

Influence of Learner Support Program on Management of Primary School Curriculum Implementation in Meru County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The researcher examined influence of learner support programs on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County, Kenya. Learner support programs are key concepts that need to be fully utilized; for complete realization of effective competence based curriculum management in Kenyan schools. The concern was that the idea of learner support programs is underutilized in competence based curriculum implementation in Kenya. The objective of the study was to examine influence of learner support programs on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County, Kenya. The researcher used Krejcie and Morgan sample determination table to determine 364 respondents from 7000 target population. The study utilized descriptive design. The study respondents were: teachers, subject panel heads, head teachers and curriculum support officers. The research tools were questionnaires and interview guides. Inferential statistics was analyzed using Pearson's chi-square tests. The study established that there was significant influence of learner support programs on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County, Kenya. Following study findings, the researcher concluded that learner support programs are significant concept in management of primary school curriculum implementation in Kenyan schools. Therefore, the researcher recommended that ministry of education should encourage learner support programs for effective curriculum implementation management in Kenyan primary schools.

Keys words: learner support programs, Curriculum, Curriculum Implementation and Management

INTRODUCTION

Learner support programs are important aspects that need to be fully involved; for successful realization of effective competence based curriculum management in Kenyan schools. Learner support programs refer to what the teacher or instructor should accomplish to assist students beyond the formal delivery of knowledge or development of skills in competency-based curriculum. According to a study by Muijs and Reynolds (2017) on effective teaching, learner support programs are a crucial for effective learning environment. The learner support program in a competency-based curriculum focuses on what the teacher or instructor can or should do to improve students' skills and moral developments. A study by Tonkin (2016) on leading schools for innovation and success, the learner support program is a project work, creative activities and other learners' activities beyond the current learning progresses. The instructor responsibility is to provide more individualized feedback to deal with the learners' actions that are more qualitatively evaluated. Students regularly need guidance on administrative or personal issues in academic programs. The Tonkin (2016) study suggested that there are possible sources of assistance that need to be incorporated in the learning design for an efficient learning environment with the intention of doing everything possible to ensure that learners succeed while meeting the academic standards of a curriculum. A study by Senol and Lesinger (2018), learner support programs covers the multiple duties of an instructor in diagnosing and treating learners' challenges. The study concentrated on the connections between trust, school culture and

instructional leadership style. The learner support program helps learners comprehend the limits of knowledge by analyzing various theories and practices. In order to obtain a deeper understanding or a higher degree of competency in managing learning activities, it encourages students to go beyond their existing level of comprehension or expertise. The activities in learner support programs often take the form of one-on-one interactions or in-person communication between an instructor and a single learner or a group of learners. The learner support program activities are frequently preplanned, forcing the teacher to improvise learning resources and react quickly to moral behavior changes to improve learner experiences. A study by Unachukwu and Okorji (2014) on educational management, noted that though there is the utilization of group projects, online conversations and collaborative learning activities, is necessary to instructors to create learner support programs where students collaborate rather than work alone. Learners vary greatly depending on the type of learning support program they receive. By determining what learner need to learn and how to achieve it best, learners may manage themselves and become autonomous. Some students find management of learning activities in formal education system to be a complete failure, if there are insufficient learner support programs.

In his study on the leadership issues surrounding the use of ICT in public secondary schools, Mingaine (2018), reviewed that learner support program is important for students' management of learning activities, but is not always acknowledged or valued. In addition, different educators and institutions hold different opinions about the value of learner support program in competency-based curriculum. The reality is that, unless one is willing to jeopardize the future of tens of thousands of students in curricula, teachers and instructors must provide effective learner aid in learning support system with a diverse range of learners. According to study by Raselimo (2017) on situating the Lesotho secondary school geography in curriculum relevance debate, the vast majority of learner support programs fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, occasionally in experiencing issues. The instructor presence affects students' performance in a course, at least in online learning. When students believe the instructor is not present, both learner performance and completion rates differ. Effective and timely learner support can differently between succeed and fail for many students in managing learning activities in learning situation. It should be emphasized that adequate learner support is necessary and is capable of being provided regardless of the instructional medium. The kind of credit online courses have been devised and delivered to provide high levels of student aid by having a strong teacher presence and careful design to ensure learners are assisted. A cross-sectional study on teacher education and decision making by Freeman (2017), showed that social development is crucial for managing learning support programs because kids need to learn how to share, cooperate and exercise self-control. A child must have concrete skills in learning activities carried out during learner support program. Children require health bodies that can sustain sitting in order to manage their physical development. According to Freeman (2017) recommendations children need to have a positive self-concept and an awareness of how they fit into their world in order to develop emotionally and participate in learning support programs. From the review of varies scholars' studies, it is not clear how learner support programs relate with management of curriculum implementation in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Learner support programs are key concepts that need to be fully utilized; for complete realization of effective competence based curriculum management in Kenyan schools. However, the ideas of learner support programs are underutilized in competence based curriculum implementation in Kenya; rising concern on management efficiency of new competence based curriculum system in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

To examine the influence of learner support programs on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County, Kenya

Hypothesis

Learner support programs have no statistical significant influence on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher utilized descriptive design. According to crewswell (2016), correlation research design provided insight into complex real world of relationship; thus helping researcher develops theories and make predictions regarding causal relationship. The descriptive design described the state of affairs as it existed in a natural and unchanged surrounding so as to establish present condition of the items under study.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling Technique

The researcher used Krejcie and Morgan sample determination table to determine 364 respondents from 7000 target population. According to Krejcie and Morgan table, 364 respondents under study are adequate to represent the total of 7000 individuals. The researcher proportionally sampled 53 head teachers and 4 curriculum support officers using purposive sampling technique from 531 target head teachers and 77 target curriculum support officers respectively. According to crewswell (2016), purposive technique is a sampling approach where researcher identifies respondents with most appropriate information needed in a given study. Some head teachers and curriculum support officers were selected since they had adequate information on influence of learner support programs on management of primary school curriculum implementation. The researcher also proportionally sampled 187 teachers and 120 subject panel heads from 4084 target teachers and 2308 target subject panel heads respectively using simple random technique.

Sample Size

The sample size was 364 respondents comprising 187 teachers, 120 subject panel heads, 53 head teachers and 4 curriculum support officers.

Research Instruments

Questionnaires and Interview Guides

The researcher employed questionnaires and interview guides for head teachers, subject panel heads and teachers. Self-completion questionnaire was less expensive and saved time for the researcher. The non-structured interview guides used in the study, aided researcher to acquire first-hand data from the respondents.

Data Collection Procedure

First researcher conducted pilot study in Tharaka Nithi County. Then, researcher employed research assistants. The researcher conducted actual study in Meru County; by collecting data starting with teachers, subject panel heads, head teachers and finally curriculum support officers; using questionnaires and non-structured interview guides respectively.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

Researcher ascertained research tools validity by getting relevant information on specific tools from experts and professionals in ministry of education. The respondents were given questions with similar characteristics; basing on specific objectives of the study. The reliability of research tools was determined by cronbach alpha co-efficient; which computed to 0.742. The researcher maintained ethical issues by adhering to assured confidentiality, non-discrimination, anonymity to maintain privacy of participation in the study.

Ethical Considerations of Study

Researcher observed principles of informed consent and permission from National Council of Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to carry out study in Meru County, Kenya. The researcher utilized NACOSTI letter to seek permission from Meru county commissioner and county director of education to carry out study in selected schools.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistic approaches of data analysis. The descriptive statistic looked for patterns in a data set to summarize the information revealed in a data set to present study information in a convenient form that is easy to understand. The inferential statistic was analyzed using Pearson's chi-square test to estimate influence of variables obtained from the sample.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study hypothesis was that learner support programs have no statistical significant influence of learner support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County. Teacher, subject panel heads and head teachers gave responses on influence of learner support programs on management of curriculum implementation in Meru County. The data were analyzed and findings recorded. The researcher utilized Chi-square tests to determine effluence of learner support programs on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County, as per responses of teachers. The results were analyzed in Table 1.

Table1: Chi-Square Tests of influence of Learning Support Program on Management of Primary School Curriculum Implementation for Teachers

	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	42.1466		0.000
N of Valid Cases	184		

Pearson chi-square test was performed to investigate whether there was influence of learning support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation for teachers. $\chi^2(6, 184) = 42.146$, $p = 0.000$ indicated that there was influence of learner support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation for teachers. The information was supported by ideas of Şenol and Lesinger (2018) comparative study in South Africa on the influence of instructional leadership style, trust and school culture, who pinpointed that in learner support program; many functions of an instructor involves diagnosing, managing and responding to learners' difficulties by helping learners gain deep understanding of a subject. The study findings were further supported by a comparative study by Tonkin (2016) in America on leading schools for innovation and success; who denoted that the learner support program is a project work, creative activities, and other learners' activities beyond the current learning progresses. The

instructor responsibility was to provide more individualized feedback to deal with the learners' actions that were more qualitatively evaluated.

The researcher utilized Chi-square tests of influence of learning support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County, as per responses of subject panel heads. The results were analyzed in Table 2.

Table 2: Chi-Square Tests of influence of Learning Support Program on Management of Primary School Curriculum Implementation for Subject Panel Heads

	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	26.184	6	0.000
N of Valid Cases	118		

Pearson chi-square test was performed to investigate whether there was influence of learning support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation for subject heads. $\chi^2(6, 118) = 26.184, p=0.000$ indicated that there was influence of learner support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation for subject heads. The study findings correlated with views of Şenol and Lesinger (2018) comparative study in South Africa on the influence of instructional leadership style, trust and school culture; who pinpointed that learner support program helps learners to evaluate a range of different ideas or practices and helps learners to understand the limits of knowledge. Above all challenging learners undergo beyond current level of thinking or practice, help them acquire deeper understanding or a higher level of competency in managing learning activities.

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests of influence of Learning Support Program on Management of Primary School Curriculum Implementation for Head Teachers

	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	6.806	4	0.147
N of Valid Cases	53		

Pearson chi-square test was performed to investigate whether there influence of learning support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation for head teachers. $\chi^2(4, 53) = 6.806, p=0.147$ indicated that there was no influence of learning support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation for head teachers. The study findings were in line with a descriptive study by Ntumi (2016) in Kenya, on challenges pre-school teachers face in the implementation of the early childhood curriculum, who postulated that learning support program is a continuous process of development when children are ready to begin learning and interact with the others after day classes to learn different basic concepts. The learning process begins at different times for different kids depending on how environment is motivating with enough instructional learning resources.

Hypothesis Testing on Influence of Learning Support Program on Management of Primary School Curriculum Implementation in Meru County

The study null hypothesis (H_0) stated that there is no statistical significant influence of learner support program on the management of the primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County.

Table 4: Overall Chi-Square Tests of influence of Learning Support Program on Management of Primary School Curriculum Implementation

	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	62.335	8	0.000
N of Valid Cases	355		

Pearson chi-square test was performed to investigate whether there was influence of learning support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation for all the groups. $\chi^2(8, 355) = 62.335, p=0.000$ indicated that there was influence of learning support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation. The p-value being less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and concluded that there was a statistical significant influence of learner support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru. The study findings correlated with views of Şenol and Lesinger (2018) comparative study in South Africa on the influence of instructional leadership style, trust and school culture, who pinpointed that in learner support program; many functions of an instructor involves diagnosing, managing and responding to learners' difficulties by helping learners gain deep understanding of a topic or subject.

The researcher gave the descriptions of responses on influence of learner support program on management of primary school curriculum implementation in Meru County. The responses were indicated in excerpt 1; as per interview guides for curriculum support officers.

Excerpt 1

Researcher: How does the management of primary school promote competence based curriculum where learning support program is commonly practiced in schools?

Respondent 1: Learner support program may promote collaborative learning activities that can help management of curriculum implementation. The study findings are consistent with those of Unachukwu and Okorji (2014) who noted that instructors can use students more formally by creating group projects, collaborative learning activities, and online discussions that encourage collaboration rather than competition in learner support programs. Learner support program can also facilitate acquisition of problem solving skills in management of curriculum learning activities.

Respondent 2: In learner support program, teachers may identify and monitor what a learner can learn and how best can do it after normal school hours remedial. The study findings correlated with a descriptive study by Ntumi (2016) in Kenya on challenges pre-school teachers face in the implementation of the early childhood curriculum, who postulated that learning support program is a continuous process of development; especially when children are ready to begin learning and interact with the others after day classes, to learn different basic concepts. The learning process begins at different times for different learners depending on how environment is motivating with enough instructional learning resources. School managers evaluate different learners' ideas to conform and supervise their limit of the knowledge in making real-life correct decisions. The study findings were supported by a study by Senol and Lesinger (2018) in South Africa; who noted that the learner support program helped learners comprehend the limits of knowledge by analyzing various theories and practices. In order to obtain a deeper understanding or a higher degree of competency in managing learning activities, the study encouraged students to go beyond the existing level of comprehension or expertise. School managers may organize self-learner individualized learning experiences. The findings were supported by the study of Buabeng-Andoh (2016) study that discovered that during learning support programs, teachers can successfully play games that enable kids to recognize words that start with a certain letter sound. An individual learner's ability helped understand what they have heard

and link it to their own experiences. School managers monitor learner safety precautions to limit learner self-risk and school administrators also may control environmental challenges in school. The study findings were supported by a comparative study by Tonkin (2016) on leading schools for innovation and success; who denoted that the learner support program is a project work, creative activities, and other learners' activities beyond the current learning progresses. The instructor responsibility was to provide more individualized feedback to deal with the learners' actions that were more qualitatively evaluated to limit learner self-risk.

Respondent 3: Teachers encourage learner engagement in co-coordinating collaborative learning. School managers have created avenue and monitor for free teacher-learner interaction after normal school hours. The study findings were in agreement by a survey on critical media literacy in the twenty-first century conducted by Song (2017); who argued that a learning support program is crucial to a child overall development and their success in learning experience and interactions. Development on the emotional, social, physical, or cognitive levels when children freely interact may assist learner support programs. Teachers ensure manageable class sizes that allow effective interaction with the learners.

CONCLUSIONS

Following study findings, the researcher concluded that learner support programs are valuable concepts in education; and significantly influence management of primary school curriculum implementation in Kenyan schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommended that ministry of education should encourage learner support programs in all schools for efficient curriculum implementation management in primary schools in Kenya.

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