THE PERCEPTION OF STAKEHOLDERS TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NON-FORMAL CURRICULUM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

A school curriculum deals with learners experiences planned inside and outside the school. It has three main dimensions; the formal, non-formal and informal which are all pertinent to holistic learning and in turn well-balanced development of learners. Implementation of the curriculum in schools in Kenya tends to emphasize the formal aspect of the curriculum alone. This arises out of the general belief that the formal curriculum allows learners immediate eligibility into institutions of higher learning and subsequently into the world of work. On the contrary, research has shown that learners who embrace the non-formal aspect of the curriculum excel academically. Still, there are learners who are not endowed academically but have advanced in the non-formal dimension of the curriculum earning incomes from the same. Stakeholders in education have a great influence in the implementation of non-formal curriculum; hence the purpose of this study was to establish the perceptions of the stakeholders towards the implementation of non-formal curriculum in secondary schools in Mumias and Matungu sub-counties. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A stratified random sampling was undertaken to identify the school types which stood at 9types, 16 out of 56 schools were identified in the random sampling and 154 teachers, 1159 students, 22 heads of schools, 30 heads of departments, 10 parents. 1 sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officer was selected . The instruments of data collection included questionnaires, structured interviews, observations, Focused Group Discussion and document analysis .The study was carried out in Mumias and Matungu sub-counties. Kakamega County, Kenya and targeted only secondary schools. Descriptive analysis of data was employed. The results were presented in form of tables. The findings of this study revealed that stakeholders have both positive and negative perceptions towards the implementation of non-formal curriculum activities and recommends that all stakeholders in education develop a more positive attitude towards non-formal curriculum since they complement formal curriculum and aid the learners to develop wholesomely and in turn integrate well into their immediate society.

INTRODUCTION

The general aims and objectives of education gear towards developing all-around, well balanced individuals who will foster personal, national, international, social, economic, political and cultural development. In this regard, one of the goals of education in Kenya is to foster nationalism, patriotism and promote social, economic and national development (K.I.E, 2002). These and other goals of education cannot be achieved in totality if individuals do not strive to make their personal contributions towards them. Hence the school curriculum should provide opportunities for the fullest development of individual talents, personality and other potentials. It ought to help learners to among other aspects, develop their potential, interests and abilities by emphasizing a vital aspect which is character building. Astin's (1988) advances a student involvement theory which presents a platform for students' participation in Non-formal curricular activities and recommends that all stakeholders in education develop a more positive attitude towards non-formal curriculum since they complement formal curriculum and aid the learners to develop wholesomely and in turn integrate well into their immediate society.

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the non-formal curriculum which Oluo (2002) defines as those learning activities that are traditionally referred to as extra-curricular or intra-curricular or co-curricular activities. They are organized in a less rigid manner than formal learning activities. Shehu (2001) observes that schools fail when they take a partial view of education by allowing the core curriculum to crowd out the interactive non-formal curricular activities from their school activities calendar. The paper is also concerned with stakeholders in education and the implementation of the non-formal curricular activities.

Eshiwani (1993) asserts that Kenya like many other third world countries suffers a certificate syndrome whereby one paper certificate fails to secure an individual a vacancy in the next level. The Kenya Secondary Heads Association in the National Conference (2009) agreed that what was taught in schools is the syllabus. Koech, (2009) put his weight on the same issue in his suggestion that education in Kenya is a race for good results.

Progressivists have stimulated schools to broaden their curriculum to a more child centered approaches making education more relevant to the needs and interests of the child. Dewey, among them, points out that the authoritarian strict; pre-ordained knowledge approach of traditional education is too concerned with delivering knowledge and not enough for understanding children’s actual experiences. To Dewey, education must be centered on the needs of the child (Sadker & Sadker, 2000) Pragmatists also approach the problem of education from the progressivists point of view. To them progress implies change. Change further implies novelty. The child therefore needs to learn new techniques to cope with novel and problematic situations (Aggarwal 1992).

Psychologists believe that learning experiences have to be introduced to the learner when such exposure is most effective and beneficial to him. Issues to be considered when dealing with the learner are capabilities of the learner, the valuation of the learner, students’ rate of learning as well as how they learners learn (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992).

All the aforementioned schools of thought agree that curriculum ought to reflect the needs, culture and problems of contemporary society. Kenya has continually striven to improve education through education commissions and sessional papers. The Kenya Education Report commonly referred to as the Ominde Commission (1964/1965) the first in Independent Kenya and regarded as a blue print in education, recommended among other things that education should be child-centered so that the youth are prepared and equipped with knowledge, skills and expertise to enable development of individual talents and personality for national development (ROK, 1965). The Kenya Education Sector Support Programmed (KESSP) 2005-2010 (ROK, 2005) the government has placed strategies to address policy issues in education (16.5;177) Key among the issues is the emphasis of support for children with special talents and abilities. This strategy calls for recognition of talent inherent within the learners. Sessional paper No 14 of 2012 in a bid to address the need to construct a balanced curriculum aligned to aspirations of Vision 2030 recommends talent potential development at all levels of education.

Implementation of the curriculum appears to be the most difficult stage of the curriculum development process. It requires that all stakeholders come together to see the success of policy put in place. It calls for concerted efforts of all the stakeholders who include, international agencies, the Ministry of Education, school principals, teachers, students, parents and the community. Each has a distinctive role to play in the success of implementation of non-formal curriculum.

The Ministry of Education sets the strategic directions for schools and collaborates with schools to formulate effective policies and practices. It supports principals and teachers in the implementation of the broad curriculum which includes non-formal curricular activities. Through the Ministry of Education the Quality Assurance of Standards monitor the extent to which the NFC has been implemented schools.

The Board of Management is charged with the overall management of schools and allocating funds and resources in the school. It plans for the improvement of the school and how curriculum ought to be implemented. It is directly in charge of the overall functioning of the school, it is important that they suggest proper infrastructure for implementation of NFC. Infrastructure will include buildings, game fields. Other facilities will include school buses and equipment to promote the implementation of NFC.

School principals are in effect translators of educational policies into practice, interpreting and applying them appropriately to suit school conditions. They build a supportive community by forging links with students, parents, alumni and the community. To great extent, they determine the non-formal activities that are offered in schools and help identify and nurture talent and potentials inherent in learners. They even sponsor NFCAs. The teachers majorly implement the curriculum. Besides teaching, they directly shape the character and moral development of the learners by providing role models for the child. They motivate, challenge and help the students to discover and nurture talents and potentials inherent in them. The students are the reason why the curriculum is implemented. They are direct consumers of the curriculum. Their interests, aspirations personal goals shape the NFCAs they participate in. They have a wide range of NFCAs offered to them by their schools from which they can select from depending on their individual interests or guidance by the teachers. The NFCAS range from clubs; both academic and talent based, games and sports, creative arts; music and drama and community work.

Parents support schools in their efforts to educate the child. They pay fees and generally show concern to their children by being keen on what the children do. They influence the non-formal curriculum activities that their children are interested in by either being supportive or non-supportive of them. They have the powers to influence curriculum as their role is felt both at home and in the school.

Methodology

The study was undertaken in selected secondary schools in Matungu and Mumias sub-counties which together form the Mumias sub-county. The target population was 10 Heads of schools, 22 Heads of Department in charge of non-formal curricular activities, 54 teachers, 1159 students and 1 Quality Assurance and Standard Officer. The study employed the use of structured interviews, questionnaires, observations, focused group discussion and document analysis. The data was analyzed
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the random observations that were carried out it was found out that perceptions of donors is very positive. Schools in Mumias and Matungu sub-counties benefit greatly from the corporate world who wish to give back to the society. They mainly donate uniforms, balls and contribute money for activities from the zonal to the national levels. Amongst the donors are, Internal Olympic Corporation, Equity bank, Brookside dairy milk sponsor which sponsors games and sports and Mumias Sugar Company promotes mainly music and drama festivals.

Documents analyzed show that the Kenyan government supports non-formal curriculum activities. It allocates in excess of Kshs 400 million for non-formal curricular activities, though not much is seen to be going on in terms of students' participation in co-curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2012). In order to establish the perceptions of students and teachers towards NFCAs, the use of questionnaires was employed. The researcher identified several areas concerned with various aspects of perception and highlighted them in the questionnaire. The table below highlights the students' perceptions towards NFCAS.

Table 1: Students Perception towards NFCAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' Perceptions</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Strongly Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make students tired</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are refreshing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students build confidence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students build team spirit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students improve academic performance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link students with other schools</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes students socialize with other students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make student's popular</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table one realizes that there are positive perceptions by students towards the implementation of NFCAs. 75% of the students disagree that NFCAS made them bored. 89% acknowledged that they were refreshing whereas 95% agreed that NFCAS helped them build their confidence. Again, 94% agreed that NFCAS helped them build their team spirit; 82% acknowledged that NFCAS helped them improve their academic achievement. Almost the same percentage of students 93% felt that NFCAS linked them with students of other schools. 92% NFCAS allowed them to socialize and 91% felt that NFCAS made their schools acquire popularity. From this rating one can conclude that students embrace the NFCAS wholeheartedly.

Table 2: Teachers Perceptions towards NFCAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s perception</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Strongly agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They waste a lot learning time</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make students tired</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are refreshing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students build confidence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students build team spirit</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students improve academic performance</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They make students sick</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They cause accidents</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses from the teachers show that a large percentage of teachers have a positive perception towards NFCAs, 76% disagree to NFCAS wasting students learning time, 68% disagree to NFCAS making the students tired, 83% disagree to making students sick and 59% to causing accidents. The teachers are positive to implementation of NFCAs as 98% agreed that the NFCAS are refreshing to students. 98% agreed that they help the students develop confidence. 93% agreed that they assist students to develop team spirit and 64% to the fact that they helped students improve in their academic achievement. Nearly half the respondents 49% considered NFCA expensive to run. On the whole teachers were very positive about NFCAs.

From the Focused group discussion (FGD), the stakeholders agree that games and sports assisted students to build their confidence and develop team spirit besides developing the spirit of competition and emotional control. Debates, they asserted, were very important language tools which they felt should be made compulsory as they went a long way in improving language competencies in both
speech and expression. It also allowed for acquisition of
listening skills and the power of learning to respect other
people’s opinion. Furthermore it aided students in
answering and discussing essay questions as they develop
their capacity in critical discussion. Christian Union, Young
Christian Association and Islamic Religious Education Club
encouraged students to enrich their spiritual well-being
and to uphold moral uprightness.

From the interviews the Head Teachers and Heads of
Department were very positive about NFCAs. They argued
that students’ holistic development was achieved through
the activities and cited student in their schools who were
well adjusted out of participation in NFCAs. The students
participation in NFCAs did not deter students from
remaining academically grounded. Participation came with
other advantages for example a large number of students
who had excelled in games and sports had gained quick
employment because employees had sought after their
prowess in NFCAs in addition to their academic
performance. The same scenario applied in recruitment
into the disciplined forces where proof of participation in
NFCAs in school was an added advantage.

The teachers felt that their NFCAs lent themselves
into pockets of indiscipline brought about by the feeling
that because they excelled in NFCAs they were special. This
was aggravated by the incentive they were entitled to, such
as better meals, larger food, portions, sponsorship by
schools in terms of fees payment, school outings and
general praise. Over all, there was a general feeling that if
NFCAs were well organized and properly managed cases of
indiscipline would be minimized. Again from the
questionnaires both the teachers and students revealed
that NFCAs helped students relax keeping them refreshed
and this aided not only in making them grasp many
concepts in academic work which positively boosted their
performance in examinations but also in boosting their
academic performance

In the focused group discussion (FGD) there was
some negative perceptions by parents and teachers. 80% of
the parents are not given to promotion of academic
performance and they complained that NFCAs infringed
on academic programs of the
students learning time. They complained that the time
spent participating in NFCAs would have been taken up by
academic programs that would enable the children excel
academically.

The bigger picture painted by perceptions of stakeholders
in the country include that of His Excellency the then
President Mwai Kibaki who in his address to participants in
the 2009 Drama festival said drama is not only a social
commentary that serves as a medium of instruction but
also helps to appreciate develop, preserve and promote our
diverse cultural values. It also sharpens the creativity of
our young people and improves their ability to express
their ideas and feelings thereby enabling them to
communicate effectively in their daily lives. Moreover
drama provides a forum for the youth to interact and co-
exist peacefully as members of one Kenyan family
(Presidential Press services, 2009).

In the same year, at the close of the Music festival in
Mombasa the vice president stressed the critical role co-
curricular activities play in moulding the youth to
achieve because of the many challenges in policy issues, the
schools themselves and the parents. Schools faced several
challenges that stood in the way of promotion of NFCAs.

Another study reveals that principals / Head teachers
believed that activities were an encroachment to academic
culture and were side shows. They deemed NFCAs a waste
of time.

Wangai (2015) found out that students fault their parents
for failing to have positive parental involvement in co
curricular activities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion
The stakeholders, especially the teachers and students
perceptions towards NFCAs were very positive. However
the actual implementation of the NFCAs was difficult to
achieve because of the many challenges in policy issues, the
schools themselves and the parents. Schools faced several
challenges that stood in the way of promotion of NFCAs.

Though schools have assigned two days in a week for NFCA
as is the government policy requirement, they do not have
strategies to ensure that every individual student
participates in NFCAs. Furthermore, school administrations
themselves worked against promotion of NFCAs by
utilizing the time scheduled for NFCAs on academic
programs therefore discouraging or completely killing
participation in NFCAs.

Again, the school principals predetermine the activities that
the school will participate in depending on their likes,
preferences and interests so that the NFCAs that they are
interested in are promoted at the expense of students
interests that might not be in their category of interests
shunned.

Recommendations
The study recommends that all the stakeholders in
education develop a more positive attitude towards non-
formal curriculum as research has proved that NFCAs are
of great benefit to the learners. A learner may be closed in
in the class activities but when exposed to NFCA they excel.

Another recommendation is that teachers be exposed to
workshops in music and drama and clinics in sports and
games to keep themselves abreast with the latest trends
and rules of the activities. Once talent has been identified
it should be nurtured and not killed. This study also
recommends that the government ministries especially the
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Sports
and Gender should be instrumental in formulating clear
policy guidelines for schools and help institute further
measures that would enhance talent development.
REFERENCES