



Aligning Ugandan University Pedagogy with Secondary Education CBC Reforms: Implications for Teaching Practices and Graduate Preparedness in Higher Education

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Abstract: Uganda's transition to a Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) at the secondary school level represents a fundamental shift from content-driven instruction toward learner-centred, skills-oriented education. However, limited empirical attention has been given to how university pedagogy aligns with these reforms, particularly in preparing graduates to teach, support, and sustain CBC principles. This study examined the extent to which pedagogical practices in Ugandan universities align with the CBC reforms and the implications for teaching practices and graduate preparedness. Using a narrative review design, peer-reviewed literature, policy documents, and institutional reports published between 2010 and 2025 were systematically reviewed. The synthesis focused on pedagogical orientation, teaching strategies, assessment practices, and graduate competencies within higher education. Findings indicate a persistent misalignment between CBC principles and dominant university pedagogies, which remain largely lecture-based, content-heavy, and examination-driven. While policy frameworks acknowledge learner-centred approaches, practical implementation in universities is constrained by assessment regimes, academic culture, and limited pedagogical retooling. The review concludes that without deliberate pedagogical realignment in universities, CBC reforms risk producing graduates who are theoretically knowledgeable but pedagogically underprepared. The study recommends curriculum redesign, assessment reform, and sustained academic staff development to ensure coherence across the education system.

Keywords: Competency-Based Curriculum, university pedagogy, graduate preparedness, teaching practices, Uganda

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1. Introduction

Globally, education systems are increasingly shifting from content-driven instruction toward competency-based approaches that emphasise skills, values, and the application of knowledge to real-world contexts (Khumalo & Ramsuraj, 2024; Li, 2021). This transition is largely

motivated by concerns over graduate employability, adaptability, and the relevance of education to contemporary social and economic demands. In Uganda, the introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) at the secondary school level represents a major reform aimed at fostering critical thinking, creativity, communication, and problem-solving among learners (Ministry of Education and Sports [MoES], 2022;

Namirembe, 2020). However, the success of these reforms depends not only on their implementation in secondary schools but also on universities' capacity to prepare graduates whose pedagogical competencies align with CBC principles.

This study examines the alignment between pedagogical practices in Ugandan universities and the principles underpinning the CBC in secondary education. CBC policy frameworks emphasise learner-centred instruction, formative assessment, and authentic learning experiences as central to competence development (MoES, 2020). In contrast, evidence from higher education research in Uganda indicates that university pedagogy remains predominantly lecture-based, content-heavy, and examination-oriented (Mugizi & Rwothumio, 2023). While universities are expected to support national curriculum reforms through teacher education and professional training, what remains unclear is the extent to which existing university teaching practices reflect CBC-oriented pedagogical approaches and prepare graduates for competency-based teaching contexts.

The need for this study arises from growing concerns about systemic misalignment within Uganda's education sector. Studies suggest that when university pedagogy does not model learner-centred, participatory, and reflective teaching approaches, graduates may struggle to implement CBC effectively in school settings (Namazzi & Ssempala, 2024; Watsemba, Moya, & Mugisha, 2024). Prior research has documented persistent challenges in higher education, including limited use of active learning strategies, assessment practices focused on recall, and institutional cultures that privilege content coverage over competence development (Mhlongo, Mbatha, Ramatsetse, & Dlamini, 2023; Muriisa, Bariyo, & Mlahagwa, 2023). However, much of this literature treats university pedagogy and CBC reforms as separate domains, leaving a limited understanding of how pedagogical practices at the university level influence the success of competency-based education downstream.

Despite sustained policy emphasis on CBC and learner-centred education, there is limited empirical synthesis examining how Ugandan university pedagogy aligns with CBC reforms and the implications of this alignment for teaching practices and graduate preparedness. Existing studies predominantly focus on CBC implementation challenges in secondary schools or on technology and pedagogy in higher education without explicitly interrogating coherence across education levels (Mugizi & Rwothumio, 2023; Namirembe, 2020). This lack of integration obscures the ways in which pedagogical discontinuities between universities and secondary schools may undermine curriculum reform efforts. Consequently, the extent to which universities reinforce or contradict

CBC principles through their pedagogical practices remains underexplored.

This study seeks to contribute both theoretically and practically by synthesising evidence on the alignment between university pedagogy and CBC reforms in Uganda. Theoretically, it advances scholarship on curriculum coherence by examining how higher education pedagogical practices support or constrain competency-based education across the education system. In practice, the study provides insights for university curriculum designers, teacher educators, and policymakers seeking to strengthen graduate preparedness for CBC-oriented teaching (Kabarungi, Richard, Ejiri, & Simon, 2025; MoES, 2020). Ultimately, the study aims to inform pedagogical reform in Ugandan universities to promote coherence, continuity, and effectiveness in the implementation of competency-based education.

Globally, competency-based education has gained prominence as education systems respond to rapid technological change, labour market uncertainty, and demands for transferable skills rather than static knowledge acquisition (Bakar, 2021; Carney, 2022; Khumalo & Ramsuraj, 2024; OECD, 2019; World Bank, 2020). These reforms increasingly emphasise alignment across education levels to ensure that learners experience pedagogical continuity as they progress through the system. Without such alignment, curriculum reforms risk fragmentation, where learning outcomes at one level are undermined by pedagogical practices at another (Kirkwood & Price, 2014; Laurillard, 2013).

Higher education has been widely identified as a critical but often neglected site in curriculum reform processes, particularly in systems implementing competency-based models at the school level (Mhlongo et al., 2023; Modiba, 2024; Tømte, Fosslund, Aamodt, & Degn, 2019; Trucano, 2005; World Bank Group, 2017). Universities shape not only graduate knowledge but also professional dispositions, pedagogical identities, and instructional norms. When university pedagogy remains content-oriented, graduates may reproduce traditional practices even when policy reforms demand learner-centred approaches (Mugizi & Rwothumio, 2023; Namirembe, 2020). In Uganda, CBC reforms have been implemented within a broader policy landscape that encourages learner-centred pedagogy and skills development across the education system (Kabarungi et al., 2025; MoES, 2020; NCDC, 2019; Tweheyo & Mugarura, 2021). However, existing evidence suggests that university pedagogy has evolved more slowly than policy rhetoric, resulting in inconsistencies between curriculum intentions and classroom realities. This gap underscores the need for an empirical synthesis that focuses specifically on university pedagogy as a determinant of CBC success.

1.1 Problem Statement

Uganda's introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) at the secondary school level represents a fundamental shift from content-driven instruction to learner-centred, skills-oriented education intended to foster critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving (MoES, 2020). However, evidence increasingly suggests that pedagogical practices within Ugandan universities, the institutions responsible for preparing future teachers, education professionals, and curriculum implementers, have not undergone a corresponding transformation. University teaching remains largely lecture-based, content-heavy, and examination-oriented, raising concerns about the coherence of pedagogical practices across the education system (Mugizi & Rwothumio, 2023; Namirembe, 2020).

This problem is most evident within Ugandan higher education institutions, where prevailing instructional and assessment practices continue to privilege knowledge transmission over competence development. While CBC reforms are actively reshaping secondary education, universities have largely maintained traditional pedagogical models that offer limited opportunities for learner-centred instruction, formative assessment, and authentic learning experiences (Mhlongo et al., 2023; Ouma, 2021). As a result, graduates entering CBC-oriented secondary schools may possess theoretical knowledge of the curriculum but lack the pedagogical competence required to implement competency-based teaching effectively.

Although policy frameworks acknowledge the importance of learner-centred and competence-based approaches across education levels, practical alignment between university pedagogy and CBC reforms remains weak. Prior studies have examined CBC implementation challenges in secondary schools and pedagogical limitations within higher education separately, but few have systematically interrogated how misalignment between these levels undermines teaching practices and graduate preparedness (Namazzi & Ssempala, 2024; Watsemba et al., 2024). This gap in empirical synthesis limits understanding of how universities may inadvertently constrain the success of national curriculum reforms. The persistence of this problem poses significant risks for the sustainability of CBC implementation. If universities continue to prepare graduates through pedagogical models that contradict CBC principles, inconsistencies in teaching practices will likely persist, weakening instructional quality and learner outcomes at secondary school level. Those most adversely affected include pre-service and in-service teachers trained in universities, secondary school learners exposed to underprepared teachers, and policymakers seeking coherent education reform outcomes. Without deliberate

pedagogical realignment, the promise of CBC to transform learning and graduate competencies may remain unrealised. Therefore, there is a need to critically examine the extent to which pedagogical practices in Ugandan universities align with CBC secondary education reforms and to analyse the implications of this alignment for teaching practices and graduate preparedness. Addressing this problem contributes to existing knowledge by clarifying pedagogical discontinuities across education levels and by informing curriculum, assessment, and pedagogical reforms within higher education necessary to support competency-based education in Uganda.

1.2 Study Objectives

1. To examine the extent to which pedagogical practices in Ugandan universities align with the principles of the Competency-Based Curriculum implemented at secondary school level.
2. To analyse how prevailing university teaching and assessment practices influence the preparedness of graduates to operate effectively within competency-based secondary education contexts.
3. To identify pedagogical gaps and opportunities for strengthening alignment between university pedagogy and CBC reforms to support coherent curriculum implementation across education levels.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Alignment of University Pedagogical Practices with CBC Principles

The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) introduced in Uganda emphasizes learner-centred instruction, formative assessment, integration of knowledge with real-life contexts, and the development of transferable skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration (MoES, 2020). These principles are grounded in constructivist and transformative learning perspectives, which position learners as active participants in knowledge construction rather than passive recipients of content (Mezirow, 1991). In theory, universities particularly those involved in teacher education are expected to model these pedagogical orientations to ensure coherence across education levels.

However, empirical literature indicates that pedagogical practices in Ugandan universities remain largely misaligned with CBC principles. Studies consistently report on the dominance of lecture-based teaching, rigid syllabi, and content-heavy curricula that prioritise coverage over competence development (Mugizi & Rwothumio, 2023; Namirembe, 2020). Learner

participation is often limited, with minimal use of inquiry-based, problem-based, or experiential learning approaches that are central to CBC. Similar patterns have been observed across Sub-Saharan African higher education contexts, where curriculum reforms at lower levels have not been matched by pedagogical reform in universities (Mhlongo et al., 2023).

Although some universities have introduced learner-centred language into policy documents and curriculum frameworks, implementation remains uneven. Ouma (2021) notes that institutional commitment to learner-centred pedagogy is frequently undermined by large class sizes, assessment regimes, and entrenched academic cultures that reward content transmission. International literature consistently demonstrates that competency-based curricula require pedagogical environments that support inquiry, collaboration, and reflective learning (Laurillard, 2013; Mezirow, 1991; OECD, 2019; Shrivastava & Shrivastava, 2024). However, universities in many developing contexts continue to privilege lecture-based instruction due to institutional inertia, resource constraints, and assessment traditions (Mhlongo et al., 2023; Trucano, 2005; World Bank Group, 2017). These conditions mirror the Ugandan experience, where pedagogical alignment with CBC principles remains uneven (Namirembe, 2020; Mugizi & Rwothumio, 2023). Consequently, while CBC principles are well articulated at the policy level, their pedagogical logic is weakly embedded within university teaching practice, creating a systemic misalignment across education levels.

2.2 University Teaching and Assessment Practices and Graduate Preparedness for CBC Contexts

Graduate preparedness for CBC-oriented teaching depends heavily on exposure to pedagogical practices that model competence-based instruction during university training. CBC requires teachers who can facilitate active learning, design formative assessments, support learner reflection, and integrate cross-cutting competencies into classroom practice (MoES, 2020). Universities, therefore, play a critical role in shaping graduates' pedagogical identities and instructional competencies.

The literature, however, suggests that prevailing teaching and assessment practices in Ugandan universities do not adequately support such preparedness. Assessment remains predominantly summative, examination-driven, and focused on recall of theoretical knowledge rather than demonstration of applied competence. (Muriisa et al., 2023; Watsemba et al., 2024) argue that this assessment culture reinforces surface learning and discourages experimentation with learner-centred instructional

strategies. As a result, graduates may complete university programmes with limited experience in formative assessment, authentic tasks, or reflective practice, key requirements for CBC implementation.

Studies focusing on teacher education further reveal that pre-service teachers often encounter CBC as a theoretical concept rather than a lived pedagogical experience during training (Namazzi & Ssempala, 2024). This disconnect contributes to low teacher confidence and inconsistent classroom practice when graduates transition into CBC-aligned secondary schools. Similar findings are reported in regional studies, where graduates trained in traditional university environments struggle to adapt to competency-based teaching demands (Mhlongo et al., 2023).

Assessment culture plays a decisive role in shaping teaching practices and the development of graduate competence. Research indicates that summative, high-stakes examinations tend to reinforce surface learning and content memorisation, whereas formative and performance-based assessments promote deep learning and transferable skills; (Watsemba et al., 2024; Muriisa et al., 2023; Hamzah et al., 2024). In CBC contexts, assessment is expected to function as a learning tool rather than merely an accountability mechanism. The persistence of examination-oriented assessment in universities, therefore, directly undermines graduate readiness for CBC classrooms.

These patterns suggest that graduate unpreparedness is not primarily a result of resistance to CBC, but rather a consequence of pedagogical misalignment during university training. Without reforming teaching and assessment practices in higher education, universities risk perpetuating a cycle in which graduates are expected to implement pedagogies they have rarely experienced themselves.

2.3 Pedagogical Gaps and Opportunities for Strengthening Alignment between Universities and CBC Reforms

Literature identifies several pedagogical gaps that constrain alignment between university pedagogy and CBC reforms. Key among these is the persistence of teacher-centred instructional models, limited pedagogical innovation, and weak integration of theory with practice (Mugizi & Rwothumio, 2023). Institutional structures, including rigid curricula, limited professional development, and performance metrics that privilege research output over teaching quality, further entrench these gaps (Ouma, 2021).

Despite these challenges, literature also highlights opportunities for strengthening alignment.

Emerging studies point to the potential of learner-centred pedagogies, reflective teaching practices, and redesigned assessment frameworks to bridge the gap between university training and CBC expectations (Namirembe, 2020; Watsemba et al., 2024). Curriculum redesign that foregrounds competencies, alongside sustained academic staff development, has been identified as a critical enabler of pedagogical transformation (Mhlongo et al., 2023).

Policy-level coherence also presents an opportunity. (MoES, 2020), underscores the need for vertical alignment across education levels to ensure curriculum continuity. However, few studies have operationalised this alignment by explicitly examining how university pedagogy supports or constrains CBC implementation. This represents a critical empirical and conceptual gap. Emerging scholarship highlights professional development and institutional support as key enablers of pedagogical transformation in higher education (Cranton, 2023). Modiba, 2024; Mpofo & Chasokela, 2025; Oulamine et al., 2025; (Kisembo et al., 2025). Where universities invest in reflective teaching communities, curriculum redesign, and assessment literacy, alignment with competency-based education improves. However, these opportunities remain underutilised in many Ugandan universities due to fragmented policy implementation and limited pedagogical leadership (Kabarungi et al., 2025) (Ouma, 2021; Overall, the literature suggests that strengthening alignment requires moving beyond isolated reforms toward a systems-oriented approach that repositions universities as active agents in CBC implementation. Addressing pedagogical gaps at the university level offers a strategic pathway to improve teaching practices, enhance graduate preparedness, and sustain competency-based education reforms in Uganda.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

This study adopted a narrative literature review design to examine the alignment between pedagogical practices in Ugandan universities and Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) reforms at the secondary school level, with particular attention to implications for teaching practices and graduate preparedness. A narrative review was considered appropriate because the study sought to synthesise conceptual, empirical, and policy-oriented literature to illuminate patterns, gaps, and inconsistencies rather than to quantify effect sizes or assess intervention outcomes. This approach enabled an integrative and

interpretive analysis of diverse sources relevant to curriculum alignment across educational levels.

3.2 Sources of Literature

The review drew on peer-reviewed journal articles, government policy documents, curriculum frameworks, and institutional reports on CBC implementation and higher-education pedagogy. Scholarly literature was accessed through databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, African Journals Online, and publisher platforms that host education research journals. Policy and curriculum documents were retrieved from official Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) repositories and related institutional websites. Priority was given to literature addressing Uganda, with regional and global studies included where they offered analytical relevance or comparative insight.

3.3 Search Strategy

A structured but flexible search strategy was employed to identify relevant literature. Key search terms included combinations of competency-based curriculum, CBC, university pedagogy, higher education teaching practices, graduate preparedness, teacher education, and Uganda. Boolean operators were used to refine searches (“competency-based curriculum” AND “university pedagogy”; “graduate preparedness” AND “CBC”). The search was limited to English-language publications from 2010 to 2025 to capture literature relevant to contemporary curriculum reforms and higher education pedagogy.

3.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Sources were included if they met the following criteria: (i) addressed CBC or competency-based education at secondary or comparable levels; (ii) examined pedagogical practices, teaching strategies, or assessment approaches in higher education; (iii) discussed graduate preparedness, teacher training, or curriculum alignment; and (iv) were situated within Uganda or comparable Sub-Saharan African contexts. Sources were excluded if they focused exclusively on primary education without relevance to secondary or higher education, addressed curriculum issues without pedagogical or instructional dimensions, or lacked sufficient conceptual or empirical clarity.

3.5 Data Analysis and Synthesis

Data analysis followed a thematic synthesis approach. Selected sources were read iteratively to identify recurring

concepts, arguments, and patterns related to university pedagogy, CBC principles, teaching practices, and graduate preparedness. The literature was then organised and analysed according to the study objectives, enabling a structured synthesis aligned with:

(i) pedagogical alignment between universities and CBC principles;

(ii) implications of university teaching and assessment practices for graduate preparedness; and

(iii) pedagogical gaps and opportunities for strengthening alignment across education levels.

Rather than aggregating findings, the synthesis focused on comparing perspectives, identifying convergences and divergences, and interpreting implications for curriculum coherence and pedagogical reform.

3.6 Rigour and Trustworthiness

To enhance rigour, multiple sources were triangulated across policy, empirical, and conceptual literature. Care was taken to ensure balanced representation of perspectives and to avoid selective citation. The review prioritised recent and authoritative sources, while older foundational literature was included where necessary to provide conceptual grounding. Transparency was maintained through explicit reporting of the search strategy, inclusion criteria, and analytical approach.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings of the narrative review in relation to the study objectives. The discussion interprets the results within the broader context of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) reforms and higher education pedagogy, drawing connections to existing literature and highlighting implications for teaching practices and graduate preparedness.

4.1 Alignment of University Pedagogical Practices with CBC Principles

The first objective sought to examine the extent to which pedagogical practices in Ugandan universities align with the principles of the Competency-Based Curriculum implemented at the secondary school level. The review reveals a substantial misalignment between CBC pedagogical expectations and dominant university teaching practices.

Across the reviewed literature, university pedagogy in Uganda is consistently characterised by lecture-dominated instruction, content-heavy curricula, and limited learner participation (Mugizi & Rwothumio, 2023; Ouma, 2021).

In contrast, CBC principles emphasise learner-centred instruction, inquiry-based learning, formative assessment, and real-world application of knowledge (MoES, 2020). The findings, therefore, indicate that while CBC promotes active learning and competence development, universities largely continue to operate within traditional transmissive pedagogical models.

Interpreting these findings, the misalignment suggests that pedagogical reform at the secondary school level has not been matched by a parallel transformation in higher education. From a constructivist and transformative learning perspective, this disconnect undermines curriculum coherence across education levels, as learners are expected to enact pedagogies they have not meaningfully experienced during training (Mezirow, 1991). Similar patterns have been reported in Sub-Saharan African contexts, where curriculum reforms at lower levels coexist with conservative pedagogical cultures in universities (Mhlongo et al., 2023).

The implications of this misalignment are significant. Universities function as pedagogical role models, particularly in teacher education. When university pedagogy contradicts CBC principles, it weakens the epistemological and instructional foundations upon which CBC implementation depends. Theoretically, these findings contribute to curriculum alignment scholarship by demonstrating that vertical coherence across educational levels is as critical as curriculum design. The findings align with broader regional evidence indicating that curriculum reform often outpaces pedagogical change in higher education (Tømte et al., 2019; Trucano, 2005; World Bank Group, 2017) (Mhlongo et al., 2023; Modiba, 2024). In Uganda, this pattern manifests in universities adopting CBC language at the policy level while maintaining traditional instructional practices in classrooms. Such symbolic compliance limits the transformative potential of CBC and reinforces pedagogical discontinuities across education levels.

However, this synthesis is limited by its reliance on secondary literature, which may underrepresent innovative practices occurring in isolated institutional contexts. Future empirical research should explore institution-specific pedagogical reforms and document emerging models of CBC-aligned university teaching.

4.2 University Teaching and Assessment Practices and Graduate Preparedness for CBC Contexts

The second objective examined how prevailing university teaching and assessment practices influence graduates' preparedness to operate effectively in CBC-oriented

secondary education contexts. The findings indicate that graduate preparedness is constrained by assessment and instructional practices that prioritise theoretical knowledge over applied competence.

The literature consistently shows that assessment in Ugandan universities remains predominantly summative and examination-oriented, with limited use of formative, performance-based, or reflective assessment strategies (Watsemba et al., 2024; Muriisa et al., 2023). These practices contrast sharply with CBC assessment approaches, which emphasise continuous assessment, learner feedback, and demonstration of competencies (MoES, 2020).

Interpreting these results, the persistence of examination-driven assessment reinforces surface learning and discourages pedagogical risk-taking among both students and lecturers. Graduates trained within such systems are therefore likely to experience difficulty transitioning into CBC classrooms that demand facilitation, adaptive instruction, and authentic assessment. This finding aligns with Namazzi and Ssempala (2024), who report that many pre-service teachers encounter CBC as a theoretical construct rather than a lived pedagogical experience during university training.

Similar challenges have been documented in other CBC-adopting systems, in which teacher preparedness lags behind curriculum reform due to misaligned training environments (Mhlongo et al., 2023). The present findings extend this literature by highlighting how assessment of culture within universities acts as a structural barrier to CBC readiness. Graduate preparedness emerges as a systemic outcome shaped by cumulative pedagogical exposure rather than isolated training interventions. Studies show that graduates trained in teacher-centred environments struggle to enact learner-centred pedagogies even when curriculum policy demands it (Shrivastava & Shrivastava, 2024)(Namazzi & Ssempala, 2024; Watsemba et al., 2024; Muriisa et al., 2023; Mpofu & Chasokela, 2025; The findings of this review therefore reinforce the argument that CBC implementation challenges at the secondary school level are partly rooted in higher education pedagogy. Practically, these findings imply that graduate unpreparedness is not merely an individual capacity issue, but a systemic pedagogical problem rooted in university instructional and assessment design. Addressing this gap requires rethinking assessment as a pedagogical tool rather than solely an evaluative mechanism. The study contributes practically by reinforcing the need for assessment reform as a central component of CBC alignment in higher education.

A limitation of the reviewed literature is its limited longitudinal focus on graduates' transition into CBC

classrooms. Future research should track graduate trajectories to empirically link university pedagogical exposure with classroom practice outcomes.

4.3 Pedagogical Gaps and Opportunities for Strengthening Alignment between Universities and CBC Reforms

The third objective sought to identify pedagogical gaps and opportunities to strengthen the alignment between university pedagogy and CBC reforms. The review identifies both persistent structural gaps and emerging opportunities for pedagogical transformation.

Key gaps include entrenched academic cultures that privilege content coverage, limited professional development in learner-centred pedagogy, and rigid curricula that restrict pedagogical innovation (Mugizi & Rwothumio, 2023; Ouma, 2021). These constraints are reinforced by institutional reward systems that prioritise research output over teaching quality, limiting incentives for pedagogical reform.

Despite these challenges, literature also highlights opportunities for alignment. Studies point to curriculum redesign, reflective teaching practices, and sustained academic staff development as viable pathways for embedding CBC principles within university pedagogy (Namirembe, 2020; Watsemba et al., 2024). Policy frameworks further acknowledge the need for vertical curriculum coherence, although operational guidance remains limited(MoES, 2020).

From a systems perspective, effective CBC implementation requires coherence across policy, pedagogy, and institutional practice (Kirkwood & Price, 2014; Laurillard, 2013; MoES, 2020; OECD, 2019). Carney, 2022 Universities occupy a pivotal position within this system, linking curriculum design, teacher preparation, and classroom practice. Failure to address pedagogical misalignment at university level risks entrenching reform fatigue and undermining confidence in competency-based education reforms. Interpreting these findings through a systems lens, alignment requires more than isolated pedagogical innovations; it demands institutional and policy-level coordination that repositions universities as active agents in CBC implementation rather than passive transmitters of disciplinary knowledge. Theoretically, this supports socio-ecological and transformative perspectives that view pedagogical change as embedded within institutional structures and professional cultures. The significance of these findings lies in their contribution to both theory and practice. Theoretically, the study extends the discourse on curriculum alignment by integrating

higher-education pedagogy into debates on CBC implementation. In practice, it provides a basis for targeted reforms in curriculum design, assessment, and academic development. Nonetheless, the review is constrained by uneven documentation of pedagogical innovations within Ugandan universities. Future research should adopt mixed-method and institution-level studies to explore how alignment efforts are enacted, resisted, or sustained over time.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that pedagogical practices in Ugandan universities remain misaligned with Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) reforms at the secondary school level, particularly in learner-centred teaching and formative assessment. This misalignment constrains graduate preparedness for competency-based classroom practice and undermines coherence across the education system. Aligning university pedagogy with CBC principles is therefore essential for the effective and sustainable implementation of curriculum reforms in Uganda.

5.2 Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education and Sports should explicitly extend CBC policy guidance to higher education, specifying expectations for learner-centred pedagogy and assessment within university programmes, especially teacher education.
2. National quality assurance bodies should integrate CBC-aligned pedagogical standards into university accreditation and programme review frameworks to ensure vertical curriculum coherence.
3. Universities should redesign curricula and assessment practices to prioritise competence development, including formative, authentic, and performance-based assessment aligned with CBC principles.
4. Universities should institutionalise continuous academic staff development in learner-centred and competency-based pedagogy, with clear incentives for pedagogical innovation and teaching quality.

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