

# Influence of School Policies on Students' Participation in Co-Curricular Activities: a Case of Public Secondary Schools in Aberdare Central Region, Kenya

**Winfred Ndunguri Muthike**  
Karatina University

**Prof. John Mwaruvie**  
Dean, School of Education and Social  
Science, Karatina University

**Prof. Zakariah K. Mbugua**  
Director Quality Assurance, Karatina  
University

**Abstract** – School policies influence students' participation in co-curricular activities in secondary schools since, there is a statistically significant relationship between school policies and student participation in co-curricular activities. Data analyzed showed a strong, positive correlation between the two variables which gave a high correlation of 0.803. High levels of support by the school administration were associated with high levels of student participation in curricular activities. It is therefore concluded that there is need to strengthen support of co-curricular activities by the school administration which will result in an increase in students' participation in co-curricular activities. The descriptive survey research design was used. The target population comprised of 35,426 subjects and a sample size of 365 participants.

**Keywords** – Co-curricular Activities, Influence, Participation, Policy, Secondary Schools.

## I. INTRODUCTION

All over the world co-curricular activities are increasingly gaining prominence as an integral dimension of the education system. The goal of co-curricular activities is to provide both boys and girls the opportunity to develop mental and physical abilities while cultivating good habits and lifelong skills (Singer, Hausenblas & Janelle, 2001). World Health Organization (WHO) (1998) points out that the benefits of participation in co-curricular activities include among others; improvement of motor skills and physical fitness, enhancement of normal physical and social growth, improvement of socialization, self-esteem, self-perception and psychological well-being, and establishment of a basis of a healthy lifestyle and lifelong commitment to physical activity. Eccless and Midgley (1999) indicated that children who do not see themselves as competent in academic, social or other activities such as athletics and sports during their elementary years sometimes report depression and social isolation more often than their peers, as well as higher levels of anger and aggression. Good school policies support student participation. Schools offer a wide range of age-appropriate co-curricular activities for students through well-structured programmes. Through various activities students not only develop new skills and interest, but also practice social interaction and teamwork in an enjoyable approach. Shiundu and Omulando (1992) observe that in the traditional African context the early modes of education were meant to support man control his environment and master the forces of nature. Education and teaching prior to the coming of Europeans, was characterized by four main features, it was; vocational-

specific in that it prepared the youth for specific roles in the society, closely linked to the community's everyday social life and was used for molding character and providing high moral qualities of the youth. In addition, in most African communities, the cultural patterns prepared children for adult life through play, work and oral literature among others (Occiti, 1973). Among the Acholi tribe in Uganda, a child who was not fond of playing after 'work' was normally suspected of being ill or even abnormal.

In Kenya, student participation in co-curricular activities, like education, is not a privilege but a right. Co-curricular activities programs are recognized as an important part of the educational process and were subjected to the equal status as other parts of the curriculum (UNESCO, 2000). Schools are obligated to provide programs to students. However, although the ministry of education has unequivocally stated that schools must offer co-curricular activities in their curricula, incidents of infractions against this rule abound discriminating this educational dimension on the bases of the non-examinable nature of the content. According to Aduda (2003) the Kenyan 8- 4- 4 system of education has been criticized for its failure to accommodate co-curriculum programs in schools. This system is said to be overloaded in both taught and examination oriented to an extent of offering extra-tuition that consumes time allocated for games, clubs and societies among others co-curricular activities. A study conducted by Anyango (2012) in Kisumu Municipality focused on the influence of co-curricular activities on academic achievement of primary school pupils, the findings revealed that involvement in co-curricular activities correlated positively with academic achievement. Stephen and Schaben (2002) observe that educationists are increasingly being interested in the role and benefits of student participation in co-curricular activities. Unfortunately, there are limited studies in the literature that outline the role played by school policies that influence student participation in various co-curricular activities in Kenya and in the Aberdare Central Region in particular. This represents a gap in knowledge that this study intends to fill.

### *Statement of the Problem*

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) has persistently underscored the importance of co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Kenya. As a result schools have been provided with funding through the Subsidized Secondary Education (SSE) to put in place policies and programmes for students' participation in co-curricular activities. Parents are also expected to provide to the same kitty through payment activity fees as the amount

from the government was not adequate. However, despite the benefits of participation in co-curricular activities and heavy monetary investment, co-curricular activity programmes in secondary schools have remained apathetic. This seems to suggest that school policies towards co-curricular activities are rather ambivalent. Additionally, there is a dearth of literature as to the actual status of school level planning and policy formulation in reference to co-curricular activities. This study intends to provide empirical evidence on school policies and student participation in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Aberdare Central Region in Kenya.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives guided the study.

- i. To find the extent of students participation in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Aberdare Central Region.
- ii. To evaluate the relationship between school policies and student participation in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Aberdare Central Region.

### Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis test was.

*H<sub>01</sub>*: There is no statistically significant relationship between school policies and student participation in co-curricular activities.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was appropriate for the study because it enabled description of the conditions as they were without being manipulated by the researcher. The study used questionnaires to collect data from selected respondents in secondary schools in Aberdare Central Region in Kenya.

### Target Population and Sample Size

The target population for study comprised of 34,653 form three students, 385 principals, 385 co-curricular activities teachers (CCAT) from 385 secondary Schools in the Aberdare Central Region. The region has three County Quality Assurance and Standard Officers (CQASO). A representative sample of the respondents was obtained using Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Table I. Target Population

Respondents	Target Population	Sample Size
1. CQASO	3	1
2. Principals	385	9
3. CCAs Teachers	385	9
4. Form Three Students	34, 653	346
<b>Total</b>	<b>35, 426</b>	<b>365</b>

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion are presented in accordance with the objectives and hypothesis that guided the study. These were;

- a) The results on the extent of students' participation in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Aberdare Central Region revealed that majority (62.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that all students were encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities, 24.5% agreed, 5.5% were undecided, 5.2% disagreed and 2.2% strongly disagreed (Table II). The scenario is explained by Guest and Schneider (2003) who concluded that fostering a sense of school co-curricular engagement in a personalized environment required an expanded role for teachers. In this expanded role, teachers seek to influence students' social and personal development, as well as their intellectual growth. To sustain a pervasive "etic of caring", adults maintain continuous and sustained contact with students, responding to the student whole rather than just as clients in need of a particular service. Expanding their traditional role as transmitters of knowledge, teachers help create networks of support that foster students' sense of belonging and support students to succeed in school.

Table II. Students are Encouraged to Participate in Co-curricular Activities

	Frequency	Percent
1. Strongly disagreed	8	2.2
2. Disagreed	19	5.2
3. Undecided	20	5.5
4. Agreed	89	24.5
5. Strongly agreed	228	62.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- b) In order to establish whether a statistical relationship existed between students' participation in curricular activities and support by the school administration, the researcher computed the Pearson product moment correlation between the two variables (Table III). Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Data analysis revealed that there was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables (0.803). High levels of support by the school administration were associated with high levels of student participation in curricular activities. We thus reject the null hypothesis and conclude that a positive relationship exists between support by the school administration and students participation in curricular activities; positive increase in support by the school administration results in an increase in students' participation in co-curricular activities.

Generally, the way the school implements co-curricular activities can be based on planning; resource allocation, actual/physical implementation and monitoring of the activities within the school. Charles and Krotee (2000) suggested that how well an organization like a school charted its course and achieved its objectives depended on how well managers outlined and performed their jobs. Thus, it was imperative that all co-curriculum teachers thoroughly understood the importance of effective and efficient management. This contributed to better performance. Bucher and Krotee (2002) suggested that

those responsible for training CCAT must be well trained and adopt professionalism in their coaching. With this knowledge, school managers should ensure that CCAT coaches are qualified and updated in their area of specialization.

Table III. Correlation Analysis of Participation in curricular activities and Support by the School Administration

		Participation in co-curricular activities	Support by the School Administration
Participation in co-curricular activities	Pearson Correlation	1	0.803(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	0.016
Support by the School administration	Pearson Correlation	0.803(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016	.000

## V. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate that students are encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities. The study established that a positive relationship exists between support by the school administration and students participation in curricular activities; positive increase in support by the school administration results in an increase in students' participation in co-curricular activities.

## VI. RECOMMENDATION

Arising from the findings of the study, it is recommended that there is need to strengthen school administrations support of co-curricular activities in secondary schools in order to equip students with competencies in games, athletics, drama, etc. This implies the need for strong school level policies to guide implementation of co-curricular activities so that schools can actualize the implementation of co-curricular activities in the school curriculum.

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