Evaluating competency-based management in English language teaching for art university students in Vietnam: Insights into key influential factors

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of Competency-Based Management (CBM) in English language teaching for students at Vietnamese art universities. As English proficiency becomes increasingly important in the global creative economy, effective management of language education programs is crucial for aligning learning outcomes with students' professional needs. The research aims to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of CBM and identify key institutional, pedagogical, and cultural factors that influence its application in art-focused educational contexts. Using a quantitative descriptive approach, data were collected from 200 students and 29 lecturers and educational managers across major art universities in Vietnam through a structured questionnaire. The survey assessed multiple dimensions of CBM, including curriculum alignment, instructional support, learning resources, teaching styles, student motivation, and learning environment. Findings indicate that while students and staff generally support the competency-based direction, significant limitations persist in the consistent application of CBM principles. Key challenges include inadequate learning materials, limited use of competency-based instructional strategies, and insufficient support from instructors. Cultural and institutional factors, such as rigid curricula and underdeveloped quality assurance systems, were also perceived as barriers. The study concludes with management-oriented recommendations to improve CBM practices, particularly through enhanced curriculum design, teacher training, and institutional support mechanisms that reflect the specific needs of art students in Vietnam.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by addressing Competency-Based Management in English teaching at Vietnamese art universities. It is one of the few studies that have investigated managerial, pedagogical, and cultural factors simultaneously. The primary contribution of the paper is the finding that institutional constraints significantly hinder effective CBM implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization and the expanding arts and creative industries, English proficiency is becoming an essential competency for university students in Vietnam, especially those pursuing careers in the arts. English language skills not only serve academic purposes but also enable students to engage in international artistic exchange, participate in global events, and communicate their creative ideas effectively in multicultural environments (Dang & Norris, 2024; Tran–Thanh, 2025). However, they all still retain a conservative trend in learning English, aiming at grammar, vocabulary, and test-taking, without enough focus on communication and professional dimensions in

language learning. This imbalance has created unfavorable skill gaps for graduates in employment and international network integration.

To address these deficiencies, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has initiated a series of national projects, for instance, Prime Minister of Vietnam (2008) and the National Foreign Language Project 2020, to improve level-specific English education. Policy implementation, nonetheless, has faced challenges such as curriculum rigidity, teacher incompetence, and a shortage of resources, especially in specialist schools like art universities (Ha, 2025; Tran–Thanh, 2025; Trinh, 2015).

In this context, CBM has emerged as a promising framework for improving the management of English language teaching. CBM emphasizes the alignment of institutional strategies, curriculum design, assessment, and instructional practices with defined student competencies (Baxter, 2015; Ramirez, 2000). It focuses not only on what students learn but also on how educational programs are designed, delivered, and managed to ensure measurable and relevant learning outcomes. When applied to English language teaching, CBM enables institutions to create learning environments that prioritize real-world application, performance-based evaluation, and interdisciplinary connections, particularly important for students in creative fields such as music, design, or visual arts (Chan & McGrath, 2024; Ha, Thu Hien, An, & Mai Huong, 2024).

Although there has been increasing research on competency-based approaches in language teaching (Nunan, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), most studies focus on pedagogical aspects (i.e., Competency-Based Language Teaching – CBLT), rather than the broader institutional and managerial structures that support them. Moreover, in Vietnam, existing studies tend to examine general education or vocational contexts, while art universities, where learning motivations, instructional culture, and language needs are distinct, remain under-researched (Nguyen, 2017; Truong, 2020). Several scholars also note that institutional barriers such as outdated curricula, limited assessment systems, and insufficient teacher training hinder the successful implementation of competency-based strategies (Hoang, 2020; Le & Nguyen, 2024).

To fill this gap, the present study investigates the implementation of competency-based management in English language teaching at Vietnamese art universities. The study aims to:

1. Evaluate the perceived effectiveness of CBM in enhancing students' English communication skills.
2. Identify institutional, pedagogical, and cultural factors influencing the success of CBM;
3. Propose management-level recommendations to support CBM implementation aligned with the specific needs of art students.

By focusing on the management dimension rather than only classroom practices, this study contributes to current discussions on educational reform in Vietnam and offers practical implications for improving English language education in the country's creative higher education sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Competency-Based Approaches in English Language Teaching

CBLT is famous for emphasizing language application rather than abstract theory (Nunan, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The learning paradigm focuses on task-oriented learning, where learners experience and practice language in diverse real-life conditions, enhancing both understanding and interactive language use (Nunan, 2004). One of CBLT's strengths is emphasizing language competencies over grammatical awareness, making learning more outcome-oriented (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). CBLT promotes active language use, especially in speaking, through dynamic strategies such as debates, group work, and flexible, process-oriented syllabi that adapt to student feedback and progress (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000; Lindsay & Knight, 2006). This student-centered approach is crucial for enhancing student motivation and communication skills, ultimately preparing them for the demands of the global labor market (Canh, 2013).

Vietnamese learning of English is a priority for national development, including industrialization, modernization, and international integration (Trinh, 2015). However, despite being recognized and reform activities taking place, Vietnamese learners' proficiency in English still does not satisfy international job markets' demands (Hoang, 2020). Recent reports indicate that a "theory-practice gap" remains, as in Vietnamese schoolbooks, abstract theory in English is perceived as inapplicable in practice, particularly in developing crucial speaking proficiency (Lap, Trang, & Tuan, 2025). A significant imbalance is also identified between academic programs in English and industry-specific language demands, particularly in ESP, due to long-standing testing procedures, which cannot accurately reflect real-life professional linguistic competence in practice (Pham & Ngo, 2025).

The "IELTS-mania" in Vietnam, where IELTS is overwhelmingly the test of choice, has a profound influence on learning and teaching. While it has driven increases in private language centers and test waivers, this intense focus on standardized tests threatens a too-test-oriented learning environment where mechanical test learning is privileged over genuine communicative proficiency and can deepen socioeconomic disparities in high-quality access to English education (Tran–Thanh, 2025). Possibly even more concerning are increases in "second-career" English teachers who tend not to have professional training in pedagogy by virtue of native-language proficiency. These factors undermine educational quality and can inadvertently reinforce old-fashioned ways of learning and instruction (Tran–Thanh, 2025). This makes a central imperative for high-quality professional training in modern communicative methodologies. Culturally, Vietnamese learners frequently face challenges related to pronunciation, vocabulary memorization, and especially speaking confidence, often due to a prevalent fear of making mistakes (Dang & Norris, 2024). This underscores the need for teaching approaches that build confidence and provide ample opportunities for practice in a supportive environment.

2.2. Competency-Based Management and Organizational Challenges in ELT

While CBLT primarily addresses classroom pedagogy, CBM emerges as a more comprehensive framework. CBM extends beyond teaching practices to encompass the alignment of organizational strategies, curriculum design, assessment, and instructional practices with clearly defined student competencies (Baxter, 2015; Ramirez, 2000). Its core focus is on *how* educational programs are systematically designed, delivered, and managed to ensure measurable and relevant learning outcomes, with a strong emphasis on developing practical skills essential for future careers (Ramirez, 2000; Wolf, 2007).

The implementation of national initiatives aimed at improving English teaching quality in Vietnam has encountered significant organizational barriers. These include curriculum rigidity and a general scarcity of resources (Ha et al., 2024; Tran–Thanh, 2025; Trinh, 2015). Scholars also note that outdated curricula and limited assessment systems within institutions actively hinder the successful implementation of competency-based strategies (Hoang, 2020; Le & Nguyen, 2024). Insufficient resources are a considerable impediment, particularly for specialized institutions like art universities, which often face unique financial and infrastructural challenges (Ha, 2025). Despite the Vietnamese government's strong commitment to EdTech, aiming for widespread digital learning by 2030, a persistent urban-rural digital divide in access to EdTech solutions remains a significant challenge for equitable English language education (B-Company, 2025).

Underdeveloped quality assurance systems are also identified as barriers to effective CBM implementation. While Vietnam shows a growing commitment to accreditation, the effectiveness of national proficiency tests like VSTEP is often questioned due to a lack of external validation. This contributes to Vietnam's overall English proficiency index remaining in the "low proficiency" group, despite increasing investment (Tran–Thanh, 2025). This highlights a pressing need for more robust, internally validated assessment mechanisms that accurately measure holistic communicative competence rather than just test-taking ability.

2.3. Research Gaps and the Unique Context of Art Universities

Despite the relatively comprehensive literature on competency-based approaches, there is limited direct research addressing the management of English language teaching through a CBM approach specifically within art universities. Most studies tend to focus on pedagogical aspects of CBLT rather than the broader institutional and managerial structures that support them. Furthermore, existing studies in Vietnam primarily examine general education or vocational contexts, overlooking art universities where learning dynamics, instructional culture, and language needs are distinctly different (Nguyen, 2017; Truong, 2020).

Art students have unique learning needs that necessitate a more flexible teaching practice, not just including knowledge but enabling creative skill-building. This necessitates a principal need for a shift in learning approaches, commensurate with the unique demands of learning in art, while still allowing the useful application of language skills in professional practice within creative industries. While conceptual frameworks of CBM in theory (Nguyen, 2017) and competency-based learning in flexible models (Baxter, 2015) are helpful, they are incomplete in providing a detailed explanation of enabling a balance in art universities between theory learning and application in practice, creative skill-building, and the unique demands of job markets in art. For instance, a paper on utilizing technology in learning management (Hoa, 2024) asserts its usefulness. Still, exploring its use in the creative, practice-focused ELT approaches prevalent in art universities is incomplete.

Moreover, while research tackles motivation in non-major English learning, it does not necessarily take into consideration separate motivational factors for art students. Motivation in non-major English learning continues to be a subject of attention, considering separate goals, professional aspirations, as well as future professional careers for art students, which would require a separate focus in adjusting learning approaches accordingly (Truong, 2020). Learner autonomy is positively correlated with task motivation, but anxiety depletes it, which requires careful classroom environment management as well as empowerment management (Wang, Zhu, & Zhang, 2023). A competency-based language teaching in Vietnamese art universities, a recent study (Ha, 2025) shows that Vietnamese universities have enthusiasm for CBLT. However, they face significant barriers, considering the available resources and a shortage of opportunities for practical foreign professional contact. This situation necessitates customized approaches for CBLT implementation, including compensating for resource limitations and establishing arrangements for increased international collaboration partnerships.

In summary, the existing literature reveals a critical gap concerning the managerial aspects of competency-based approaches in ELT, particularly within the unique and under-researched context of Vietnamese art universities. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing effective, context-specific strategies that align English language education with the distinct professional and creative needs of art students.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

The study was conducted at selected Vietnamese art universities offering English language courses across disciplines such as music, fine arts, and design. The target population included both students and faculty members involved in English language teaching and learning.

Data were collected through a structured survey administered to a total of 217 participants, including administrators, instructors, and students from ten major art universities in Vietnam. These institutions included: National University of Art Education; Hanoi University of Theater and Cinema; Vietnam National Academy of Music; Vietnam University of Fine Arts; Ho Chi Minh City University of Fine Arts; Military University of Culture and Arts; Hue Academy of Music; Hanoi University of Industrial Fine Arts; Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music.

The data collection took place between June and December 2024. Out of 217 distributed surveys, 200 valid responses were retained for analysis, while 17 were excluded due to missing or inconsistent data. This sample includes

diverse respondent groups, allowing for a comprehensive perspective on the management-related factors influencing the implementation of competency-based English language teaching in Vietnamese art universities.

Among the valid responses, 29 participants were English language instructors, of whom 11 also held academic or administrative management positions. The inclusion of both teaching and managerial perspectives strengthens the study's ability to examine how institutional-level practices affect classroom implementation of CBM principles.

3.2. Survey Design

A structured questionnaire was developed based on prior literature concerning CBM and competency-based approaches in language education (Baxter, 2015; Le & Nguyen, 2024; Ramirez, 2000). The survey consisted of 24 items, divided into five thematic sections.

1. General perceptions of CBM (5 items).
2. Curriculum alignment and content appropriateness (5 items).
3. Teaching methods and teacher support (5 items).
4. Learning environment and student motivation (5 items).
5. Institutional resources and policy support (4 items).

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a small group of participants (30 students and 5 instructors) to refine the language and improve clarity. Minor adjustments were made based on feedback to enhance comprehensibility and contextual relevance.

3.3. Variables and Measurement Scales

All survey items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Each section of the questionnaire was treated as a separate variable group reflecting different dimensions of CBM.

To ensure internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the overall instrument and subscales. The overall reliability coefficient was 0.84, indicating high reliability. Subscale reliability scores ranged from 0.72 to 0.87, meeting commonly accepted thresholds ($\alpha \geq 0.70$) for social science research (Taber, 2018).

3.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to summarize and interpret participant responses. Specifically, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated for each item and thematic section of the questionnaire. This approach allowed for the identification of trends and patterns in participants' perceptions of CBM in English language teaching.

Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' English proficiency levels (self-assessed) and the academic qualifications of instructors and administrators.

No inferential statistics (e.g., correlation or regression analysis) were conducted in this study, as the research aimed to provide an exploratory overview rather than test specific hypotheses. However, the self-assessed proficiency data offer important context for understanding differences in perception between student and faculty groups.

Table 1. English proficiency level (Self-assessed).

Students	Quantity	Ratio (%)	Administrators and lecturers	Quantity	Ratio (%)
Total sample	**200**	**100%**	**Total sample**	**29**	**100%**
Elementary	164	82	Bachelor's degree in English language teaching	0	0
Intermediate	36	18	Master's degree in English language teaching	26	89.7
Advanced	0	0	Ph.D. in educational management	3	10.3

4. RESULTS

4.1. Evaluating the Level of Student Perceptions on the Effectiveness and Influencing Factors in the Management of Competency-Based English Language Teaching at Art Universities

The data in Table 2 reflect the satisfaction levels regarding the current competency-based English teaching method. Most respondents show a high level of satisfaction, with 61% (122 individuals) feeling satisfied and 25.5% (51 individuals) expressing strong satisfaction. This means that 86.5% of participants have a positive view of the teaching method, indicating high acceptance and approval. However, a small portion of respondents remains dissatisfied, with 9% (18 individuals) feeling dissatisfied and 4.5% (9 individuals) expressing strong dissatisfaction. Although this group is relatively small (a total of 13.5%), it suggests areas for improvement to increase satisfaction among all learners.

Table 2. Student satisfaction with CBELT.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
How satisfied are you with the current competency-based English teaching method?	Strongly satisfied	51	25.5
	Satisfied	122	61.0
	Dissatisfied	18	9.0
	Strongly dissatisfied	9	4.5
Total		200	100

Table 3. Improvement Level.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
To what extent have your English language skills improved through the competency-based teaching method?	Very much	23	11.5
	Quite a lot	65	32.5
	A little	79	39.5
	Very little	33	16.5
Total		200	100

The data in Table 3 reflect students' perceptions of the improvement in their English language skills through the competency-based teaching method. A significant portion of respondents, 39.5%, reported that their skills had improved "a little," indicating a moderate level of improvement. 32.5% felt their skills had improved "quite a lot," suggesting a positive effect for many students. However, 11.5% indicated that their skills had improved "very much," highlighting a smaller group who experienced significant progress. On the other hand, 16.5% felt their improvement was "very little," indicating that the teaching method did not produce substantial gains for all participants.

Table 4. Frequency of Method Application.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
How frequently do you observe that your instructor applies competency-based teaching methods in your classes?	Always	30	15
	Frequently	40	20
	Occasionally	95	47.5
	Never	35	17.5
Total		**200**	**100**

The data in Table 4 shows the frequency with which students observe their instructors applying competency-based teaching methods in class. A significant portion of students, 47.5%, report that competency-based methods are applied "occasionally," suggesting that while the approach is present, it may not be consistently integrated into every lesson. Twenty percent of respondents observe the application of competency-based methods "frequently," indicating a relatively positive but not overwhelming frequency of usage. A smaller portion, 15%, reports that these methods are applied "always," which indicates that only a few instructors are fully committed to using competency-based

teaching in every class. Additionally, 17.5% of students report that the competency-based methods are applied "never," suggesting that in some cases, instructors are not incorporating this approach at all.

These findings suggest that, while competency-based teaching methods are present in many classes, their application is inconsistent. A significant number of students observe the methods only occasionally, and a smaller group sees them applied frequently or always. This highlights the need for greater consistency in implementing competency-based methods across all courses to enhance their effectiveness and provide a more uniform learning experience for students.

Table 5. Impact of Student Motivation.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
How much does your motivation affect your English language learning under this method?	Very much	11	5.5
	Quite a lot	76	38
	A little	81	40.5
	Very little	32	16
Total		**200**	**100**

The data in Table 5 illustrates the impact of student motivation on English language learning under the competency-based teaching method.

A large portion of students, 40.5%, reported that their motivation affects their learning "a little," indicating a moderate influence of motivation on their language acquisition. 38% of students feel that motivation affects their learning "quite a lot," suggesting a stronger correlation between motivation and learning outcomes for many students. However, only 5.5% indicated that their motivation impacts their learning "very much," pointing to a smaller group of students who feel highly driven by motivation in this context. On the other hand, 16% of students reported that their motivation affects their learning "very little," suggesting that for this group, motivation plays a minimal role in their learning process.

Table 6. Level of Instructor Support.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
How well do you feel supported by your instructor in the competency-based English teaching method?	Very Well	20	10
	Quite Well	62	31
	A Little	89	44.5
	Not Well at All	29	14.5
Total		**200**	**100**

The data in Table 6 shows the level of support that students feel they receive from their instructors in the competency-based English teaching method.

A notable portion of students, 44.5%, reported feeling supported "a little," suggesting that while they may receive some guidance, it may not be substantial or consistent. 31% of students feel they are supported "quite well," indicating a more positive experience for a considerable number of students. However, only 10% feel supported "very well," pointing to a smaller group who feel highly supported by their instructors in this method. On the other hand, 14.5% of students feel they are not supported "well at all," indicating that for some, the level of support from instructors is insufficient or lacking.

The data in Table 7 indicate the students' perception of the appropriateness of the current English learning materials for the competency-based teaching method.

A small percentage, 3%, feel that the learning materials are "very appropriate," suggesting that only a few students believe the materials align well with the competency-based approach. Sixteen percent find the materials "appropriate," indicating that a small group considers them suitable, though not ideal. However, a significant portion of students, 44%, feel that the materials are "inappropriate," suggesting that many students believe the learning

materials do not effectively support the competency-based teaching method. Furthermore, 37% consider the materials "completely inappropriate," highlighting a considerable dissatisfaction with the materials' relevance or effectiveness in this teaching context.

Table 7. Appropriateness of Learning Materials.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
How appropriate do you find the current English learning materials for the competency-based method?	Very Appropriate	6	3
	Appropriate	32	16
	Inappropriate	88	44
	Completely Inappropriate	74	37
Total		**200**	**100**

The data in Table 8 reflects students' perceptions of how the learning environment at their university, including facilities, classrooms, and equipment, impacts their English language learning under the competency-based teaching method.

Table 8. Impact of Learning Environment.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
How much does the learning environment at your university (Facilities, classrooms, equipment) affect your English learning under this method?	Very Much	10	5
	Quite a Lot	12	6
	A Little	91	45.5
	Not at All	87	43.5
Total		**200**	**100**

A very small percentage, only 5%, feel that the learning environment affects their learning "very much," indicating that for most students, the physical and educational environment does not play a significant role in their learning process. An additional 6% feel it affects their learning "quite a lot," suggesting a limited but positive impact for a small group of students. The majority, 45.5%, report that the learning environment affects their learning "a little," implying that while the environment has some effect, it may not be substantial enough to significantly influence their educational experience. Finally, 43.5% of students believe that the learning environment affects their learning "not at all," highlighting a substantial portion of students who feel that the facilities and resources available do not contribute to their learning under the competency-based method.

Table 9. Appropriateness of Teaching Style.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
How well does the teaching style of your instructor meet your English learning needs?	Very well	20	16
	Quite well	63	31.5
	Not well	73	36.50
	Completely not well	44	22
Total		**200**	**100**

The data in Table 9 shows students' perceptions of how well the teaching style of their instructors meets their English learning needs under the competency-based teaching method.

Only 16% of students feel that their instructor's teaching style meets their learning needs "very well," indicating a relatively small group who are highly satisfied with the teaching approach. 31.5% find the teaching style "quite well" aligned with their needs, suggesting a moderate level of satisfaction. However, a significant proportion, 36.5%, report that the teaching style meets their needs "not well," indicating that for a large group of students, the teaching approach is not effectively addressing their learning requirements. Additionally, 22% feel that the teaching style

"completely does not meet" their needs, pointing to a considerable level of dissatisfaction with how their instructors are teaching.

Table 10. Impact of Extracurricular Activities.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
To what extent have extracurricular activities, clubs, or cultural events helped improve your English skills?	Very much	6	3
	Quite a lot	56	28
	A little	87	43.5
	Not at all	51	25.5
Total		**200**	**100**

The data in Table 10 reflect students' perceptions of how extracurricular activities, clubs, or cultural events have contributed to improving their English skills. A very small percentage, only 3%, report that these activities have helped improve their English skills "very much," suggesting that extracurricular opportunities have a limited impact on language learning for most students. 28% feel that these activities have helped "quite a lot," indicating that a moderate number of students find some value in them. However, 43.5% report that the activities have improved their English skills "a little," implying that while there is some benefit, it may not be substantial. Additionally, 25.5% of students feel that extracurricular activities have helped "not at all," highlighting a significant portion of students who do not see any improvement in their English skills through these activities.

4.2. Evaluating the Level of Lecturers and Educational Manager Perceptions on the Effectiveness and Influencing Factors of Competency-Based English Language Teaching at Art Universities

The data from the Table 11 reflects the perceptions of lecturers and educational managers regarding the effectiveness and application of competency-based English language teaching.

Table 11. Lecturers and Educational Managers' Perceptions on the Effectiveness and Application of Competency-Based English Language Teaching.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
How much do you agree with the statement, "Competency-based management has helped enhance students' English proficiency"?	Strongly Agree	9	31
	Agree	11	37.9
	Disagree	5	17.3
	Strongly Disagree	4	18.8
Total		**29**	**100**
To what extent have your students improved their English language skills due to the competency-based teaching approach?	Very Much	7	24.1
	Quite a Lot	12	41.4
	Moderate	7	24.1
	Little	3	10.4
Total		**29**	**100**
Do you use assessment tools to measure the progress of students' English proficiency?	Always	7	24.1
	Often	13	44.9
	Occasionally	5	17.2
	Rarely	4	13.8
Total		**29**	**100**

In terms of the statement, "Competency-based management has helped enhance students' English proficiency," the majority of respondents (68.9%) agree, with 31% strongly agreeing and 37.9% agreeing. However, a significant portion (36.1%) disagrees or strongly disagrees, suggesting that some do not perceive competency-based management as effective in improving students' English skills. This divergence in opinions highlights the need to investigate further why this approach may not be producing the expected results for all. Regarding the improvement in students' English language skills due to the competency-based teaching approach, most lecturers and managers

(65.5%) report positive outcomes. While 24.1% believe students' skills have improved "very much" and 41.4% indicate "quite a lot" of improvement, there are still 10.4% who feel the improvement has been minimal, and 24.1% report moderate improvement. This variation suggests that while the approach appears effective for many, it may not be equally beneficial for all students, possibly due to differences in individual needs or the specific implementation of the method. As for the use of assessment tools to measure students' progress, the majority of respondents (69%) either always or often use these tools, indicating a strong commitment to monitoring student performance. However, a notable portion (31%) uses assessments less frequently, with 17.2% using them occasionally and 13.8% rarely. This inconsistency in the frequency of assessments could mean that not all students are receiving the same level of feedback and support, which may impact the overall effectiveness of competency-based teaching.

Table 12. Lecturers and Educational Managers' Perceptions on Key Factors Influencing the Success of Competency-Based Management in English Language Teaching.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
In your opinion, how important are the following factors in implementing competency-based management? (e.g., teaching methods, teaching materials, learning environment)	Very Important	10	34.5
	Important	13	44.8
	Moderate	4	13.8
	Not Important	2	6.9
Total		**29**	**100**
To what extent do you face difficulties in applying the competency-based teaching approach?	Very Much	8	27.6
	Quite a Lot	12	41.4
	Moderate	6	20.7
	No Difficulties	2	10.3
Total		**29**	**100**
What are the most important factors in maintaining students' motivation in this approach?	Very Important	8	27.6
	Important	15	51.7
	Moderate	4	13.8
	Not Important	2	6.9
Total		**29**	**100**

The data from Table 12 provides valuable insights into lecturers' and educational managers' perceptions of key factors influencing the success of competency-based management in English language teaching. When asked about the importance of various factors in implementing competency-based management, such as teaching methods, teaching materials, and the learning environment, the majority of respondents (79.3%) consider these factors either "very important" or "important," with 34.5% rating them as very important and 44.8% as important. Only a small minority (6.9%) believes these factors are not important. This suggests a strong consensus among the respondents on the significance of these elements in the successful implementation of competency-based teaching, emphasizing that the right methods, materials, and environment are crucial for achieving effective learning outcomes.

Regarding the difficulties faced in applying the competency-based teaching approach, most respondents (69%) report encountering challenges, with 27.6% indicating they face "very much" difficulty and 41.4% stating they face "quite a lot" of difficulty. However, 20.7% report facing moderate challenges, and a small group (10.3%) reports no difficulties at all. This highlights that while many educators find the implementation of competency-based teaching challenging, a significant proportion of them manage to overcome these obstacles, indicating that difficulties in applying the method can be mitigated with appropriate support and training.

Finally, when asked about the most important factors in maintaining students' motivation in competency-based teaching, a large majority (79.3%) of lecturers and educational managers view factors such as personalized learning and student engagement as either "very important" or "important." Only 6.9% consider motivation-related factors "not important." This emphasizes the critical role of motivation in the success of competency-based approaches, as keeping students motivated is essential for their engagement and progress in language learning.

Table 13. Lecturers and Educational Managers on the Impact of Institutional, Cultural, and Pedagogical Factors on Competency-Based English Language Teaching.

Question	Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
How would you rate the impact of cultural factors, such as learning culture and teaching style, on competency-based English teaching?	Very High	6	20.7
	High	15	51.7
	Moderate	5	17.3
	Low	3	10.3
Total		**29**	**100**
How important are pedagogical factors (teaching methods, assessment methods) in the competency-based teaching process?	Very Important	9	31
	Important	14	48.3
	Moderate	4	13.8
	Not Important	2	6.9
Total		**29**	**100**
How do you think the learning environment and institutional policies impact the implementation of this approach?	Very High	9	31
	High	15	51.7
	Moderate	3	10.4
	Low	2	6.9
Total		**29**	**100**

Table 13 presents are lecturers' and educational managers' perceptions of the impact of institutional, cultural, and pedagogical factors on competency-based English language teaching. When assessing the impact of cultural factors, such as learning culture and teaching style, the majority of respondents (72.4%) rate the influence as "high" or "very high," with 51.7% indicating a "high" impact and 20.7% considering it "very high." A smaller proportion, 17.3%, rates the impact as "moderate," and 10.3% view it as "low." This highlights the significant role that cultural factors play in the success of competency-based teaching, with a strong emphasis on how learning culture and teaching styles shape students' engagement and learning experiences. Regarding the importance of pedagogical factors, such as teaching methods and assessment approaches, 79.3% of respondents consider them "very important" or "important." Specifically, 31% deem them "very important" and 48.3% "important," while a small group (13.8%) views them as "moderate" in importance and only 6.9% believe they are "not important." This demonstrates widespread recognition of the crucial role that effective pedagogical strategies, including appropriate teaching methods and assessment tools, play in the successful implementation of competency-based teaching.

Lastly, when asked about the impact of the learning environment and institutional policies on the implementation of competency-based teaching, 82.7% of respondents acknowledged a "high" or "very high" impact, with 51.7% rating it as "high" and 31% as "very high." A smaller group (10.4%) considers the impact "moderate," and only 6.9% view it as "low." These results indicate that institutional policies and the physical learning environment are vital factors that influence the effectiveness of competency-based English teaching.

In summary, the survey results reflect a strong belief among lecturers and educational managers that cultural, pedagogical, and institutional factors are integral to the successful implementation of competency-based English language teaching. Both teaching methods and assessment, as well as the learning environment and cultural context, are seen as critical elements in achieving effective learning outcomes.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Perceived Effectiveness of CBM in Enhancing English Communication Skills (RQ1)

The results show that students and instructors generally recognize the potential of CBM to improve English learning outcomes. A high percentage of students expressed satisfaction with the CBM approach (86.5%), and more than 65% of instructors observed some level of improvement in students' English proficiency (Table 11). These findings align with the principles of CBM, which emphasize outcome-based learning and real-world skill application (Baxter, 2015; Ramirez, 2000).

However, the effectiveness of CBM appears to be limited in practice. Only 11.5% of students reported significant improvement in their communication skills (Table 3), and many perceived the learning materials (81%) and teaching methods as inappropriate or poorly adapted to their needs (Tables 7 & 9). This reflects a disconnect between CBM's intended impact and its operationalization in the classroom, particularly in specialized disciplines such as the arts, where English usage is highly contextualized and project-based (Chan & McGrath, 2024).

These findings support Van Nguyen and Habók (2021), who emphasized the need for curriculum contextualization in ESP programs, especially for non-English majors with unique learning profiles.

5.2. Factors Influencing the Success of CBM Implementation (RQ2)

Three key categories of influencing factors emerged from the data: institutional, pedagogical, and cultural.

Institutional factors: Instructors cited limited resources, vague policy guidance, and rigid curricula as significant challenges to CBM implementation. Tables 12 and 13 show that more than 69% of staff encountered considerable difficulty in applying CBM, and over 70% believed institutional culture significantly constrained innovation. *This confirms earlier research* by Le and Nguyen (2024) and Hoang (2020), which noted that Vietnamese universities often lack systematic frameworks for operationalizing educational reforms. Furthermore, the findings reflect a lack of institutional investment in instructional design, quality assurance, and cross-departmental collaboration, all core elements of CBM (Nguyen, 2017).

Pedagogical factors: While instructors possessed strong academic qualifications (89.7% held a master's degree or higher), their teaching practices often failed to reflect CBM principles. Students reported a low frequency of active learning methods (Table 4), and there was limited support from instructors (Table 6), and a lack of individualized teaching (Table 9). This suggests a gap between theoretical competence and classroom practice. It also highlights the need for continuous professional development in CBM-specific pedagogy and assessment, an issue raised in studies by Ha (2025) and Le and Nguyen (2024).

Cultural factors: Cultural resistance to change and passive learning habits among students also impacted CBM success. For example, motivation was low despite moderate satisfaction, with only 11.5% of students reporting strong motivation (Table 5), and most reporting that extracurricular activities had little effect (Table 10). These findings support Truong (2020) and Dang and Norris (2024), who note that cultural norms in Vietnamese education often hinder the adoption of competency-based and student-centered approaches.

5.3. Recommendations for Management-Level Support of CBM (RQ3)

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to support effective CBM implementation in English language teaching at art universities in Vietnam:

- Curriculum reform and contextualization: Institutions should revise curricula to better align with real-life communication needs in the creative industries. This includes developing ESP materials tailored to artistic fields, incorporating performance-based tasks, and focusing on communicative competencies.

- Faculty development and instructional leadership: Teacher professional growth should enable educators to implement CBM-compatible instruction, that is, task-oriented learning, test-based projects, and differentiated instruction. Instructional leaders should monitor and lead educators in utilizing CBM strategies.

- Assessment system enhancement: CBM relies on transparent, performance-based assessment. Institutions should adopt rubrics and outcome descriptors that reflect the competencies expected in creative fields and align them with national qualification frameworks.

- Policy alignment and institutional support: School policies should clearly state CBM expectations, allocate resources for support in implementation (e.g., software tools, integration of studios and classrooms), and specify procedures for ongoing evaluation.

- Fostering a supportive learning culture: To diffuse cultural resistance, colleges would be well advised to build awareness campaigns, foster autonomy for students, and incorporate English in interdisciplinary and co-curricular programs in the arts.

6. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the use of CBM in English language classes among Vietnamese art college students to evaluate its efficacy, identify factors affecting it, and offer improvement recommendations at a management level.

The report summarizes that its adoption remains piecemeal and patchy despite CBM's general high regard among students and instructors. Students recorded only moderate improvement in communication in English, and they commonly complained of unsuitable materials, ineffective instruction, and a lack of support from instructors. Instructors acknowledged the value of CBM but blamed systemic shortcomings such as a rigid curriculum, lack of resources, and unclear policy direction that frustrated its effective use.

Institutional, pedagogical, and cultural circumstances all influenced CBM implementation outcomes. Such outcomes verify the need for curriculum content alignment with professional environments of students, for professional training for educators, and for shaping an institutional environment conducive to innovation and a focus on the student.

To enhance CBM effectiveness in art universities, strategic reform of curriculum design, teacher learning practice, assessment systems, and institutional policy is advocated for by this research. On a management level, efforts should be geared towards delineating CBM against the unique characteristics of the arts so that English language teaching fosters students' communicative competencies required for professional practice in creative sectors.

Future studies should extend the scope by involving qualitative interview data and classroom observation, exploring longitudinal outcomes of CBM projects, and examining institutional differences in policy and practice. Such studies would better clarify how CBM can be employed flexibly in specialized areas and assist in the further internationalization of learning English in Vietnam's tertiary institutions.

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