

Competency Based Curriculum, Parental Perceptions, And Skills Development Among Primary School Pupils in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Competence-based curriculum is critical in fostering holistic skills and development among the learners. However, its success is largely dependent on parental involvement. Parents who participate and are directly involved in CBC are likely to have better performing learners. For parents, issues such as accessibility of CBC, equity as well as the associated benefits and challenges could have an impact on their participation. However, the perceptions of parents in these issues and how this would contribute towards skills development especially within the resource-constrained contexts remains unclear. As a result, the study sought to examine the effect of parental perceptions on skills development among learners in Kibra sub-county.

Materials and Methods: Study adopted a descriptive and cross-sectional design. The target participants in the study were parents whose children are enrolled in CBC. The target population was 1020 parents from across 170 schools in Kibra sub-county. Stratified random sampling was adopted in the study. Stratification was achieved by nature of schools, whether public or private. Using Yamane's formula, a sample of 288 participants was obtained. Study achieved a participant response rate of 86.5%.

Results: Parental perceptions were measured by considering accessibility of CBC, equity of CBC, benefits and challenges associated with CBC. All variables were found to have a positive and significant influence on skills development among the learners ($p < 0.001$). The effect of accessibility of CBC, equity of CBC and benefits were found to be positive while the influence of challenges of CBC was found to be negative implying that skills development among learners is likely to reduce within increasing implementation challenges. Study further found an enhancing moderation role of curriculum policy frameworks ($t = 9.290$; $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: Parental perceptions in areas such as accessibility, equity, benefits and challenges shape parents' understanding and participation in CBC which increases skills development. The relationship however, is dependent on the presence of strong curriculum frameworks.

Keywords: Competence-based curriculum, accessibility, equity, benefits, challenges, policies

Date of Submission: 04-09-2026

Date of Acceptance: 14-09-2026

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential aspect that enhances social and economic development, especially in preparation of learners with critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, problem solving and digital skills needed in technology driven world. While responding to the need for more inclusive and skills-oriented education, Kenya has considered introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum. The education system was introduced by Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and represents a shift from traditional approaches centered on knowledge acquisition and insists on the application of knowledge through different activities such as collaboration and hands-on learning (Muchiri et al. 2023). The curriculum focuses on the acquisition of competencies such as creativity, problem solving and critical thinking.

However, for the implementation of CBC to succeed, stakeholders must consider active participation from parent. Previous studies have shown that parental participation is key to minimizing gaps in student academic achievements. In this regard, parents should be encouraged to provide learning materials, communicate with teachers and schools, attend school activities and also create supportive learning environments at home. Despite this, there is a lack uniformity in parental engagement as some parents do not have sufficient knowledge and resource required in curriculum expectations. Kibra sub-county in Nairobi County is one of the areas that is affected by such challenges, due to differences in income, education and access to digital technologies which play a critical role in shaping parents' perceptions and capacity of supporting CBC.

Current evidence has shown that for a majority of parents especially in economically vulnerable areas such as Kibra sub-county, access to CBC in terms of information and resources remains a challenge (Koros & Achieng, 2025). According to Koros and Achieng (2025), parents especially those in informal employment lack

sufficient time and resources in participating actively in their children's learning. Other studies have shown that limited access to CBC information results in differences in parental knowledge and perceptions which have an effect on the ability to provide learners with the relevant support (Dorothy et al. 2025). Despite this, there is limited empirical evidence on how parental perceptions in general contributes towards skills development among learners in Kibra sub-county. Equally, while previous studies have addressed the role of curriculum policy frameworks, their ability to moderate the association between parental perceptions and learner skills development within Kibra sub-county remains unknown.

Therefore, the present study will investigate the influence of parents' perceptions of the Competency-Based Curriculum on skills development among primary school pupils in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County. Specifically, it examines how perceived accessibility, benefits, challenges and equity of CBC relate to pupils' skills development, while also considering the moderating role of the curriculum policy framework.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive cross sectional survey research design. The design is informed by the fact that the purpose of the study was to evaluate the parental perceptions in regard to issues such as accessibility, equity, benefits and challenges associated with CBC. The study did not involve any manipulation of variables which makes the design appropriate. The design was correlational allowing data to be collected within a specific period in time.

The target population was parents with children in CBC settings within Kibra sub-county in Nairobi County. Stratified random sampling approach was adopted in the study. The selected strata were public and private schools offering the CBC curriculum. Kibra sub-county has a total of 170 elementary schools out of which 16 are public and 154 are private. The target population was six parents from each elementary school, spanning grades one through six. A total of 1,020 parents were targeted in the study. Using Yamane's formula, a total of 288 participants were sampled. Using sample distribution, 26 participants who were parents from public schools and 262 from private schools were selected to the study. A total of 249 participants returned the questionnaires representing a response rate of 86.5%.

Data collection was through the use of questionnaires which were administered among the potential participants. A five-point Likert scale was utilized in quantifying participant perceptions in the questionnaire. A direct approach to participant recruitment was adopted across the selected schools. A pilot study was conducted with 28 participants drawn from Mathare sub-county. Data collected was subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis including moderation analysis. Moderation analysis sought to examine the effect of curriculum policy development on the association between parental perceptions and skills development. Ethical considerations in regard to participant confidentiality, anonymity and data privacy were observed in the study.

III. RESULTS

The study examined parental perceptions of CBC in regard to accessibility, equity, benefits and challenges. Descriptive analysis of the variables was undertaken followed by regression analysis to determine the extent to which the variables influence skills development among learners enrolled in CBC.

The first variable was accessibility of CBC. From Table 1, the overall mean was 3.24 which implies that a majority of participants generally agreed on the accessibility of CBC. Specifically, more parents agreed on the accessibility of CBC information, learning materials, meetings and engagements. However, participants also disagreed on the ability of schools to provide relevant guidelines related to CBC.

Table 1: Accessibility of CBC

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean
As a parent, I have access to CBC information	8%	17%	14%	39%	22%	3.47
My child has access to CBC learning materials	10%	22%	14%	30%	24%	3.28
Digital CBC materials are easily accessible	13%	21%	17%	18%	31%	3.06
I have access to meetings and engagements related to CBC	10%	16%	11%	37%	26%	3.35
School provides relevant guidelines related to CBC	14%	26%	13%	31%	16%	2.88
Overall	11%	20%	14%	31%	24%	3.24

The second variable was equity of CBC. From Table 2, the overall mean was 3.26 implying that a majority of participants agree on equity of CBC. Specifically, participants agreed that CBC provides equal opportunities to learners and that there was fairness in resource allocation across CBC classroom. Access was

also measured in terms of assessment, ability to accommodate the needs of different learners as well as the presence of competent teachers. Findings imply that parents pay attention to these aspects of CBC and their contribution towards learning.

Table 2: Equity of CBC

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean
CBC provides equal learning opportunities to all learners	6%	13%	16%	39%	26%	3.42
There is fairness in resource allocation across CBC classrooms	12%	17%	11%	28%	32%	3.40
The assessment of CBC is fair for all learners	12%	27%		10% 30%	21%	3.21
CBC accommodates the needs of learners with different abilities and talents.	8%	18%		36% 18%	20%	3.13
All learners have access to competent and qualified teachers	8%	17%	36%	24%	15%	3.15
Overall	10%	19%	16%	29%	26%	3.26

The third variable was benefits of CBC. From Table 3, the overall mean was 3.32 which means that a majority of participants generally find CBC to be beneficial to the learners. Study participants agreed that CBC learning has encouraged independent learning, increased practical skills and resulted in holistic learner development. Parental recognition of these benefits is likely to increase their willingness to support learners resulting in improved learner outcomes.

Table 3: Benefits of CBC

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean
CBC has increased practical skills for my child	10%	16%		12% 33%	29%	3.44
CBC has resulted in holistic development for my child	10%	16%		16% 30%	28%	3.31
CBC has enhanced future career readiness for my child	12%	19%		16% 29%	24%	3.25
CBC has encouraged independent learning and development for my child	8%	15%		6% 34%	37%	3.59
CBC has prepared my child for real-life situations	14%	21%		24% 24%	17%	3.03
Overall	11%	18%		15% 29%	27%	3.32

The fourth variable was on challenges associated with the implementation of CBC. From Table 4, the overall mean was 3.42 which means that a majority of participants have an understanding of the different challenges associated with CBC. From the perspective of parents, the most common challenges were the time and effort applied in supporting learners followed by difficulties in understanding CBC requirements. Parents further agreed that CBC require resources which they lack access to. Equally, a fair number of participants also observed that schools and teachers are unable to effectively implement CBC. Such challenges affect the ability of learners to obtain some consistent opportunities for skills development.

Table 4: Perceived Challenges

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean
CBC require resources which I do not have access to	6%	12%	14%		39% 29%	3.39
CBC require time and effort which I am not able to provide	2%	7%	17%		42% 32%	3.81
I find it difficult to understand CBC requirements	5%	11%	11%		34% 39%	3.68
Schools have been unable to effectively implement CBC	8%	18%	36%		18% 20%	3.13
Teachers are not well prepared to handle CBC	9%	19%	35%		20% 17%	3.08
Overall	7%	13%	23%		30% 27%	3.42

Regression analysis was conducted to determine association between the variables. From Table 5, all variables were found to have a significant influence on skills development among learners enrolled in CBC. Findings indicate that accessibility of CBC has a significant influence on skills development ($t = 4.820$; $p < 0.001$). Findings imply that learners who are able to access CBC are most likely to develop skills and competencies required to grow holistically. Similarly, parents with access to CBC resources and information are most likely to easily support learners in skills development.

The variable with the most significant effect was perceived benefits of CBC ($t = 9.706$; $p < 0.001$). In this regard, parents who believe that CBC is able to offer practical skills and can result in holistic development are most likely to support learners in skills development. The benefits associated with CBC implies that parents' cognition and understanding of those benefits can shape how they support their children. Similarly, equity of CBC was found to have a significant influence on skills development among the learners ($t = 3.879$; $p < 0.001$). In this regard, when parents believe that there is equity in terms of equal access to opportunities, they are more likely to be involved in learning and therefore a high likelihood of being involved in learners' skills development.

The study further found perceived challenges to have significant but negative effects on skills development ($t = -8.040$; $p < 0.001$). The findings imply that higher levels of implementation challenges in regard to aspects such as the time and efforts required to support CBC, school resources, teacher preparation and difficulties in understanding the requirements. From the findings, it is evident that higher implementation challenges tend to be associated with lower levels of skills development.

Table 5: Association between Variables

Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
Model	B Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	
1 (Constant)	1.466	.204	7.187	.000	
Accessibility CBC	.208	.043	.253	4.820	.000
Equity CBC	.172	.044	.176	3.879	.000
Perceived Benefits CBC	.478	.049	.508	9.706	.000
Perceived Challenges CBC	-.256	.032	-.058	-8.040	.000

The study also sought to determine the moderation effect of the curriculum development policies on the association between parental perceptions and skills development among learners. Table 6 shows the results of moderation analysis. First, the findings indicate a direct association between parental perceptions and skills development. The moderation effect of curriculum policy framework is evident through the interaction (INT). The moderation was significant ($t = 9.290$; $p < 0.001$). The findings mean that parental perceptions are most likely to translate into enhanced skills development in situations where there are strong policies. The moderation was enhancing which would mean that the effect of parental perceptions on skills development among the learners is most likely to increase with an increase or presence of strong curriculum related policies.

Table 6: Moderation Analysis

Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	1.397	.218	6.404	.000
Parental Perceptions	.530	.077	.381	6.895
INT	.084	.009	.514	9.290

IV. DISCUSSION

Parental perceptions were measured by considering accessibility, equity, benefits and challenges associated with CBC. On accessibility, the study found that parents' perceptions of access to information, resources and materials is likely to increase their understanding of CBC resulting in increased skills development among the learners. Findings are consistent with Muchira et al. (2023) who observed that when parents are not well informed of their personal responsibilities, their engagement and support towards learners remains low. In this case, parents who perceive CBC to be accessible are most likely to identify learning materials and resources in ways that could enhance learner competencies. The findings are particularly important in Kibra sub-county where socio-economic contexts may have an influence on accessibility.

Study also found equity of CBC to have a positive and significant influence on skills development among the learners. Study found that parents pay attention on issues such as learning opportunities, resource allocation

and presence of competent teachers. Consistent with scholars such as Mwita and Onyango (2022), parents who perceive CBC to be equitable are most likely to encourage their children to participate in classroom and practical activities which is likely to have an effect on their skills and competencies. However, the relationship does not imply causal effect meaning that higher perceptions of equity of CBC would only improve conditions required for competency development.

The variable with the strongest influence on skills development was benefits of CBC. The study found parental perceptions of CBC to result in improved skills development among the learners. The findings imply that parents who understand the benefits of CBC in regard to areas such as creativity and digital skills are most likely to offer support to learners in ways that would improve their skills and competencies. The findings confirm the observations of scholars such as Namubiru et al. (2024) that the parents who understand the benefits of CBC are most likely to encourage the learners to pursue their skills and competencies beyond the classroom. The findings confirm that parents perceive CBC to be relevant to learners which is likely to increase support and engagement in CBC activities.

The study found the perceived challenges of CBC to have negative and significant influence on CBC. This means that higher levels of perceived challenges are likely to be associated with lower levels of skills development among learners. Consistent with Opondo et al. (2023), the challenges affect the ability of parents to offer support from home which also has an influence on skills and competency development. The major challenges identified were lack of time and effort to support CBC as well as the difficulties associated with understanding CBC requirements. Understanding these issues becomes a critical factor in improving CBC within Kibra sub-county.

Lastly, the study found curriculum policy framework to have a significant and enhancing moderating effect on the association between parental perceptions and skills development among the learners. This means that the presence of supportive policies such as teacher development and presence of clear implementation guidelines creates an environment where parents are able to perceive CBC positively. The findings imply that in CBC settings, it is not only enough to determine parental perceptions but also the policy environment within which learning occurs.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that parental perceptions on CBC are likely to have an influence on skills development among the learners. Parents' perceptions on issues such as accessibility of CBC in terms of information and resources, equity in terms of access to equitable learning opportunities, understanding of benefits such as acquisition of practical skills as well as challenges such as time and resources are likely to shape parents' participation and involvement which eventually is likely to have an impact on learner skills development. The effect of such perceptions is however likely to be higher in situations where schools have strong policy frameworks.

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