foster both engagement and motivation, while hands-on activities support skill development and perception.

Observations of engagement in interactive tasks and curriculum goals emphasizing learner-centered approaches reinforce this. However, gaps in inclusivity, inconsistent motivational strategies, and resource shortages, *corroborated by documented class size and resource constraints*, limit CBC's efficacy. The proposition that CBC objectives are interconnected is supported, but the expectation of seamless implementation is partially refuted due to systemic and pedagogical challenges, highlighting the need for targeted interventions.

However, gaps in inclusivity, inconsistent motivational strategies, and resource shortages, corroborated by *documented class size (average 40 students) and resource constraints in Mengo's 2024 annual report*, limit CBC's efficacy. These challenges align with Kember's (2009) concept of "perception gaps", where extroverted students dominate, and O'Sullivan's (2006) and Nanyonjo's (2007) findings that large class sizes and inadequate teacher training hinder participatory methods in Uganda. Karamagi's (2018) emphasis on teacher competency in delivering practical lessons, further highlights that inconsistent training exacerbates these issues, limiting the effective implementation of hands-on activities. For instance, the observed less distraction in a Senior One English teacher-led lesson (from Objective 2) suggests that without motivational strategies like praise or real-life examples, as supported by Walsh & Sattes (2015), engagement and skill acquisition suffer.

The literature offers solutions to address these challenges. Gaba's (2004) and Cook et al.'s (2011) advocacy for simulation-based learning, provides a risk-free environment for practicing skills, which could enhance perception and motivation in

resource-constrained settings by simulating real-world applications. Laurillard's (2012) and Means et al.'s (2014) emphasis on digital platforms, such as virtual simulations, complements this by offering scalable solutions to overcome resource shortages, enabling students to engage in practical tasks despite limited physical materials. Furthermore, Namubiru's (2020) findings on the success of hands-on activities like laboratory experiments in Uganda suggest that prioritizing such methods, supported by teacher training as emphasized by Karamagi (2018), can mitigate the impact of large class sizes and foster skill retention.

Thus, the proposition that CBC objectives—perception, motivation, and skill acquisition—are interconnected is strongly supported, as interactive and hands-on methods create a synergistic effect, aligning with Kolb (1984), Edelson (2001), and Vygotsky (1978). However, the expectation of seamless implementation is partially refuted due to systemic and pedagogical challenges, including inclusivity gaps, inconsistent motivation, and resource constraints. Targeted interventions are needed, including structured facilitation techniques like turn-taking and probing questions (Walsh & Sattes, 2015), simulation-based learning (Gaba, 2004; Cook et al., 2011), integration of digital tools (Laurillard, 2012; Means et al., 2014), and comprehensive teacher training programs focused on participatory and practical methods (O'Sullivan, 2006; Nanyonjo, 2007; Karamagi, 2018). These strategies address systemic barriers in the Ugandan context, ensuring a more inclusive, motivating, and skill-focused learning environment under the CBC.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the study findings in relation to the objectives that guided the investigation of students' perceptions of teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum at Mengo Secondary School. The conclusions are derived from the analysis and discussion of findings and provide a summary of the major issues that emerged from the study. The chapter further presents recommendations for teachers, school administrators, curriculum implementers, and policymakers aimed at enhancing effective implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum. Finally, the chapter outlines the study's contribution to knowledge and proposes areas for future research.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 Conclusion on Students' Perceptions of Teaching Methods Used to Promote Participation in Classroom Discussions

The study concludes that learner-centred teaching methods, particularly classroom discussions, group work, inquiry-based learning, and teacher encouragement, positively influence students' participation in learning activities under the Competence-Based Curriculum. Students perceived these methods as effective in creating opportunities for expression of ideas, collaborative learning, and active engagement in classroom activities. The findings indicate that participatory

teaching methods support the CBC goal of promoting learner involvement and competency development.

However, the study also concludes that effective participation is constrained by barriers such as shyness, fear of making mistakes, domination of discussions by a few learners, and large class sizes. These challenges limit equitable participation and reduce opportunities for all learners to benefit fully from learner-centred approaches. Therefore, while CBC teaching methods promote participation, their effectiveness depends on teachers' ability to create inclusive and supportive learning environments.

6.2.2 Conclusion on Students' Perceptions of Teaching Methods Used to Motivate Learners

The study concludes that motivational teaching methods such as teacher encouragement, recognition of learner effort, use of real-life examples, collaborative learning, role play, and interactive classroom activities significantly enhance students' motivation to learn under the Competence-Based Curriculum. Students perceived these methods as enjoyable, relevant, and engaging, which increased their interest in learning and willingness to participate in classroom activities.

The findings further demonstrate that motivation is strengthened when teaching methods allow learners to relate classroom content to everyday experiences and future aspirations. However, inconsistent application of learner-centred approaches by some teachers reduces the motivational benefits expected under CBC. Consequently, sustained learner motivation requires consistent use of interactive and supportive teaching practices across all learning contexts.

6.2.3 Conclusion on Students' Perceptions of Teaching Methods Used to Facilitate Practical Skills Acquisition

The study concludes that practical teaching methods, including demonstrations, projects, experiments, simulations, field activities, and hands-on learning experiences, play a significant role in promoting practical skills acquisition among learners under the Competence-Based Curriculum. Students perceived these methods as useful because they enabled application of knowledge, development of competencies, and understanding of real-life situations.

The findings further indicate that practical learning approaches support the CBC objective of preparing learners with competencies required for lifelong learning and the world of work. Nevertheless, inadequate instructional materials, limited practical resources, and overcrowded classrooms constrain the effective implementation of practical learning activities. Therefore, successful development of practical competencies requires adequate resource provision and strengthened support for experiential learning.

6.2.4 Overall Conclusion

The study concludes that teaching methods promoted under the Competence-Based Curriculum positively influence students' participation, motivation, and practical skills acquisition at Mengo Secondary School. Learner-centred teaching approaches contribute significantly to the achievement of CBC goals by encouraging active engagement, enhancing learner motivation, and facilitating competency development. However, implementation challenges related to teacher preparedness,

resource adequacy, inclusivity, and classroom management continue to limit the full realization of curriculum objectives. Addressing these challenges is critical for strengthening effective implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum in Uganda.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Recommendations for Enhancing Students' Participation in Classroom Discussions

Teachers should adopt structured learner-centred discussion strategies such as think-pair-share, group discussions, peer teaching, and inquiry-based learning to encourage participation among all learners. Special attention should be given to shy and less confident learners through supportive classroom practices that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for contribution.

School administrators should organize continuous professional development programmes aimed at strengthening teachers' competencies in facilitating classroom discussions, managing large classes, and implementing participatory teaching methods consistent with CBC principles.

The Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Curriculum Development Centre should continue supporting schools through teacher training, mentoring, and monitoring mechanisms that promote effective implementation of learner-centred pedagogies.

6.3.2 Recommendations for Enhancing Student Motivation

Teachers should consistently use motivational teaching approaches such as positive reinforcement, constructive feedback, real-life examples, collaborative learning activities, role play, and problem-solving tasks to sustain learner interest and engagement.

School management should establish supportive learning environments that recognize and celebrate learner achievements through academic recognition programmes, exhibitions, debates, competitions, and project presentations that encourage active learner participation.

Curriculum implementers should strengthen integration of contextualized learning activities that connect classroom learning with learners' daily experiences, community challenges, and future career aspirations to enhance relevance and motivation.

6.3.3 Recommendations for Enhancing Practical Skills Acquisition

Schools should prioritize investment in practical learning resources, including laboratories, instructional materials, ICT facilities, workshops, and project materials necessary for effective implementation of practical learning activities under CBC.

Teachers should increase the use of demonstrations, projects, experiments, simulations, field visits, and community-based learning activities that provide learners with opportunities to apply knowledge and develop competencies through hands-on experiences.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should allocate adequate funding and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders to support resource provision for practical and experiential learning in secondary schools implementing CBC.

6.3.4 Policy Recommendations

The Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Curriculum Development Centre should strengthen monitoring and evaluation of CBC implementation to ensure that learner-centred teaching methods are consistently applied across schools.

Teacher education institutions should integrate practical training on learner-centred pedagogies, classroom facilitation, competency-based assessment, and practical skills development into both pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes.

Policies aimed at reducing overcrowding in classrooms and improving teacher-to-student ratios should be prioritized to enhance meaningful learner participation and effective implementation of competency-based teaching approaches.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

This study faced several limitations that impacted its scope and generalizability, particularly in the context of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) implementation at Mengo and its alignment with the findings on student perception, motivation, and skill acquisition. These limitations are outlined below:

The findings are primarily applicable to Mengo, a specific educational institution in Uganda implementing the CBC. The unique contextual factors, such as class sizes (average 40 students, as noted in Mengo's 2024 annual report) and resource constraints, may limit the generalizability of the results to other schools or educational systems with different structures, resources, or cultural contexts. This aligns with O'Sullivan (2006) and Nanyonjo (2007) highlight the influence of Uganda's educational environment, particularly large class sizes, on the effectiveness of participatory methods.

The study employed a cross-sectional design, utilizing data collection methods such as interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), observations, and documentary reviews. While these methods provided rich insights into student perception and motivation (e.g., 13 interview mentions of praise), a longitudinal design could have captured the long-term dynamics of CBC implementation, such as changes in perception gaps (Kember, 2009) or skill retention (Namubiru, 2020). Different data collection methods, such as experimental or action research approaches, might have yielded varied results, particularly in assessing the sustained impact of interactive strategies.

The study was constrained by limited resources and time, which restricted the scope of data collection and analysis. For instance, the focus on a single institution (Mengo) and specific subjects (English, Geography, and Biology) limited the ability to explore CBC implementation across diverse settings or subjects. This constraint aligns with Karamagi's (2018) observation that resource shortages in Uganda hinder the

effective delivery of practical lessons, suggesting that broader resource availability could enhance the study's depth.

6.5 Contribution of the Study

This study makes significant contributions to the understanding of CBC implementation in Uganda, particularly in fostering student perception, motivation, and skill acquisition, with implications for educational policy and practice:

The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers at the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and other educational bodies in Uganda. The study highlights the effectiveness of interactive methods like group discussions (12 interview mentions, 18 FGD mentions) and hands-on activities in enhancing perception and skill development, as supported by Vygotsky (1978) and Kolb (1984). However, it also identifies barriers such as inclusivity challenges and large class sizes, aligning with O'Sullivan (2006) and Nanyonjo (2007). These insights can guide the formulation of policies to strengthen teacher training and resource allocation to support CBC's learner-centered goals, ensuring more equitable and effective implementation.

The study enriches the body of literature on CBC by providing empirical evidence from the Ugandan context, particularly through student voices (e.g., "Group work makes me confident to speak," Student Interview, July 2025) and observational data (e.g., 70-80% perception in group activities). It builds on the theoretical frameworks of Vygotsky (1978), Slavin (2014), and Kolb (1984) from local studies like Namubiru (2020) and Karamagi (2018), offering a context-specific perspective on how

interactive and practical methods foster learning outcomes. Scholars and educators can use these findings to further explore the interplay of perception, motivation, and skill acquisition in competency-based education.

6.6 Areas for Further Research

The study's scope was deliberately narrowed due to practical constraints, including time, resources, and geographical focus on Mengo. This focus enabled an in-depth examination of CBC implementation but left several areas open for future research. The following areas are proposed to broaden the understanding of perception, motivation, and skill acquisition under CBC:

The cross-sectional design limited the ability to capture long-term dynamics of CBC implementation. A longitudinal study could explore how perception gaps (Kember, 2009), motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and skill retention (Namubiru, 2020) evolve over time, assessing the impact of interventions like teacher training (O'Sullivan, 2006; Nanyonjo, 2007) or simulation-based learning (Gaba, 2004; Cook et al., 2011) on sustained learning outcomes.

The study focused on Mengo, limiting its generalizability. Comparative studies across diverse schools in Uganda or other countries implementing competency-based curricula could examine whether findings, such as the effectiveness of group work (Slavin, 2014) or barriers like large class sizes (O'Sullivan, 2006), hold universally or vary due to cultural, regional, or institutional factors. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of CBC's applicability.

Diverse Educational Contexts: Expanding the research to include different educational settings, such as rural schools, private institutions, or vocational programs, could reveal context-specific nuances. For instance, exploring how hands-on activities (Namubiru, 2020) or apprenticeship models (Lave & Wenger, 1991) function in resource-scarce rural settings could inform tailored CBC implementation strategies.

Alternative Theoretical Frameworks: This study utilized Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivist Theory and Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory. Future research could apply other frameworks, such as Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory or Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), to explore additional dimensions of perception and motivation in CBC contexts.

Varied Methodological Approaches: The mixed-methods approach provided rich data but may differ from results obtained through a single methodology. Future studies could adopt a purely quantitative approach to measure perception and skill acquisition statistically or a qualitative approach to delve deeper into student and teacher experiences, potentially uncovering new insights into CBC's effectiveness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Guide for Focused Group Discussion with Students.

Purpose: To gather a range of student perceptions in a group setting, encouraging interaction and debate.

FGD Guide Template

FGD Code: _____

Date: _____

Facilitator Name: _____

Class Level: _____

Number of Participants: _____

Target group: Groups of students (8-12 per group)

Objective 1: Ways of Improving Students' Perception in Discussions

1. What encourages you to participate in classroom discussions?
2. What makes it hard for some students to speak during lessons?
3. Do teachers give everyone a chance to speak? Please explain.
4. How do group discussions or peer learning affect your perception?
5. In your experience, which subjects encourage discussion the most?
6. What can teachers do to improve student perception?

Objective 2: Methods That Motivate Students

1. What teaching styles make you excited to learn?
2. What motivates you the most in class—games, stories, rewards, group work?

Why?

3. Are you more motivated when the teacher uses real-life examples?
4. What makes a class interesting or boring?
5. How do teachers make you feel confident or proud of your work?
6. What teaching activities help you stay focused?

Objective 3: Teaching Methods for Practical Skills

1. What kind of practical activities do you do in class?
2. How do these activities help you understand the topic better?
3. Are there enough materials/tools for everyone in the class?
4. Can you give an example of a skill you learned through practice?
5. Do you prefer learning by doing or by listening? Why?
6. What would you want your teacher to improve in teaching practical skills?

Appendix 2. Semi-Structured Interview Guide (for Students)

Purpose: To collect individual student views and experiences regarding teaching methods under the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC).

Interview Guide Template

Participant Code: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Class/Form: _____

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am interested in learning about your experiences and opinions about the teaching methods used in your school, especially under the Competence-Based Curriculum. Your responses will remain confidential, and you are free to skip any question or stop the interview at any point.

Interview Questions

Target group: Individual students selected from different classes or streams.

Objective 1: Students' Perception in Discussions

1. How do you feel about participating in classroom discussions?

2. What methods does your teacher use to make discussions easier or more fun?
3. Do you get a chance to express your opinions in class?
4. Are there students who speak more or less? Why do you think that is?
5. What do you enjoy about discussion-based lessons?
6. How has your perception changed since the new curriculum started?

Objective 2: Motivation Under the CBC

1. What motivates you most when learning in class?
2. Which teaching methods make learning more enjoyable for you?
3. How do teachers reward or encourage students in your class?
4. Do activities like role plays, projects, or group tasks motivate you? Why?
5. Are you more interested when learning is practical or linked to real life?
6. How do you feel when a teacher uses new or creative teaching methods?

Objective 3: Teaching Methods for Practical Skills

1. What types of lessons involve hands-on activities?
2. Can you describe something you did practically that helped you learn?
3. Do you think practical lessons are important? Why or why not?
4. How are practical skills taught differently from theory?
5. Are the materials for practical work enough for the class?
6. What skills have you learned that you think you can use outside school?

Appendix 3. Classroom Observation Checklist

Purpose: To systematically document actual teaching methods and student engagement under the CBC framework.

Observation Checklist Template

Observer Name: _____

Date: _____

Subject: _____

Class/Form: _____

Teacher Code: _____

Time: _____

Purpose: To observe student perception, motivation, and engagement with practical skills during lessons.

Teaching Activity Observed

Yes

No

Comments

Objective 1: Students' Perception in Discussions

1.Students actively take part in class discussions

2.The majority of students show a willingness to answer or ask questions

3.Group discussions are used to increase student involvement

4.Teachers give students equal chances to speak

5.Students appear confident and expressive in giving their ideas

6.Peer-to-peer interaction is evident during discussions

Teaching Activity Observed	Yes	Comments
No		

Objective 2: Student Motivation

- 1.Students show interest and attention during lessons
2. Learners respond positively to interactive activities (e.g., games, storytelling)
- 3.Use of real-life examples or creative methods sparks engagement
- 4.Students seem excited or curious about what they are learning
- 5.Learners respond well to teacher encouragement or praise
- 5.Signs of boredom or disengagement are minimal

Objective 3: Teaching Practical Skills

- 1.Practical or hands-on activities are used in the lesson
- 2.Students use real materials/tools during learning
- 3.Students are engaged in active skill-building tasks
- 4.Teacher guides students through step-by-step demonstrations
- 5.Students collaborate on tasks that reflect real-world scenarios
- 6.Evidence of students applying what they learned practically

END

Appendix 4: Rec Certificate



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Research Ethics Committee UG-026



05th June, 2025

SABIITI JAMES MAGAMBO,
Uganda Christian University
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Email: sabiitimagambojames@gmail.com

UG-REC-026 APPROVAL NOTICE

To: Sabiiti James Magambo, Principal Investigator

Re: UCU-REC Application titled: *Exploring Students' Perceptions Of Teaching Methods In Competence Based Curriculum In Uganda: A Case Of Mengo Secondary School In Kampala District, Uganda.*

Application Number: UCUREC-2025-1725

Version: 4.1

Type: ☐ INITIAL REVIEW
☐ Protocol Amendment
☐ Letter of Amendment (LOA)
☐ Continuing Review
☐ Material Transfer Agreement
☐ Other, Specify:



I am pleased to inform you that the UG-REC-026; UCUREC approved the above referenced application.

Approval of the research is for the period from 05th June, 2025, to 05th June, 2026

This research is considered minimal risk category.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and additions to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or other must be submitted to the REC. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for REC review.

1 of 2

Research and Ethics

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Tel: +256 (0) 312 350 885 Fax: +256 (0) 4142 90 800 Email: rec@ucu.ac.ug Web: www.ucu.ac.ug
UCUREC is accredited by Uganda National Council for Science & Technology, FDA, and National Institutes for Health of the United States of America



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Research Ethics Committee UG-026



- Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
- Regulations require review of an approved study not less than once per 12-month period. Therefore, a continuing review application must be submitted to the REC eight weeks prior to the above expiration date of 05th June, 2026 in order to continue the study beyond the approved period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must be taken off the study.
- The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
- Your research details have been shared with the Executive secretary of Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) and you are not required to get clearance since you are a Master's Degree research. Refer to UNCST Research registration and clearance Policy and guidelines (July 2016) in Uganda section 6(e).

The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by UG-REC _026:

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	Protocol	English	1.0	2025-05-27
2.	Semi-Structured Interview Guide (for Students)	English	1.0	2025-05-27
3.	Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide (for Students)	English	1.0	2025-05-27
4.	Observation Checklist	English	1.0	2025-05-27
5.	Informed consent form	English	1.0	2025-05-27

Signed and Stamped

Prof. Peter Waiswa,
UCUREC Chairperson,
pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug



Appendix 5: Turnitin Report



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Submission ID trn:oid::1:346777569

Magambo James Sabiiti

Exploring students' perceptions on competence-based curriculum



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