



**TEACHER-RELATED CHALLENGES  
AFFECTING THE APPLICATION OF COMPETENCY-BASED  
ASSESSMENT IN PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KIBWEZI  
WEST SUB-COUNTY, MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA**

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**Abstract:**

Competency-Based Assessment (CBA) is one of the most important aspects of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya that focuses on the assessment of the skills and knowledge of the learners to be applied in real-life situations. In spite of the national policy guidelines and curriculum reforms, empirical research across different counties shows that there is still a lot to be overcome in CBA implementation, and mostly it is associated with teacher capacity and readiness. This paper discussed the issues surrounding the teachers that affect the application of competency-based assessment in pre-primary schools in Kibwezi West Sub-County in Makeni County in Kenya. The research design applied was a descriptive survey research design using a mixed-methods approach, where there were 202 primary schools, 384 pre-primary teachers, and 202 head teachers. Multistage sampling techniques were used to select a sample of 31 schools, 60 pre-primary teachers and 31 head teachers. The information was gathered using the questionnaires, interview schedules, and observation checklists. Data analysis was performed with descriptive statistics of frequencies and ages, but on the qualitative side of the data, it was performed using a thematic analysis. It was found that challenges associated with teachers were the major barriers to CBA implementation, such as teacher shortage (91.7%), excessive workload (90%), insufficient knowledge and skills to use CBA (86.7%), inability to perform assessments (78.3%), inappropriate and adequate training

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(75%), and low teacher motivation (63.3%). The qualitative results indicated that teacher training was not very common and was usually shallow, with a majority of the teachers undergoing short-term training of half a day to three days, that were not sufficient to develop their competency level. Some of the recommendations to overcome the challenges were regular and intensive teacher training, hiring more teachers, availing sufficient teaching and learning resources and enhancing the motivation of the teachers.

**Keywords:** teacher related challenges, competency-based assessment, pre-primary education, teacher training, teacher motivation, Kibwezi West Sub-County

## 1. Introduction

Competency-Based Assessment (CBA) is one of the key paradigms of a profound change in the traditional norm-referenced assessment models, where the main emphasis was on the recall of knowledge and the hierarchy of learners. CBA is the opposite of conventional assessment, which focuses on what learners have learned; however, CBA aims at assessing what learners can perform with the knowledge and skills they have developed in real-life situations (Warui, 2025). This methodology is consistent with international education changes which focus on the growth of skills required by 21st-century students. CBA is important in pre-primary education because it instills foundational competencies that would support lifelong learning since the aspect focuses on whole learner growth on different aspects such as cognitive, social, emotional and physical growth.

The move towards competency-based education has gained momentum in the world, with countries trying to equip learners with competencies that are relevant in the contemporary workforce. Early-stage school teachers in Australia are faced with the challenge of equipping students with performance-based testing and sustaining a pedagogic accountability towards the development of competency-based testing (Molloy, 2024). A study by Fitria *et al.* (2025) indicated that training early childhood educators using competency-based training models led to a 30% increase in competency scores, and classroom observations indicated improved instructional practices that produced improved student performance and learning. The results highlight the importance of teacher capacity in effective CBA implementation because the teacher-related factors have a direct effect on the quality and effectiveness of the assessment practices.

In Vietnam, teacher educators are experiencing a lot of problems in training pre-service primary school teachers to become competency-based educators, with a lack of understanding of CBE principles, inability to match teaching activity with assessment, and inability to integrate interdisciplinary competencies owing to the established traditional education practices and scarce resources (Phan, 2025). This points out the fact that the issues surrounding the teachers in Kenya are not a local problem but a global issue in terms of the application of competency-based strategies.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, competency-based curricula have been adopted due to the fact that skills gaps and the quality of education should be addressed. There are countries like Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania that have made curriculum changes which focus on competencies and learner-centered pedagogies. Nevertheless, studies continue to point to the issue of implementation, as done by teachers, especially in the areas of teacher preparedness, poor teacher training and poor knowledge of assessment procedures. The lack of professional development and adequate knowledge of the pedagogical content often makes teachers shift to competency-based methods of assessment rather than use the traditional ones.

The educational environment in Kenya has undergone a revolutionary change as the 8-4-4 curriculum has been substituted by the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2017. This reform is expected to improve the quality of education by not focusing on the acquisition of knowledge but on creating and applying knowledge and skills (Adongo, Opiyo & Ouda, 2025). The key feature in this reform is Competency-Based Assessment (CBA), which is centered around measuring the capacity of learners in showing competencies as opposed to remembering facts.

CBA is especially important in pre-primary education because it assists in developing necessary skills during the early years of life, which will be the basis for future studies. The curriculum framework provides a set of specific assessment strategies that are aimed at the holistic progress of learners in a number of areas. Nonetheless, the success of CBA to realize the desired results is greatly determined by the ability, competence, drive and readiness of teachers to administer these assessment procedures. Factors that relate to the teacher are therefore critical in successful CBA implementation.

The other recent studies carried out in Kenya have shown some worrying trends regarding teacher issues related to CBA implementation. According to a study conducted in Nyeri County (Warui, 2025) on school-related factors that affect the use of CBA in pre-primary schools, the researcher discovered that many teachers continue using old norm-referenced assessments that are not in tandem with the provisions of CBC. The research found that there was low motivation towards CBA because of insufficient training, low instructional material, insufficient infrastructure and fewer teaching resources. The correlation analysis revealed that teacher motivation (negative =  $-.797$ ) and resource availability (negative =  $-.584$ ) had significant negative correlations with CBA use; thus, teacher-related variables have a significant impact on assessment practices.

In a similar study, Hamisi (2024) conducted research in Kilifi County on school dynamics that influence CBC implementation in pre-primary schools and reported that learning resources, teacher preparedness, instructional monitoring, and teacher-pupil ratios play a significant role in curriculum implementation. The research suggested that teacher-related factors play a significant role in the CBC implementation and advised increasing the resource allocation and CBC teacher training on a regular basis.

Kenyatta University researchers (2024) conducted a study in Baringo County to examine the pedagogical skills of teachers and the use of classroom assessment in Early Years Education. These findings showed that although 53.57 % of the teachers made

arrangements to evaluate learners with disabilities, 79 % of them used written tests largely to evaluate their learners and only 31.31 % directed learners to create showcase portfolios. It was found that teachers did not have pedagogical competencies to apply various authentic assessment techniques, and classroom assessment was not applied as the Competency-Based Assessment Framework suggested. This discovery indicates that there are considerable gaps in teacher competence in CBA implementation.

A study that was conducted in Nambale Sub-County, which targeted the skills of teachers in Pre-Primary II on resource development and utilization as part of the implementation of CBC in language activities, established that resource development and utilization skills of the teachers largely relate to the successful implementation of CBC. In the study, it has been found that 38.3 % of the difference in CBC implementation can be attributed to the ability of teachers to create and use resources (Adongo, Opiyo & Ouda, 2025). This highlights the importance of teacher competency in the implementation of the curriculum.

Harriet (2021) investigated how teacher preparedness and application of competency-based curriculum relate to each other in public pre-primary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. The results revealed that a majority of pre-primary teachers were not proficient and competent enough to make effective use of assessment rubrics to determine the progress of learners. The research found that there is a great impact of teacher preparedness on curriculum implementations and proposed special professional development programs for pre-primary teachers.

Robert *et al.* (2023) explored the difficulties when applying CBA in Kenyan primary schools, with the emphasis on Kajiado County. They found that many teachers knew little about how different elements of CBC could be implemented, especially in assessment. Educators complained that there were insufficient instructions on good teaching and assessment techniques. Also, the shortage of teachers in the government schools was cited as a significant obstacle, where the teachers could not respond to the arising needs of learners. In other instances, absenteeism and understaffing put a single teacher with too much work. The results are consistent with those of Mulenga and Kabombwe (2019), who determined that the level of confidence held by teachers is directly connected to the level of their content knowledge.

In their research on teacher competency in administering CBC tests in Grades 1 to 3 in Lang'ata Sub-County, Otieno and Machani (2022) established that a lot of teachers did not have sufficient training in administering learners effectively according to the CBC requirements. Consequently, learners found it difficult to attain the targeted competencies and skills. The teachers who had been identified as wanting the necessary skills to conduct a reliable assessment of learners confessed to not being able to measure competencies, and this was further undermined by poor application of formative strategies like continuous assessment, oral assessments and project-based tools, which are major elements of CBC.

The Competency-Based Curriculum has been applied in Makueni County in the Eastern region of Kenya in pre-primary schools under the coordination of the County

Government in its Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The county has been keen on early childhood education, as evidenced by the confirmation of 959 teachers who are in permanent and pensionable terms and the partnership with UNICEF to hold capacity building workshops for teachers in Kilome, Kibwezi West and Kibwezi East (County Government of Makueni, 2025). Makueni County Education and Training Policy (2022) discusses the county's priorities regarding the quality of education and the assistance of the curriculum implementation.

Nevertheless, even with these efforts, the initial findings in Kibwezi West Sub-County showed that educators were reported to be giving exams rather than administering assessments (Mathias, 2018), which was against the principles of CBA. This implied that there are serious challenges related to the teachers that impact the implementation of CBA. Since the teachers are the most important agents of the implementation of the curriculum, it is important to know the specific teacher-related problems they encounter to design specific interventions aimed at ensuring that the use of CBA in pre-primary schools is successful.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Introduction of Competency-Based Assessment in the pre-primary schools in Kenya is crucial to the realisation of the objectives of the Competency-Based Curriculum. CBA concentrates on assessing the skills of learners to show competency, and this gives a more comprehensive and realistic view of development in learners than the other forms of evaluation. Nonetheless, although national policy guidelines and curriculum interventions have been made, there are empirical results in different counties showing that CBA implementation faces huge challenges related to teachers.

There have been studies that have shown a trend in teacher-related issues in various counties that depict that teacher capacity, training, knowledge, skills, and motivation are essential factors that determine CBA implementation. Nonetheless, there was no empirical study that had specifically studied issues associated with teachers in relation to the use of CBA on pre-primary school teachers in Kibwezi West Sub-County, Makueni County. Even preliminary observations showed that teachers were allegedly performing examinations, rather than conducting assessments (Mathias, 2018), which implies that a great number of challenges associated with teachers were present. This research was therefore aimed at filling this gap by establishing the challenges of teachers which could be affecting the application of competency-based assessment in pre-primary schools in Kibwezi West Sub-County, Makueni County, Kenya.

### **2.1 Research Objective**

To determine the teacher-related challenges that affect the application of competency-based assessment in pre-primary schools in Kibwezi West Sub-County, Makueni County, Kenya.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The Educational Change Model by Michael Fullan (1991) was used to guide the present study and provide a framework for the understanding of the realization of educational innovations. Fullan stresses that educational change can be successful only if the three stages of change are considered: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. The model recognizes some of the important variables that affect implementation, such as the nature of change (need, clarity, complexity, quality), local variables (district, community, principal, teachers) and external variables (government policies, support agencies). In this context, issues related to teachers play a key role in the implementation process. In Fullan, the knowledge, skills, beliefs, motivation and understanding of the change by the teachers play a critical role in determining how and whether educators implement educational innovations in the classroom. According to the model, to have CBA successfully implemented, teachers should realise that the change needs to happen, they should be provided with clear guidance on how to assess their students, they should possess sufficient knowledge and skills, and they should have motivation to apply new methods. In the case of teachers who possess none of these qualities, implementation will either be superficial or fail. This framework is especially applicable in understanding the teacher-related challenges that are a barrier to the implementation of CBA in Kibwezi West Sub-County.

### 4. Literature Review

Educators are a very important part of implementing the curriculum, and the issues that impact them may inhibit the successful teaching and student interaction. In a study carried out by Warui (2025), teacher unavailability in pre-primary schools of Nyeri County resulted in high ratios of students to teachers, which made them unable to carry out individual assessments and give timely feedback. The research indicated that in most schools, one teacher taught PP1 and PP2 classes, and enrolments were more than 40 learners, and the teacher had no time to create and implement a diverse range of CBA tools. The correlation analysis revealed that there was a significant negative correlation between teacher availability and CBA use (-.584), meaning that teacher shortages in the state schools are the main barrier to implementing CBA in Kenyan primary schools, as teachers were unable to address the emerging needs of the learners. In other scenarios, a teacher had too much work because of absenteeism and a lack of sufficient teachers. According to the study, teachers were overworked with high student populations, numerous administrative functions, and the requirements of putting CBC into practice, which left them with less time to create and apply competency-based assessment tools.

Globally, Phan (2025) observed that the issue of huge workload and large class sizes is a challenge to teacher educators in Vietnam, as they cannot individually attend and evaluate pre-service teachers. This observation indicates that the issue of workload

is not Kenya-specific but a problem in the world in terms of competency-based education implementation.

It has been found that teacher competency in CBA is a critical issue that affects implementation. The researchers of Kenyatta University (2024) examined pedagogical competencies of teachers and application of classroom assessment in Early Years Education in Baringo County and discovered that 79% of teachers were dependent on written tests and 31.31% instructed learners to create showcase portfolios. The research concluded that there were severe knowledge and skills gaps among teachers since they lacked pedagogical skills to use a variety of authentic assessment methods.

Teacher training quality, as well as frequency, play a significant role in the implementation of CBA. According to Warui (2025), in Nyeri County, most teachers had gone through very short training programs on CBC, between half a day and three days, which could not impart sufficient competence in assessment practices. The research found out that teachers who underwent training had problems with CBA implementation, which implied that the training was shallow and inefficient. Moreover, Hamisi (2024) suggested providing regular CBC training to teachers in Kilifi County, where occasional training did not allow the teachers to keep abreast of the changes in the curriculum and assessment. The research paper underscored the importance of constant professional learning in order to establish and maintain teacher competency in CBA.

## **5. Research Methodology**

### **5.1 Research Design**

The research was a descriptive survey research design, which was suitable for the collection of information about schools and teachers to represent the current state of affairs. Apuke (2017) notes that descriptive research design is appropriate in preliminary and exploratory research because it will help researchers investigate the relationship between variables to be used as an explanation.

### **5.2 Research Approach**

The study was considered to be a mixed approach study where a triangulation design is undertaken in a concurrent manner (Creswell, 2015). The data collection was carried out through questionnaires, interview schedules, and observation checklists, which made it possible to collect in-depth and multifaceted data. The dependent variable was that of the application of CBA in preprimary schools; the independent variable was that of teachers' related challenges concerning CBA.

### **5.3 Location of the Study**

The research was done in Makueni County in the Eastern part of Kenya in the Kibwezi West Sub-County. It was specifically chosen because the use of CBA was still an issue, and teachers were also said to implement examinations rather than administering

assessment (Mathias, 2018). In addition, there was no known study of the same in the Kibwezi West Sub-County, Makueni County.

#### **5.4 Target Population**

The study population was all the 202 primary schools in Kibwezi West Sub-County -151 government and 51 private schools. It also had the number of 384 pre-primary teachers and 202 primary school head teachers (Ministry of Education, 2020).

#### **5.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

To select the total number of preschools, the study used purposive sampling to identify Kibwezi West Subcounty, stratified random sampling, and simple random sampling, which took the form of 15%. A total of 31 preschools and 31 headteachers were then selected out of 202 preschools. The participants of the study were 60 pre-primary teachers.

#### **5.6 Data Collection Techniques**

Following the required approvals, the researcher made a preliminary visit to the sampled schools to introduce the respondents to the study and inform them of the purpose of the study. The information was collected on the physical facilities and teaching-learning materials observed and recorded using the Observation Checklist. Data collection among the Pre-primary teachers was done by the use of questionnaires, whereas the head teachers were given data collection in the form of an interview.

#### **5.7 Data Analysis**

Information gathered in the schools was tabulated, checked and scrubbed to detect and rectify any faults or lack of responses. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize quantitative data through frequencies, %, means and standard deviations. The results of the data analysis were provided in the form of frequency tables. Thematic and content analysis were performed to analyze qualitative data of head teachers.

#### **5.8 Logistical and Ethical Concerns**

The introduction letter was obtained by the researcher at the Kenyatta University Graduate School, where a research permit was obtained through the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). After that, the Makueni County and Kibwezi West Sub-County education offices were consulted to grant permission to collect the data in schools. To achieve anonymity, all information about participants was hidden, and instead of their actual names, identification codes were utilized.

## 6. Findings and Discussions

### 6.1 Teacher-Related Challenges in Use of CBA

The research was conducted to analyze the challenges of teachers that affect the application of CBA in pre-primary schools, and the findings are reported in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Teacher Related Challenges in Use of CBA According to Pre-Primary School Teachers

SNO	Challenges	Frequency	Percen (%)
1.	Lack of enough teachers	55	91.7
2.	Heavy workload	54	90.0
3.	Lack of adequate knowledge and skills on use of CBA	52	86.7
4.	Lack of enough time to conduct CBA	47	78.3
5.	Lack of appropriate and adequate training on CBA	45	75.0
6.	Lack of teacher motivation to use CBA	38	63.3

As indicated in Table 1, there are a number of challenges related to teachers in pre-primary schools that impede the use of CBA. The greatest complaint was the lack of teachers (91.7%), heavy workloads (90%), lack of knowledge and skills on how to use CBA (86.7%), no time to carry out assessments (78.3%), appropriate training (75%), and low teacher motivation (63.3%).

These results are consistent with the study by Robert *et al.* (2023), who evaluated problems associated with the implementation of CBA in Kenyan primary schools in Kajiado County. Their research showed that a significant number of teachers were not well informed about the practice of implementing different components of CBC, especially in the assessment practices. Teachers indicated that they do not have sufficient instructions in implementing effective teaching and assessment strategies. Moreover, shortages of teachers in government-funded institutions were also cited as a significant hindrance because teachers could not tend to the needs of learners that arose. In other instances, absenteeism and understaffing had to be dealt with by the same teacher because others were absent. The fact that the findings were similar in various counties indicates that the issues that surround teacher implementation in CBA are prevalent and systemic and not unique to certain counties.

The results also echo the literature by Warui (2025), who discovered meticulous negative relationships between the instructor's inspiration and CBA utilization (-.797) and in the source supply and CBA utilization (-.584) in Nyeri County. The fact that 63.3 % of the teachers mentioned in the present study that low motivation was a problem contributes to the necessity to discuss motivational issues and increase the implementation of CBA.

These quantitative results were backed up by interviews and observations, whereby the headteachers stated that it is necessary to hire more teachers. Most centres hire teachers employed by parents, and this creates problems in terms of sustainability, and in some schools, there is a single teacher. The challenges have detailed qualitative results as provided below.

## 6.2 Lack of Enough Teachers

Teacher shortages were the most common reason given by most teachers (91.7%) as the principal obstacle to the effective usage of CBA. Otherwise, in most instances, the PP1 and PP2 classes are merged owing to a scarcity in staffing. The majority of centres employ just one teacher who is paid by the county because the parents are not always able to accept the idea of two teachers. Headteachers also attested that the enrolment levels are not in line with the number of teachers.

*"... The government must hire additional teachers. The number of my learners is too large for the two teachers to have no time to take care of each one or assess them. (Headteacher, Public School 11)*

*"... The parent teacher usually skips school because his remuneration is low. This interferes with learning and assessment, particularly because one teacher is teaching 40 learners at two levels. The parents do not want to employ a second teacher. (Pre-primary Headteacher, Private School 3)*

These qualitative results are highly correlated with the quantitative results and are consistent with Robert et al. (2023), who found that teacher shortages in government schools were the key obstacle to the implementation of CBA in Kajiado County. The result also echoes Hamisi (2024), who stated that teacher-pupil ratios are a crucial factor affecting the implementation of the curriculum in Kilifi County. In cases where learners outnumber the teachers, it is almost impossible to use individual assessment, and teachers resort to group assessment or other traditional testing methods that cannot measure individual learner ability.

## 6.3 Heavy Workload

Educators complained that the workload prevents them from creating and applying CBA instruments. Headteachers echoed this, saying that CBA implementation was challenging due to large class sizes and several responsibilities.

*"... The workload of teachers is enormous, and there is no time to prepare rubrics of each learner, particularly when a teacher deals with a large group of children. The work stress is discouraging. (Pre-primary Headteacher, Private School 14)*

*"... In big classes, it is difficult to provide feedback in time. Teachers are so preoccupied by the numerous activities and responsibilities that they forget about CBA. (Pre-primary Headteacher, Public School 12).*

*"... Educators do not have time to prepare the tests. They are bombarded with professional records, materials and co-curricular activities. A teacher with a large number of learners*

*makes the use of assessment tools close to impossible.*" (Pre-primary Head teacher, Public School 18).

These results are similar to those of Warui (2025), who revealed that heavy workload was a major impediment to the implementation of CBA in Nyeri County. The result also appeals to the works of Otieno and Machani (2022), who mentioned that educators in Lang'ata Sub-County were overburdened with numerous responsibilities and did not have enough time to create and apply various assessment tools. It is suggested in the Competency-Based Assessment Framework that several tools, such as observation, portfolios, rubrics, and anecdotal records, should be utilized and they demand considerable time to create and execute. Teachers with heavy workloads are bound to resort to faster, easier assessment methods.

#### **6.4 Absence of Sufficient Knowledge and Ability on Use of CBA**

The teachers complained that they had difficulties in applying CBA. Most of them had attended CBA training exercises but still lacked the necessary knowledge and skills, though this implied that the training was not effective in developing their competence in assessment practices. This was affirmed by qualitative data of headteachers who said:

*"... Educators are not very familiar with the utilization of certain tools, and some of them have gained negative attitudes towards ICT. They also do not possess the pedagogical knowledge of useful usage of CBA. These qualifications will provide teachers with the necessary skills to perform effectively.* (Preprimary Headteacher at Public School 23)

*"... The lack of skills and knowledge in some teachers is still an issue since many do not know how to use rubrics and other assessment tools. The majority of them are not familiar with different assessment techniques and like question-answer method as it is simpler to conduct. The interview was conducted with* (Pre-primary Headteacher, Private School 22)

*"... There are teachers with negative attitudes towards CBC, which is partly due to the fact that they were not part of its formulation, as well as a lack of knowledge and skills.* (Headteacher of Pre-primary School 16, Public)

*"... Teachers possess little knowledge and skills of formulating and utilizing assessment tools like rubrics and portfolios. This can be among the primary reasons they fail to employ the tools in assessing learners.* (Pre-primary Headteacher, Public School 11)

The researcher noted that the necessary assessment materials, including the teacher's handbook, were unavailable and that the curriculum designs were available but inadequate. This indicates that the teachers were not given the essential reference

materials that provide comprehensive information on assessment, so they were unable to advance their knowledge.

These results are in line with Kenyatta University (2024), which identified that teachers in Baringo County did not have the pedagogical skills to implement various authentic assessment methods. The result also echoes Harriet (2021), who discovered that practices in the majority of pre-primary schools in the Nairobi County were characterized by low competence and the ability to utilize assessment rubrics in assessing learner development. Mulenga and Kabombwe (2019) defined that teacher confidence is strongly connected with the level of content knowledge they have. The lack of knowledge on the principles and practices of CBA among teachers makes them not to have confidence in applying assessment, and they tend to use the common but unsuitable traditional methods of assessment.

These results are, however, contrary to those of Adongo, Opiyo and Ouda (2025) in Nambale Sub-County, who established that teachers had an overall high capability of developing and using learning materials in CBC language activities. The different explanations for this discrepancy can be related to the contextual differences between the study sites, the difference in the quality of teacher training, or the particular emphasis on the language activities in the Nambale study, but in the present study, the authors focused on the general CBA practices in all areas of learning.

### **6.5 Inappropriate and Inadequate Training on CBA**

It was determined that 65 % of teachers had been through short CBA trainings (less than a day to three days), yet they had a hard time implementing them. The trainings were frequent, short-remedial and superficial, which reduced their effectiveness. Head Teachers testified to this:

*"... My teachers have not been regularly trained as needed by the County government to ensure that teachers are regularly refreshed, and that has slowed them down in using CBA effectively in their classes. (Pre-primary Headteacher in Public School 21)*

*"... Teachers are not frequently trained by the county government. They have very seasonal training. Educators should be informed about CBA by conducting routine training and seminars to enhance their skills. (Pre-primary Headteacher in Public School 27)*

These results are congruent with Warui (2025), who determined that in Nyeri County, teachers had attended short training courses on CBC of half a day to three days of training time, which was not enough to establish sufficient competence in assessment practices. This observation is also echoed by Robert *et al.* (2023), who mentioned that the training extended to teachers in Kajiado County was reported to be theoretical and lacked connection with classroom realities, such that teachers were not prepared to apply CBA in their unique scenarios.

The results are in line with the study by Ren, Chano and Saihong (2025), who observed that competency growth has features of simplification, linearity, and dogmatism during the initial phase of professional development. This implies that assessment competencies should be developed in the form of long-term and systematic professional support, but not with short-term training sessions. Fitria *et al.* (2025) established that the application of a holistic competency-based training model to early childhood educators led to a 30-%age point rise in competency scores, which highlights the significance of the quality and depth of training.

### **6.6 Lack of Teacher Motivation to Use CBA**

The research established that the problem of teacher motivation is a major challenge to CBA usage. Headteachers complained that salaries came late, job security was lacking, and workloads were too high to be satisfied; in fact, they demoralised assessment practices:

*"... I do sympathize with the pre-primary teachers as they are assigned lots of workload to teach and the nurturing part. My parent, who is a teacher, is not happy to work because there are instances of salary being delayed, and during holidays, he/she is not being paid. (Pre-primary Headteacher in Public School 11)*

*"... Teachers do not take it well, particularly the parent who is employed. Unsatisfaction results in poor morale during teaching and the evaluation of pupils. She believes that she is being insecure about her job, as it is a contract that can be cancelled at any moment. Lack of proper payment habits kills her psyche to work effectively because her mind is split in attention. (Pre-primary Headteacher in 3 Privatised Schools)*

*"... Teachers are discouraged by the massive workload and large classes. They become tired, particularly when one is dealing with PP1 and 2. They do not concern themselves with CBA because, as long as they are teaching. (Pre-primary Headteacher in Private School 22)*

Such results are consistent with Warui (2025), who observed highly negative relationships between teacher motivation and use of CBA (-.797) in Nyeri County. The observation is also echoed by Robert *et al.* (2023), who observed that the lack of teachers and excessive workloads in Kajiado County caused demotivation and burnout, both of which influenced the desire and capacity of the teachers to employ CBA successfully. Similar findings were made by Hamisi (2024), who determined that teacher motivation played an important role in curriculum implementation in Kilifi County.

The conclusion that parent-employed teachers experience specific motivation issues because of job-insecurity and delayed payment is indicative of the necessity to accommodate employment conditions to all pre-primary teachers, irrespective of their employment status. According to Harriet (2021), teacher preparedness and motivation

have a strong relationship. Teachers who feel ready and confident in their skills are more willing to adopt new methods, whereas those who are not prepared to gain experience become anxious and discouraged.

## **7. Conclusions**

The research was based on challenges surrounding teachers that affect the implementation of CBA in pre-primary schools. The research determined that the major obstacles were shortages of teachers, work overload, lack of knowledge and skills, time constraints, lack of training and lack of motivation. Such factors are great impediments to the successful application of CBA in pre-primary.

Based on the findings, the research concludes that, in pre-primary schools in Kibwezi West Sub-County, Makueni County, teacher-related challenges are major barriers to successful CBA implementation.

## **8. Recommendations**

### **8.1 County Government**

- 1) County Government should hire and hire additional pre-primary teachers to overcome the serious shortage of teachers and lower the high pupil-teacher ratios that indicate that individual assessment is impossible.
- 2) The County Government needs to enhance the teaching and learning environment by differentiating the number of classes taught, building more classrooms, and supplying them with sufficient teaching and learning materials, which were some of the major challenges compromising the successful utilization of CBA.
- 3) County Government must have sustained, intensive, and frequent training of teachers instead of short and seasonal training.

### **8.2 School Management and Administrator**

- 1) The management of a school ought to conduct sensitization session that would enlighten the parents about the need to employ teachers and to supply them with the relevant assessment materials. The support of the parents is critical in resolving teacher shortages and making sure that the teachers have the resources to implement CBA effectively.
- 2) School administrators can also put measures in place to cut down on the workload of the teacher, e.g. ensuring that they have support staff to do non-teaching work and that they can schedule the timetables in such a way that teachers do not have to work a long schedule before they can develop assessments.

### **8.3 Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC)**

KNEC must join forces with the county governments to undertake frequent training on the use of CBA and to create simplified testing frameworks that are easy to access by the

teachers who have different competency levels. The training is to consist of practical lessons on the creation and utilization of certain assessment tools.

#### **8.4 Teacher Training Colleges**

Colleges that train teachers ought to tighten their pre-service courses so that teachers who graduate have sufficient preparation in the implementation of CBA. The training on skills of how to develop and utilize different competency-based assessment tools in the early childhood setup should be a very long, practical training part of the curriculum.

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#### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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