



A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF CLASSROOM DYNAMICS ON STUDENTS' SOCIAL INTERACTION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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Abstract:

The purpose of the study was a critical analysis of the impact of classroom dynamics on students' social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya. Most of the Kenyan secondary schools are faced with the challenge of overcrowding in the classrooms thus unsuited to providing a positive classroom atmosphere hence limited learner-teacher contact. The critical analysis was to establish and address issues and strategies that must be implemented to create a positive classroom atmosphere where learners feel comfortable to learn and communicate with each other and the teacher. The main purpose of the study was to critically analyze the gender related issues, learner's personality related issues and the impact they have on classroom dynamics and establish the impact of learners discipline on classroom dynamics. Moreover the study generate the importance of learners participation in the classroom set up and also the role of the teacher in motivating learners who are not naturally motivated. The study adopted a qualitative research design that was valid in studying critical analysis. The study established key recommendations to the school management to ensure that classrooms have adequate space to accommodate all the students comfortably and allow the teacher to move freely and easily connect with the learners. It also recommends provision of in-service training for teachers on how to handle large classes with learners of mixed ability, varying ages and genders, teachers should provide teaching approaches that sustain learner's interest and ensure participation of students in class and finally teachers should provide a friendly learning environment that

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engages all the learners irrespective of their gender and personality abilities as it enhances a good classroom dynamic and social interaction among learners.

Keywords: classroom dynamics, social interaction, contemplative, reflective practice, diversity

1. Introduction

Classroom dynamics involves the interaction between learners and teachers in a classroom community while social interaction is an exchange between two or more individuals and is a building block of society. By interacting people design rules, institutions, and systems within which they seek to live. In any classroom setting there are numerous kinds of interactions that create a sort of environment or setting. Setting a positive classroom atmosphere enable learners to learn comfortably and communicate freely with one another.

The learner's population in secondary schools is on increase due to the free primary education hence high indiscipline cases due to large population in schools and few teachers to handle all of the learners. The challenge for secondary schools is to create classroom spaces that can be flexible enough to adapt to this diversity and enhance the learning experience for all learners, regardless of their backgrounds and educational objectives. The government of Kenya has provided funds for constructions of more classrooms and established new schools through the county government to accommodate the learners. Education is a right to all learners irrespective of their gender and learning ability and the idea of engaging all the learners in classroom activities have created a good classroom dynamics and social interaction.

2. Statement of the Problem

The provision of universal free primary education in Kenya was recognized as an important milestone to economic and social development, providing education to learners of different personality and genders hastened development in Kenya. The expansion of secondary schools due to the large number learners joining the form one classes called for more classrooms, equipment and suppliers. Despite the government efforts to set up more buildings and schools to provide a conducive learning environment that accommodate learners, has faced several setbacks due shortage of funds to run the program and increased number of schools being set ablaze by the learners. This problem has been persistently on the rise and learners needs in the classrooms have been inadequately met. Learners continue to suffer due to congestion in the classrooms, lack of motivation from the teachers, high indiscipline cases in

schools, in involvement in classroom activities and differences in personality, all these are major problems facing most of the secondary schools in Kenya.

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to critically analyze the impact of classroom dynamics students' social interaction in the secondary schools in Kenya.

4. Research Objectives

- To critically analyze the impact of learners discipline dynamic on students social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya.
- To critically analyze the impact of role teachers motivation dynamic on students social interaction in the secondary schools in Kenya.
- To critically analyze the impact of learners participation dynamic on students social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya.
- To critically analyze gender dynamic on students social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya.
- To critically analyze the impact of personality dynamic on students social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya.

5. Research Questions

- To what extent does learner's discipline dynamic have an impact on students' social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya?
- To what extent does teacher's motivation dynamic have an impact on students' social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya?
- To what extent does learner's participation dynamic have an impact on students' social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya?
- To what extent does gender dynamic have an impact on students' social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya?
- To what extent does learner's personality dynamic have an impact on students' social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya?

6. Significance of the Study

The study helps the school management to be able to eliminate the existing biases on education of a girl child through the provision of guidance and counseling services to learners and teachers. The study helps government agencies acquire funds in support of

training teachers to equip them with guidance and counseling skills and knowledge and setting up classrooms to accommodate the large population of learners in secondary school in Kenya. The study helps teachers participate fully in giving support to learners through motivation, hence improves academic performance of learners through participation in classroom activities. The study helps the teachers to acquire knowledge and skills on how to handle learners of different personality and help them integrate with others creating a positive classroom atmosphere.

7. Research Methodology

The study was a critical analysis of the impact of classroom dynamics and social interaction in secondary schools in Kenya. It was carried out using qualitative design method to explore the practices of classroom dynamics and social interaction. A qualitative design method was used to collect all the study findings. The method was used to gain understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivation and provides insights into a problem. The future of qualitative research will be influenced by delivery insights-based consulting, not just insights (White, 2015).

8. Literature Review

8.1 A Critical Analysis of the Impact of Learners Discipline Dynamics on Social Interaction in Secondary School in Kenya

The concept of discipline is based on enforcing a set of rules and regulations in order to control inevitable student misbehavior. According to Varkey (1997), true discipline implies sincere love for the one being disciplined; this means the ability to discern what is right and to have some facility to do it. Teachers should provide a classroom atmosphere devoid of fear or resentment and handle learners politely but firmly with understanding, the main goal being to produce learners who are responsible in making their own decisions and accept consequence.

According to research report done by Muchiri Karega on Thursday July of 21st 2016 Kenya as a nation has been beset with serious cases of learners assaulting, setting a blaze their own dormitories and classes and raping their teachers and fellow students. The ongoing wave of unrest in secondary schools has caused much anxiety among Kenyans. Some of the causes of unrest in school cited in this report by the committee are: drug use, parents having neglected their children and relegated the responsibility to teachers who are busy to guide them and lack of adequate professional guidance and counseling staff. Learners should be provided with guidance and counseling services to assist them deal with stress due to pressure of work in schools and at home. Teachers

also must provide guidance to individual learners who through external influence may have fallen victim to deviant behavior patterns and also provide a behavioral code and to maintain order.

Discipline is important in all schools because it trains individuals to develop responsible behaviour leading to self-disciplined learners unmoved by any peer pressure. It exposes learners to the art of self-control. Teachers should provide physical activities to learners to lessen the tension accumulated from intensive academic studies. Every school must establish a rigorous recreation programmer in which every learner is required to participate expect for medical reasons.

School rules and regulations help learners know what is expected of them. Teachers should provide an induction to learners on the existing standards of conduct and the consequences that accompany any breach of specified rule. Teachers must employ force as physical punishment in order to instill discipline or gain learners attention in learning and teaching (www.standardmedia.co.ke, why unrest in Kenyan secondary schools By Muchiri Karega).

8.2 A Critical Analysis of the Impact of Teachers Motivation Dynamics on Social Interaction in Secondary Schools in Kenya

Motivation refers to reasons that underlie behavior that is characterized by willingness and volition. Intrinsic motivation is animated by personal enjoyment, interests or pleasure whereas extrinsic motivation is governed by reinforcement's contingencies. Teachers are expected to get pupils interested in learning desirable behavior. Learning can only take place in response to the felt needs of the learner. Teachers need to devote their time providing positive reinforcement through giving of rewards, praise to the learners to increase interest and readiness of learners to learn. True interest and inspiration to learn in any area will result to more devotion to read and sustained learning.

Motivation affects what learners pay attention to and how effectively they process it (Eccles and Wigfield, 1985; Pinfrich and Schunk, 2002, Pugh and Bergin, 2006). Thus, teachers need to draw a connection with what is taught in classrooms to real life, teach content through the use of games and discussions instead of lecture method and offer incentives to make learning fun and motivate learners to push themselves to participate in the classrooms. Teachers are the agents of change and socialization in schools, the society, nation and the global village. Thus the teachers must provide effective interactions in classrooms to promote effective learning .Relevance classroom activities should be provided to learners, thus giving them an opportunity to interact with one another in the discussions and share ideas and comment on what being presented. Learners should be given opportunities to evaluate their own accomplishment and explore situations that give them challenge. Introvert

learners are often unable to make friends and engage in the classroom activities hence teachers must pair them with learners that accommodate their personality, build connection and boost their self-confidence and provide them with an opportunity to socialize with others and engage in the classroom discussions (Eccles and Wigfield, 1985; Pinfrich and Schunk, 2002, Pugh and Bergin, 2006).

8.3 Participation Dynamics On Social Interaction In Secondary Schools In Kenya

Learner's participation in the classrooms needs diversity support from the teachers. Teachers need to encourage learners to learn one another's name; this strategy will increase the possibility of learners addressing one another by name as they participate in classroom activities and discussions. A varied classroom activity stimulates learning and retention of taught content and helps reduce idleness amongst learners. Variety of teaching methods helps reflective and shy learners develop ideas that they can contribute to the class discussion. Teachers need to participate fully in classroom activities and show interest to individual learner and encourage them to participate in the classrooms thus creating a lively and dynamic classroom. Evaluation of classroom, participation gives an opportunity to quiet learners to talk more often and verbose students to hold their comments to give others a chance to participate in the classroom (www.teachingcenter.wustl.edu).

8.4 Gender Dynamics on Social Interaction in Secondary Schools in Kenya

Gender is the behavior and social roles associated with being male or a female. Gender is one of the fundamentally way to categorize learners whether consciously or unconsciously. Studies of classrooms ranging from kindergarten through graduate school (Sadker "Sexism in the classroom" 513, Hall & Sandler *et al* 10-14) have shown that teachers are more likely to call on male students, even when female students raise their hands, give male students more eye contact following question. Teachers must call on both male and female learners in nearly equal proportion a give precise responses to all learners' comments thus helping them develop their own thoughts.

Gender insensitive school environment that include insensitive teaching and learning materials, sexual harassment and teachers and administrators who portray girls in a given light discourage the learning of a girl child. Teachers should emphasis on a girl child education and try and eliminate the existing biases on education of a girl child and use teaching and learning materials that does not target the girl child. Social environment need to be provided to reduce isolation, embarrassment of a particular gender in the classroom. Teachers should provide a conducive learning environment that matches the style of training and provide equal opportunity to every learner irrespective of their gender to participate in class. Gender disparities are high with regard to access of education and performance in science, mathematics and

technological subjects. Enough support to both genders will provide an opportunity to learners to learn what interests them and pursue a particular area for their careers. Teachers must provide classroom activities that meet the requirements of learners and ensure that every discussion group involves both genders thus creating a social cohesion in the classes (www.academia.edu papers portal)

8.5 Personality Dynamics on the Social Interaction in Secondary Schools in Kenya

Personality is the sum total of the unique traits of an individual that determines characteristics behavior and thoughts patterns in relatively consistent ways across different situations and overtime. Learner's cognitive personalities have strong bearing on the ability to learn new things, skills and ability to retain them. Some learners are slow learners and others quick learners this all depends on their cognitive process. Teachers must use different strategies to handle and manage the learners effectively. Some learners are dominant, noisy (extroverts) and others are shy and inward looking (introverts) while others are high tempered and others humorous. Teachers should incorporate all the learners' qualities in the classrooms and ensure that they are fully utilized to enhance smooth learning. Learners with negative personality qualities are often difficult to handle, providing them with the necessarily guidance helps them change and be accepted by other learners in the school environment. Absence of teachers guide makes their learning and stay in schools unbearable hence leads to dropout (Nasibi Were M. W. (2003). Discipline: Guidance and Counseling in Schools. A practice to Teacher-counselors and Parents).

9. Conclusions

The findings suggest that most Kenyan secondary schools have indiscipline cases caused by influence of the media, teachers using poor teaching strategies that don't appeal to learners, learners being highly demotivated due to isolation in classes. It also suggests that teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills of guidance and counseling in order to handle learners with indiscipline cases.

The teachers and head teachers should give attention to learners of different personality and genders in order to retain them in schools. Teachers are not fully prepared to appreciate and respect learners opinions thus create negative attitude from learners towards learning, a particular teacher and subject and leads to low participation in class and performance.

10. Recommendations

The study established the key areas in schools that need to be strengthened for classroom dynamics and social interaction process to succeed as:

1. Guidance and counseling services should be strengthened by equipping teacher counselors with skills and knowledge on the area of counseling.
2. Teachers should provide learners with an environment that allows them to freely exploit their potentials and provide them with challenging classroom activities.
3. The teachers should provide teaching approaches that sustain learner's interest and ensure participation of students in class. Teachers need to draw a connection with what is taught in class to real life situation.
4. Teachers should provide a friendly learning environment that engages all the learners irrespective of their gender and personality abilities as it enhances a good classroom dynamic and social interaction among learners.
5. Teachers should be trained on how to handles learners with different personalities and varying ages and gender.

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