

INFLUENCE OF TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NON-FORMAL BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM AT THE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION CENTRES IN NAIROBI, MOMBASA AND KISUMU CITIES, KENYA

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Abstract

The drive to access basic education to out-of-school (OOS) children has preoccupied successive governments in independent Kenya. Despite the efforts, attaining Education for All (EFA) has remained elusive. The reality of out-of-school children prompted individuals and organizations to initiate non formal education (NFE). Upon recognition of NFE as a viable means of providing education to the OOS children, the then Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) (now Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development [KICD]) developed the Non-formal Basic Education Curriculum (NFBECC) to be used by the Non-Formal Education Centres (NFECCs) in Kenya. This study aimed at assessing the influence of teacher characteristics on NFBECC implementation in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu urban centres. The study specifically sought to assess how teachers' professional training and in-servicing influenced the implementation of NFE basic Education curriculum and secondly establish how teacher characteristics such as gender, age, duration of service at the NFE centre and marital status and level of education influenced the implementation of NFE basic Education curriculum. The study employed cross sectional survey design. The sample size comprised of 96 teachers and 36 directors of the NFE centres. Data was collected by use of questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used in analyzing data. The findings of the study revealed that implementation of the NFE curriculum was hampered by factors such as inadequate teachers, lack of training, and lack of in-servicing and lack of professional training. The study also revealed that gender of the teachers statistically influenced learner completion ($p = 0.01$). The study concluded that if more female teachers were employed, they could significantly improve learner completion rates. Age of the teachers also statistically influenced completion rates ($p = 0.05$) which implied that older teachers were more likely to increase learner completion. The level of education was statistically significant in influencing learner completion ($p = 0.02$). This meant that if more teachers were trained, they could positively learner completion. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should consider financing the NFE which is currently being supported by a variety of sponsors. Once this is done, the centres will have the necessary requirements for effective implementation of the curriculum. That Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should prepare programmes for in-servicing NFE teachers on the NFE curriculum. The government should also consider posting teachers to the NFE centers. Lastly teacher training colleges and universities training teachers should consider introducing programs meant for teachers for the NFE curriculum.

Key words: *Non-Formal Education, Curriculum Implementation, Teacher Characteristics, Completion Rates*

Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948, guaranteed for the individual a whole range of basic freedoms with education serving as a basic right necessary for the achievement of all other freedoms (Article 26). Article 28 (1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989, declares that all children have a right to education. Education is critical to the attainment of the broader Millennium Development Goals and the fulfillment of every child's potential. It is central to the success of a whole range of other human endeavors (UNESCO, 2014). The right to education requires that young people be given the opportunity necessary for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them lead happy and productive lives as individuals and discharge their social duties for the betterment of life in the society (UNESCO, 2006).

Individual governments across the world constantly reaffirm their commitment to equal opportunity in education. Besides, they are obligated under international human rights conventions, to act on that commitment. And yet most governments are systematically failing to address extreme and persistent education disadvantages that leave large sections of society marginalised (UNESCO, 2010). These disadvantages are rooted in deeply ingrained social, economic and political processes, and unequal power relationships, and they are sustained by political indifference (UNESCO, 2010). This failure to address education gaps is a major problem whose repercussions reverberate across generations, as those who fail to get education lose a competitive edge in other areas of life like employment, health, and social and political participation with the consequent danger of stoking insecurity and social unrest. As UNESCO (2010) notes, restricted opportunity in education is arguably the most powerful mechanism for transmitting poverty across generations (UNESCO, 2010). The Dakar Forum set 2015 as the year to achieve Education for All (EFA). The forum acknowledged that this goal cannot be achieved solely through formal education. It therefore, advocated for third channel approaches, including Non-Formal Education (Republic of Kenya, 2012).

The government of Kenya is committed to providing quality education to all its citizens. In the Kenya Vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2012), Kenya recognises that education and training of all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the Vision. The Vision by which the country hopes to become a middle income country by the year 2030 recognises that education equips citizens with understanding and knowledge that enables them to make informed choices about their lives and about the society. However, despite education being the cornerstone for economic and social development and an indispensable key to personal and social improvement, the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (2012) acknowledges that globally, more than 61 million children fail to complete basic education programmes of whom 42% translating to 26,230 live in The Sub-Saharan Africa (Global Partnership for Education, 2013).

Most of the countries that are off track in achieving universal primary education by 2015. Continued inability of many children to access the formal school system could be interpreted as a testimony, not only of the failure of the formal school system, but also of the need for non-traditional education approaches that would address the needs of the out-of-school children (UNESCO, 2014). The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) advocated for the "third channel" approaches, that is non-formal education (NFE) delivery mode.

It was upon recognition of NFE as a viable means of providing education at basic level that then KIE (now Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development [KICD]), in 2006, began preparation of Non-Formal Basic Education Curriculum (NFBE) to be used by the NFECs in Kenya, it was later officially launched in March 2007. The NFBE curriculum is flexible in that it allows entry, dropping out and re-entry at any level. The curriculum is broad in nature and provides the learners with the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for individual and national development. The target group for this curriculum is out-of-school children and youth aged 6-17 years. Since the launch of the NFBE curriculum, NFE centres have not fully implemented the curriculum but opt for the formal curriculum. One may therefore wonder whether the curriculum addresses the intended goals.

According to the Nairobi City Education department report 2012, 98 percent of the NFECs are offering the formal curriculum with few isolated cases offering the NFBE. Only 16 percent of the Non-Formal Education Centres in Mombasa and 13 percent in Kisumu were using the curriculum (Adult and Non formal Education department, Mombasa County, 2013; Adult and Non Formal Education department, Kisumu County, 2013). It was therefore evident that NFE curriculum was not being implemented in majority of the centres across the three cities.

Stenhouse (1975) identifies the teacher as the agent in the curriculum implementation process and argues that implementation is the manner in which the teacher selects and mixes the various aspects of knowledge contained in a curriculum document or syllabus. A major setback in effective curriculum implementation is the problem of teacher characteristics such as unqualified teachers, especially specialist teachers in technical subjects. This study, therefore, aimed at investigating how teacher characteristics influenced implementation of NFE basic education curriculum in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu cities.

Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To assess how level of education, length of service at the centres influenced the implementation of NFE basic Education curriculum
- ii. To establish how teachers' gender, age, marital status and level of education influenced the implementation of NFE basic Education curriculum.

Literature review

The review in this section has its focus on how teachers at the NFE will influence how NFBE is being implemented. With their knowledge, experience and competencies, teachers are central to any curriculum implementation effort. Regardless of which philosophical belief the education system is based on, there is no denying that teachers influence students' learning. Better teachers foster better learning. Teachers are most knowledgeable about the practice of teaching and are responsible for introducing the curriculum in the classroom.

Teacher factors such as attitude towards the curriculum, teachers training in NFE and their in-service on NFE curriculum have an impact on how the curriculum is implemented adequately.

Teachers' difficulty in using the curriculum has a negative impact on the implementation. Kenya does not train teachers for NFE curriculum. This is why teachers at the NFE centres are largely those that have been trained in formal Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) who are referred to as P1s. Such teachers, having been trained for formal schools may find it challenging teaching in NFE centres. When they are therefore taken as teachers in the centres, they are likely to employ the teaching methodologies learnt at TTCs which are not always appropriate for NFE. This implies that they may not be able to effectively implement the curriculum. The study will therefore establish teacher related factors and how they influence curriculum implementation.

Fullan (2001) thus agrees the importance of the teacher as a central change agent, as the teacher is the one who is primarily responsible for the successful implementation of a new curriculum. Besides, according to Morrison, Bachman and Connor (2005) the teacher's pedagogy, classroom management strategies, and interactions with students at classroom level can determine how much is learned. Therefore, learning is contingent on the teachers' ability to create and sustain optimal learning environments. There are at least three important dimensions of teaching that influence learners' literacy acquisition directly or indirectly: (1) the classroom environment teachers create, (2) teachers' warmth and responsiveness to their students, and (3) the amount and type of instruction they provide (Morrison, Bachman, & Connor, 2005).

Moreover, teachers' attitude has also been found to be associated with quality teaching and learning in the classroom. For example, possession of positive work attitude enhances teaching, thereby leading to the achievement of learning objectives and the overall educational objectives (Okorodudu, 2006). This implies that teachers who possess negative attitudes impair the ability of students to receive messages from the subjects that they teach, leading to wrong interpretation of concepts. Research also shows that the teachers' knowledge is key to effective interaction in the classroom (Osakwe, 2009; Okorosaye-Orubite, 2005; & Darling-Hammond, 2000).

In a survey of Non-Formal Education in Kenya by the Government of Kenya and UNICEF (1995), findings revealed that all teachers at the NFE centres had formal education of KCPE and above. Majority (63%) were (KCPE) level. None of the teacher was trained, which was a barrier to effective curriculum implementation. The results revealed that the centres faced challenges in maintaining teachers thus affecting curriculum implementation. In the same study, teachers indicated that they required training on the implementation of NFE curriculum.

These findings suggested that teachers needed to have been trained so as to have good content knowledge, knowledge of assessment strategies, including the design of activities and test items relevant to objectives and marking for effective mathematics teaching and learning. Content knowledge aside, it is only when a teacher can communicate effectively that he/she will be able to draw upon the various socio cultural contexts of the learner to facilitate learning (Stoner, Freeman, & Gilbert, 1999). Effective classroom interaction can also be enhanced by individual attention of teachers to their students.

Amugo (1997) studied the relationship between availability and qualification of teachers and implementation of secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. Her sample consisted of 50 secondary school teachers who were randomly selected from the population of teachers in Lagos and Imo States. She hypothesized that there was no significant relationship between availability and qualification of teachers and curriculum implementation in Nigeria and that available specialist teachers only used theoretical methods in their classroom work without the practical aspect. The

result of the study showed that there existed a significant relationship between the availability and qualification of teachers and implementation of skill-based secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. Amugo, therefore, concluded that quality and quantity of teachers in Nigerian schools significantly affect the implementation of curriculum in Nigerian schools, especially, at the secondary school level (Junior and Senior). These sentiments are shared by Ajibola (2008) who notes that when teachers are not qualified to teach the subjects in the curriculum; it negatively affects curriculum implementation.

In a study by Owiny (2006) on Provision of Non-Formal Education to the semi-nomadic Bahima and Karamojong pastoralists in Uganda found that most of the facilitators and instructors of the existing NFE programmes were not qualified. Because of lack of qualified personnel around the centres, the recruited people did not meet the minimum qualification of “O” level. As a result, they were incompetent academically and professionally. Consequently they were unable to effectively deliver course content and manage the learning situations and programme hence unable to implement the curriculum.

Research methodology

The design for this study was cross-sectional survey. The design was preferred because the study cut across three cities. The sample comprised of 30 directors and 96 teachers drawn from across the three cities. Data were collected by use of questionnaires and were analysed by use of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The number of learners who had completed the NFE programme was taken as the measure for implantation of curriculum.

Results and discussion

The study sought to determine how teacher characteristics influenced the implementation of Non-formal basic education curriculum at the non-formal education (NFE) centres in Kisumu, Nairobi and Mombasa urban centres. The study therefore examined aspects of teacher characteristics among other factors, teachers’ demographic data, teacher adequacy, and attitude that influenced the NFBE curriculum implementation at the NFE centres. It is in this regard that the directors of the centres were asked to indicate whether they had adequate teachers in their centres. Their responses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Directors’ Responses on Adequacy of Teachers

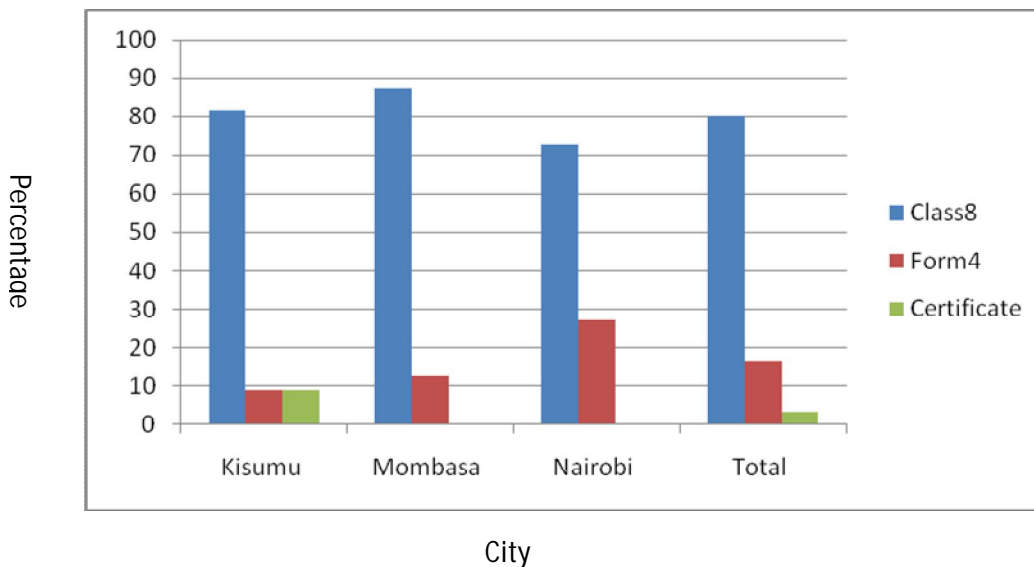
Adequacy	Region						Total	
	Kisumu		Nairobi		Mombasa			
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Yes	10	90.9	8	72.7	5	55.6	23	74.2
No	1	9.1	3	27.3	4	44.4	8	25.8
Total	11	100	11	100	9	100	31	100

Data on the adequacy of teachers at the NFE centres indicated that all the centres had adequate teachers with Kisumu having the highest rating of 90.9%. For the three cities, 23 (74.2%) of the centres had adequate teachers. The availability and adequacy of teachers could be attributed to the fact that graduates from different fields at time work as volunteers at the centres.

The directors were also asked to indicate whether there were specific qualifications that the centres required for one to be a teacher where 29 (96.7%) responded in affirmative. Asked to indicate the qualifications that were required, they responded as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Directors' Responses on Minimum Qualifications Required for Teachers



Data on the minimum qualifications that were required for teachers indicated that most of the centres required KCSE certificate as indicated by 24 (80%) of the directors. A small percentage (27.3%) of the directors in Nairobi required Form Four certificate holders. It is presumed that pupils who have completed class 8 are able to teach basic reading and writing. More so, those who have completed form four are better placed to do so. However, standard 8 leavers may not be in a position to demand high pay hence they are cost effective in running the institutions, are able to stay longer unlike Form Four leavers who may wish to go for further studies and certificates holders who may seek for greener pastures.

Asked whether they faced challenges acquiring trained teachers for the centres, majority of the directors 29 (96.7%) indicated that they did with all the directors in Kisumu and Nairobi reporting in the affirmative. Asked to indicate some of the challenges that they faced when deploying teachers, they responded as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Challenges Faced by Directors in Acquiring Trained Teachers

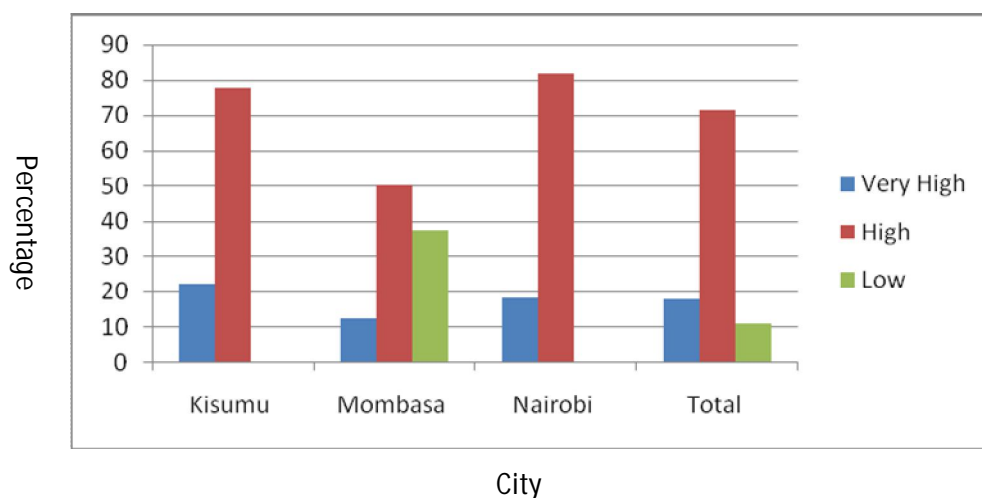
Challenges	Region						Total	
	Kisumu		Nairobi		Mombasa			
	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Teachers' unwillingness to teach at the NFE	8	72.7	8	80.0	1	16.7	17	63.0
Inadequacy of funds to pay the teachers	3	27.3	1	10.0	5	83.3	9	33.3
Others	0	00	1	10.0	0	00	1	3.7
Total	11	100	10	100	6	100	27	100

Predominantly teachers unwillingness to teach at NFE centres as recorded by 17 (63.0%). Challenges relating to inadequate funds to pay trained teachers was recorded by 9 (33.3%) with Mombasa leading at 83.3% and Kisumu at 72.3%. This situation left directors with no option other than to hire Standard 8 and Form 4 leavers as teachers.

The research further sought to establish the source of funds for teachers' salaries. Responses from the directors indicated that salaries in most of the centres were paid by donors as indicated by 20 (74%). In Nairobi all the directors indicated that the salaries were paid by donors while in Mombasa, the institutions paid the salaries of the teachers as shown by 5 (62.5%). It is important to note that there is no policy on how much teachers at the NFE centre ought to be paid.

Payment therefore depended on the agreement on terms of employment between the centre management and those seeking employment. There were cases where salaries are delayed which demotivated teachers hence leading to high teacher turnover and ultimately affected curriculum implementation. The study further sought to establish the extent of teacher turn over in the NFE centres. In this regard, the directors were asked to rate the teacher turn over in their institutions. The data is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Directors' Responses on Teacher Turnover

Responses indicated that for the majority of the centres, 71.4% of the directors reported teacher turnover as high. Regionally, Directors in Nairobi recorded the highest number of teacher turnover at 81.8% followed by Kisumu at 77.8% and lastly Mombasa at 50%. The directors were also asked to indicate the reasons for teacher leaving the centres. Their responses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Reasons for Teachers Leaving the centres

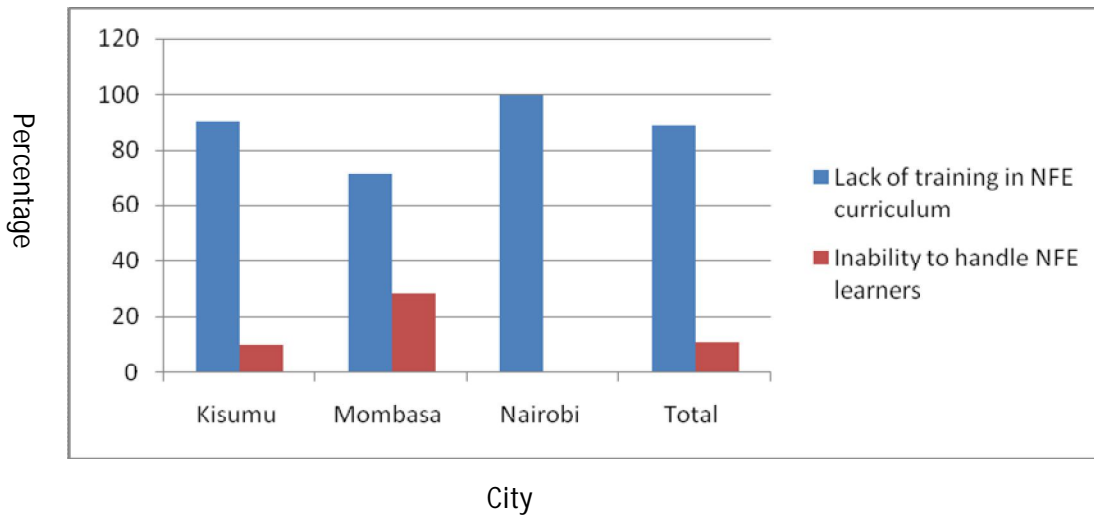
Reason	Urban centre						Total	
	Kisumu		Nairobi		Mombasa		f	%
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Poor salary	8	88.9	8	80	5	62.5	21	77.8
Search for better employment	1	11.1	2	20	3	37.5	6	22.2
Total	9	100	10	100	8	100	27	100

As shown in Table 3, 21 or 77.8% of the directors reported that teachers left the centres mainly due to mostly poor salaries. Similar results were reported by directors in Kisumu and Nairobi with 62.5% in Mombasa. As explained above, salary issues mostly contributed to teachers' turn over hence affecting curriculum implementation.

When asked to indicate the challenges that teachers faced while teaching at the NFE centres, the directors gave the following responses. (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Challenges that Teachers Faced in Teaching at NFE as Reported by Directors

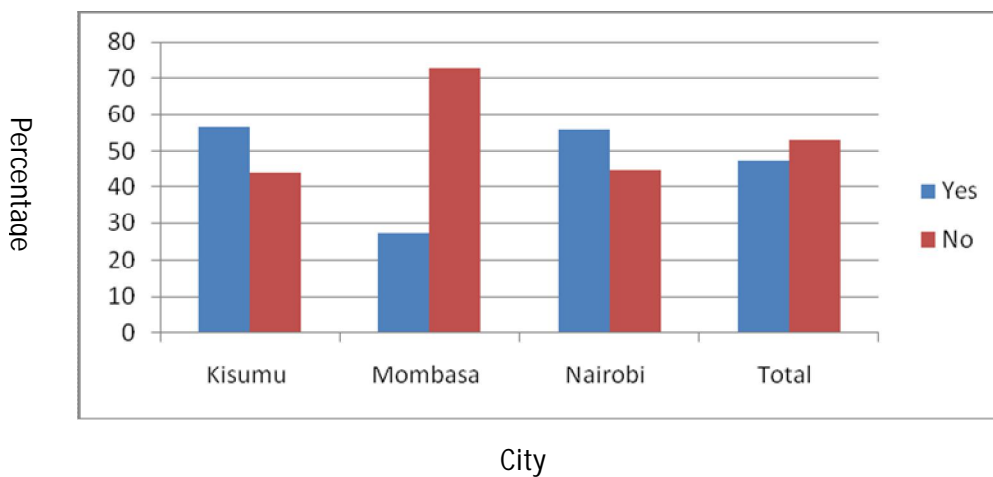


Across the three cities, lack of training was the major challenge that faced teachers at the NFE centres. All the directors in Nairobi region, 9 (90%) in Kisumu and a similar number in Mombasa reported lack of training as a challenge that faced teachers. Teachers in particular, play a central role in the implementation of a curriculum. If the teacher is to translate curriculum intentions into reality, it is imperative that the teacher understands the curriculum document or syllabus well in order to implement it effectively.

The teachers were also asked to indicate whether they had received in-service training on the NFE curriculum. The data is tabulated in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Teachers' Response on whether they had received NFE In-Service Training



Data revealed that majority (52.7%) of teachers in the NFE had not been in-serviced on the NFE curriculum. Ongoing in-service training and professional development constitute important components of any projected implementation. In-service training focuses on teachers' responsibilities and is aimed at short-term and immediate goals (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Teachers were further asked to indicate whether they used the NFBE curriculum. Their responses are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

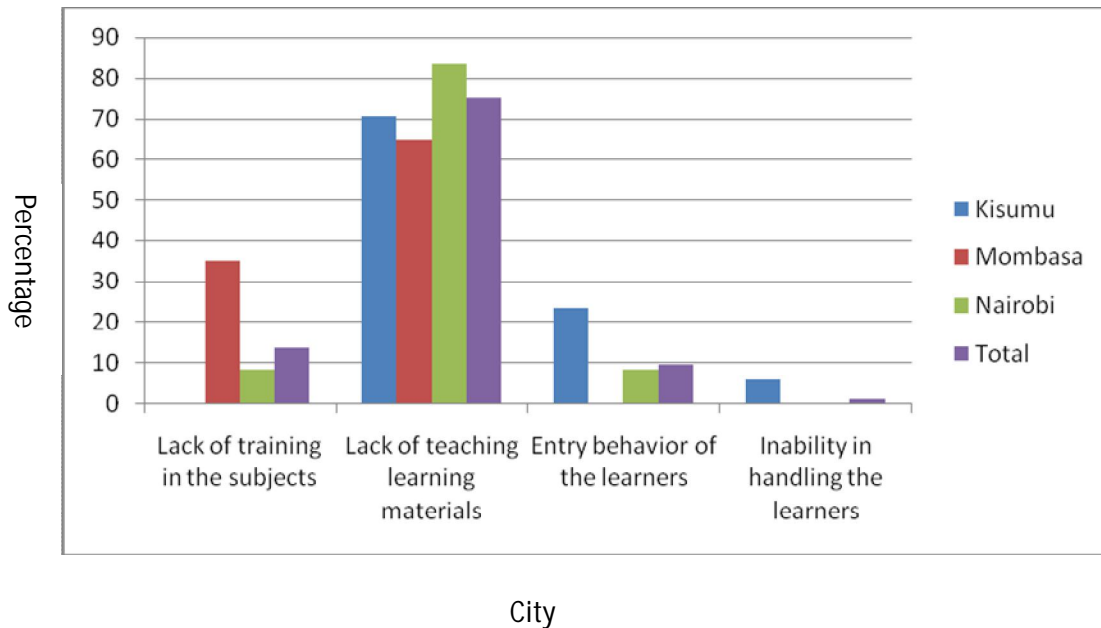
Teachers' responses on use of NFBE Curriculum

Curriculum use	Region						Total	
	Kisumu		Nairobi		Mombasa		f	%
	f	%	F	%	f	%		
Yes	16	94.1	27	75	14	82.4	57	81.4
No	1	5.9	9	25	3	17.6	13	18.6
Total	17	100	36	100	17	100	70	100

Data shows that most 57 (81.4%) of the teachers used the NFE curriculum. It was however observed during the research that centres were slowly reverting to formal curriculum due to the cost implications. In a specific example in Mombasa, it was observed that the curriculum was best in use when the donors funded the centres by provision of technical subjects' resources but once the funding was over, it was difficult to teach those subjects hence, adopting the 8-4-4 curriculum. It was also observed that most of the centres preferred the latter since the centres were slowly adopting the formal schooling, with centres embracing formal schooling within the centre rather than graduates transiting to formal schools outside the centre.

The teachers were asked to indicate the challenges they faced during teaching. They responded as indicated in Figure 10

Figure 10

Teachers' Responses of Challenges they faced During Teaching

Data showed that inadequate teaching and learning materials was the greatest challenge in the urban centres: 70.6%, in Kisumu, 83.3% in Nairobi and 65% in Mombasa with an average of 75.3% across the three cities. These findings are similar to those of Rogan and Grayson's finding (2003) which indicated that successful implementation is also affected by the nature of the particular school's physical and human resources. Similar findings had been obtained by Carless (1999a) and Li's (1998) studies demonstrated that human, material, and financial resources have been considered indispensable in determining the successful implementation of a curriculum.

To determine the teachers' attitude towards the NFE curriculum implementation, the teachers were required to respond to a 5 point Likert Scale. The findings showed that teacher obtained a score of 4.0 which implied that teachers had a positive attitude towards NFE curriculum.

To establish whether teacher characteristics of gender, age, length of service, marital status and level of education influenced curriculum implementation, categorical regressions were carried out against learner completion rates. Learner completion rates depicted as 'completeall' was used an indicator of successful curriculum implementation. Table 6 displays the regression results for the teacher characteristics.

Table 6

Correlations of Selected Teacher Characteristics against Learner Completion Rates

completeall	Coef.	Std. Error	z	P>z	[95% Confidence Interval]	
Gender	0.010606	0.088256	0.12	0.904	-0.16237	0.183583
Age	0.030287	0.076878	2.35	0.019	0.029609	0.330964
Length of service	0.219785	0.08034	2.11	0.035	0.012323	0.327248
Marital status	0.043097	0.107952	1.07	0.286	-0.09648	0.326678
Level of education	0.02033	0.022124	-0.78	0.433	-0.0607	0.026029

The data showed that gender had a p value of 0.01 which is lower than 0.05, (significant level) hence gender was statistically significant in explaining learner completion rates. It should be noted that gender was categorized as binomial where we used 1 for males and 2 for females. The nature of the variable and the notation therefore suggested that female teachers were more likely to influence completion than males. The data implied that if more female teachers were employed, they may significantly improve learner completion.

On the other hand, results on age had a p value of 0.03 which is lower than significant level (0.05) hence it was revealed that age significantly influenced completion rates. The regression model definitively established a relationship between the age and completion rate. The data meant that the older the teachers were, the more likely they were to increase learner completion rates.

For the variable that teachers had served at the centre, data showed that the length of service had a p value of 0.28 which was higher than 0.05 hence length of service was not statistically significant in determining completion rates. Hence there was no relationship between the completion rate and the teachers' length of service. Duration of service of teachers at the centres did not influence learner completion.

It was further observed that marital status was not statistically significant with p value of 0.43 which implied that there was no relationship between the completion rate and the marital status. The findings implied that marital status did not influence learner completion rates. The level of education was at statistically significant. This was shown by a p value of 0.02 which was lower than 0.05. This implied that the level of education that teachers had received influenced learner completion.

Conclusions and recommendations

The findings of the study revealed that implementation of the NFE curriculum was hampered by teacher related factors, for example, teachers were not willing to work at the centres due to poor salaries hence most of the centres were not able to contain their teachers. Lack of training was another factor that hindered effective curriculum implementation. Teachers at the centres were also not professionally trained and had not been in-serviced on the NFE curriculum. This implied that they could not effectively implement the curriculum.

Findings on the teachers characteristics and NFE curriculum implementation revealed that teachers' gender ($p = 0.01$) influenced learner completion rates hence the study concluded that gender was statistically significant in explaining learner completion rates. The study concluded that if more female teachers were employed, they may significantly improve learner completion. Age of the teachers statistically influenced completion rates ($p = 0.05$), where the older the teachers were, the more likely they were to increase learner completion rates. The level of education was at statistically significant in influencing learner completion ($p = 0.02$). This implied that the level of education that teachers had received influenced learner completion. Duration that teachers had served at the centres did not statistically influence learner completion ($p = 0.28$). The study therefore concluded that duration that the NFE teachers had served at the centres was not a factor in influencing completion rates. It was further observed that marital status was not statistically significant in influencing learner completion ($p = 0.43$).

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. That the Ministry of Education should consider financing the Non-Formal Education. Once this is done, the centres will be able to adequately implement the curriculum.
- ii. That Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should prepare programmes for in-servicing NFE teachers on the NFE curriculum. In doing so the teachers will be able to effectively implement the curriculum.
- iii. Quality Assurance and Standards (QAS) department should monitoring curriculum delivery in the NFE centres, provide advisory service to ensure effectiveness implementation of the curriculum
- iv. The government through the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should appreciate the role played by the NFE centres in the provision of education and hence consider posting teachers for effective implementation of NFE curriculum.
- v. The teacher training colleges and universities training teachers should consider introducing programmes meant for teachers for the NFE curriculum.

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