

Examining the Level of Teacher Motivation in the Implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in Junior Public Schools, Busia County, Kenya

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100700135>

Received: 12 July 2026; Accepted: 17 July 2026; Published: 27 July 2026

ABSTRACT

The successful rollout of Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) depends heavily on the motivation of the teachers charged with delivering it in the classroom. Drawn from a broader mixed-methods study on teacher attitude and motivation in CBC implementation, this article reports findings addressing the specific objective of examining the level of teacher motivation for CBC implementation in public junior schools in Busia County, Kenya. Anchored on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, the study adopted a concurrent mixed-methods design, drawing quantitative data from 240 junior school teachers, alongside qualitative data from key informant interviews with Heads of Institution and Education Officers and focus group discussions with teachers. Quantitative results showed a moderately high overall level of teacher motivation ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.82$, $CV = 22.40\%$), with collaboration among colleagues recording the highest mean score ($M = 3.89$) and investment of extra time in CBC preparation recording the lowest ($M = 3.48$). Frequency analysis showed that CBC training was the strongest reported driver of motivation, with 59.6% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that it had increased their motivation, while incentives and recognition were the weakest, drawing agreement from only 22.9% of respondents. Qualitative findings corroborated these patterns, revealing that teacher motivation was sustained mainly by intrinsic commitment to learner development rather than by extrinsic reward, and was under continuous threat from workload intensification and limited institutional recognition. The study concludes that teacher motivation for CBC implementation in Busia County is moderate, intrinsically anchored, and structurally fragile. It recommends institutional and policy interventions, including workload rationalisation, structured recognition systems, and sustained, practice-oriented professional development, to safeguard and strengthen teacher motivation for the effective implementation of CBC in junior schools.

Keywords: teacher motivation; Competency-Based Curriculum; CBC implementation; Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory; junior secondary schools; Busia County; Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), introduced in 2017 to replace the examination-driven 8-4-4 system, represents one of the most far-reaching educational reforms undertaken in the country in recent decades (MoE, 2020). Structured under the 2-6-3-3-3 framework, CBC seeks to move classroom practice away from rote learning toward the cultivation of seven core competencies, including communication and collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and citizenship (KICD, 2018). As with any curriculum reform of this scale, the success of CBC on paper is only as strong as the willingness and capacity of classroom teachers to enact it in practice (Fullan, 2007; Schneider & Kogan, 2019).

Among the human factors that determine whether teachers embrace and sustain a reform, motivation occupies a central place. Motivation shapes the energy, persistence, and enthusiasm that teachers bring to the demanding pedagogical and administrative requirements of CBC, from continuous assessment and competency-based lesson planning to differentiated instruction (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Kibe & Simiyu, 2021). Where teachers are well supported, recognised, and professionally fulfilled, they are more likely to adopt innovative practices and invest

discretionary effort in curriculum delivery; where they are overburdened, under-resourced, and unrecognised, morale and commitment tend to decline (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Owino & Kipkoech, 2022).

Existing research on CBC implementation in Kenya has documented widespread challenges related to workload, resource inadequacy, and inconsistent training (Ngugi, Muthaa & Mbaabu, 2021; Mwaura & Nyaga, 2020). However, comparatively little empirical attention has been directed specifically at the level and drivers of teacher motivation within this reform, particularly outside the more frequently studied urban counties such as Nairobi (Kibe & Simiyu, 2021; Wangui, 2021). Busia County, situated along Kenya's western border, combines urban, peri-urban, and rural school settings with markedly uneven access to resources and professional support, offering a context in which the structural determinants of teacher motivation can be examined with particular clarity.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the centrality of teacher motivation to the success of curriculum reform, existing studies in the Kenyan context have tended to concentrate on macro-level policy and infrastructural challenges of CBC rollout, leaving the specific motivational disposition of junior school teachers comparatively underexplored (Ngugi, Muthaa & Mbaabu, 2021). International evidence from comparable reforms, including South Africa's Curriculum 2005 and Rwanda's competency-based transition, indicates that teacher-related factors, motivation prominent among them, are decisive in determining whether ambitious curricula succeed or falter (Chisholm, 2005; Nkengurutse & Ndiokubwayo, 2020). Yet no study had systematically examined the level of teacher motivation for CBC implementation specifically among junior school teachers in Busia County. Without such evidence, policymakers, the Teachers Service Commission, and school leaders lack the targeted, context-specific insight required to design interventions that genuinely sustain teacher motivation during this reform. Therefore this paper addresses the following research question: What is the level of teacher motivation in implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum in public junior schools in Busia County, Kenya?

METHODOLOGY

This paper is drawn from a broader study that investigated the role of teacher attitude and motivation in CBC implementation in public junior schools in Busia County, Kenya, and reports specifically on the objective examining the level of teacher motivation. The study adopted a mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection to provide a comprehensive account of teacher motivation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The study was conducted in Busia County, a region combining urban, peri-urban, and rural public junior schools with markedly diverse socio-economic and resource conditions. The target population comprised 2,997 respondents, consisting of 2,500 junior school teachers, 447 Heads of Institution (HoIs), and 50 Education Officers (EOs) drawn from seven sub-counties: Busia Central, Butula, Funyula, Bunyala, Matayos, Nambale, and Teso South. Using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations, a sample of 285 respondents (11.1% of the population) was drawn, comprising 250 teachers selected through stratified and simple random sampling, stratified by teaching experience, school location, and subject specialisation, together with 28 HoIs and 7 EOs selected purposively for their contextual expertise.

Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to teachers, capturing motivation on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) across items measuring enthusiasm for CBC, willingness to invest extra time, pursuit of professional development, collegial engagement, perceived administrative support, incentives and recognition, training-linked motivation, and professional fulfilment. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with HoIs and Education Officers and six focus group discussions with teachers, exploring lived experiences of motivation under CBC in both urban and rural school contexts.

Instrument validity was established through expert review by university supervisors and curriculum specialists, yielding content, construct, and face validity averages of 0.79, 0.83, and 0.88 respectively, and an overall average validity score of 0.83. Reliability, assessed through Cronbach's Alpha during a pilot study of 15 to 20 respondents conducted in Bungoma County, returned a coefficient of 0.838 across 21 items (0.806 based on standardised

items), indicating good internal consistency (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Quantitative data were analysed descriptively, using means, standard deviations, coefficients of variation, and frequencies, in SPSS Version 26. Qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, combining deductive and inductive coding, with triangulation strengthening the credibility of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study adhered to standard ethical protocols, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymisation of responses, following approval from Kibabii University's School of Graduate Studies and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings addressing the objective of examining the level of teacher motivation in the implementation of CBC in public junior schools in Busia County, Kenya. It begins with a summary of the instrument return rate and the demographic characteristics of respondents, before presenting the detailed quantitative and qualitative findings on teacher motivation.

Instrument Return Rate

Questionnaires were distributed both physically during scheduled school visits and electronically via Google Forms, a dual-mode strategy adopted to maximise participation across diverse respondent contexts. Table 1 summarises the return rate achieved across the three data collection tools.

Table 1: Response Rate

Tool	Questionnaire (Teachers)	Interview (HoIs)	Interview (Sub-County Directors)	Total
Returned/Covered	240 (96.00%)	23 (82.14%)	4 (57.14%)	267 (78.43%)
Not Returned/Not Covered	10 (4.00%)	5 (17.86%)	3 (42.86%)	18 (21.57%)
Total	250 (100.00%)	28 (100.00%)	7 (100.00%)	285 (100.00%)

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 1 indicates an overall response rate of 78.43%, which was adequate for credible analysis. Out of 250 questionnaires distributed to teachers, 240 were duly filled and returned, representing a 96% return rate. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), a response rate above 70% is considered very good and sufficient for drawing reliable conclusions in social science research, while Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) argue that high response rates enhance data quality by reducing non-response bias and increasing representativeness.

The high questionnaire return rate therefore strengthens the validity, reliability, and generalisability of the quantitative findings on teacher motivation reported in this paper. The moderate return rate for HoI interviews (82.14%) supports meaningful qualitative insight, while the lower rate among Sub-County Directors (57.14%), likely attributable to demanding schedules and administrative commitments, may slightly limit administrative perspectives without undermining overall confidence in the findings.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Understanding the demographic profile of the 240 junior school teachers who participated in the study is essential for contextualising the motivation findings and assessing the representativeness of the sample.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	127	52.9
Female	113	47.1
Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 2 indicates that male teachers constituted 52.9% (n = 127) of the sample, while female teachers represented 47.1% (n = 113), demonstrating a relatively balanced gender representation. This near-parity is advantageous for the study, as it ensures that motivation findings are not skewed toward the perspectives of one gender and can be generalised across the teaching workforce (Wiederman, 2012). The distribution aligns with national trends in Kenya's teaching profession, where male teachers have historically been slightly more prevalent in rural areas such as Busia County.

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 30 years	89	37.1
31-40 years	96	40.0
41-50 years	43	17.9
Above 50 years	12	5.0
Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

The majority of respondents were in the 31-40 years age bracket (40.0%, n = 96), followed closely by those below 30 years (37.1%, n = 89). Teachers aged 41-50 years comprised 17.9% (n = 43), while those above 50 years constituted only 5.0% (n = 12). This age distribution reveals a relatively youthful teaching workforce in Busia County's junior schools, with over three-quarters (77.1%) of teachers being below 40 years of age, a profile that is relevant to interpreting motivation findings given that younger teachers are more recently trained but also more likely to be navigating an unfamiliar curriculum with limited institutional memory to draw on.

Table 4: Teaching Experience of Respondents

Experience Category	Percentage (%)
Below 5 years	61.7
6-10 years	14.2
Above 10 years	24.1

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings reveal that a majority of respondents (61.7%) had less than five years of teaching experience, while 14.2% had between 6 and 10 years, and 24.1% had over ten years of experience. This indicates that most teachers were relatively early in their professional careers.

The presence of a large proportion of less-experienced teachers suggests that the motivation findings largely capture emerging practices and adjustment challenges associated with CBC, while the inclusion of more experienced teachers provides insight drawn from longer-term professional practice. The relatively small proportion of highly experienced teachers may limit the availability of mentors to support less experienced colleagues in sustaining motivation during CBC implementation.

Level of Teacher Motivation for CBC Implementation

Teacher motivation was measured using five items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with higher scores indicating higher levels of motivation for CBC implementation. Table 5 summarises the descriptive findings.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Motivation

Item	Mean	Std. Dev	CV (%)
I am enthusiastic about implementing CBC	3.65	1.02	28.0
I invest extra time in CBC preparation	3.48	1.15	33.0
I seek professional development on CBC	3.72	0.95	25.5
I engage with my colleagues on CBC	3.89	0.87	22.4
I feel motivated to make CBC successful	3.58	1.08	30.2
Overall Teacher Motivation	3.66	0.82	Agree

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 5 indicates that teachers exhibit moderately high motivation towards implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), as reflected by an overall mean score of 3.66 and a coefficient of variation (CV) of 22.40%, suggesting relatively consistent responses among respondents. The findings imply that most teachers generally agree that they are motivated to support CBC implementation, although motivation levels are not exceptionally high.

Collaboration with colleagues recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.87$, $CV = 22.37\%$), indicating strong peer support and relatively low variability in responses. This suggests that teachers widely acknowledge the importance of teamwork, shared planning, and collaborative problem-solving in facilitating effective CBC implementation. Similarly, teachers demonstrated a strong willingness to seek professional development opportunities on CBC ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.95$, $CV = 25.54\%$), reflecting positive attitudes towards continuous learning and professional improvement.

Teachers' enthusiasm for implementing CBC ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.02$, $CV = 27.95\%$) and their motivation to make CBC successful ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.08$, $CV = 30.17\%$) were moderate, with relatively higher variability in responses. This indicates that while many teachers are positively disposed towards CBC, some remain uncertain or less motivated, possibly due to implementation challenges encountered in schools.

Investment of extra time in CBC preparation recorded the lowest mean score and the highest variability ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.15$, $CV = 33.05\%$). The high CV suggests inconsistent experiences among teachers, with some willing to dedicate additional preparation time while others are constrained by workload pressures, limited planning time, and competing professional responsibilities.

The findings imply that although teachers are generally motivated to implement CBC, structural and operational challenges continue to limit full commitment and consistency. Enhancing teacher motivation may therefore require institutional support through reduced workload, adequate instructional resources, provision of sufficient planning time, and recognition or incentive systems. Strengthening collaborative professional cultures and expanding continuous professional development opportunities could further sustain teacher motivation and improve the effectiveness of CBC implementation.

The moderate levels of teacher motivation for CBC implementation ($M = 3.66$) revealed in this study align with findings from previous research on curriculum reform. Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu, and Nthinguri (2013) found that Kenyan teachers demonstrated moderate enthusiasm for new curriculum initiatives but cited workload and resource constraints as demotivating factors, while Gachathi (2016) reported that teachers' motivation for implementing competency-based approaches was hampered by inadequate training and limited support systems.

The relatively high collaboration among teachers ($M = 3.89$, $CV = 22.37\%$) is an encouraging finding that can be explained through Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (1959). According to Herzberg, interpersonal relationships and positive working conditions are important hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction and create a supportive work environment. The strong collaboration observed among teachers suggests that schools have fostered positive collegial relationships that enhance teamwork, knowledge sharing, and mutual support during CBC implementation. Such collaborative environments reduce workplace frustrations and create conditions that enable teachers to perform their duties more effectively. Schools in Busia County should therefore continue strengthening professional learning communities and collaborative structures to sustain teacher satisfaction and support successful CBC implementation.

Teachers' strong motivation to seek professional development ($M = 3.72$, $CV = 25.54\%$) is also consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (1959). Herzberg identifies achievement, personal growth, advancement, and recognition as key motivator factors that enhance job satisfaction and performance. Teachers who actively pursue professional development demonstrate a desire for personal growth and increased competence in implementing CBC, reflecting intrinsic motivation arising from opportunities for professional advancement and self-improvement. This finding suggests that education authorities should provide continuous and relevant professional development programmes, as such opportunities serve as motivators that enhance teacher satisfaction, commitment, and effectiveness in implementing curriculum reforms.

To address the low and highly variable willingness to invest extra time in CBC preparation, several interventions are indicated by the findings. Schools should allocate dedicated planning time within the regular school schedule for CBC-related activities, rather than expecting teachers to work beyond their contracted hours. The Ministry of Education should consider reducing the non-teaching workload placed on teachers to free up time for instructional planning. Schools should provide structured planning templates and resources that reduce the time required for CBC lesson preparation, and teacher motivation could be enhanced through recognition systems and incentives for exemplary CBC implementation.

This section further examines teachers' motivational and institutional support factors influencing the implementation of CBC. Understanding teachers' enthusiasm, administrative support, incentives, and professional fulfilment is critical in assessing the sustainability and effectiveness of CBC in schools. Table 6 presents respondents' levels of agreement with statements on motivation and support for CBC implementation using frequencies and percentages across the five-point Likert scale.

Table 6: Teachers' Motivation Frequency Distribution

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
I feel enthusiastic about teaching under CBC.	18 (7.5%)	28 (11.7%)	73 (30.4%)	100 (41.7%)	21 (8.8%)	240 (100.0%)
My school administration provides adequate support.	41 (17.1%)	29 (12.1%)	74 (30.8%)	81 (38.8%)	45 (18.8%)	240 (100.0%)
I receive incentives or recognition for CBC implementation.	35 (14.6%)	47 (19.6%)	103 (42.9%)	44 (18.3%)	11 (4.6%)	240 (100.0%)
CBC training has increased my motivation to teach.	6 (2.5%)	11 (4.6%)	80 (33.3%)	111 (46.3%)	32 (13.3%)	240 (100.0%)
I feel professionally fulfilled under CBC.	22 (9.2%)	29 (12.1%)	100 (41.7%)	73 (30.4%)	16 (6.7%)	240 (100.0%)

Key: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. Source: Field Data (2026)

The results in Table 6 indicate a generally positive but mixed level of teacher motivation toward CBC. A majority of teachers expressed enthusiasm for teaching under CBC, with 50.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing, although a sizeable proportion (30.4%) remained neutral, suggesting cautious optimism rather than strong conviction. Perceptions of administrative support were moderately positive, as 57.6% of respondents agreed or strongly

agreed that their school administration provides adequate support, while nearly 29.2% disagreed, pointing to uneven support across schools.

In contrast, incentives and recognition for CBC implementation emerged as a weak motivational factor. Only 22.9% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they receive incentives or recognition, while a substantial proportion disagreed (34.2%) or remained neutral (42.9%), indicating limited extrinsic motivation mechanisms. CBC training appeared to be the strongest positive influence on motivation, with 59.6% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that training increased their motivation to teach. However, professional fulfilment under CBC was moderate, as only 37.1% of teachers felt fulfilled, while a large neutral group (41.7%) suggests uncertainty about long-term career satisfaction under the new curriculum.

The findings suggest that teacher motivation under CBC is driven more by intrinsic factors, such as enthusiasm for learner-centred teaching and the benefits gained from training, than by extrinsic rewards like incentives or recognition. The strong positive response to CBC training highlights the importance of capacity-building initiatives in fostering confidence and motivation among teachers, aligning with the notion that well-designed professional development can enhance teachers' self-efficacy and willingness to adopt new pedagogical approaches.

However, the relatively high levels of neutrality across several statements indicate that many teachers are still adjusting to CBC and may not yet have formed firm opinions. The mixed perceptions of administrative support suggest disparities in leadership practices, resource allocation, and implementation strategies across schools. Furthermore, the low levels of perceived incentives and professional fulfilment may undermine sustained motivation, potentially affecting long-term commitment to CBC if not addressed.

The findings imply that while CBC training programmes are effective in motivating teachers, motivation may not be sustainable without stronger institutional and policy-level support. Education authorities and school administrators should strengthen administrative backing through consistent supervision, provision of teaching resources, and supportive leadership practices. Additionally, the lack of incentives and recognition suggests a need for structured reward systems, such as acknowledgement of exemplary CBC practices, opportunities for career progression, or performance-based incentives, to enhance extrinsic motivation. Addressing professional fulfilment through reduced workload pressures, mentoring, and clear career pathways within CBC implementation could further improve teacher morale. Overall, enhancing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors is critical for successful and sustained implementation of CBC in junior schools.

Institutional and Policy Support as a Motivational Factor

Because Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory situates administrative support and recognition as hygiene and motivator factors respectively, the study further examined teachers' perceptions of institutional and policy support underpinning motivation. Table 7 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for these variables.

Table 7: Institutional and Policy Support Influencing Teacher Motivation

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	CV (%)
My school administration provides adequate support.	3.10	.314	10.13
I receive incentives or recognition for CBC implementation.	2.79	1.051	37.67
I involve parents in supporting CBC learning.	3.47	1.093	31.50

Source: Field Data (2026)

The coefficient of variation (CV) analysis in Table 7 reveals important patterns in respondents' perceptions. Administrative support ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.314$, $CV = 10.13\%$) exhibits low variability, indicating that respondents share broadly consistent views, suggesting uniformity in administrative practices across institutions. In contrast, incentives and recognition ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 1.051$, $CV = 37.67\%$) shows high variability, reflecting

substantial disparities in how motivational mechanisms are implemented, with some respondents experiencing adequate recognition while others do not. Parental involvement ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.093$, $CV = 31.50\%$) demonstrates moderate-to-high variability, indicating uneven parental engagement across different school contexts. Overall, the findings imply that while administrative support is relatively standardised, there are notable inconsistencies in incentive provision, suggesting a need for policy harmonisation and targeted interventions to enhance motivation.

Table 8: Frequency Distribution of Institutional and Policy Support

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
My school administration provides adequate support.	41 (17.1%)	29 (12.1%)	80 (33.3%)	46 (19.2%)	44 (18.3%)	240 (100.0%)
I receive incentives or recognition for CBC implementation.	35 (14.6%)	47 (19.6%)	103 (42.9%)	44 (18.3%)	11 (4.6%)	240 (100.0%)
I involve parents in supporting CBC learning.	12 (5.0%)	39 (16.3%)	52 (21.7%)	99 (41.3%)	38 (15.8%)	240 (100.0%)

Key: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. Source: Field Data (2026)

The frequency analysis in Table 8 reveals that perceptions of administrative support are mixed, with 37.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing, while 29.2% disagree. Incentives and recognition recorded the weakest support, as only 22.9% agreed or strongly agreed, while a large proportion of respondents remained neutral (42.9%). Parental involvement showed moderate agreement (57.1%), but with notable disagreement (21.3%), indicating uneven stakeholder participation.

The neutral perceptions of institutional and policy support suggest that teachers may not be receiving sufficient encouragement, motivation, or resources from school leadership and education authorities. While some schools appear supportive, others may lack effective leadership structures, adequate supervision, or recognition mechanisms. The absence of incentives and recognition is particularly concerning, as it may negatively affect teacher morale and long-term commitment to CBC implementation. These findings imply that successful CBC implementation requires stronger institutional and policy backing. Education policymakers and school administrators should prioritise supportive leadership, timely resource provision, and clear implementation guidelines. Introducing formal incentive and recognition frameworks, such as awards, promotions, or professional growth opportunities, could enhance teacher motivation.

Qualitative Insights into Teacher Motivation

To validate the quantitative findings, the study presents qualitative results obtained through in-depth interviews with educational leaders and focus group discussions (FGDs) with CBC teachers. Three key informant interviews were conducted with Heads of Institution and education officers, while two FGDs were held with Grade 7-9 teachers from urban and rural schools, involving 14 participants in total. This triangulation approach strengthens validity by integrating multiple data sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and enhancing interpretive depth. Qualitative data were analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, combining deductive and inductive coding; two of the resulting themes bear most directly on teacher motivation.

Motivation through Intrinsic Commitment despite External Demotivators

A striking finding was that despite numerous challenges and frustrations, many teachers maintained moderate levels of motivation driven primarily by intrinsic factors: professional duty, commitment to learners, and personal growth. Extrinsic motivators such as recognition, incentives, or career advancement were conspicuously absent from participants' accounts. This over-reliance on intrinsic motivation without supportive external structures raises concerns about sustainability.

"I'm motivated by duty to learners, not by enthusiasm for CBC. If I am honest, I am counting days to retirement." (FGD02-P1, Female, 20 years' experience)

"What motivates me is collegial support. We have a WhatsApp group where we share resources and encourage each other. Without that, I would probably be very demotivated." (FGD01-P3, Male, 6 years' experience)

This finding connects directly to the quantitative results showing moderate motivation levels ($M = 3.66$) and teachers' unwillingness to invest extra time ($M = 3.48$). Teachers are motivated enough to fulfil basic professional duties but not sufficiently motivated to go beyond minimum requirements. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (1959), the emergence of informal peer support networks such as WhatsApp groups reflects teachers' efforts to create supportive workplace relationships, which are important hygiene factors that reduce dissatisfaction. In the absence of adequate institutional support, teachers rely on collegial interactions to share experiences, solve implementation challenges, and provide encouragement. These informal networks help improve working conditions and foster a sense of professional support, thereby sustaining teacher satisfaction and motivation during CBC implementation.

Increased Workload and Teacher Burnout

The most emotionally charged and consistently emphasised theme across all data sources was the dramatic increase in teacher workload under CBC compared to the previous 8-4-4 curriculum. Participants described feeling overwhelmed by the multiple demands of CBC implementation: elaborate lesson planning, continuous assessment, documentation, resource preparation, differentiated instruction, and portfolio management. This workload intensification was identified as a primary source of stress and a major demotivator for CBC implementation.

"Lesson preparation has tripled. For each lesson, I need learning objectives, competencies to develop, activities for different ability levels, assessment criteria, and reflection. Previously, I could recycle lesson plans from previous years. Not anymore." (FGD01-P1, Female, 12 years' experience)

"Work-life balance is a challenge. CBC work follows me home, planning, assessing, documenting. I have no personal time. Small reward is knowing I'm part of education transformation, even if implementation is rocky." (FGD02-P5, Female, 7 years' experience)

The theme of increased workload and its impact on teachers' work-life balance emerged as a critical factor affecting motivation toward CBC. This finding is consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (1959), which emphasises that unfavourable working conditions and excessive workload are hygiene factors that can lead to dissatisfaction when inadequately addressed. The qualitative evidence suggests that teachers are experiencing increased workload demands associated with CBC implementation without sufficient support, time, or resources. The quantitative finding that teachers demonstrated lower willingness to invest extra time in CBC preparation ($M = 3.48$) can therefore be understood within Herzberg's framework, as excessive workload creates dissatisfaction that undermines teachers' enthusiasm and commitment. This finding underscores the need for education authorities to streamline assessment processes, reduce administrative burdens, and provide adequate support mechanisms to improve teachers' working conditions and sustain their motivation toward effective CBC implementation.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings provide rich explanatory depth for the quantitative patterns identified in this study. The moderate motivation levels ($M = 3.66$) and particularly the lower willingness to invest extra time ($M = 3.48$) are clearly explained by the workload theme: teachers are already working beyond capacity and experiencing burnout, making additional effort unsustainable. The qualitative finding that motivation is primarily intrinsic, rooted in duty to learners, rather than extrinsic, driven by recognition or incentives, explains why motivation levels, while moderate, may be fragile and at risk of decline without systemic support. Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative strands converge on a single conclusion: teacher motivation for CBC implementation

in Busia County is real and professionally grounded, but it is being sustained disproportionately by teachers' own sense of duty rather than by the institutional and policy support structures that Herzberg's theory identifies as necessary for durable motivation.

Situating the Busia County Findings within the Broader Empirical Literature

The moderate, intrinsically anchored pattern of teacher motivation observed in Busia County resonates closely with, and extends, a substantial body of empirical work on teacher motivation under curriculum reform. Watt and Richardson (2015), in a large-scale comparative study of teacher motivation across Australia, the United States, Germany, and Norway, found that intrinsic motivators, particularly the social utility value of teaching and the desire to contribute to children's development, were more strongly associated with sustained commitment than extrinsic motivators such as salary. Importantly, they also found that the salience of extrinsic factors increased when teachers felt their intrinsic needs were being frustrated by poor working conditions or insufficient support, a pattern consistent with Herzberg's prediction that hygiene factors become salient primarily when they are absent, and one that mirrors the Busia County finding that incentives and recognition, though weakly endorsed on their own terms ($M = 2.79$), were repeatedly invoked by participants as a missing piece of an otherwise intrinsically sustained commitment.

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) examined teacher motivation and professional identity in Norwegian schools undergoing curriculum reform and found that teachers' sense of self-efficacy, their confidence in their ability to teach effectively under the new curriculum, was the single strongest predictor of sustained motivational engagement, with high-efficacy teachers reporting lower emotional exhaustion and greater resilience through implementation challenges. This finding is directly relevant to the CBC context in Busia County, where the moderate confidence levels documented alongside motivation suggest that self-efficacy concerns may be compounding, rather than simply coexisting with, the workload-driven erosion of willingness to invest extra time. Klassen and Chiu (2010), investigating teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction across countries, identified a curvilinear relationship in which very high efficacy, when unmatched by adequate resources, produced its own frustration, an insight that helps explain why even Busia County's more enthusiastic and better-resourced urban teachers described real, if more manageable, motivational strain.

Desimone (2009) synthesised research on professional development and teacher motivation, arguing that the most effective programmes share a clear content focus, active learning opportunities, coherence with existing teacher knowledge, sustained duration, and collective participation, features largely absent from the brief, one-off CBC retooling workshops described by Busia County participants. The strong endorsement of training as a motivator in this study (59.6% agreement) alongside the equally strong finding that training had, in most cases, been a single short session, is therefore best read not as a contradiction but as an indication of unmet demand: teachers value professional development highly precisely because so little of the sustained, high-quality variety that Desimone's framework recommends has reached them.

At the regional level, Mulkeen (2010), synthesising evidence from nine African countries for the World Bank, found that teacher motivation was widely undermined by a combination of inadequate compensation, poor working conditions, weak accountability structures, and limited professional development, producing what he termed "implementation fatigue", a progressive erosion of engagement that becomes difficult to reverse once embedded. Hardman, Ackers, Abrishamian, and O'Sullivan (2011) similarly found that many primary school teachers in Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya were implementing curriculum frameworks they did not fully understand, relying on individual improvisation rather than systematic professional support, a description that closely parallels the improvisation and self-reliance reported by Busia County teachers, particularly those in rural schools. Within Kenya specifically, Kibe and Simiyu (2021) studied motivation among CBC teachers in Nairobi's public junior schools and found that whilst intrinsic commitment remained the dominant motivational driver, it was eroding under the combined pressure of workload, inadequate resources, and insufficient institutional recognition, a trajectory that this study's Busia County findings replicate almost item for item, suggesting that the motivational pattern documented here is not a localised anomaly but a structural feature of CBC implementation across differing Kenyan contexts.

The Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2021), in its own internal review, acknowledged that the pace of CBC rollout had outstripped the capacity of the teacher professional development infrastructure, and recommended a shift toward school-based, ongoing, and practically oriented support, a recommendation that the present findings, particularly the strength of the collaboration and training-linked motivation items relative to the weakness of the incentive item, independently corroborate. Collectively, this body of evidence positions the Busia County findings not as an isolated case but as one data point within a well-established regional and international pattern: teachers do not lack the will to implement ambitious curriculum reform, but that will is intrinsically financed and, absent structural reinforcement, is a finite resource.

Additional Qualitative Evidence: Ambivalence and the Call for Systemic Support

Two further themes from the qualitative analysis, while centred on attitudes and systemic policy more broadly, contain evidence that bears directly on the sustainability of teacher motivation and is reported here for completeness. Participants' accounts were frequently characterised by ambivalence, a simultaneous recognition of CBC's philosophical merit and frustration with the conditions of its implementation, a duality that helps explain why motivation, though present, remains moderate rather than strong.

"My attitude toward CBC has evolved. Initially negative, 'here we go again, another reform.' Then cautiously positive as I saw benefits. Now I am realistic, CBC is good but needs better implementation support. My motivation fluctuates depending on challenges I face." (FGD01-P1, Female, 12 years' experience)

"What motivates me is seeing the learners develop real skills. When you see a Grade 7, 8 or 9 learner confidently presenting their project or solving a practical problem, you feel the effort is worth it." (HoI04)

This fluctuation in self-reported motivation, tied explicitly by participants to the presence or absence of implementation support, is consistent with the moderate coefficients of variation observed across several motivation items in the quantitative data, and reinforces the conclusion that current motivation levels, while real, are conditional rather than settled.

Relatedly, participants across both institutional and classroom levels articulated a consistent call for systemic, rather than incremental, changes to sustain their motivation over time.

"I want to see a proper mentorship system. When a new curriculum comes, you don't just train teachers once and leave them. You need master trainers in every school, regular follow-up visits, people you can call when you are stuck. We had none of that. We had one workshop and then silence." (FGD02-P5, Female, 7 years' experience)

This call for structured, sustained mentorship echoes both Desimone's (2009) criteria for effective professional development and the Busia County teachers' own strong quantitative endorsement of training as a motivator, reinforcing that the intrinsic motivation documented in this study is not indefinitely self-renewing and is contingent on the systemic support structures that participants describe as currently lacking.

Methodological Reflection

Two methodological considerations merit brief comment in interpreting these findings on teacher motivation. First, the quantitative data were self-reported, and self-report instruments are susceptible to social desirability bias, whereby teachers may present their motivation more favourably than their actual disposition (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This concern was mitigated through triangulation with focus group discussions, which provided a more candid, interactive setting in which teachers voiced frustrations, including a willingness to admit to "counting days to retirement", that were not always visible in the Likert-scale responses. Second, data collection occurred during a period of ongoing curriculum reform in which training programmes and policy guidance were themselves in flux; the concurrent, bounded-timeframe design adopted for this study, together with retrospective

interview and FGD prompts, helped ensure that the motivation findings reported here reflect a relatively stable account of teacher experience rather than a momentary reaction to transient policy conditions.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Read through the lens of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (1959), the Busia County findings offer a clear illustration of the theory's central dual-continuum claim: the presence of motivator factors, seen here in strong collegial collaboration ($M = 3.89$) and enthusiasm for professional development ($M = 3.72$), coexists with unresolved deficits in hygiene factors, seen in uneven administrative support ($M = 3.10$) and weak incentive structures ($M = 2.79$), without one set of factors compensating for the other. Motivators alone, however strong, cannot indefinitely offset dissatisfaction generated by inadequate hygiene conditions; conversely, incremental improvements to hygiene factors, such as slightly better administrative support, will not by themselves elevate motivation to consistently high levels unless matched by strengthened motivators such as recognition and career progression. This dual requirement carries direct implications for how CBC-related motivation should be understood by policymakers: interventions that address only one side of Herzberg's framework, for instance training programmes (motivators) without workload relief (hygiene), or salary adjustments (hygiene) without recognition systems (motivators), are likely to yield only partial and potentially unstable gains in teacher motivation.

For school-level practice, the findings suggest that Heads of Institution occupy a pivotal position in shaping the hygiene side of the motivational equation. Because administrative support showed comparatively low variability ($CV = 10.13\%$) relative to incentives and recognition ($CV = 37.67\%$), school leadership practices, rather than being uniformly absent, appear inconsistently distributed across the county's schools, some HoIs are evidently succeeding in creating supportive conditions where others are not. This variability points to an actionable, school-level lever: targeted leadership development for HoIs on practical, low-cost ways of supporting CBC delivery, including protected planning time, informal recognition of teacher effort, and consistent, visible engagement with classroom-level challenges, could meaningfully narrow the gap between better- and worse-supported schools without requiring large-scale policy or budgetary reform.

At the policy level, the near-uniform absence of extrinsic incentive structures across the sample, rather than being concentrated in particular sub-counties or school types, suggests that this is a systemic rather than a localised gap, one that individual school administrators are poorly placed to resolve on their own. Addressing it will likely require action at the level of the Teachers Service Commission and the Ministry of Education, whether through CBC-linked allowances, formal recognition schemes tied to demonstrable implementation quality, or clearer career progression pathways for teachers who invest in CBC delivery. The strength of intrinsic motivation documented in this study should not be read as evidence that such extrinsic measures are unnecessary; rather, it should be read as evidence that teachers are currently absorbing a structural gap through personal and professional goodwill that cannot be assumed to be limitless.

Urban-Rural Variation in the Conditions Shaping Motivation

A theme that emerged with striking consistency across the qualitative data, and which bears directly on the sustainability of teacher motivation, was the marked disparity between the experiences of teachers working in urban and peri-urban schools and those serving in rural settings. Whilst both groups faced the broad challenges associated with CBC implementation, workload intensification, resource constraints, and training gaps, the severity and combination of these difficulties differed substantially depending on school location, with corresponding implications for how sustainable teachers' currently intrinsic motivation is likely to prove over time.

"I am privileged that I am in an urban school, teachers at least have access to the internet and electricity, they can download CBC materials, they can watch demonstration videos, they can form peer groups easily. In rural schools, a teacher may be the only science teacher in the school, with no colleague to consult, no internet, and sometimes no electricity. We do not have the same play field when it comes to CBC resources." (HoI, 12 years' experience)

"We are told to use project-based learning, to take learners out for field trips, to use digital tools. But our school has no electricity. We have three sets of textbooks for forty learners. I use a blackboard and chalk. I do my best, but I cannot pretend I am implementing CBC the same way a school in Busia town is." (FGD02-P4, Female, 11 years' experience)

The contrast between the two focus group discussions was illuminating in relation to motivation specifically. Teachers from the urban school described challenges that were real but manageable, workarounds, peer collaboration, and occasional access to online resources, conditions broadly consistent with the collaboration-driven motivation ($M = 3.89$) identified in the quantitative data. Teachers from the rural school described a more fundamentally constrained implementation reality, in which professional isolation, being the sole teacher of a subject in a small school, with no nearby colleague to consult, limits access to precisely the peer-support mechanism that this study identifies as the strongest current source of teacher motivation. This finding aligns with Gikonyo and Waweru (2021), who documented rural-urban disparities among Kenyan CBC teachers attributable primarily to differential access to training and professional support rather than to ideological differences in disposition toward the curriculum, and it extends that finding by showing that the disparity operates through the specific motivational channel of collegial collaboration identified in this study's quantitative results.

The practical implication is that county-level strategies to strengthen teacher motivation cannot assume uniform starting conditions across Busia County's schools. Where urban teachers may benefit most from stronger incentive and recognition structures, given their comparatively stronger access to the collaborative and training-linked motivators already available to them, rural teachers require differentiated, deliberately structured mechanisms, such as mobile or cluster-based professional learning communities, and scheduled peer-support visits, to compensate for the professional isolation that otherwise leaves their motivation more exposed to workload and resource pressures without the buffering effect of collegial support observed elsewhere in the sample.

Relevance of Sample Characteristics to the Motivation Findings

The demographic profile of respondents reported in Section 3.2 is relevant to interpreting the motivation findings in two respects. First, the relatively youthful composition of the sample, with 77.1% of teachers below 40 years of age and 61.7% having fewer than five years of teaching experience, suggests that the moderate motivation levels documented in this study are being reported by a workforce still early in its professional trajectory, and therefore one in which current motivational patterns, whether reinforced or eroded by subsequent institutional experience, are likely to shape career-long orientations toward curriculum reform rather than reflecting settled, late-career dispositions. Second, the relatively balanced gender composition of the sample (52.9% male, 47.1% female) provides reasonable confidence that the motivation findings reported here are not an artefact of gender-skewed sampling, although the study did not disaggregate motivation scores by gender, age, or experience category, and such disaggregation represents a natural extension for future research building on these findings.

Resource Constraints and the Limits of Intrinsic Motivation

A further qualitative theme, resource scarcity, warrants brief mention here because it clarifies the ceiling on what intrinsic motivation alone can achieve. Participants across both urban and rural settings described chronic shortages of teaching and learning materials, forcing constant improvisation.

"Resources are grossly inadequate. We have textbooks but not enough for each learner. Practical materials? We make them ourselves or ask learners to bring items from home." (FGD01-P2, Female, 9 years' experience)

This pattern of improvisation, often financed from teachers' own resources, illustrates a further dimension of the intrinsic-extrinsic imbalance identified in this study: teachers are not only supplying the motivational energy that institutional recognition should provide, but in many cases are also privately subsidising the material resources that institutional budgets should provide. Read alongside the quantitative finding that investment of extra time in CBC preparation recorded both the lowest mean score and the highest variability ($M = 3.48$, $CV = 33.05\%$),

this suggests that resource scarcity operates as a compounding hygiene deficit, one that, left unaddressed, is likely to accelerate rather than merely coexist with the erosion of teacher motivation that this study's qualitative findings describe as already underway among some teachers, particularly the more experienced FGD participant who reported "counting days to retirement."

Read cumulatively, Sections 3.3 through 3.13 point to a single, well-triangulated conclusion regarding the level of teacher motivation for CBC implementation in Busia County: motivation is moderate rather than high, is anchored overwhelmingly in intrinsic professional commitment rather than in extrinsic institutional reward, is unevenly distributed between urban and rural school contexts, and is being actively, if not yet critically, strained by workload intensification and resource scarcity. This composite picture, built from five quantitative Likert items, two dedicated frequency tables, and multiple independently coded qualitative themes, provides a more granular and policy-actionable account of teacher motivation than either the quantitative or qualitative strand could offer alone, and it is this composite account that grounds the conclusions and recommendations that follow.

CONCLUSION

On the objective examining the level of teacher motivation for CBC implementation, the study concludes that teacher motivation was moderate and driven primarily by intrinsic factors, professional duty, commitment to learner development, and personal growth, rather than by extrinsic incentives or recognition. Consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (1959), teacher motivation was constrained by inadequate hygiene factors and limited access to key motivator factors. Teachers reported heavy workloads associated with CBC preparation, suggesting that working conditions had become a source of dissatisfaction; excessive demands without corresponding support can reduce enthusiasm and commitment to curriculum implementation. Furthermore, the absence of recognition, incentives, opportunities for advancement, and professional growth represents a deficiency in motivator factors that are essential for enhancing job satisfaction. These findings support the argument that sustainable teacher motivation during curriculum reform requires both supportive working conditions and meaningful opportunities for achievement, recognition, and professional development. Overall, teachers in Busia County's junior schools show willingness to take part in CBC activities and generally remain committed to making it work in their schools, collaboration among teachers is strong, and interest in professional development is high, but their willingness to dedicate extra time to CBC-related tasks remains only moderate, indicating that motivation is present but not consistently strong across all aspects of implementation. These findings make a targeted empirical contribution to the literature on teacher motivation in curriculum reform in two respects. First, they extend existing Kenyan evidence on CBC-related teacher motivation, previously concentrated in urban counties such as Nairobi (Kibe & Simiyu, 2021; Wangui, 2021), to a county combining urban, peri-urban, and rural school contexts, showing that the intrinsically anchored, extrinsically under-supported motivational pattern documented elsewhere in Kenya is not confined to well-resourced settings. Second, by disaggregating teacher motivation into its constituent hygiene and motivator components using Herzberg's framework, the study identifies incentive and recognition structures, rather than administrative support or collegial collaboration, as the most acute and consistent point of institutional failure, offering a more precise target for policy intervention than a generalised call to "improve teacher motivation" would provide. Future research building directly on this objective would benefit from tracking these motivation indicators longitudinally across successive CBC implementation cycles, and from disaggregating motivation scores by school location, gender, and experience category to test whether the urban-rural and intrinsic-extrinsic patterns identified here strengthen, narrow, or shift as the reform matures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings on the level of teacher motivation for CBC implementation, the following recommendations are made to the Ministry of Education, the Teachers Service Commission, county education offices, and school administrators in Busia County and comparable contexts:

- i. The Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission should introduce formal recognition mechanisms, CBC-specific allowances, and career advancement pathways linked to

- effective implementation, addressing the weak extrinsic motivation revealed by the low mean score for incentives and recognition ($M = 2.79$).
- ii. The Ministry of Education should conduct a comprehensive workload review and reduce non-teaching demands on teachers, to reverse the burnout dynamics that suppress teachers' willingness to invest extra time in CBC preparation ($M = 3.48$).
 - iii. School administrators should strengthen consistent, visible administrative support and supervision, given the moderate and unevenly perceived levels of administrative backing reported across schools ($M = 3.10$).
 - iv. County education offices and teacher training institutions should formalise and fund peer learning communities, building on existing informal collaboration structures such as teacher WhatsApp groups, given that collaboration recorded the highest motivation mean score ($M = 3.89$).
 - v. Education authorities should sustain and expand continuous, practical, school-based professional development on CBC, since training-linked motivation was the strongest single driver identified in the study (59.6% agreement).
 - vi. County education offices should establish differentiated, context-sensitive support mechanisms, such as mobile or cluster-based professional learning communities, that specifically extend the collegial support benefits enjoyed by urban teachers to professionally isolated teachers in rural schools.
 - vii. Heads of Institution should be supported through targeted leadership development to adopt low-cost, school-level practices, including protected planning time and consistent, visible recognition of teacher effort, that address the variability in perceived administrative support identified across schools.

Declaration For AI Use

During the preparation of this manuscript, artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used to assist in reorganising, condensing, and formatting material drawn from the author's original master's thesis into the structure of a journal article, and in drafting connecting narrative text between sections. All underlying research data, tables, quantitative results, qualitative excerpts, and interpretations presented in this manuscript originate from the author's own thesis research and have not been altered in substance by AI assistance. The author reviewed, edited, and takes full responsibility for the content, accuracy, and interpretations presented in this manuscript.

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