

---

**CHALLENGES FACING PARENTS IN SUPPORTING  
IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCY-BASED  
CURRICULUM (CBC) IN KENYA**

**Dr. Stella Lucy Atieno Juma**  
Lecturer, Rongo University  
Email: [stella.atieno@yahoo.com](mailto:stella.atieno@yahoo.com)

**Publication Date: April 2026**

---

**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between parents view and teacher's perception on the challenges parents face while supporting implementation Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

**Statement of the Problem:** With the adoption of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), which emphasizes learner-centered approaches, practical skills, and holistic development, Kenya's educational system underwent a significant paradigm shift from the 8-4-4 system. While the goal of CBC is to help learners become more capable, creative, and adaptable, parent involvement is crucial to the program's successful implementation, yet many parents face significant challenges in fulfilling this role.

**Methodology:** The study employed a mixed-methods approach using surveys, with a sample of 142 parents and 86 teachers drawn from selected public and private primary schools implementing CBC.

**Findings:** The study established that the key challenges facing parents included the digital divide, lack of curriculum comprehension, mental and emotional stress, poor communication with schools, pressure to provide materials, and time constraints, with a statistically significant relationship confirmed between parents' views and teachers' perceptions at  $p < .05$ .

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that inconsistency between CBC policy expectations and parental capacity poses a serious threat to equitable and successful implementation of CBC in public primary schools.

**Recommendations:** The study recommends that the government and educational stakeholders develop inclusive engagement strategies, community education programs, and support systems to enable parents to effectively fulfill their evolving role under the CBC framework.

**Keywords:** *Basic Education, Kenya Education System, Learner-centered Approach, CBC Implementation Barriers, Parental Support*

---

## INTRODUCTION

The old knowledge-based system (8-4-4) in Kenya saw a dramatic change with the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), which took a more learner-centered and skills-oriented approach. Practical learning, creativity, critical thinking, and active involvement from parents as well as teachers and students are all emphasized by CBC. The effectiveness of CBC implementation in public primary schools, where most Kenyan children go, is largely dependent on the kind of support that students receive at home. However, under the CBC system, many parents of children enrolled in public primary schools encounter significant difficulties in providing them with effective support. These schools frequently serve populations whose parents may be undereducated, unaware of the CBC framework, or experiencing financial difficulties that limit their capacity to participate in school activities and offer the required learning resources.

The rising desire for parental involvement in their children's education, including at-home projects and assignments that demand time, resources, and careful supervision, also makes it difficult for many parents to juggle their daily work schedules with the CBC activities. As the gap between curriculum expectations and parental ability grows, this situation presents a serious danger to the successful implementation of CBC in public primary schools. If this disparity is not closed, students attending public primary schools may have different learning opportunities and outcomes than their private school counterparts. In order to improve learner outcomes and increase family involvement, this project aims to explore potential solutions to the unique problems parents in public primary schools encounter when trying to support their children under the CBC.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Recognize the hindrances to parental support in Competency Based Curriculum (CBC).

## HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between parents view and teacher's perception on the

challenges parents face while supporting implementation Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### History of Competency based Curriculum (CBC)

According to Nodine, (2016) the concept of Competency-Based Education (CBE) emerged in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. The development of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) has its origins in CBE, which was initiated in response to demands for enhanced accountability in educational systems. CBC was designed to align education more closely with job market needs and to focus on the learner (Manduku, and Sang, 2021; Odhiambo, 2023). The emphasis moved away from progress based on time (such as class levels) to achieving mastery of designated skills or competencies (Nyaboke, Kereri, & Nyabwari, 2021). Teacher training programs in the U.S. were among the pioneers in implementing competency based models (Gümüs, 2022). Institutions like Western Governors University later adopted CBE in its entirety. The fundamental principles included individualized learning pace, clear and measurable outcomes, assessments aligned with practical tasks, and a strong focus on performance and application (Idowu, 2024).

Mainstreaming of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) demonstrated a notable global proliferation and reforms from 2000 to 2010 (Jaramillo, and Chiappe, 2024). Developing nations started to implement CBC frameworks in primary education, extending beyond just vocational training (Cheruiyot, 2024; Maiyuria, 2024). A prominent example is South Africa, which underwent education reforms after apartheid that incorporated the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) model during the late 1990s to 2000s (Rais, 2024; Lawrence, 2022). The Philippines launched a K–12 educational system featuring competency-based standards in 2013 (Diquito, 2024). Finland is recognized for its remarkable integration of interdisciplinary competencies into curriculum development (Haapaniemi, Venäläinen, Malin, and Palojoki, 2021). OECD member countries focused on fostering 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, teamwork, and digital literacy (Bravo, Chalezquer, and Serrano-Puche, 2021). UNESCO promoted Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED), which highlighted the competencies necessary for sustainable living and global collaboration (Mohanty, Alam, and Mohanty, (2024).

## Kenyan Situation

Garnier-Liot, (2025) noted that key characteristics of CBC Today encompass a learner-focused approach with flexibility, an emphasis on outcome and competency achievements, supports mastery learning tailored to individual pacing, a combination of assessment and learning (Manduku and Sang, 2021), incorporation of project-based, inquiry-driven, or hands-on experiences (Kotsis, 2024), and a strong focus on essential life skills, digital literacy, teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking where parental involvement is mandatory (Dumbuya, 2023).

According to Akala, (2021) and Ogembo, (2025), Kenya has not fallen behind in the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) education program. The 8-4-4 education system was the subject of discussions and public involvement between 2009 and 2012. The transition to competency-based learning was implemented in 2012 through the Taskforce on Re-aligning Education to the Constitution of Kenya (2010). For Grades 1-3, a pilot program of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) was implemented in a few chosen schools and in 2017, The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) was formally implemented in primary schools across the country. In grades five and six, the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) was progressively introduced. Finally, in 2023, there was a shift to Junior Secondary Schools in the republic of Kenya (Mohamed, 2023; Barasa, 2021).

For many parents, the high expenses of implementing Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) have become a major obstacle. These monetary obligations result from a number of requirements put in place by the CBC structure (Cheruiyot, 2024). Students are frequently obliged to have particular textbooks and educational resources for every grade under CBC (Kiptoo, 2024). For example, a parent at a number of Migori County schools stated that the average amount of KSh 3,500 was spent on books and educational supplies during the term. In a same vein, parents were directed to buy supplies including 17 exercise books, dictionaries, a Bible, a hymn book, a geometry set, a ruler, a pencil, a pen, and three rolls of tissue for their children's elementary schools in Nairobi County (Micheni, 2021).

The emphasis on practical skills in the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) results in assignments that call for parents to supply a variety of resources. In Uasin Gishu, parents were requested to buy things like molding clay, luminescent paper, student files, and assessment books. (Omariba, 2022; Mbithe, Ndanu, and Piliyesi, 2023) Parents' financial burden has been increased

in certain cases when teachers have asked for food goods including a whole chicken, a kilogram of meat, sugar, corn, and tomatoes.

In conclusion, even though the CBC seeks to improve learning outcomes through hands-on experience, many Kenyan parents have found the related expenses and other emerging issues involving digital divide, lack of curriculum comprehension, mental and emotional stress, poor communication with schools, pressure to provide materials, and time constraints extremely difficult to bear (Mulangi, 2024). To solve these issues and guarantee fair access to high-quality education, the government and educational institutions must continue their efforts. The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) is expensive to adopt, and parents in Kenya are dealing with a number of other concerns. This paper will assess the challenges faced by parents on implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive survey design, which is suitable for obtaining data, viewpoints, and perceptions from a sizable population (Prosen, 2022) was used in this investigation. Parents' and other stakeholders' perspectives on the difficulties in assisting with CBC implementation are reflected in the quantitative data that the researcher was able to gather. Parents of primary school students and teachers from certain public and private primary schools using CBC will make up the target demographic. Parents and teachers were given standardized questionnaires to complete in order to obtain quantitative information about their experiences and difficulties. Using programs like SPSS, quantitative data from surveys were examined using descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages. Finally, a hypothesis test was put in place to test the relationship between parents views and teachers perception of obstacles parents meet while supporting Competency- Based Curriculum (CBC).

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

The research paper used six indicators to assess challenges facing parents as they support their children in acquisition of skills and knowledge in Curriculum-Based Curriculum. The indicators were digital divide between parents and their children, lack of understanding of the curriculum, mental and emotional strain, poor communication with schools, Pressure to Provide Materials and time demand for parents. The table below showed responses from 142 parents whereby 90 were

female and 52 parents was male gender.

**Table 1: Parents Responses**

Indicator	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
Digital Divide	131	92.3	11	7.7
Lack of Understanding of the curriculum	126	88.7	16	11.3
Mental and emotional strain	80	56.3	62	43.7
Poor Communication with schools	67	47.2	75	52.8
Pressure to Provide Materials	90	63.4	52	36.6
Time Demands on Parents	99	69.7	43	30.3

N=142

According to the results, 131 parents (92.3%) agreed that one of the challenges parents face while helping to implement the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) at the primary school level is the digital divide. Of the parents, just 11 (7.7) indicated that they were tech-savvy. 126 parents (88.7 percent) concurred that a lack of understanding of the curriculum was a challenge they faced when assisting primary school learners. Only 16 parents (11.3 percent) comprehended the curriculum. 80 parents (56.3 percent) reported that supporting primary school learners caused them mental and emotional strain, while 62 parents (43.7 percent) did not experience emotional strain. While 67 (47.2 percent) of parents reported that the obstacle of inadequate communication with schools caused a disconnect supporting primary school learners in CBC activities, 75 (52.8 percent) of parents suggested that communication with schools was not an issue. Among the parents surveyed, 90 (63.4%) believed there was significant pressure to offer learning resources, whereas 52 (36.6%) disagreed. Additionally, 43 (30.3%) of the parents indicated they did not face time constraints, while 99 (69.7%) asserted that time demands posed a challenge.

Further, this research paper sought views from teachers using the same six indicators to assess teachers perception on challenges facing parents as they support their children acquisition of skills and knowledge in Curriculum-Based Curriculum (CBC) set up. The table below showed responses from 86 teachers whereby 32 were female teachers and 54 teachers were male gender.

**Table 2: Teachers Responses**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Digital Divide	40	46.5	46	53.5
Lack of Understanding of the curriculum	80	93.0	6	7.0
Mental and emotional strain	75	87.2	11	12.8
Poor Communication with schools	44	51.2	42	48.8
Pressure to Provide Materials	72	83.7	14	16.3
Time Demands on Parents	79	91.9	7	8.1

N=86

Based on the data above, 40 teachers (46.5%) agreed that one of the challenges parents faced while helping to implement the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) at the primary school level is the digital divide. Of the parents, teachers suggested that 46 (53.5) were tech-savvy. 80 teachers (90.0 percent) concurred that a lack of understanding of the curriculum was a challenge faced by parents when assisting primary school learners. Only 6 teachers (7.0 percent) supported that parents comprehended the curriculum. 75 teachers (87.2 percent) reported that supporting primary school learners caused parents mental and emotional strain, while 11 teachers (43.7 percent) suggested that parents did not experience emotional strain. 44 (51.2 percent) of teachers reported that the obstacle of inadequate communication with schools caused parents a disconnect while supporting primary school learners in CBC activities, 42(48.8 percent) of teachers suggested that communication with schools was not an issue for parents. Among the teachers surveyed, 72 (83.7%) believed there was significant pressure from parents to offer learning resources, whereas only 14 (16.3%) of the teachers disagreed. In conclusion, 7 (8.1%) of the teachers indicated that parents did not face time constraints, while 79 (91.9%) emphasized that time demands posed a challenge for parents.

Hypothesis test to gauge parents and teachers view on obstacles facing parents as they support Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)

Hypothesis test

There is no significant relationship between parents view and teacher’s perception on the challenges parents face while supporting implementation Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)

**Table 3: Relationship between parents and teachers view on indicators**

<b>Chi-Square Responses</b>	<b>There Are Challenges</b>	<b>There Are No Challenges</b>	<b>Marginal Row Totals</b>
Parents	593 (612.22) [0.6]	259 (239.78) [1.54]	852
Teachers	390 (370.78) [1]	126 (145.22) [2.54]	516
Marginal Column Totals	983	385	1368 (Grand Total)

Table 3 presents the chi-square analysis of the relationship between parents' and teachers' views on the challenges facing parents in supporting CBC implementation. Out of a grand total of 1,368 responses, 983 acknowledged the existence of challenges while 385 indicated otherwise. Parents contributed 852 responses, of which 593 observed challenges against an expected frequency of 612.22, and 259 noted no challenges against an expected frequency of 239.78, yielding chi-square contributions of 0.6 and 1.54 respectively. Teachers contributed 516 responses, with 390 noting challenges against an expected frequency of 370.78, and 126 indicating no challenges against an expected frequency of 145.22, yielding chi-square contributions of 1.0 and 2.54 respectively.

The computed chi-square value of 5.6837 (5.3918 with Yates correction) returned a p-value of .017123, which is less than the .05 significance level, and the Yates-corrected p-value of .020232 equally remains significant at  $p < .05$ . Since the obtained p-value of .017123 is less than or equal to 0.05, the outcome is statistically significant, providing sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This therefore confirms that there is a significant relationship between parents' views and teachers' perceptions on the challenges parents face while supporting the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that parents faced obstacles that hindered them from proactively supporting their children as they learnt in primary schools. The paper concluded that the indicators of digital divide between parents and their children, lack of understanding of the curriculum, mental and emotional strain, poor communication with schools, Pressure to Provide Materials and time demand for parents were obstacles that needed to be addressed. The paper further used responses

from teachers using the same variables. The result was subjected to chi-square test where by the null hypothesis was rejected. In summary, the paper found out that the teething problems were witnessed by both teachers and parents.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study recommends that the government and relevant educational stakeholders urgently address the multifaceted challenges parents face in supporting CBC implementation by first rolling out comprehensive and accessible parent sensitization programs that demystify the CBC framework, ensuring that parents across all socioeconomic backgrounds gain a clear understanding of the curriculum's goals, structure, and expectations. Additionally, the government should subsidize or fully provide the required learning materials to ease the financial burden on parents, particularly those in public primary schools, while also establishing clear guidelines that regulate the kind of materials teachers can request from parents to prevent exploitation and undue pressure. To bridge the digital divide, the study recommends that community digital literacy programs be introduced, targeting parents specifically, so that they can meaningfully engage with the technology-driven aspects of CBC and effectively support their children at home.

Schools should also strengthen communication channels with parents through regular, structured, and inclusive engagement forums that keep parents informed and involved in their children's learning progress. Furthermore, given the mental and emotional strain reported by a significant proportion of parents, the study recommends the integration of psychosocial support mechanisms within school communities to help parents cope with the pressures associated with CBC participation. Finally, policy makers should review the time demands placed on parents under the CBC framework and explore flexible participation models that accommodate the diverse work and social circumstances of families, ultimately ensuring that parental involvement in CBC is not a privilege of the few but an achievable expectation for all Kenyan families.

## REFERENCES

- Akala, B. M. M. (2021). Revisiting education reform in Kenya: A case of Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 3(1), 100107.
- Barasa, P. L. (2021). Digitalization in teaching and education in Kenya: Digitalization, the future of work and the teaching profession project. International Labour Organization.
- Bravo, M. C. M., Chalezquer, C. S., & Serrano-Puche, J. (2021). Meta-framework of digital literacy: A comparative analysis of 21st-century skills frameworks. *Revista Latina de Comunicacion Social*, (79), 76-109.
- Cheruiyot, B. (2024). Challenges Faced in the Implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Junior Schools in Kenya.
- Diquito, T. (2024). Basic Education Curriculum under the Newly Implemented K to 10 (MATATAG) Curriculum in the Philippines: The Case of Science Education. *American Journal of Education and Technology (AJET)*, 3(3), 123-132.
- Dumbuya, E. (2023). Developing a Framework for Revising the Curriculum to Incorporate Future Skills such as Digital Literacy, Critical Thinking, and Adaptability, While. *Critical Thinking, and Adaptability, While* (September 04, 2023).
- Garnier-Liot, M. (2025). Learners in a Canadian Diagnostic-Focused Competency-Based Medical Education Program: A Qualitative Case Study (Doctoral dissertation, St. Francis Xavier University).
- Gümüş, A. (2022). Twenty-first-century teacher competencies and trends in teacher training. *Y. Alpayd*, 243-267.
- Haapaniemi, J., Venäläinen, S., Malin, A., & Palojoki, P. (2021). Teacher autonomy and collaboration as part of integrative teaching—Reflections on the curriculum approach in Finland. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 53(4), 546-562.
- Idowu, E. (2024). Personalized Learning: Tailoring Instruction to Individual Student Needs. Preprints.
- Jaramillo, J. J., & Chiappe, A. (2024). The AI-driven classroom: A review of 21st century curriculum trends. *Prospects*, 54(3), 645-660.

- Kiptoo, B. (2024). The Effect of Teacher and Resources Related Factors on the Implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in Junior Schools Within Bomet Sub-County in Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Eldoret).
- Kotsis, K. T. (2024). Integrating Inquiry-based Learning in the New Greek Primary Science Curriculum. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 5(6), 63-71.
- Lawrence, A. R. (2022). Basic educational reform and provision of quality education in South Africa (1994-2018): A tentative exploration of policy in the making (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University).
- Maiyuria, M. N. (2024). Factors Influencing Implementation of Competency-based Curriculum (Cbc) in Private and Public Primary Schools in Southkinangop Sub-county, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- Manduku, J., & Sang, H. (2021). Innovative pedagogies in competency based learning: A critical analysis between the traditional and the CBC curriculum.
- Mbithe, E., Ndanu, C., & Piliyesi, E. (2023). Parents' Socio-Economic Status and Implementation of Competence Based Curriculum in Public Primary Schools, Yatta Sub County, Kenya. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*, 7(8), 49-68.
- Micheni, B. M. (2021). Teacher perspectives on the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oxford).
- Mohamed, S. (2023). An Inquiry into the Implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (2017) in Primary Schools in Mombasa, Kenya (Master's thesis, Oslomet-storbyuniversitetet).
- Mohanty, A., Alam, A., & Mohanty, A. (2024). Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship for India. *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development Studies*, 1(2), 134-159.
- Mulangi, M. (2024). Financial Administration Challenges on the implementation of CBC among Public Primary Schools in Taita Taveta County, Kenya. *International Journal of Capacity Building in Education and Management*, 6(3), 1-16.
- Nodine, T. R. (2016). How did we get here? A brief history of competency-based higher

education in the United States. *The Journal of Competency-Based Education*, 1(1), 5-11.

Nyaboke, R., Kereri, D., & Nyabwari, L. (2021). Competence-based curriculum (CBC) in Kenya and the challenge of vision 2030. *International Journal of Education, Technology and Science*, 1(4), 155-169.

Odhiambo, K. T. (2023). Aligning Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Anchored on E-Learning Platforms: Transferable Competency in CBC Education. In *Competence-Based Curriculum and E-Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 303-329). IGI Global.

Ogembo, P. O. (2025). The Implementation of Competency Based Curriculum in Public Schools in Kenya: Challenges and Opportunities. *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)*, 5(1), 57-77.

Omariba, A. (2022). Challenges faced by parents in implementing competence-based curriculum in primary schools: Kenyan perspective.

Prosen, M. (2022). Nursing students' perception of gender-defined roles in nursing: a qualitative descriptive study. *BMC nursing*, 21(1), 104.

Rais, L. I. (2024). Education in South Africa: Post-apartheid Dilemma (Doctoral dissertation, University of Martyr Sheikh Larbi Tebessi Tebessa).