

A Critical Analysis of the Infringement of Co-Curricular By Examination Oriented System and Its Effects on Learners' Development in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Good academic results are and have become a fundamental requirement in education of any civilized society. The quest for better academic grades has informed a lot the clamour for excellence and better academic results in Kenya. Much as this may be necessary, a lot has been forgotten pertaining co-curricular activities. Essentially both aspects are designed to complement one another. The purpose of this study is to critically analyze the many drawbacks and effects of the infringement of the examination oriented curriculum on the co-curricular activities in Kenya. In trying to explain this puzzle, the researcher used qualitative research methodology with a critical analysis on past research work targeting the same subject. The study established that there is too much inclination towards an exam oriented curriculum in Kenya. Learners had very slim chances to engage in co-curricular activities with the result being health complications like obesity among school going children, cardio-vascular ailments, diabetes, poor social skills and drug abuse among many others. From the study, there was need to keenly look into the issue of co-curricular activities and reverse the trend in order to arrest the situation. The government through the ministry of education (MOE) should increase monitoring to ensure that both curricula are given their fair share of time as is allocated. The ministry through the quality assurance and standards (QAS) should develop monitoring tools to ensure that time allocated for co-curricular activities is not diverted to any other forms of curricula.

Key words: Academic, co-curricular, examination oriented system, infringement learners' development

1.0 Introduction

Co-curricular activities are the true and practical experiences received by students. To a larger extent the theoretical knowledge gets strengthened when a relevant co-curricular activity is organized related to the content taught in classroom. Intellectual developments are best done in the classroom, while aesthetic development, character building, spiritual growth, physical growth, moral values and creativity are aspects supported by co-curricular activities. Unlike the theoretical knowledge, “the co-curricular activities are voluntary and students do not receive grades or academic credits for them” (Holloway, 2000, 87)

Lack of evaluation on co-curricular activities coupled with lack of amenities together with inclined interest has resulted into total neglect of this in favor of theoretical academic knowledge, and better grades. This has in the long run brought about devastating effects and far reaching consequences that are manifest in the learners in Kenyan schools. Indeed it’s true that “lack work and no play make jack a dull boy”.

2.0.Statement of the problem

It is without doubt that co-curricular activities are inseparable from a myriad other learning activities and more specifically theoretical learning. This is clear from numerous studies that the two aspects are complimentary. Beashel and Taylor, (1996) says that sports make a positive contribution to an individual’s morale and health development. Oluoch, (1982) defines school curriculum as all that is planned to enable the students to acquire and develop the designed knowledge, skills and attitudes. This therefore explains how seriously all this aspects need to be integrated to yield better results. Co-curricular activities need to be given time and be taught to avert the problems that threaten proper development of learners.

3.0. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to critically analyze the effects of emphasizing and preference given to exam oriented curriculum not forgetting the value of co-curricular activities on the learners in Kenya. More specifically the study was geared towards establishing how the absence and generally less emphasis on co-curricular activities has negatively impacted on the health of the learners and general holistic development as is expected.

4.0. Research objectives

- i. To establish the extent to which exam oriented curriculum is taught and its infringement to learners' development in schools in Kenya.
- ii. To identify factors that influence teaching the exam oriented curriculum and their infringement to learners' development in schools in Kenya.
- iii. To analyze the effects of under-teaching co-curriculum activities on learners development in schools in Kenya.
- iv. To determine the value of teaching co-curricular activities on the development of learners in schools in Kenya.

5.0. Research questions

1. What are the factors that influence the teaching of the exam oriented curriculum in schools in Kenya?
2. What are the effects of under-teaching co-curriculum activities in schools in Kenya?
3. To what extent is the exam oriented curriculum taught in schools in Kenya?
4. What is the value of teaching co-curriculum activities on the development of learners in schools in Kenya?

6.0. Research methodology

The researcher used qualitative research methodology that employs the use of critical analysis design. In this research method, the researcher analyzed past and present computed research studies on the subject area through content analysis. The researcher was able to critique positive evaluation of various curriculum issues and quickly give measures propagated as a curriculum recommendation. Through the critical method the researcher was able to come up with resolution of curriculum challenges against the conflicting curriculum background. The researcher attempted to seek clarification of curriculum implementation approaches and questionable practices with the aim of enhancing co-curriculum implementation in schools.

7.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

7.1. Factors influencing teaching and learning of the exam oriented curriculum in schools in Kenya.

For anything meaningful to happen constructively in society, human beings have got to derive meaning and motivation from its process. H. McFarland mentions that, 'motivation activates the energy which ends learning, keeps it on the alert and guides it'. Education in Kenya today is so competitive with all stakeholders working tirelessly towards making a society of scholars deriving motivation from the job market as well as the technological world.

A major recommendation was once made on education reforms by the taskforce on the re-alignment of the education sector to vision 2030 and the constitution of Kenya (2010). The government pledged commitment to provide free basic education to all its citizens. It cannot be over emphasized that in that regard the much sought after knowledge became readily accessible. This is one of the major incentives influencing teaching and learning of the exam oriented

curriculum. Rigorous exam is another factor to behold Raffick, (2004) agrees that “private tuition is a consequence of a heavy emphasis on examinations forcing students to seek outside help”. In this sense all students have the fear of failing exams and especially in their final year of primary school or secondary school course not to mention the other levels on a lower scale.

Other stake holders in this field attribute the thirst for the exam oriented curriculum differently. According to KNUT boss Ambrose Adongo (Daily Nation 26th, July, 1995) tuition was made necessary by the broad 8-4-4 curriculum that could not be covered within normal teaching hours. This led to the understanding why we have more and more classroom teaching and learning.

7.2. Analysis of the effects of under-teaching Co-curricular activities in schools in Kenya.

Co-curricular activities happen outside the curricular setting. “A silo effect may occur wherever co-curricular and curricular activities act as separate entities”, (Shroeder, 2005). The separation between the two curricular gives room for the structured curriculum to thrive at the expense of the poorly structured Co-curricular. The end result of all this is laziness and boredom

(Nesan, 2009) Argues that “the normal curriculum has limitations, with the result that learners who only experienced rigidly academic study may not be able to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations”. He also adds that “another benefit is that quite a number of activities have a strong physical bias”. This clearly implies that under-teaching the co-curricular in favor of the exam orientated curriculum is in itself incomplete knowledge acquisition.

Co-curricular attempts to expose learners to a wider range of experiences that exhibit reasonable resemblance to a world of reality out there in which they will live and work after they complete school. In Kenya, the ministry of education allocates in excess of kshs 400 million to fund Co-curricular activities in schools (Ministry of education, 2012) this amount doesn’t make much

impact. According to the Daily Nation newspaper (1st, July, 2014) each county receives kshs 300,000 towards funding of Co-curricular activities. This is inadequate considering the heavy funding on the other curricular programmes.

Mr. Michael Tuitoek, Nakuru Region Music Secretary says that the amount of money allocated for co-curricular activities is not enough. He calls on the government to allocate more funds (Daily Nation, July, 2014). The underfunding of co-curricular activities causes ripple effects like under participation and poor preparedness in Co-curricular activities.

7.3 Establish the extent to which exam oriented curriculum is taught in schools in Kenya.

Modern school institutional practices are increasingly appearing to be under the control of an invisible monster that demands rapid academically excellent results. This has seen contemporary schools under heavy pressure to cut themselves a niche_in both the Kenya certificate of primary education (K.C.P.E) and Kenya certificate of secondary education (K.C.S.E) exams.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG) had suggested that all countries in the world should strive to achieve universal primary education by 2015. In developing countries like Kenya enrolment in primary schools reached 91%. Although the target has not been reached, there's great improvement up from only 83% in 2000. This is an impression of how big the numbers of learners are in our primary schools and in translation, secondary schools. With the huge enrolments coupled with demand for excellent results, it is understandable that a lot of classroom teaching in quest for grades is inevitable.

Lunenburg & Ornstein, (2008), says that “generally, extracurricular activities are voluntary, are sponsored by school officials and carry no academic credit toward graduation”. In sense of this regard, many of the learning institutions work very hard in academic work to deliver good grades

and to stay relevant. Indeed it can be established that to a very large extent, the exam oriented curriculum is exclusively being taught in Kenyan schools.

7.4 The value of teaching co-curricular activities on the development of learners in schools in Kenya.

Extra-curricular activities are fundamental even at the level of the school system. “They are of paramount importance especially in secondary schools” (Foster, 2008). “The terms extra-curricular activities, co-curricular activities and classroom activities have all been used interchangeably to mean experiences and activities such as debate, athletics, music, drama, school publications, student council, school club contests and various social events” (Emmer, 2010a,b,c,d,e,f). This numerous activities make a considerable percentage of the school curriculum-“paralleling the required and the elective curriculums, and are well integrated into the daily school programs” (Barbieri, 2009). This underscores the need to teach co-curricular activities in schools. “Extra scholastic activities have been associated with an improved educational level, more interpersonal competencies, higher aspiration and better attention level”. (Mahoney, Cairos & Fawer, 2003), increased critical thinking, personal social maturity (Bawer & Liang, 2003).

Acquisition of knowledge goes beyond brain training. Co-curricular activities should be incorporated into the curriculum to create a “well rounded student” (Stoltzfus, 2007). In 1995 Robert Barr and John Tagg wrote an article “from teaching to learning”. In the article, higher education was experiencing a powerful transition from instructional to learning. They had a vision that education was about to undergo from thinking about just acquiring knowledge to focusing on outputs in terms active research. This way education would become more inclusive

in focusing on outputs in terms active research. They envisaged that education would then become more inclusive in focusing on the co-curricular activities hence making it meaningful.

8.0 Research methodology

This is a research that has employed the use of qualitative research methodology. In this methodology the researcher applied the critical analysis design that sought to look more intently into the findings of other researchers in a similar subject area. Through the critiquing of past research works, the researcher was able to find major gaps in this co-curriculum matter and hence was able to come up with recommendations and stop gap measures that urgently need to be put in place. Schools, institutions and the government through the ministry of Education (MOE) need to reinvent time management strategies, curriculum supervision procedures and monitoring to rescue Co-curricular activities from extinction.

9.0. Recommendations

The study suggests that co-curricular activities should be given considerable time as prescribed in the curriculum in all learning institutions. It further advocates for proper monitoring services by the ministry of Education together with enough funding and evaluation of the activities to enhance their implementation.

The research further advises the government through the ministry of education to give proper guidelines on infrastructural developments in various institutions. This will ensure that institutions of learning have playgrounds and other recreational facilities necessary for co-curricular activities. The research also calls upon the government to crack the whip on Private institutions that don't meet standards especially those that have no space for co-curricular

activities and those that have completely forsaken co-curricular activities in favor of the examination oriented curriculum.

10. Conclusion

It is clear from the research that indeed there is every reason to be worried about the sudden upsurge of the exam oriented curriculum that has seen diminishing interests in co-curricular activities. It is also clear that the glory and value of co-curricular activities is almost gone paving way for the consequences of its absence. Although some of the effects take long to be manifested and others even much later in life, some of them are felt immediately. They include indiscipline in schools, obesity and diabetes among young people who by nature should be active not forgetting drug abuse.

Theoretical knowledge is important but left alone without co-curricular activities; it will only produce intellectuals with poor practical orientation to face life which is more of a practical activity than theoretical. There's need to balance and integrate both the exam oriented curriculum and the Co-curricular activities.

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