Influence of Co-Curricular Activities on Academic Achievement of Public Primary School Pupils: The Case of Kisumu Municipality, Kisumu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the influence of co-curricular programmes on academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools in Kisumu Municipality. The study objectives were to establish the extent to which games, sports, drama and music as components of co-curricular activities influence the academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools. The study employed a descriptive survey design. A total of 75,000 pupils distributed across 118 public primary schools in Kisumu municipality were targeted. A sample of 360 drawn from12 randomly selected public primary schools in Kisumu municipality was used. Three classes (class 5, 6 and 7) per school were purposively selected and in each of the classes 10 pupils (5 girls and 5 boys) participated in the study. The main instrument used was questionnaire which was analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics was used to analyze hypotheses. The study found that the more pupils participated in co-curricular activities the more their academic performance deteriorated. For instance the correlation between involvement in all the co – curriculum activities and academic achievements was negatively correlated as indicated by -0.116. It was established that the correlation between academic achievements and highest level reached in sports competition was -0.221, while the correlation between academic achievements and highest level reached in music competitions was -0.069. The same trends were registered on correlation between academic achievement and the extent to which pupils participation in drama as shown by negative correlation of -0.125; the correlation between participation in clubs and academic achievement of the pupils was -0.093. It was therefore concluded that, games, music festivals, clubs and society does not significantly influence students' academic achievement. There could be other factors that in combination with the aforementioned factors contribute to students' achievement. It was recommended that Kenyans curricula be made to cater for holistic development of pupils.

Key words: *Co-curricular activities, Academic achievement, Primary school programme*

1. Introduction and Context of the Study

1.1 Introduction

The History of education reveals that co- curricular and extra-curricular activities have always been present but regarded with varying degrees of importance. The academic curricular are meant to provide children with the experience and knowledge necessary to be prepared primarily for the world of work. However, academic and social factors are necessary to a child's development (Armentrout, 1979; Franklin, 1992; Wentzel, 1991). Reading, writing, and other indispensable academic skills are intertwined with learning about self, communicating and working well with others, and gaining broader understanding of cultural influences. Furthermore, social competence in childhood often is cited as a predictor of academic achievement (Marsh, 1992; Taylor, 1991; Vaughn and Haager, 1994; Wentzel, 1991). Conversely, socially rejected or aggressive children appear to be at risk for academic failure (Brown, 2000; Scott, 2001). Children who are considered successful in schools and have mastered integration of academic and social skill sets, often list involve in extracurricular activities as an important part of their school lives. Children who do not see themselves as competent in

academic, social, or other
activities (such as athletics, music, drama, or scouting) during their elementary years sometimes report depression and social isolation more often than their peers, as well as higher levels of anger and aggression (Eccles, 1999). Student's level of competence serves as a feedback influence on school success and achievement of self-perceptions (Eccles and Midgley, 1990; Wigfield, Eccles, MacIver, Reuman, and Midgley, 1991). While there are numerous interventions for academic and social skill difficulties, the present study asserts that participation in extracurricular activities is a useful and acutely appropriate vehicle for children to gain valuable academic achievement.

In Hong Kong, the need for more extracurricular activities was stressed after the social disturbances in 1966 and 1967. Today, a typical secondary school in Hong Kong provides its students with about thirty different kinds of extracurricular activities which are coordinated by a senior teacher (Fung, Sin, and Mak, 1988). This is meant to prepare them for family life, directing their use of leisure time, developing a set of moral and ethical values, developing social competency, discovering special interests and capacities and developing creative expression.

In America public schools face an awesome responsibility. With new educational legislation, such as 'No Child is Left Behind' and the pending re-authorization of International Debate of Education Association (IDEA, 1997), increasing measures of accountability and student achievement are strongly emphasized. A diverse population of children has to be educated and socialized in the face of dwindling resources and overburdened support systems. Due to personal and environmental factors, children can become at risk for adjustment and developmental problems. The most pronounced risk factors for students are low academic achievement and low socialization compared to age-appropriate expectations (Mahoney and Cairns, 1997).

In the UK, extra-curricular activities are less well organized and funded, being entirely voluntary for students and taking place outside the school timetable. School staff may be involved in running extra-curricular activities, but there is no obligation on them to do so and they do not normally receive extra pay for it. Clubs and societies in many UK state schools fit this definition, as do non-academic activities in most universities and colleges throughout the world (Nesan, 1993).

The Education commission report (Kochhar, 1993:281) of India shows "we conceive of the school curriculum as the totality of learning experiences that the school provides for the pupils through all the manifold activities, in the school or outside, that are covered on under its supervision". These manifold activities include not only curriculum centred activities but also other curricular activities (co-curricular activities and extra-curricular) that help children to develop mentally, spiritually and socially. Bossing (1963:505) "Even with the most satisfactory school-room conditions, students need a more direct outlet for their tendencies".

Since 1985, Kenya has been operating the 8-4-4 system of Education .This was due to the recommendation of the report of the presidential working party on the second University of 1981. The objectives of the system were to provide learners with academic and practical skills to make them self-reliant. The system is criticized to be instruction oriented and that it gives a lot of emphasis on academic subject at the expense of physical education (Aduda, 2003: 6).The report of commission of inquiry into the education system of Kenya (1999: 70), notes that, quality in education emphasizes enrichment in the process and outcome of learning achievement. It is not mere passing of examination or certification but the development of independent, analytical, creative potential of the individual including critical imagination, spiritual and ethical values.

Primary education provides a

fundamental base for all further schooling training or self- education. It also provides the basis for developing the capacity to cope with rapidly evolving and changing society in an information age (Chantanavanch and Fray.1990: 112). In fact the crucial role played by primary education has led to its being declared a human right to which every child is entitled, and whose provision should therefore be the responsibility of the state

There is also need for educational planners to develop a sports curriculum that operates efficiently right from primary schools through to colleges. The National youth policies should be operationalized and an institutional mechanism put in place to ensure that youth issues are mainstreamed into the development process (Kenyan Development plan, 2002-2008).

1.2 Context of the study

Extracurricular activities are activities performed by students that fall outside the realm of the normal curriculum of the school. Also known as enrichment programs they are courses offered by educational facilities to help promote skills and high level of thinking for students (Redston *et al*., (2010). While co- curricular activities are those that take place in the school setting therefore are guided by staff playing a major role in the effect of academic achievement on the students. Pierce *et al.,* (1999) maintains that co-curricular and extra-curricular activities play an important role in the lives of schools students. A study by Marsh (1992) examined the effect of total extra-curricular activities participation during the students' last two years in high school, found total extra-curricular activity participation to be significantly related to 13 of the 22 outcome variables studies. The variables included global self-concept, academic self-concept, taking advanced aspirations, parental involvement, among others. In general, the studies conducted on high school athletes showed generally positive effects on extracurricular involvement on academic achievement. Silliker and Quirk (1997) examined the effects of extra-curricular activity participation on the academic achievement of high school students. Participants consisted of 123 high school students who participated in interscholastic soccer during the first quarter of the school year but were not involved in any extracurricular activity during the second quarter. The results of the studies indicated that participants had higher grade point average in the first quarter (i.e., during soccer season) than in the second quarter (outside soccer season) and the student attendance was also found higher during the soccer season. Taras (2005), maintains that physical activity are likely to help children performance better in school" because physical activity "improves general circulation, increases blood flow to the brain" and releases brain chemicals which "may reduce stress and improve mood" and "induce a calming effect.

According to research compiled by music teachers in Keller, Texas, there is a large amount of evidence that suggest the relationship between music and student achievement. It concludes that music students' score higher on SATs, music improves test scores, music lessons boost math scores and that music training helps underachievers, among other things. Extracurricular activities such as instrument lessons, band, or choir all promote learning through music, and can benefit student's performance in academic subjects. Durlar and Weissman, (2007)

A National State Assembly of Arts Agencies publication connects student learning in the arts to students' academic and social achievements. According the Assembly, "research has shown that what students learn in the arts may help them to master other subjects, such as reading, math or social studies." The national agency's conclusions reflect the results of a 2002.

According to Odeyemo, (2010) there is a direct correlation between a student's social skills and academic performance. The study found that over the course of six

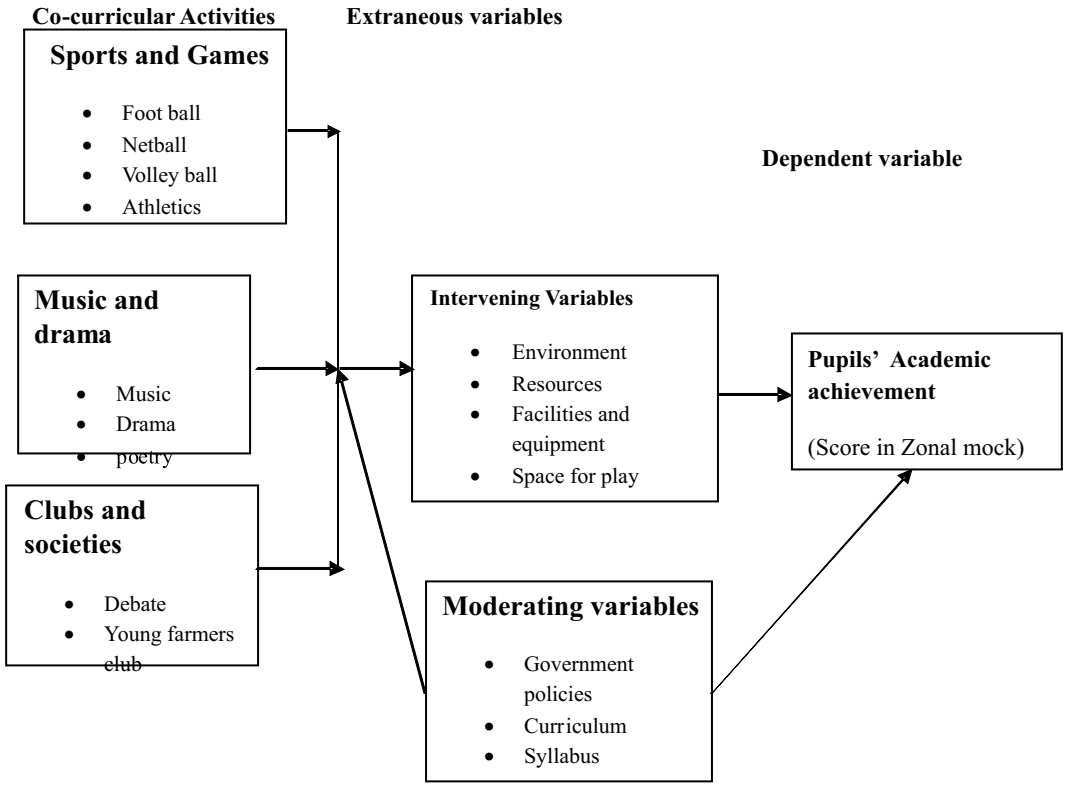
months, students who received social skill instruction performed 11 percent better in academics than students who did not receive the same instruction. School clubs, organizations, and after school programs promote social skills through structured group collaboration and cooperation.

Durlak and Weissman (2007), found that school clubs and after school programs contributed to "positive social behaviors, school grades and achievement test scores." The authors also found that in addition to benefiting student's academic performance through social development, school clubs and after school programs also reduced behavioral problems and drug use.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

This Section describes the perceived conceptual framework as highlighted in the figure below:

Independent variables



The study conceptualizes that independent variables; sports and games; music and drama; clubs and society which forms components of co-curriculum activities interacts in a school environment to improve pupils academic achievements. However, the kind of learning environment, resources, equipment and support given to pupils by their schools could influence the dependent variable in either direction. Government policy on implementation of co-curriculum in schools was regarded as a moderating factor. In this study, the zonal and Municipal mocks exams of the previous year was considered as units of measure to measure academic achievement of pupils since these were exams done on term basis.

2. Statement of the problem

The Kenyan 8-4-4 system of education has been criticized for its failure to

accommodate co-curriculum and extracurricular programmes in schools. The system is said to be overloaded in both taught and examined subjects to an extent of offering extra-tuition during weekends and evening times and thus consuming time allocated for games, clubs and societies among others. (Aduda, 2003: 6).

Educationists are interested in the relationship between academic achievement and participation in extracurricular activities implying that these activities do have some sort of influence on how students perform academically (Stephen and Schaben, 2002). However, since they are not examined in the same way that the academic curricular is, and because most of them take place outside lessons, such activities have less status in education than the main curriculum.

Kenyan education system has been said to be examination oriented and thus schools dedicate more time on cognitive oriented programmes than social and psychomotor oriented programmes (Nyonje, 2004). From this argument, it is clear that any students spending more time in class is rewarded more than those investing in activities outside class. Several experts including Brown, (2000) and Scott, (2001) noted that co curriculum programme has a significant influence on the pupils academic achievements. Whether or not there is a relationship between students participation in school based extracurricular activities and students achievement is yet a gap to be investigated. The purpose of this study was to investigate influence of Co-curricular programmes on academic achievement in respect to pupils of public primary school in Kisumu municipality, Kisumu County Kenya.

3. Objectives of the study

The study was based on the following objectives;

1. To establish the extent to which sports and games as components of co-curricular activity influence academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools in Kisumu Municipality Kisumu County.
2. To examine the extent to which music and drama as components of co-curricular activities influence academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools in Kisumu municipality Kisumu County.
3. To assess the extent to which clubs and societies as components of co-curricular activities influence academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools in Kisumu municipality Kisumu County.

4. Research Methodology

The study was carried out using descriptive survey method. A descriptive survey does not require variables under study to be manipulated. The study targeted 75,000 pupils who were distributed across 118 public primary schools in Kisumu municipality. The area was purposively selected from Kisumu County since it had many public primary schools with very high pupils' enrolment. Sample size of 360 was determined based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size at 5% margin of error. The sample size was drawn from 10% (12 Schools) of the 118 schools that were assumed to display the same characteristics and interest since they were in the same environment. The 12 schools were then divided by the sample size of 360 giving a total of 31 pupils' per school. The number was spread equally as per the gender of pupils. Finally the number was distributed considering the three classes (class 5, 6 and 7) under study by dividing 31 pupils by 3 classes and got 10 pupils for each class, where by 5 were boys and 5 were girls respectively.

The study used three research instruments questionnaire, interview and observation schedules which were constituted in parts A, B, and C. Part 'A' consisted of questionnaire in two sections which had both structured and unstructured questions.

Section 1 of the questionnaire sought general information about the pupil, for instance gender, age activities played, and the academic scores among others. . The respondents were required to indicate their choice of answer by ticking against the choice on each sub-item. Section 2 of the questionnaire dealt with the opinions of pupils concerning participation in selected aspects of co-curricular activities and curricular activities, it contained open ended questions, which required the respondent to give the required information by filling blank spaces that were provided. These questions addressed among other things, the following issues; pupil's own opinion of the contribution of co-curricular programmes to academic achievement, availability and nature of co-curricular facilities and equipments, participation and other kinds of support given to pupils, challenges experienced by pupils while participating in co-curricular activities and ways of overcoming them. Other qualitative instruments were used for the purpose of colleting and validating the data collected through the questionnaire. These included; interview schedules and observation checklists.

The validity of the instruments was ascertained by conducting a pilot study. This ensured that the instructions were clear and captured in simple English language and all possible responses to a question were captured. The instruments were reviewed by two research experts of the University of Nairobi and were adjusted as per the comments given thereafter.

5. Findings and Discussions

5.1 Sports and games and academic achievement

The study established that among learners who had the higher marks over 351, there was a higher percentage of learners who did not participate in sports and games compared to those who did. For instance out of the 129 learners who did not participate in sports, 49 (13.6%) had over 351 marks while among the 231 pupils who participated in sports and games 72 (20.0%) pupils had 351 marks and above. This shows than the percentage of learners increases with less participation in sports and games. In the lower marks of less than 250 marks, however, there was a slightly higher percentage of learners who participated in sports and games compared to those who did not. For instance out of the 129 learners who did not participate in sports and games only 24 (6.7%) attained below 250 marks while on the other hand, out of 231 learners who participated in sports and games 43 (11.9%) had below 250 marks in examinations (see Table 1 in appendix). The study found that at 5% level of significance there was a significant negative correlation between highest level reached in sports competition and academic achievements of the pupils. This results show that the more the learners excelled in games and sports the less they performed in their academic.

5.2 Music and drama and academic achievement

Concerning music and drama, the study revealed that very high performance in academics was associated with less participation in music. For instance, out of the 275 pupils who did not participate in music, 107 (29.7%) attained more than 350 marks while among the 85 learners who participated in music only 14 (3.9%) had over 350 marks (see Table 3 in the Appendix section). It is clear that pupils who indicated not to participate in music scored higher marks than those who said they did. Further analysis of the correlation between participation in music completion and academic achievement indicated a significant negative correlation of -0.69. Implying that the more the pupils participated in music the more they registered lower marks.

Same results were recorded on pupils participation in drama. For instance among the 302 pupils who did not participate in drama, 141 (39.2%) pupils got the average marks of between 250 and 350 marks. On the other hand among the 58 learners who participated in drama, a total of 31 (8.6%)

pupils attained the average marks of between 250 and 350 marks. Lastly among the category of learners who attained the scores of less than 250 marks, a slightly higher percentage participated in drama compared to those who did not. Out of the 302 pupils who did not participate in drama, a total of 56 (15.6%) pupils obtained less than 250 marks. On the other hand among the 58 pupils who participated in drama, a total of 11 (3.2%) pupils had less than 250 marks (see Table 5 in the appendix section). The study established a correlation of -0.125 between participation in drama and academic achievement, which was greater than a probability of 0.05. This implied that the more pupils participation in drama the less they performed academically.

5.3 Clubs and society and academic achievement

The findings on pupils participation in clubs and society showed that out of the 129 pupils who indicated that they participated in the clubs, 70 (19.4%) attained 350 marks and over . On the other hand out of 231 pupils who participated in clubs, 51 (14.2%) pupils attained over 350 marks. This showed that among the learners who attained the high marks of over 350 marks, there were a higher percentage of learners who did not participate in clubs compared to those who participated in clubs.

In the group of pupils who had the low marks of less than 250 marks a big number of pupils did not participate in clubs compared to those who participated in clubs. For example out of the 129 pupils who did not participate in clubs, 34 (9.4%) pupils had less than 250 marks while out of the 231 pupils who participated in clubs, 33 (9.2%) pupils had less than 250 marks. The correlation between participation in clubs and academic achievement of the pupils was -0.093. This means that there was a negative relationship between pupils' participation in clubs and academic achievement. Concerning the influence of societies on academic achievements, it came out clearly that attainment of the high marks was associated more with participation in societies and vice versa. For instance, among the 303 pupils who did not participate in the societies 99 (27.5%) pupils got above 350 marks, on the other hand among the 57 pupils who participated in societies 22 (6.1%) pupils had over 350 marks. The correlation between academic achievements and the highest level reached in society competitions was 0.03, meaning that there was a positive relationship between academic achievement and the highest level reached in primary schools' society competitions. This implies that the more pupils participate in primary schools' society activities the more their performance improves and vice versa but not significantly.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to establish the extent to which co – curricular activities influenced pupils academic achievement in public primary schools in Kenya. In all items of co curriculum activities, a significant negative correlation was found except the item on society. This led to the conclusion that the more public primary schools pupils participated in co-curriculum such as sports, games, music, and drama the more their performance deteriorated. Nyonje (2004) found that the Kenyan primary school curriculum was academic oriented and thus teachers engaged pupils more in academic subjects to the extent of utilizing the time set aside for co-curriculum activities. There is possibility that pupils participating more in co-curriculum activities were losing a lot of academic hours which they were unable to recover and thus poor performance.

7. Recommendations

The study recommends that the government should reduce the overload in the curriculum. This will lessen the burden in academics of the learners thereby enabling them to balance between their academics and the co – curriculum activities. This will see to it that the

academics and co – curricular activities do not occur in exclusive.

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education should devise a way of examining non-academic subjects and co-curriculum activities. This should form part of the overall performance of pupils. This will ensure development of a holistic pupil.

The study recommends that the government should find strategies of improving competition among schools with a well developed motivation strategies. This will make the co-curriculum attractive to all pupils.

The study recommends that steps aimed at changing the teacher's attitude towards co – curriculum activities need to be adopted in the schools. All teachers should be taken through in-service on the importance of encouraging pupils to participate in co-curriculum

The study recommends that the schools should get stakeholder support to improve the co – curriculum facilities if they do not have the resources to do so. For instance, the schools should improve the state of the fields, buy more balls and get more personnel in terms of coaches to train the pupils.

The study recommends that the schools should ensure that they monitor the involvement of the learners in academics and co – curriculum activities to guard against learners overdoing one aspect at the expense of the other. On the other hand the Ministry of Education through its quality assurance department should ensure that the school timetables are adhered to and pupils are involved in all programme that develop all aspect of their body.

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