An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Co-curricular Policy in Developing Talent Among the Youth in Secondary Schools in Transmara West Sub-county, Kenya.

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Abstract
Many school-going children are placed at risk by school practices that are based on a system of education which tend to glorify those who excel academically while condemning students who fail in examinations and therefore regarding them to be of lower quality. The study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of co-curricular policy in developing talent among the youth in secondary schools in Transmara West Sub-County, Kenya. The objectives of the study included to assess the level of awareness on co-curricular policy among stakeholders and to assess the training needs of head teachers, games HODs, club patrons and coaches in areas of skills shortage identified. The study adopted a mixed methodology with the Naturalistic and participant-oriented research design. From a population of 4202, the researchers used stratified sampling technique to sample 9 head teachers, 90 teachers and 270 students from the 9 schools sampled with each providing 30 students for the study thus making a sample of 369 respondents.   The data was analyzed using Microsoft excel and SPSS programme. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The findings revealed that there was inadequate time allocated for co-curriculum activities and that most schools did not take co-curricular activities seriously. Most respondents were not aware about the co-curricular policy. There was also need for schools to expose their teachers to structured training in order to empower them with the necessary skills and techniques needed to develop talent among the youth under their watch.
Key Words: Evaluation, Effectiveness, Co-curricular Activities, Talent

1.   Introduction

The effectiveness of any educational policy is directly proportional to the capacity of that policy to enhance student involvement (Astin, 1984). Astin's theory presented a platform for viewing student participation in co-curricular activities. Involvement was an active concept that required the student to invest time and energy.

Despite the fact that schools are concerned with the students' sufficient development in both academic and social aspects, more attention has been given to their academic performance. This has been reflected in numerous researches in the past which found that co-curricular activities played an important role in students' academic success (Chambers& Schreiber, 2004; Huang & Chang, 2004; Hunt, 2005; Stephens & Schaben, 2002; Tan & Pope, 2007). However, there are not many studies investigating the effectiveness of co-curricular policy in Kenyan secondary schools. The researchers found no study that attempts to unearth how effective co-curricular activities are in talent development.

Though generally available, empirical evidence on the relationship between co-curricular activities and academic performance is inconclusive so far. Numerous researches found a positive correlation between them (Camp, 1990) whereas some reported no such correlation (Light, 1990). Otto (1982) asserted that the strong positive results reported thus far might have been caused by the flawed use of cross sectional research designs and inadequate or non-existent selection control methods. The results are inconsistent in many of the cross-sectional studies, and the literature on this topic is inconclusive. Hunt (2005) suggested using longitudinal designs to treat the variables at one time point as a possible cause and at a later time point as a possible effect. This study adopted a Naturalistic and participant-oriented design.

Co-curricular activities enhance and enrich the regular curriculum during the normal school days. Tan & Pope (2007) also referred to co-curricular as extracurricular, extra-class, non-class, school-life, and student activities. Despite the lack of a precise term, co-curricular activities seem more student-centred than the regular classes. In co-curricular activities, students assume responsible positions of leadership; students' spontaneous interests and immediate needs determine affiliations and experiences; and the teacher-supervisor is often a mentor or guide rather than an instructor (Stevens, 1999).

Kenyan system of education places a lot of emphasis on academic performance to the detriment of co-curricular activities. Consequently, talents are neither identified early in life nor are they fully developed thus denying students an opportunity to earning a living as professional sports people and joining other related careers.

Although the Kenyan government allocates in excess of Ksh 400 million for co-curricular activities, not much is seen to be going on in terms of students' participation in co-curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2012). Most schools concentrate on academic work examined after four years in secondary school thus effectively locking out co-curricular activities – a central component of the curriculum offered in our secondary schools.

Each child has the capacity to succeed in school and in life although many, especially those from poor and minority families, are exposed to risk by school practices that are based on a system of education that tend to glorify those who excel academically while condemning students who fail in exams thus relegating them to lower quality futures. This is unfair particularly given that some of the so called 'failures' are actually good in one form of co-curricular activity or the other, given opportunity. A survey carried out in Transmara West Sub-County discovered that only 20% of school-going children participate in co-curricular activities (DEO Transmara West Sub-County,2013).

While our education system in Kenya recognizes the central role of co-curricular activities in the curriculum as attested by the 2003 co-curricular policy (Ogochi, 2011), it is not known how effective those activities are in developing talents among secondary school students in Transmara west Sub-County. Thus, the evaluation was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of co-curricular policy implementation in talent development in secondary schools in Transmara West Sub-County.

The objectives of the evaluation were; to access the awareness of the co-curricular policy among stakeholders and to assess the training needs of head teachers, games HODs, club patrons and coaches in areas of skills shortage identified by the end of September, 2013.

It was hoped that the study was likely to increase awareness of co-curricular policy and provide secondary school teachers and principals with information about the implementation of co-curricular policy in secondary schools. This would be used to improve the implementation of the policy thus enhance talent development. The study would also facilitate the establishment of training needs for secondary school Head teachers, Coaches and patrons in an effort to enhancing implementation of co-curricular policy. The study would also be important to the government ministries especially the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Sports and Gender in the bid to track the implementation of co-curricular policy in schools and help institute further measures that would enhance talent development. In addition, the study was expected to stimulate further research on appropriate practices that will enhance effective co-curricular implementation in schools.

2.   Methodology

A mixed methodology was used for the evaluation. A mixed method approach involves integrating process and outcome designs (Creswell, Plano Clark, et al. 2003). The method increases the chances of accurately describing the processes and assessing the outcomes of the programme. It used a mixture of data collection which included document review, questionnaires, interview and observations.

The evaluation adopted the Naturalistic and participant-oriented design. This design provides opportunity for evaluators to pay attention to the whole education process and respond to the requirements of different audiences (Ogula, 2003). The evaluators described the whole picture of the situation evaluated thus helping them understand the situation they were evaluating.

The total population was composed of 20 head teachers, 182 teachers and 4000 students in secondary schools making a total population of 4202 (DEO Transmara West Sub-County, 2013). The sample used for the evaluation included 9 head teachers, 90 teachers and 270 students from the 9 schools sampled with each of the sampled schools providing 30 students for the study thus making a sample of 369 respondents. Stratified sampling was employed as secondary schools were grouped into Girls', Boys' or Mixed schools. Names of schools in each category were written on pieces of paper and then shuffled in a container. Three schools were then selected from each category to make nine schools. Purposive sampling was used to automatically sample all head teachers whose schools were sampled.

Given that the sub-county had 20 head teachers, 182 teachers and 4000 students in secondary schools making a total population of 4202, Sloven's formula (Machuki, 2012) was used for determining minimum number of respondents required for the given population size i.e. a minimum of 365 respondents were required for this study.

The evaluation relied on the checklist for evaluating Curriculum Designs to collect data on implementation of co-curriculum activities. A questionnaire was developed to collect additional information. An interview schedule was also used to collect data particularly from head teachers who happened to be very busy and could not fill in the evaluation checklist. Besides, an observation protocol was used by the researcher to gather information on how the program operates.

Collected data from this research was organized in quantitative and qualitative data. Microsoft Excel and the statistical package of social scientists (S.P.S.S 17.0) were used to analyze data. Descriptive and inferential

statistics were used. The results were discussed and recommendations made. In order to interpret the analysis of the respondents' responses, the following quantification and values were used:

Table 1: Interpretation Table

Mean Range	Interpretation
3.26- 4.00	Very Good
2.51- 3.25	Good
1.76- 2.50	Fair
1.00-1.75	Poor

3. Results and Discussion

Table 2: Awareness of Co-curricular policy

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
School Policy on co-curricular policy/activities		
You are well informed about the policies	1.50	Poor
The policies are reasonably comprehensive in scope	2.07	Fair
You are well informed about the provisions through manual	2.00	Fair
The policies are clear and easy to understand	2.00	Fair
policies are flexible and stable	1.99	Fair
You are well informed about the provisions through orientation	1.98	Fair
policies provide for coordination with other departments	1.98	Fair

The School Policy on co-curricular activities rated 1.93 (Fair) a clear indication that this area remains wanting. Respondents said that they were neither well informed about the provisions through orientation (1.98) nor through manual (2.00). As for whether the policies were clear and understanding (2.00), flexible and stable (1.99) and provide for coordination with other departments (1.98), the respondents disagreed with the questions provided clearly indicating that they were not satisfied with the policies in place. The issue of policies being reasonably comprehensive in scope was rated the best with a mean index of 2.07.

Table 3: Staff Training and motivation to conduct co-curricular activities

Staff preparation and motivation	Mean	Interpretation
you receive high regard/prestige from: your principal	2.58	Good
your colleagues	2.58	Good
staff within your department	2.58	Good
community members	2.58	Good
your students	2.58	Good
you are given the opportunity: to participate in the determination of co-curricular activities and methods & procedures	2.49	Fair
for personal growth and development through training	2.49	Fair
to use your unique capabilities and potentials	2.41	Fair
given the chance for independent thought and action	2.39	Fair
Average mean	**2.52**	Good

Staff training and motivation to conduct co-curricular activities revealed a mean index of 2.52 (Good). This showed that some the teachers were given opportunity to use their unique capabilities and potentials, a chance for independent thought and action (2.39), participate in determination of co-curricular activities, methods and procedures (2.49). As for personal growth and development, the mean index was 2.49. However, most respondents did not lack high regard/prestige from their principal (2.58) and community members support (2.58), though they could do with more. Majority of the respondents, however, seemed to receive high regard from their colleagues and students (2.58). Since the total mean index of staff motivation is 2.24(Fair), it becomes very evident that most teachers were not highly motivated in the performance of their job of coaching and being patrons of clubs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The evaluation identified the need increasing for teachers to be exposed to more awareness programmes on the existence of the co-curricular policy in schools. It also identified the training needs of teachers and head teachers to make them actively participate in co-curricular activities.

In light of the above findings the following recommendations were made:

i.   More awareness campaigns need be carried out to ensure that all stakeholders in education sector are enlightened on the vital role co-curricular activities play in talent development.

ii.   A more vigorous training programme ought to be rolled out to empower teachers with necessary skills and attitudes that are crucial in helping young people in secondary schools identify and cultivate their talents.

iii. A clear programme should be prepared on when and how co-curricular activities should be offered in schools. Time allocated to each activity should also be specified.

iv.   Proper Supervision of co-curricular policy implementation in schools should be instituted so as to ensure that all activities are offered to students as per the ministry policy.

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