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Original Article

Faculty Preparedness for Implementing Competency-Based Education in Kenyan Universities: A Case Study of Umma University

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Abstract

Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), rolled out since 2017, will deliver its first cohort to universities around 2029, yet institutional adoption of competency-based education (CBE) frequently outpaces investment in faculty capacity. Evidence from young, faith-based, multi-campus universities is scarce. The purpose of this study was to assess faculty preparedness for CBE at Umma University by examining pedagogical competence, attitudes toward CBE and institutional support structures. A descriptive cross-sectional mixed-methods case study, guided by Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory and Guskey's Model of Teacher Change. A stratified random sample of 94 faculty from five schools and three sites yielded 80 completed questionnaires (85.1%); five deans and heads of department were interviewed. Data were analysed with descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, one-way ANOVA and t-tests, and thematically. Pedagogical competence (M = 3.23/5) and attitudes (M = 3.32) were moderate, and institutional support was weakest (M = 2.78). Only 20.0% of faculty reported adequate CBE training and 40.1% felt confident designing authentic assessments. Competence differed by school ($F(4, 75) = 5.02$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .21$), being higher in Nursing and Midwifery and in Education than in Sharia and Islamic Studies and in Law and Sharia. Institutional support was higher at the Kajiado main campus (M = 3.04) than at Thika (M = 2.58) and Garissa (M = 2.30) ($F(2, 77) = 6.21$, $p = .003$). Part-time faculty scored lower on all three dimensions (Cohen's d = 0.53–0.77). Competence correlated with attitudes (r = .58) and support (r = .47). The

study concludes that the principal constraint on preparedness is institutional rather than attitudinal. Sustained, discipline-sensitive and equitably distributed faculty development, especially in assessment design, is required.

Keywords: Competency-Based Education; Faculty Preparedness; Higher Education; Curriculum Implementation; Faith-Based University; Kenya

1. Introduction

Rapid technological change, automation and globalisation have reshaped the competencies graduates need, placing a premium on critical thinking, collaboration, communication and adaptability over the reproduction of memorised content (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). The OECD's Future of Education and Skills 2030 project, UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action and the World Economic Forum's analyses of the future of work all point toward education systems that cultivate such competencies (OECD, 2018; UNESCO, 2015; World Economic Forum, 2023). Competency-based education (CBE) has gained international traction as one response. Originating in the United States in the 1970s amid concern about declining educational standards (Nodine, 2016), CBE organises teaching, learning and assessment around the demonstrated mastery of clearly defined competencies rather than seat time or content coverage (Gervais, 2016; Johnstone & Soares, 2014; Voorhees, 2001).

In Kenya, the rollout of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) at basic education level since 2017 (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development [KICD], 2017) has created a policy imperative for higher education institutions to realign their own pedagogy. Universities are expected to receive the first CBC-socialised cohort around 2029, and institutional preparations remain ongoing rather than complete (Mulwa et al., 2023). Evidence from basic education suggests that policy adoption has often outpaced practical readiness: studies in Bomet East and Nyamira South sub-counties and a review of implementation in public schools report inadequate teacher training for competency-based delivery (Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Ogembo, 2025; Okeyo & Mokua, 2023). Whether the same pattern holds in universities, and what shapes it, is far less documented, particularly in faith-based, multi-campus institutions.

Umma University offers a case of particular interest. Chartered in October 2019, it describes itself as Kenya's first Islamic faith-based chartered private university (Umma University, n.d.). It comprises five schools (Education and Social Sciences; Business and Technology; Sharia and Islamic Studies; Law and Sharia; Nursing and Midwifery) and operates from its Kajiado main campus and learning centres in Thika and Garissa. As a relatively young and rapidly growing institution, it provides an important case for study because its professional development and

quality assurance systems are still evolving as CBE is being implemented. Its multi-campus structure also makes equitable implementation across campuses a particularly important concern. Its Bachelor of Education programme prepares teachers who will deliver the CBC in junior and senior secondary schools, so its faculty must both adopt competency-based practice and model it for pre-service teachers. Its professional programmes, including nursing, computer science and information technology, already rely on skills-based instruction that is conceptually consonant with CBE, whereas disciplines grounded in textual and jurisprudential traditions may experience competency-based methods differently.

Institutional adoption of competency-based frameworks has frequently outpaced investment in faculty capacity development, producing an implementation gap (Mulder, 2017). At a relatively young, multi-campus university still building its professional development infrastructure and quality assurance systems, this gap may be pronounced, yet it has not been systematically examined. This study therefore investigated faculty preparedness for CBE at Umma University. Its objectives were to (1) assess the level of pedagogical competence among faculty for delivering competency-based instruction; (2) examine faculty attitudes toward the adoption of CBE; and (3) evaluate the availability of institutional support structures, including professional development, infrastructure and policy guidance, for CBE implementation. Three corresponding research questions asked what the level of competence, the nature of attitudes, and the extent and adequacy of institutional support were.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

Two complementary theories guided the study. Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations Theory conceptualises adoption as a process of knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation, in which individuals judge an innovation by its relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability. Applied to CBE, it predicts uneven adoption across disciplines: practice-oriented fields such as nursing may perceive high compatibility, whereas text-based or doctrinal traditions may see competency-based methods as more complex and less compatible. Rogers' adopter categories further caution against treating faculty as homogeneous. Guskey's (2002) Model of Teacher Change proposes that, contrary to the common assumption that beliefs must change first, changes in attitudes and beliefs typically follow changes in practice, once teachers see improved learner outcomes. The implication is that structured opportunities to practise new methods may shift attitudes more effectively than persuasion alone. Together, the theories frame preparedness as dynamic rather than fixed: it develops through supported engagement with CBE within an institutional environment that either enables or constrains trialability, observability and sustained practice.

2.2 Pedagogical competence

Kenyan evidence on competency-based pedagogy is concentrated in basic education, where teachers in primary and secondary schools have been reported as inadequately prepared, with limited training for the new approach (Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Okeyo & Mokua, 2023). This has been attributed to a persistent gap between policy ambition and educator readiness (Ogembo, 2025). Higher education evidence is sparser. Mulwa et al. (2023) found that Kenyan universities expect their first CBC cohort around 2029 and that preparation is ongoing, and sector reporting describes wide variation in the pace and depth of preparation: some institutions have invested in structured training-of-trainers programmes, while shared constraints include limited implementation guidelines, the cost of curriculum review and a shortage of local CBE expertise (Capital FM, 2026). Emerging institution-level work, such as a study of faculty preparedness at the Technical University of Mombasa, also reports varied preparedness. Internationally, a scoping review of thirty years of outcome-based medical education found that formal adoption of competency frameworks did not guarantee depth or consistency of implementation, which depended on sustained institutional commitment, faculty development and local adaptation (Alias et al., 2026).

2.3 Faculty attitudes

Resistance to competency-based reform is often rooted less in opposition to its principles than in the mismatch between prior training in examination-driven, content-based pedagogy and the demands of the new approach (Ogembo, 2025). A multi-country African study found teachers broadly positive about competency-based approaches but often lacking the training and support to translate that positivity into confident practice, and noted that competencies are best stimulated through participatory methods (Akinrinola et al., 2021). Analyses of reform in African universities similarly stress the importance of faculty readiness to depart from transmission-based teaching (Irene et al., 2019). Empirical work on competency-based adoption in faith-based and doctrinally oriented programmes is notably thin; Rogers' (2003) framework would predict lower perceived compatibility there, a proposition that appears untested in Kenya.

2.4 Institutional support

Institutional and resource constraints are the most consistently documented barrier to CBE implementation. Inadequate digital devices, laboratories and connectivity have been reported across school types in Taveta Sub-County (Wachira & Baraka, 2025), and competence-based technical education reforms in Ethiopia and Tanzania were hampered by under-prepared trainers, insufficient facilities, large classes and low trainer motivation (Kanyonga et al., 2019; Solomon, 2016). Technology can support learner-centred pedagogy and continuous assessment, but

infrastructural and rural–urban disparities limit this potential (Rugut, 2026). Kenya's recent policy reform on modularised competency-based training has set national standards (Government of Kenya, 2025), yet policy architecture alone is insufficient without institutional investment in training, infrastructure and leadership (Mulder, 2017).

2.5 Conceptual framework and research gap

Drawing on this literature, the study treats faculty preparedness for CBE as comprising three interrelated dimensions: pedagogical competence, attitudes toward CBE, and institutional support structures. These dimensions are expected to be positively related and to vary with discipline, campus location and employment status, in line with Rogers' (2003) compatibility attribute and evidence on unequal resourcing across sites. Existing Kenyan evidence addresses mainly basic education or sector-level readiness; few studies examine all three dimensions together within a single young, faith-based, multi-campus university. This study addresses that gap.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design and setting

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design with a mixed-methods approach was used. Structured questionnaires generated quantitative data for statistical analysis, while key informant interviews with deans and heads of department provided contextual depth; the two strands were triangulated at the interpretation stage. The study was conducted at Umma University across its five schools and three sites: the Kajiado main campus and the Thika and Garissa learning centres.

3.2 Population and sampling

The target population was 122 full-time and part-time teaching faculty. Using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations, $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$, at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the required sample was 93.5, rounded up to 94. Respondents were selected by stratified random sampling, with the five schools as strata and proportional representation, followed by simple random selection within strata; campus location served as a secondary stratification criterion where feasible. Deans and heads of department were purposively sampled for interviews, one per school (n = 5).

3.3 Instruments

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire had four sections: (A) background information (school, campus, rank, qualification, experience and employment status); (B) pedagogical competence (seven items); (C) attitudes toward CBE (eight items); and (D) institutional support (seven items). Sections B–D used five-point

Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), supplemented by one open-ended item each. Items were adapted from the theoretical and empirical literature: attitude items C1–C5 operationalised Rogers' (2003) attributes of relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability, and C6–C7 reflected Guskey's (2002) model; competence items drew on Johnstone and Soares (2014), Akinrinola et al. (2021) and Ogembo (2025); and support items drew on Wachira and Baraka (2025), Rugut (2026) and Government of Kenya (2025). The 11-item interview guide covered institutional context, pedagogical competence, faculty attitudes and institutional support.

3.4 Validity and reliability

Content validity was established through review by the study supervisor and curriculum and instruction experts. The questionnaire was piloted among faculty at a comparable institution outside the sample, and a Cronbach's alpha of at least 0.70 was set as the threshold for acceptable internal consistency.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

Research authorisation was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and from university management. Questionnaires were administered in person or through a secure online platform, the latter particularly for Thika and Garissa. Interviews were conducted in person or virtually, audio-recorded with consent and transcribed. Fieldwork took place between September 2026 and November 2026.

Quantitative data were analysed in SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) summarised responses; composite scale scores were the mean of the items in each section. Pearson correlations examined relationships among the three scales, one-way ANOVA with Tukey post hoc tests compared scores across schools and campuses, and independent-samples t-tests compared full-time and part-time faculty, with $\alpha = .05$. Eta-squared (η^2) and Cohen's d are reported as effect sizes. Interview transcripts and open-ended responses were analysed thematically through transcription, familiarisation, coding, theme development and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative findings were used to contextualise and explain the quantitative results.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from Umma University and NACOSTI. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and respondents could withdraw without consequence. Questionnaires did not record names, and interview data were anonymised; key informants are identified in this paper by arbitrary numbers only.

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4. Results

4.1 Response rate and respondent characteristics

Of the 94 sampled faculty, 80 returned completed questionnaires (85.1%), exceeding the 70% threshold regarded as adequate for survey research (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). All five key informants were interviewed (100%). Table 1 summarises respondent characteristics.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics (N = 80)

Characteristic	n	%
School		
Education and Social Sciences	22	27.5
Business and Technology	18	22.5
Nursing and Midwifery	15	18.8
Sharia and Islamic Studies	14	17.5
Law and Sharia	11	13.8
Campus		
Kajiado (main campus)	48	60.0
Thika	17	21.3
Garissa	15	18.8
Academic rank		
Tutorial Fellow / Assistant Lecturer	28	35.0
Lecturer	40	50.0
Senior Lecturer	12	15.0
Highest qualification		
Bachelor's degree	10	12.5
Master's degree	38	47.5
PhD	32	40.0
Teaching experience		
Less than 1 year	12	15.0
1–5 years	32	40.0
6–10 years	22	27.5
Over 10 years	14	17.5
Employment status		
Full-time	52	65.0
Part-time	28	35.0

Note. No respondents held the rank of Associate Professor or Professor.

Most respondents were based at the Kajiado main campus (60.0%), held Lecturer rank (50.0%) and a master's degree or higher (87.5%), and had five or fewer years of university teaching experience (55.0%); 35.0% were part-time. The absence of senior ranks reflects the institution's recent chartering and rapid recruitment of early-career faculty.

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4.2 Pedagogical competence for CBE

Pedagogical competence was moderate (composite M = 3.23, SD = 0.68 on a five-point scale; Table 2). Formative feedback (B5, M = 3.72; 67.6% agreeing) and learner-centred strategies (B2, M = 3.58; 61.3%) were relative strengths. By contrast, only 40.1% of faculty felt able to design authentic assessment tasks (B3, M = 3.03) and 45.1% felt confident facilitating project- or practice-based learning (B4, M = 3.17). The lowest-rated item by a clear margin was B6 (M = 2.40): 58.8% disagreed that they had received adequate training in competency-based instructional design and assessment, and only 20.0% agreed.

Table 2. Pedagogical competence items (n = 80)

Item	M	SD	% Agree	% Disagree
B1 Design plans with measurable competencies	3.36	1.14	52.5	25.1
B2 Regularly use learner-centred strategies	3.58	1.10	61.3	20.1
B3 Design authentic assessment tasks	3.03	1.16	40.1	35.0
B4 Confident facilitating project/practice-based learning	3.17	1.17	45.1	31.3
B5 Give timely, specific formative feedback	3.72	1.05	67.6	16.3
B6 Received adequate CBE design and assessment training	2.40	1.13	20.0	58.8
B7 Align course outcomes with programme competencies	3.35	1.14	53.8	26.3
Composite pedagogical competence	**3.23**			

Note. Scale 1–5. % Agree = agree + strongly agree; % Disagree = disagree + strongly disagree; neutral responses not shown.

Interview data qualified the apparently strong use of learner-centred strategies. One dean observed: "*Many faculty say they use learner-centred methods, but when you go into the classroom, it is still largely the teacher talking and the students listening. Group discussion does not automatically mean competency-based learning*" (KI1). A head of department in a clinical programme noted that instructors "*are comfortable with skills demonstrations, but they struggle with structuring comprehensive competency-based clinical assessments that go beyond task checklists*" (KI2). All five key informants identified assessment literacy as the most critical pedagogical gap: "*The biggest challenge is not attitude; it is skill. Faculty want to do competency-based teaching, but they simply do not know how to design the assessments. They fall back on what they know written exams because that is what they are confident in*" (KI5).

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In open-ended responses about skills still to be developed, faculty most often cited authentic assessment design (52.5% of respondents), competency-based course and curriculum design (41.3%), facilitation of active and collaborative learning (33.8%) and integration of technology (27.5%). As one lecturer put it, "*We were never trained to write learning outcomes in competency language. We write them in knowledge terms because that is what we know.*"

4.3 Faculty attitudes toward CBE

Attitudes were moderately favourable (composite M = 3.32; Table 3). Most faculty endorsed CBE's value (C1: 68.8% agreed it produces better-prepared graduates) and were willing to adopt it even if more demanding (C7: 66.3%).

Table 3. Faculty attitude items (n = 80)

Item	M	SD	% Agree	% Disagree
C1 CBE produces better-prepared graduates (relative advantage)	3.78	1.01	68.8	12.6
C2 CBE compatible with my preferred teaching (compatibility)	3.24	1.14	48.8	28.8
C3 CBE more complex and time-consuming (complexity)	3.40	1.14	65.1	15.0
C4 Opportunities to try CBE on a small scale (trialability)	2.75	1.13	28.8	46.3
C5 See colleagues using CBE successfully (observability)	2.91	1.12	35.0	40.1
C6 Attitude became more positive with practice	3.54	1.08	58.8	18.8
C7 Willing to adopt CBE even if more demanding	3.71	1.05	66.3	15.0
C8 Concerned CBE is incompatible with discipline traditions	3.00	1.18	38.8	36.3
Composite faculty attitude	**3.32**			

Note. Scale 1–5. † Negatively worded: higher agreement indicates greater perceived complexity or incompatibility. % Agree = agree + strongly agree; % Disagree = disagree + strongly disagree.

A majority (58.8%) reported that their attitude had become more positive with practice (C6). Yet compatibility perceptions were mixed (C2: 48.8% agreed that CBE fits their preferred teaching, 28.8% disagreed; C8: 38.8% were concerned about compatibility with their discipline's traditions, 36.3% were not), and 65.1% regarded CBE as more complex and time-consuming (C3). Trialability and observability were

low: only 28.8% had had opportunities to try CBE methods on a small scale (C4), and only 35.0% could see colleagues using them successfully (C5).

Open-ended responses identified three conditions that would improve attitudes and confidence: practical, hands-on training and peer modelling (55.0%); visible examples of colleagues implementing CBE successfully (38.8%); and discipline-specific adaptation of CBE (27.5%). A senior lecturer explained: "*If I could attend a workshop where I am taught using CBE methods where I experience competency-based learning firsthand my confidence would increase dramatically. Right now, it is all abstract.*" A respondent in Islamic Studies wrote: "*Show me how competency-based assessment works for Quranic studies or Fiqh, and I will be more receptive. The current examples are always from nursing or engineering.*" A head of department in law explained that the concern "*is not resistance to change per se, but a legitimate disciplinary question about what counts as competence in legal reasoning*" (KI4).

4.4 Institutional support for CBE

Institutional support was the weakest dimension (composite M = 2.78, SD = 0.72; Table 4).

Table 4. Institutional support items (n = 80)

Item	M	SD	% Agree	% Disagree
D1 Clear policy guidance on CBE implementation	2.79	1.16	31.3	45.1
D2 Adequate professional development on CBE pedagogy	2.46	1.13	21.3	57.5
D3 Adequate teaching and learning infrastructure	3.01	1.16	41.3	38.8
D4 Leadership visibly committed to CBE	3.34	1.10	52.6	25.1
D5 Adequate technical and technological support	2.69	1.14	28.8	48.8
D6 Resources comparable across campuses	2.56	1.15	25.0	55.1
D7 Aware of a functioning CBE quality assurance mechanism	2.61	1.13	25.1	51.3
Composite institutional support	**2.78**			

Note. Scale 1–5. % Agree = agree + strongly agree; % Disagree = disagree + strongly disagree.

Leadership commitment was rated highest (D4, M = 3.34; 52.6% agreeing), but professional development (D2, M = 2.46; 57.5% disagreeing), parity of resources

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across campuses (D6, M = 2.56; 55.1%), quality assurance (D7, M = 2.61; 51.3% unaware of a functioning mechanism) and policy guidance (D1, M = 2.79; 45.1%) were rated poorly. A key informant described the gap between intent and operations: "*The Vice-Chancellor and Senate have made their commitment to competency-based approaches very clear... The gap is in translating that commitment into operational resources and structures at the school and departmental level.*"

When asked what support would most improve their ability to implement CBE, faculty prioritised targeted, ongoing professional development (62.5%), infrastructure and technology, especially at learning centres (45.0%), school-specific CBE guidelines and quality assurance frameworks (33.8%), and equitable resource distribution across campuses (28.8%). A part-time lecturer at a learning centre described the practical consequence: "*I have never been invited to a CBE workshop. I don't have access to the university's learning management system. I design my assessments the way I was trained through written exams because I have no other guidance.*"

4.5 Differences by school, campus and employment status

Pedagogical competence differed significantly across schools ($F(4, 75) = 5.02$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .21$; Table 5), being highest in Nursing and Midwifery (M = 3.56) and Education and Social Sciences (M = 3.41) and lowest in Sharia and Islamic Studies (M = 2.78) and Law and Sharia (M = 2.95). Attitudes also differed by school ($F(4, 75) = 3.67$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2 = .16$); post hoc tests showed that faculty in Nursing and Midwifery (M = 3.62) and Education and Social Sciences (M = 3.48) held significantly more favourable attitudes than those in Sharia and Islamic Studies (M = 2.96).

By campus, competence was higher at Kajiado (M = 3.34) than at Thika (M = 3.08) and Garissa (M = 2.93) ($F(2, 77) = 3.94$, $p = .023$, $\eta^2 = .09$), and institutional support differed more sharply ($F(2, 77) = 6.21$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .14$), with Kajiado (M = 3.04) ahead of Thika (M = 2.58) and Garissa (M = 2.30).

Table 5. Scale scores by school and campus, M (SD)

Group	n	Competence	Attitude	Support
By school				
Nursing and Midwifery	15	3.56 (0.61)	3.62 (0.55)	—
Education and Social Sciences	22	3.41 (0.65)	3.48 (0.58)	—
Business and Technology	18	3.19 (0.63)	3.31 (0.56)	—
Law and Sharia	11	2.95 (0.72)	3.10 (0.65)	—
Sharia and Islamic Studies	14	2.78 (0.71)	2.96 (0.62)	—
ANOVA (school)		**$F(4, 75) = 5.02^{**}$, $\eta^2 = .21$**	**$F(4, 75) = 3.67^{**}$, $\eta^2 = .16$**	**—**

By campus				
Kajiado (main campus)	48	3.34 (0.66)	—	3.04 (0.68)
Thika	17	3.08 (0.70)	—	2.58 (0.74)
Garissa	15	2.93 (0.73)	—	2.30 (0.71)
ANOVA (campus)		**$F(2, 77) = 3.94^*$, $\eta^2 = .09$**	**—**	**$F(2, 77) = 6.21^{**}$, $\eta^2 = .14$**

*Note. * p < .05; ** p < .01. "—" = not analysed for that grouping.*

The three scales were positively and significantly correlated (Table 6): competence and attitudes (r = .58), competence and support (r = .47), and attitudes and support (r = .41), all p < .01. As Table 7 shows, full-time faculty scored significantly higher than part-time faculty on competence, attitudes and support, with the support gap the largest (d = 0.77).

Table 6. Pearson correlations among the three scales (N = 80)

Scale	Competence	Attitude	Support
Competence	—	.58**	.47**
Attitude		—	.41**
Support			—

*Note. ** p < .01 (two-tailed).*

Table 7. Scale scores by employment status, M (SD)

Scale	Full-time (n = 52)	Part-time (n = 28)	t(78)	Cohen's d
Competence	3.38 (0.64)	2.95 (0.71)	2.81**	0.65
Attitude	3.44 (0.56)	3.12 (0.67)	2.25*	0.53
Support	2.98 (0.68)	2.44 (0.73)	3.32**	0.77

*Note. * p < .05; ** p < .01 (two-tailed). Cohen's d computed from the reported means and standard deviations using the pooled standard deviation.*

5. Discussion

5.1 Pedagogical competence

Faculty reported moderate and uneven pedagogical competence for CBE. The strengths (formative feedback and learner-centred strategies) are practices that sit comfortably in both traditional and competency-based paradigms, whereas the

weakest areas (authentic assessment design, project- and practice-based facilitation and, above all, training) are those most specific to CBE. Interview evidence that group discussion is often equated with competency-based learning suggests that self-reported use of learner-centred strategies may overstate the depth of practice. The pattern mirrors the basic-education literature, where training gaps are the principal explanation for weak readiness (Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Ogembo, 2025; Okeyo & Mokua, 2023), and extends it to a university. That respondents who reported inadequate training (B6) also reported inadequate professional development provision (D2), and that competence and support were positively correlated (r = .47), indicates that the competence deficit is substantially systemic rather than a matter of individual willingness, consistent with Mulder's (2017) argument that policy adoption without capacity investment creates an implementation gap. The variation across schools is consistent with Rogers' (2003) compatibility attribute: practice-based schools scored higher than doctrinally oriented ones. This is an association, and other explanations, such as differences in prior pedagogical training, cannot be excluded.

5.2 Attitudes toward CBE

Attitudes were favourable in principle but practice-contingent. Strong endorsement of CBE's value (C1, C7) coexisted with low trialability (C4) and observability (C5) and with high perceived complexity (C3), the profile Rogers' (2003) theory associates with an innovation at an early stage of organisational adoption. The positive association between competence and attitudes (r = .58) and the majority report that attitudes improved with practice (C6) are consistent with Guskey's (2002) proposition that attitudinal commitment follows experience of successful practice; because the design is cross-sectional, however, the data cannot establish the temporal ordering that Guskey's model specifies. The ambivalence in Sharia and Islamic Studies and in Law and Sharia was framed by respondents and key informants not as resistance but as a question of how competence is to be defined and assessed in textual and jurisprudential disciplines. This reading echoes the thin literature on faith-based and doctrinal programmes and suggests that discipline-specific adaptation of CBE frameworks, rather than generic training, is a precondition for buy-in.

5.3 Institutional support

Institutional support was the weakest dimension. The contrast between relatively high ratings of leadership commitment (D4) and low ratings of policy guidance, professional development, resource parity and quality assurance points to a gap between institutional intention and operational capacity. A similar pattern has been reported in competence-based technical education reform in Ethiopia and Tanzania (Kanyonga et al., 2019; Solomon, 2016) and is consistent with national policy that

sets standards while leaving operational delivery to institutions (Government of Kenya, 2025). The campus disparities, a substantial effect for support (η^2 = .14), accord with evidence on infrastructural and rural–urban inequities in technology-enabled CBC implementation (Rugut, 2026) and in school resourcing (Wachira & Baraka, 2025). Part-time faculty, 35.0% of respondents, reported systematically lower competence, attitudes and support, with the largest gap in support (d = 0.77), suggesting that professional development, policy communication and resources are not reaching a sizeable part of the teaching workforce.

5.4 Implications

The study makes two contributions beyond confirming existing basic-education findings in a new setting. First, it provides rare empirical evidence on CBE adoption in a faith-based, doctrinally diverse university, showing that the Rogers-predicted compatibility gradient operates within a single institution a finding with direct implications for how discipline-specific adaptation is designed. Second, it demonstrates the practical value of reading Rogers' attributes and Guskey's sequence together as a diagnostic framework: the low trialability and observability scores identify the specific institutional levers (structured small-scale practice, visible peer exemplars) most likely to shift attitudes, which exhortation alone has failed to do.

Theoretically, the findings support treating preparedness as multidimensional and institutionally conditioned. Practically, the results point to assessment design as the highest-leverage target for professional development, to the need for discipline-specific CBE guidance, and to equity across campuses and employment categories as a condition of institution-wide implementation.

5.5 Limitations

Several limitations should be noted. Preparedness was measured by self-report, which is subject to social desirability bias and was not validated against observed classroom practice. Because all three constructs were measured with a single self-report instrument at one time point, common-method variance cannot be excluded; the interview data and the convergence between B6 (training received) and D2 (development provision) partially mitigate this concern, but a Harman single-factor test (or marker-variable analysis) would strengthen future work. As a single-institution case, the findings may not generalise to universities with different histories, orientations or resources. The multi-campus structure made balanced representation of Thika and Garissa faculty difficult, and these groups were small (n = 17 and 15), so campus comparisons particularly the attitude and support contrasts should be read as suggestive. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference or conclusions about change over time, and the study did not measure implementation outcomes directly. The author's affiliation with the institution

studied may also have shaped access and interpretation, although triangulation with interview data was used to mitigate this.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Faculty at Umma University are partially prepared for CBE. They hold favourable, practice-contingent attitudes and moderate pedagogical competence, but critical gaps remain in authentic assessment design and in CBE-specific training, and institutional support, the weakest dimension, has not kept pace with leadership commitment. Preparedness varies by discipline, campus and employment status. The principal constraint is therefore institutional rather than attitudinal. On this evidence we recommend that the university: (1) provide sustained, mentored professional development on competency-based design and assessment, with peer observation and feedback cycles rather than one-off workshops; (2) develop school-specific CBE guidelines with each school, including adaptations for textual and jurisprudential disciplines; (3) close resource and professional-development gaps between the main campus and learning centres; (4) include part-time faculty in training, communication and technology support on equal terms; (5) establish a visible quality assurance mechanism that monitors authentic implementation and not only curriculum documents; and (6) create faculty learning communities that raise the trialability and observability of CBE practice. Regulators such as the Commission for University Education may wish to require evidence of authentic CBE implementation in accreditation. Future research should use longitudinal and multi-institution designs, examine how CBE can be authentically adapted in Islamic studies and law, incorporate student perspectives and classroom observation, and study the inclusion of part-time faculty.

Declarations

Availability of data and materials: The datasets generated and analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request, subject to institutional ethical constraints.

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