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EXPLORING TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF YALA 2 DISTRICT, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates teachers' perspectives on Competency-Based Education (CBE) in Yala 2 District, Thailand, focusing on their understanding, instructional practices, and the challenges they face during its implementation. Using qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Findings revealed that while teachers recognized CBE's potential to enhance critical thinking and real-world skills, they faced significant barriers including heavy workloads, limited resources, and unclear assessment frameworks. Even though Yala 2 teachers employed student-centred strategies such as hands-on activities and technology integration, they still require greater support through targeted training, policy clarification, and resource allocation to ensure success of CBE. The study concludes that while CBE offers transformative benefits, systemic challenges must be addressed to achieve its full potential, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas. These findings provide actionable insights for policymakers to create more equitable and effective CBE implementation strategies.

Keywords: Competency-based education, teacher perspectives, qualitative research, Thailand, educational policy.

INTRODUCTION

Competency-based education (CBE) has its origins in the early 20th century with Taylor's (1911) behavior-focused approach to performance improvement in the workplace (Schilling & Koetting, 2010). This approach was part of the scientific management movement, which sought to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in various practices, including education. Principles from Taylor's scientific

management were applied to compartmentalize, sequence, and streamline classroom learning. Competency standards were established for students, and teacher preparation focused on delivering instruction relevant to those standards (Schilling & Koetting, 2010; Tuxworth, 1994).

Ozhegov and Shvedova (1993) state that the following criteria are used to define CBE concepts: (1) Competence is defined as the domain or ability of issues and phenomena that one can control; (2) Competency is a state of awareness; (3) Competent means that one is a recognized expert in a particular field (like insurance), having the requisite competence; and (4) Willingness is defined as either the willingness and ability to participate in an activity, like risk assessment or risk distribution, or the agreement and desire to do so. Stated differently, willingness can be understood as both a readiness to act and as permission to move forward once all requirements are satisfied (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 1993).

Background of the Study

In the context of Thailand, Competency-Based Education (CBE) reform has gained global momentum as education systems aim to enhance student competencies aligned with professional and societal needs. Thailand has joined this movement, influenced by international organizations like the World Bank, OECD, and UNESCO, which advocate for quality education models (Sangwanglao, 2024). As part of this initiative, the latest draft of Thailand's competency-based curriculum, developed by the Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in 2022, focuses on primary education. This draft aims to replace the standards-based curriculum established in 2008 by the Ministry of Education. It emphasizes practical knowledge and skills necessary for societal and economic efficiency while maintaining traditional subjects like religious studies to preserve cultural heritage (Sangwanglao, 2024).

The development of national curricula plays a crucial role in enhancing educational quality and addressing inequalities within the country. The 2008 Basic Education Core Curriculum, which has guided educational development in Thailand for nearly 15 years, aims to improve the quality of learners. This curriculum includes learning standards and indicators across eight subject areas (Ministry of Education, 2009). However, despite its longevity, learner quality has not met expectations, with concerns about students' shallow conceptual understanding and inability to apply knowledge in real-life situations (Independent Committee for Education Reform [ICER], 2019). To address these issues, Thailand is currently revising its curriculum, adopting a competency-based approach that focuses on developing competencies essential for real-world applications (Anderson-Levitt, 2017; Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2019; Thummaphan et al., 2021; Office of the Education Council, 2019). The new framework, known as the (draft) Basic Education Curriculum Framework, places an emphasis on learners' competencies as the primary educational goal (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2021a). The framework is in the process of finalizing its components and guidelines for implementation in schools, with pilot schools in education sandboxes managing their own education under the oversight of provincial steering committees. As outlined in the Education Sandbox Act B.E. 2019, implementing the (draft) Basic Education Curriculum Framework in these sandboxes represents a significant milestone in the ongoing development of Thailand's national curriculum.

The (draft) Basic Education Curriculum Framework is designed to foster the development of core competencies in all learners, enabling them to realize their full potential (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2021a; 2021b). This framework consists of 11 key components: (1) the fundamentals of curriculum development, (2) the vision, (3) the guiding principles of the curriculum, (4) curriculum objectives, (5) desirable characteristics, (6) six core competencies with ten competency levels, (7) defined learning areas, (8) the relationship between core competencies and the content of the seven

learning areas at the 1st grade level, (9) the structure of study time, (10) learning management approaches and assessment strategies, and (11) guidelines for curriculum management (Thummaphan et al., 2022). The six core competencies identified in the framework include: (1) self-management, (2) higher-order thinking, (3) communication, (4) teamwork and collaboration, (5) active citizenship, and (6) sustainable coexistence with nature and science. The learning areas at level 1 cover subjects such as Thai language, mathematics, English language, arts, health and physical education, social studies, and science and natural systems. This draft curriculum framework introduces several educational approaches. Given its relevance for practitioners, the components related to learning and assessment have been expanded into additional elements. Meanwhile, key components such as (1) fundamentals of curriculum development, (2) vision, (3) curriculum principles, (4) curriculum objectives, and (5) desirable characteristics have been condensed and presented as an introductory section in the quantitative part of this research (Thummaphan et al., 2022).

The Education Sandbox Act, which was passed in 2019, aims to improve the nation's educational system and became effective on April 30, 2019 (Education Sandbox Act, 2019). The term "education sandbox" refers to a designated area for administrative reforms in education, supporting the creation of educational innovations. These innovations may include new concepts, teaching methods, materials, or management strategies that promote effective learning and enhance educational management. Currently, there are six education sandboxes across the country, located in Satun, Rayong, Si Sa Ket, Chiang Mai, Kanchanaburi, and the three Southern Border Provinces of Narathiwat, Yala, and Pattani. These sandboxes are given the autonomy to develop new educational management guidelines, which aim to improve the quality of education and serve as models for future educational practices. The Pilot School Project, initiated by the Basic Education Commission's Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards, is designed to assess the application of the (draft) Basic Education Curriculum Framework within schools. The findings from this project will be used to refine and adjust the framework (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2021b). The project is being carried out in two phases: Phase 1 involves supporting schools as they develop their curricula, building capacity for school supervisors, and providing consulting services on curriculum preparation. Phase 2 takes place after the curriculum has been approved by the Educational Sandbox Steering Committee, focusing on further capacity building, and consulting on teaching and learning. Schools within the education sandboxes are invited to apply as pilot schools for this initiative (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2021b). Currently, the project is in its first phase, with 224 elementary schools voluntarily participating.

Problem Statement

Unlike traditional education systems, which often focus on time spent in courses or the reputation of the institution, CBE prioritizes the attainment of skills and knowledge that are directly applicable to real-world tasks and professional requirements. While many studies have shown the positive effect of CBE on learning, little research has been done on the implementation of the CBE framework in Thai schools. Furthermore, the lack of cohesive ideology for developing CBE could cause confusion among various parties involved (Sangwanglao, 2024). Additionally, achieving competency levels in the curriculum is challenging due to its excessive content and lack of concreteness, making it difficult for teachers to design effective learning management (Sahakit, 2021). Although Thailand's CBE system has been methodically designed, previous studies indicate a lack of clear communication about the underlying principles of the curriculum (Jatupol, 2024). The adoption of a CBE curriculum has been the subject of several studies aimed at preparing students for the evolving nature of the workforce. Despite this, there are additional obstacles in Yala that hinder the successful implementation of a CBE curriculum.

Most studies have highlighted the research gap in CBE implementation, emphasizing the need to bridge the gap between theory and practice, integrating modern methods, supporting lecturers, and overcoming cultural and institutional barriers (Curry & Docherty, 2017; Chinh Danh Cao et al., 2022). Therefore, this study places special emphasis on teachers' perspectives, comprehension, and use of CBE in Yala District, Thailand.

Research Questions

This study aims to address the gap in research regarding the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE) in primary schools in Yala, Thailand. Specifically, it seeks to explore teachers' perspectives and understanding of CBE, as existing literature lacks insight into how teachers perceive and apply CBE in this region. To achieve the aim of the study, the current research paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' understanding of CBE?
2. How do teachers practice CBE in their classroom?
3. What are the challenges that teachers face when implementing CBE?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines the theoretical foundations, implementation challenges, and practical outcomes of CBE, with a special focus on its application in the context of medical education. Tracing its roots back to Taylor's (1911) behavior-centered model for performance improvement in the workplace, CBE has evolved over the decades, eventually influencing educational systems worldwide. By the 1960s, it was formally adopted by the U.S. Office of Education as a direct measure of student learning, reflecting a growing recognition of the need for education systems to produce graduates who can thrive in rapidly changing environments (Curry & Docherty, 2017).

The theoretical underpinnings of CBE, particularly within education, emphasizes the importance of competence conceptualization, the sociocultural context of learning, and the promotion of self-regulated learning. Key elements such as learning trajectories, entrustment decisions, and psychometric principles are essential for ensuring the validity and reliability of competency assessments. Additionally, CBE focuses on self-regulated learning, which allows students to actively manage their educational progress, utilizing feedback to improve competencies while adapting to diverse cultural contexts. These foundational principles support a flexible, paced approach to learning, ensuring students achieve mastery before advancing into more advanced competencies. This framework fosters a more effective and equitable educational system, ultimately preparing students for the challenges of their future careers.

Competency-Based Education (CBE) has been a transformative approach in various educational domains, including education, emphasizing the acquisition and demonstration of specific competencies essential for academic and professional success. The theoretical foundations of CBE in education emphasize the importance of conceptualizing competence, understanding sociocultural influences, and promoting self-regulated learning. The notion of learning trajectories, entrustment decisions, and rigorous psychometric principles are central to ensuring the validity and reliability of competency assessments. Furthermore, the implementation of CBE requires diverse methodological approaches, balancing applied and theoretical research to enhance its effectiveness (Curry & Docherty, 2017). CBE emphasizes the role of self-regulated learning, where students actively manage their learning processes and use feedback to improve their

competencies. It also considers the sociocultural context, recognizing that educational practices must adapt to different cultural settings and student needs. Furthermore, the concept of learning trajectories is central to CBE, mapping out students' progression from novice to expert levels. It supports the idea that learning should be a constant, while time should be the variable, allowing students to learn at their own pace, ensuring they achieve mastery before moving forward. These theoretical principles provide a robust framework for understanding and implementing CBE, aiming to create a more equitable and effective education system that prepares students for future success.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilizes a qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives on Competency-Based Education. The purposive sampling method was used to ensure participants were directly relevant to the research objectives. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and themes, providing a comprehensive understanding of how teachers perceive and implement CBE in their classrooms while addressing contextual challenges.

FINDINGS

This study was set to explore teachers' understanding of CBE, their practices and the challenges they faced during the implementation. Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in this study.

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

Name	School	Gender	Qualification	Teaching Experience
Teacher F	KBLS	F	M.ED (Educational Administration)	13 years
Teacher S	BIS	F	B.Sc. (Food Technology)	14 years

As indicated in Table 1, two female teachers from two different schools in the District of Yala 2 participated in the study. Teacher F has 13 years of experience, with a Master's degree in Educational Administration, while Teacher S has 14 years of experience in Food Technology.

Table 2 shows the teachers' perspectives of CBE. It includes teachers' understanding of CBE, classroom strategies, assessment and challenges. The interview findings will answer Research questions 1,2 and 3.

Table 2

Teachers' Perspectives of CBE

Main Theme	Subtheme	Answers
Understanding of CBE	CBE as a departure from traditional methods	- <i>"Competency-Based Education (CBE) aims to prepare students in this era by adopting approaches that differ from traditional methods." (Teacher F)</i> - <i>"Competency-Based Education (CBE) is a pilot curriculum implemented in school sandboxes in Thailand. It allows teachers the flexibility to move away from traditional teaching methods." (Teacher S)</i>
	Teacher autonomy in applying the curriculum	- <i>"CBE is particularly effective for science subjects, as it offers freedom without strict grading scales, which many teachers appreciate. It does not adhere to rigid learning objectives, giving teachers the autonomy to adapt and apply the curriculum creatively and freely." (Teacher F)</i>
	Emphasis on attitude and skills, not just knowledge	- <i>"CBE integrates classroom learning with real-world outcomes, emphasizing attitude and skills alongside knowledge." (Teacher F)</i>
	Focus on practical application and real-world outcomes	- <i>"Unlike traditional approaches that focus primarily on rote memorization and test results, CBE emphasizes practical learning, exploration, and discussion." (Teacher S)</i> - <i>"For instance, when studying water survey techniques, students are encouraged to learn through hands-on experiments and practical activities." (Teacher F)</i>
	Focus on hands-on learning and exploration	- <i>"CBE emphasizes practical learning, exploration, and discussion. It does not adhere to rigid learning objectives, giving teachers the autonomy to adapt and apply the curriculum creatively and freely." (Teacher S)</i>
Classroom Strategies and Practices	Active learning, critical thinking, and hands-on experiences are central to CBE	- <i>"Active learning strategies in education encourage students to engage in more hands-on practice." (Teacher F)</i> - <i>"In her school, Competency-Based Education (CBE) is implemented at two levels... These initiatives allow students to explore and complete projects based on their individual interests." (Teacher S)</i>
	Teachers act as facilitators, encouraging student-led learning, independent projects, and exploration	- <i>"Teachers act as guides or coaches, while students take the lead in applying their knowledge." (Teacher F)</i> - <i>"Teachers play a crucial role in stimulating critical thinking by asking probing questions that encourage students to observe and think deeply." (Teacher S)</i>
	Group activities, technology, and research-based projects are important instructional strategies	- <i>"Teachers encourage students to engage in group activities, such as drawing on paper or playing games on the whiteboard." (Teacher F)</i> - <i>"Research-based projects play an important role as a method in the classroom. In addition to using the internet, TV, digital tools, and various video platforms for student learning, these projects foster deeper engagement and critical thinking." (Teacher S)</i>

(continued)

Main Theme	Subtheme	Answers
Assessment methods	Lack of formal assessment guidelines, leading to reliance on observation and informal records	- "Currently, no specific assessment guidelines have been provided by the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), but it is expected that these guidelines will be available in 2025. In the absence of a formal rubric or scale, teachers rely on observation and manual recording to assess students." (Teacher F)
	Use of systems like QINFO for tracking progress	- "Assessment will follow the QINFO system from Naresuan University, which includes various components such as the Academic Transcript, Student Portfolio, Semester Report, Certificate of Academic Achievement, and Student Development Record." (Teacher F) - "Teachers are overwhelmed with the workload required to manage CBE classes, as there are too few teachers for the large number of students. This leaves them with little time to think of effective CBE strategies to implement in their classrooms." (Teacher S)
Challenges	Teacher workload and time constraints	- "Teachers face several challenges in implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE), including budget limitations, their own mindset, and the overwhelming workload." (Teacher F)
	Limited resources and budget	- "One challenge is the limited budget, which restricts the number of students who can participate in science experiments. For example, in a class of 40 students, only 4-5 may be able to take part in an experiment due to budget constraints." (Teacher F)
	Difficulty in engaging students	- "A major challenge is engaging students, particularly as they are often distracted by their phones" (Teacher S)
	Need for training particularly in remote areas	- "Training is typically conducted in the capital city, such as in Yala, and is represented by each school. However, this model does not always reach all teachers, as it can be difficult for everyone to attend in-person sessions, especially in remote areas." (Teacher F)
	Lack of clear policies and training for teachers	- "Teachers need to have a clear understanding of Competency-Based Education (CBE) to effectively implement it and track student progress. Another challenge is the need for CBE training teams that can provide teachers with the necessary guidelines and instructions on how to implement CBE." (Teacher F) - "A specific training team should be established to guide teachers in effectively implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE)." (Teacher S)
Support needed for successful implementation	Training teams	- "A dedicated training team should be established to guide teachers in implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE)." (Teacher F)
	Clear policies	- "Clear policies on CBE implementation are essential, ensuring that teachers understand the process and expectations." (Teacher F)

Understanding of CBE

As indicated in Table 1, in answering RQ1. What are the teachers' understanding of CBE?, the teachers reported that CBE serves as a departure from the traditional methods, it gives the teachers autonomy in applying the curriculum, it focuses on practical application and real-world outcomes, and it emphasizes on attitude and skills, not just knowledge. Teacher F mentioned that CBE is "adopting approaches that differ from traditional methods". Teacher S added that, "Unlike traditional approaches that focus primarily on rote memorization and test results, CBE emphasizes practical learning, exploration, and

discussion” and “it allows teachers the flexibility to move away from traditional teaching methods” (Teacher S). In addition, it gives the teachers autonomy in implementing when she mentioned that, “CBE is particularly effective for science subjects, as it offers freedom without strict grading scales, which many teachers appreciate. It does not adhere to rigid learning objectives, giving teachers the autonomy to adapt and apply the curriculum creatively and freely” (Teacher S). From the above excerpts, these teachers understood the concepts of CBE, which is different from the traditional approach, requires hands-on activities and gives autonomy for teachers to apply the curriculum freely.

Implementation of CBE

In relation to the Research Question 2, How do teachers practice CBE in their classroom?, another significant theme discovered during the interview was related to instructional strategies and active learning. The respondents mentioned that CBE encourages a student-centered approach, and the teachers emphasized the value of engaging students through active participation, hands-on activities, and project-based learning. These teachers understood the concept of active learning and student-centred well. Teacher F stated that “Active learning strategies in education encourage students to engage in more hands-on practice” while Teacher S added that, “these initiatives allow students to explore and complete projects based on their individual interests.” In other words, they mentioned that active learning approaches in education promote student involvement through practical, experience-based activities, which enhance understanding and retention. For example, instead of passively listening to teachers’ instructions, students might participate in group experiments in a science class, or engage in interactive problem-solving during math lessons. These activities require students to apply what they have learned in real-world or simulated scenarios, making the learning process more dynamic and meaningful. By allowing students to explore and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, CBE promotes deeper understanding and critical thinking. The respondents shared that these instructional strategies not only foster a more engaging learning environment but also helped students build skills that are applicable beyond the classroom.

They also mentioned that the teachers act as facilitators, encouraging student-led learning, independent projects, and exploration through group activities, technology, and research-based projects. These teachers said,

“Teachers encourage students to engage in group activities, such as drawing on paper or playing games on the whiteboard.” (Teacher F)

“Research-based projects play an important role as a method in the classroom. In addition to using the internet, TV, digital tools, and various video platforms for student learning, these projects foster deeper engagement and critical thinking.” (Teacher S)

Teacher S, for example, mentioned that research-based projects serve as a valuable instructional method in the classroom, encouraging students to actively investigate topics using a range of digital resources such as the internet, television programs, educational tools, and video platforms. Beyond simply gathering information, these projects promote deeper engagement and help students develop critical thinking and analytical skills.

Roles

"Teachers act as guides or coaches, while students take the lead in applying their knowledge." (Teacher F)

"Teachers play a crucial role in stimulating critical thinking by asking probing questions that encourage students to observe and think deeply." (Teacher S)

In the above extracts, both teacher F and S, emphasized the teachers' roles as guides, coaches, or facilitators in student centred learning. In this context, they offered support, feedback, and direction, while students took an active role in their own learning by applying their knowledge to real-world tasks and challenges. Rather than simply delivering information, teachers facilitated learning by asking thought-provoking questions, providing resources, and encouraging exploration. Students, in turn, are encouraged to take ownership of their learning, whether through group discussions, independent research, or hands-on projects.

Challenges

However, the implementation of CBE is not without its challenges. Research Question 3 addresses this issue. RQ3. What are the challenges that teachers face when implementing CBE?

The findings indicated several barriers that hinder the full adoption of CBE: Teacher workload and resource limitations; limited budget and resources; students' engagement; lack of assessment framework.

Workload

The heavy workload, combined with insufficient resources, makes it difficult for teachers to fully implement CBE's student-centred strategies. Teacher S explained that,

"Teachers face several challenges in implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE), including budget limitations, their own mindset, and the overwhelming workload." (Teacher F)

Limited Budget

Besides that, Teacher F also claimed that budget is another issue faced by the teachers. She said,

"One challenge is the limited budget and resources, which restricts the number of students who can participate in science experiments. For example, in a class of 40 students, only 4-5 may be able to take part in an experiment due to budget constraints."

Student Engagement

Another challenge faced by the teachers is the difficulty in engaging the students. Teacher S stated that,

"A major challenge is engaging students, particularly as they are often distracted by their phones".

Assessment

Furthermore, the lack of formal assessment frameworks was noted as a significant challenge. Without clear guidelines for assessing student progress, teachers are left to rely on informal methods, which may result in inconsistencies in evaluating students' competencies. The theme of Assessment and Progress Tracking further underlined this concern. Teachers reported that, due to the absence of clear assessment guidelines, they often rely on informal methods such as observation and project assessments. Teacher F said,

"Currently, no specific assessment guidelines have been provided by the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), but it is expected that these guidelines will be available in 2025. In the absence of a formal rubric or scale, teachers rely on observation and manual recording to assess students."

She reiterated that they had to follow the QINFO from Naresuan University which consists of many documents such as Academic Transcripts, Student Portfolio, report, Certificated and Student development Record.

- "Assessment will follow the QINFO system from Naresuan University, which includes various components such as the Academic Transcript, Student Portfolio, Semester Report, Certificate of Academic Achievement, and Student Development Record." (Teacher F)

Furthermore, Teacher S expressed her concern regarding limited teachers with a large number of students and the amount of documentations that they have to prepare for each student. As such, they had less time to prepare an effective strategy when implementing CBE.

- "Teachers are overwhelmed with the workload required to manage CBE classes, as there are too few teachers for the large number of students. This leaves them with little time to think of effective CBE strategies to implement in their classrooms." (Teacher S)

While CBE is found to be useful, they lacked the assessment structure for consistent and comprehensive evaluation of it. The teachers complained that the ministry has not released formal assessment guidelines specifically tailored to certain teaching methods or project-based learning approaches to provide clearer direction for them across the country. In the meantime, teachers are navigating this gap by relying on their professional judgment, classroom observations, and manual recording techniques to evaluate student learning. This often includes taking anecdotal notes, using checklists, and documenting student progress through portfolios or journals. While this method allows for flexibility and a personalized understanding of each student's development, it can also be time-consuming and inconsistent across different classrooms or schools due to the lack of a common framework. For example, in a project-based learning activity, a teacher might assess a student's collaboration skills, creativity, and application of knowledge through in-class interactions and final presentations, rather than using a standardized rubric. This informal approach helps teachers stay responsive to students' individual needs, but also highlights the importance of having future guidelines that support fair, comprehensive, and transparent assessment practices.

Training

Another problem highlighted by the respondents was the training received by teachers in Yala District. Teacher F stated that,

"Training is typically conducted in the capital city, such as in Yala, and is represented by each school. However, this model does not always reach all teachers, as it can be difficult for everyone to attend in-person sessions, especially in remote areas." (Teacher F)

"A dedicated training team should be established to guide teachers in implementing Competency- Based Education (CBE)." (Teacher F)

"Clear policies on CBE implementation are essential, ensuring that teachers understand the process and expectations." (Teacher F)

As shown in the extracts, Teacher F felt that training is needed to guide teachers in the remote areas as not many teachers gained access to the training conducted. She also called for a clear policy implementation to help all the teachers understand the process of implementing CBE. In other words, teachers across the board called for better training, more resources, and stronger support structures. This is particularly critical for teachers in remote areas, who face additional challenges due to limited access to professional development opportunities. Teachers expressed the need for more accessible and region-specific training programs that would equip them with tools and knowledge to effectively deliver CBE and address the unique challenges they face in their classrooms.

In summary, the respondents emphasized the importance of having a clear understanding of CBE for its successful implementation in the classrooms in Yala District. Teachers noted that a well-defined comprehension of the principles behind CBE is essential for adapting it effectively. However, they highlighted the need for clearer policies and guidelines to help educators navigate the complexities of CBE and ensure that it is applied consistently and meaningfully across different classroom contexts.

DISCUSSION

This study examines the potential and difficulties of competency-based education (CBE) from the viewpoints of teachers in Thailand's Yala 2 District. CBE is a transformative strategy that emphasizes real-world skills, critical thinking, and practical applications above rote memorization, based on the teachers' views. They claimed that CBE is far more effective than traditional teaching methods because it allows students to apply what they learn in real-life scenarios. This supports Kennedy's (2019) claim that CBE prioritizes skills-based learning to get pupils ready for challenging, real-world situations. Teachers shared how they used hands-on practices, group activities, and independent projects to foster student engagement and autonomy. They conceded, though, that these methods necessitate significant resources, which are frequently scarce. Thus, it highlights the necessity of sufficient training and resources for successful CBE implementation.

Assessment is another key challenge. Instructors disclosed that they mainly rely on project-based assessments and unofficial observations, with technologies such as QINFO providing some assistance but missing full capability. They expressed concern over no clear guidelines for assessing CBE outcomes. While observation emphasizes the necessity of organized assessment frameworks in order to guarantee accuracy and consistency when assessing students' development, it may not be able to provide a systematic observation without any clear guidelines.

Resource constraints, heavy workloads, and insufficient training further complicate CBE implementation. Respondents emphasized the importance of professional development, to fully understand CBE and apply it effectively, especially in rural schools where resources are scarce. This reflects the broader need for systemic support, particularly in remote areas, to ensure equitable access to training and resources. Despite these barriers, teachers expressed optimism about CBE's potential to transform education as it helps students think critically and learn skills they can use in their future careers. However, for CBE to achieve its full potential, policymakers must address these systemic challenges. Clearer policies, increased funding, and robust training programs are critical to equipping teachers with the tools and confidence to implement CBE effectively.

CONCLUSION

In exploring the perspectives of Thai teachers regarding competency-based education, a nuanced narrative emerges, marked by both optimism and concerns. While many educators see promise in this approach, which prioritizes students' mastery of specific skills and competencies, they also faced significant challenges in the implementation, particularly with regards to teacher professional development, technology integration, and assessment design. As the Thai education system grapples with competency-based education, it becomes clear that a deeper understanding of the complexities involved is essential. Teachers must adapt to new pedagogical approaches, leveraging digital tools to monitor student progress and create personalized learning experiences. Moreover, educators need to address the pressing issue of assessment fatigue, as competency-based progression relies on continuous evaluation of student mastery. Ultimately, a comprehensive support system is required to ensure that teachers are well-equipped to navigate the transition to competency-based education, thereby enhancing the learning outcomes and overall educational experience for Thai students.

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