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Full Length Research Paper

Teachers' decisional participation and job satisfaction in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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This study investigated the relationship between teachers' decisional participation and job satisfaction in secondary schools in Ekiti State. The study also examined the level of teachers' participation in decision making and level of job satisfaction. A descriptive research design of correlation type was adopted for the study while the population for the study comprised all the teachers' teaching in the public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample consisted of 270 teachers selected through multistage and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected with the aid of a questionnaire. The reliability coefficient for the instrument used was 0.84. The data obtained were analyzed using frequency counts, mean, standard deviation, Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis. Hypotheses formulated for the study were tested at 0.05level of significance. The study revealed that the level of teachers' participation in decision making in their respective schools was low. The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation and their job satisfaction. It was also revealed that teachers' job satisfaction was significantly related to the level of teachers' decisional participation in school financial matter, conflict resolution, examination matters, staff welfare, disciplinary matters, school academic work and co – curricular activities. Based on the findings, that the levels of teachers' decisional participation in school management were relatively low, government and stakeholders in education should ensure that teachers actively participate during school decisions making which would somehow influence their profession. Effort to bridge the communication gap and alienation, principals of senior secondary schools should allow their teachers to participate in decision making process on school financing, conflict resolution, staff welfare, disciplinary matters, academic work, and co – curricular activities. This could boost teachers' level of job satisfaction.

Key words: Teachers' decision, participation, job satisfaction, secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Decision making is central to the practice of administration. That task of deciding pervades the entire administrative organization quite as much as the task of doing. Decision making is not only the central function of

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administration, but it is even more important than other functions of administration, because other functions can best be interpreted in terms of the decision making process. Decision making is an issue to the individual, group of people, corporate bodies, firms, and government agencies. Decisions made could have negative or positive implication on the subject concerned or the source of the decision. The repercussion of decision resolution is what necessitated its thoroughness right from the formulation to the implementation stage.

In the secondary school context, principal is the administrator. The vice principal(s), head of department(s), from teachers, class teachers are regarded as members of teaching staff, while bursar, account clerk, typist, office assistant, laboratory attendant(s), and guards are as well regarded as member of non – teaching staff. The principal is the head of academic and administrative staff. He is the link between the educational managers, teachers, students, parents, and community at large.

The principal performs series of professional duties that include inspection of school records, curriculum planning and development, programme planning for the session, examination function, recruitment and development of teachers, provision of facilities, budgeting function to perform the virtue of his position in the school system. The principals are saddled with the administrative duties that include students' welfare, staff's welfare, regular meeting with staff and other bodies, public relations function, clerical functions, maintenance of school facilities, staff and students' discipline. It is apparent that, the principal alone cannot successfully carry out all the aforementioned duties without embracing the idea of teachers' decisional participation and delegation of duties within the staff that surround him. The principals are the chief accounting officer of the schools. They are accountable for everything that happens to the live and properties on ground in the school environment.

Experience has shown that the school administrators usually dictate the school academic issues, which include time – table preparation, scheme and records of work preparation, broad sheet entry, daily attendance register, teachers' lesson plan format, afternoon lesson etc. without constituting any standing committee to work on it and gives feedback to the entire member of staff after briefing the school principal in his office.

In some secondary schools, disciplinary matters are resolved mainly by the principals alone or along with the contribution or opinion of their vice principal(s). When disciplinary matters ensue probably between students and teachers, some principals will still cleverly turn down the committee's recommendations. They may be silent on the case or manipulate the committee's resolutions on the matter.

Some teachers are usually not aware of school administrators' plans on the co-curricular activities that comprise agricultural practical, social activities, literary devices, sports, clubs and organizations. The decision is always made by the school principal without due consultation with the entire members of staff. Most of the programmes under co-curricular activities usually fail because teachers feel that they have been neglected and considered insignificant.

The non-involvement of teachers in the process of decision making could cause low productivity, less commitment, and nonchalant attitude toward teachers' statutory duties. Teachers may not be interested in embracing any decision that they have no input. The implication of this is that indiscipline, truancy, moral decadence, cheating, theft, fighting, poor academic performances, cultism, property destruction, examination malpractice, students' loitering around the school compound may be peculiar in the students' lifestyle.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Participation is a much used word these days. It means different content. In training, the trainees benefit by participating in the training activity they "learn from doing " . In community work, participation means that the whole community, including those that do not usually speak up, participate in decisions that affect the future of the community.

It means that staff, not only the designated managers, have input and influence over the decisions that affect that organization. It is not that same as communal or co-operative management, where every staff member has the same weight in the decision making process. A voted majority, or a consensus, is not the final arbitrator for a contentious decision (Ajayi and Ayodele, 2002).

In decisional participation, the designated managers (or manager) still have (or has) the final responsibility for making decisions and answering for them, but members of the staff who are affected by those decisions are actively sought to provide observations, analysis, suggestions and recommendations in the executive decision making process.

These guidelines can be used whole when you are setting up a new organization, can be made as a major conscious decision for an ongoing organization, or can be slowly added piece in an organization that is more monopolistic decision making where decisions are made only at the top.

Teachers' decisional participation is an approach in management in which there is consultation with staffs and serious consideration of their opinions before making a decision. It allows for a reduction in the power differential between the school authority and staffs.

Teachers' decisional participation is a motivational strategy that is capable of arousing management to make full use of the potential capacities of its human resources and also to gain a high degree of group loyalty. Teachers'

decisional participation is an approach that can lead to increased acceptance of the decision of those affected easier co – ordination, greater varieties of alternatives and solutions considered; greater job satisfaction and work achievements as well as greater individual integration into the organization.

Teachers require independence to function effectively. It will enable them to play active roles in decision making process, enjoy greater autonomy, readiness will be guarantee, and pave way for collaborative role in other areas (Folajin, 1987).

Practicing decisional participation has been long acknowledged as an essential ingredient in the quest for better schools. In characterizing successful schools, researchers commonly list five school-level factors, which include collaborative planning/collegial work and parental/community participation. Ajayi (2008) asserts that "high levels of planning, individual school autonomy and the resulting flexibility" are effective school characteristics that justify the implementation of participatory governance.

Golarz and Golarz (1995) point out; securing a "synergy of communities" is the key to attainment of educational benefits. It should be noted, however, that attempts to involve stakeholders should be geared beyond mere participation but towards meaningful involvement (Bush, 2003; Adeyemi, 2006; Ajibade, 2008; Ajayi, 2008).

Research findings show that allowing teachers and stakeholders to take part in decision-making yields salutary results. Employees' satisfaction, motivation, moral and self-esteem are affected positively by involvement in decision-making and implementation (Durotolu, 2001; Ajayi and Ayodele, 2002; Gamage and Pang, 2003; Akomolafe, 2004).

Similarly, employers' commitment and loyalty are fostered by collaborative school management practices (Beyerlein et al., 2003).

Moreover, researchers claim that better decisions and greater efficiency are reached since issues are discussed extensively via open communication among people having varying viewpoints involved in participative set-up. Embracing teachers' decisional participation will as well yield the following benefits: heads cannot easily manipulate people, teachers are given a sense of control over their own working lives, power inequalities are balanced and additional resources personnel become available to the organization.

Statement of the problem

It seems that secondary school teachers usually complain of over centralization of authority by their principals and are not allowed to participate in the various aspects of school management such as financing, disciplinary matter, conflict resolution, staff welfare, examination matter, academic matter, and co – curricular activities of the schools.

It appears that teachers are being neglected by their principals and being ruled authoritatively, making unilateral decision, and become unapproachable to the teachers serving under them.

It seems that the situation has caused negative effects on teachers' level of job satisfaction, and made their job performance to be drastically dwindled.

In examining this problem, the following general questions were raised:

1. What is the level of secondary school teachers' involvement in decision making?
2. What is the level of secondary school teachers' job satisfaction?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of teachers' participation in the process of decision making in the management of secondary schools in Ekiti State. The study would examine the level of teachers' job satisfaction in relation to their expected duties. The study would explore the implication of involving teachers in decision making process and the level of his satisfaction.

Research questions

The relevant questions which the study focuses on include:

1. Is there a relationship between teachers' decisional participation in the various aspects of school management and job satisfaction?
2. Is there any relationship between teachers' participation in decision making on school finance and their job satisfaction?
3. Is there any relationship between teachers' participation in decision making on conflict resolution and their job satisfaction?
4. Is there any relationship between teachers' participation in decision making on examination matters and their job satisfaction?
5. Is there any relationship between teachers' participation in decision making on staff welfare and their job satisfaction?
6. Is there any relationship between teachers' participation in decision making on disciplinary matters and their job satisfaction?
7. Is there any relationship between teachers' participation in decision making on school academic work and their job satisfaction?
8. Is there any relationship between teachers' participation

in decision making on school co- curricular activities and their job satisfaction?

Research hypotheses

Based on the research questions earlier stated, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in the various aspects of school management and job satisfaction.
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making on school finance and job satisfaction.
3. There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making on conflict resolution and job satisfaction.
4. There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making on examination matters and job satisfaction.
5. There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making on staff welfare and job satisfaction.
6. There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making on disciplinary matter and job satisfaction.
7. There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making on school academic work and job satisfaction.
8. There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making on school co-curricular activities and job satisfaction.

Significance of the study

The study will provide education stakeholders, state and federal governments with necessary information on teachers' decisional participation and job satisfaction in secondary schools.

The study will be of great help to education managers at all levels on how to boost teachers' level of job satisfaction. It will enable them to realize the various machineries that can be put in place to enhance greater degree of teachers' efficiencies.

The study will help to reduce the administrative hardship been experienced by the school authority in decision making as teachers will be co – opted right into the formulation, deliberation, enactment, and implementation and evaluation stage.

Lastly, the study will help to bridge the gap between teachers' and other stakeholders in education industry; by being acquainted with the various areas where teachers can be professionally served for the smooth running of the school affairs and the same can enhance teachers' level of satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The descriptive research of the correlational type was adopted in the study. The research design is descriptive because it involves collection of data in order to describe phenomena as they exist in the field and there was no manipulation of the variables involved in the study.

Population

The population for this study comprised all the 3536 teachers in the 167 public senior secondary schools in Ekiti State.

Sample and sampling techniques

A total of 270 teachers were used for the study. The multi-stage random sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample for the study. Multistage random sampling and sample random sampling techniques were used. It involves selection of subjects from the population in stage without basis. The first stage was random selection of 3 local government areas from each senatorial district in Ekiti State. The second stage involved selection of 5 senior secondary schools in each local government areas for the study. The third stage involved selections of 6 teachers each from the school selected for the exercise. That means 270 teachers were used as a sample for the study.

Research instrument

The Teachers' Decisional Participation and Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TDPJSQ) was designed for this study by the researcher. It consisted of three sections. Section A requires personal information from the respondents. This information includes: L.G., sex, marital status, age, educational qualification, work experience, salary grade level, and designation at work; section B consists of 35 Items which elicit information on teachers' decisional participation in their school, while Section C consists of 15 items which elicit information on teacher's job satisfaction.

Validity of instrument

In order to determine the content and face validity of the instrument designed for the study, it was given to the appointed supervisor and other experts in the Department of Educational Foundation and Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ado Ekiti. Suggestions and corrections made were utilized in the final draft of the questionnaire items.

Reliability of instrument

The reliability of the instrument was carried out using test – retest method. This involved the administration of the instrument twice within an interval of two weeks on 27 teachers, in a pilot study of six senior secondary schools that were not included in the sample schools for product moment Correlation Coefficient in order to

Table 1. Descriptive analysis showing the level of secondary school teachers' participation in decision making process.

Level of involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Low	157	58.1
Moderate	78	28.9
High	35	13.0
Total	270	100.0

Table 2. Descriptive analysis showing the level of secondary school teachers' satisfaction.

Level of involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Low	37	13.7
Moderate	169	26.6
High	64	23.7
Total	270	100.0

obtain the reliability co-efficient of the instruments. The reliability co-efficient was considered high enough for the reliability of the instrument.

Administration of the instrument

Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the teachers through the principals of the sampled schools. The completed copies of the instrument were retrieved from the subjects immediately. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher to enhance good respect from the respondents.

Data analysis

Data collected were analyzed with frequency counts, percentage scores, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product moment correlation. Specifically, Pearson correlation coefficients were used to test hypotheses two to eight, while multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses that examined the various aspects of the school management.

RESULTS

Question 1

What is the level of secondary school teachers' involvement in the decision making process on education?

To answer the question, mean score of subjects on level of teachers' involvement in the decision making process was computed. The standard deviation was also obtained. These [mean score and standard deviation] were used to categorize the subjects into low, moderate and high. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 presents the level of secondary school teachers' involvement in decision making process. The result shows that 157 (58. 1%) had low involvement in decision making process while 35 (13%0 and (28.9%) were highly and moderately involved in decision making process.

Question 2

What is the level of secondary school teachers' satisfaction as regard the working package and expected duties of discharge?

To answer the question, mean score and standard deviation of subjects' level of satisfaction were used to group the participants into low, moderate and high level of satisfaction. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table2 presents the level of job satisfaction of the secondary school teachers. The result shows that 64 (23.7%) of the total respondents were highly satisfied with their job, 37 (13.7%) had low level of job satisfaction, while 169 (62.6%) experienced moderate level of job satisfaction. Therefore, the level of secondary school teachers' satisfaction as regard the working packages and expected duties to discharge is moderate.

Test of hypotheses

Eight (8) research hypotheses were tested using multiple Regression analysis and Pearson product moment correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented as follows.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in the various aspects of the school management and job satisfaction.

In order to test the hypothesis, Multiple Regression Analysis was used. Components of decisional participation were used as the independent variables while job satisfaction constituted the dependent variable. The regression model is specified as follows:

$Y = bo+b1X1+b2X2+b3X3+b4X4+b5X5+b6X6+b7X7$
Where Y = Job satisfaction
X1 = School Financial Management
X2 = Conflict Resolution
X3 = Examination Matters
X4 = Staff Welfare
X5 = Disciplinary Matters
X6 = School Academics

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis showing the effect of teachers' decisional participation in the various aspects of school management and job satisfaction.

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Significant P -level	Remark
Constant	122.146	11.357		10.755	.000	S
School Financial Management	.120	.167	.047	.718	.474	NS
Conflict Resolution	.271	.185	.105	1.466	.144	NS
Examination Matters	.461	.151	.204	3.054	.002	S
Staff Welfare	-.167	.171	-.073	-.978	.329	NS
Disciplinary Matters	-.0033	.113	-.019	-.296	.768	NS
School Academics	.369	.117	.119	3.147	.002	S
Co – curricular Activities	.132	.047	166	2.836	.005	S

Dependent variable: Job satisfaction.

X7 = Co – curricular activities

The regression result is presented in Table 3. From the table, the following results are obtained: R = .423, R2 = .179, R2 = .157, F = 8.148, sig. F = .000.

Table 3 presents the relationship between teachers' decisional participation in the various aspects of the school management and job satisfaction. The result shows that the relationship between teachers' decisional participation and job satisfaction is moderate, positive and statistically significant at 0.05 level (r = .433, P <0.005). The null hypothesis is rejected. It implies that there is significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in various aspects of school management and job satisfaction.

The coefficient of determination (R2) is .179. This implies that teacher's decisional participation accounts for 18% of the variation in job satisfaction. The remaining 82% unexplained variation in job satisfaction is caused by other variables outside the regression model which are otherwise included in the stochastic error term. Testing the effect of effect individual components of teachers' decisional participation on job satisfaction, the result shows that only the effect of teachers' participation in examination (t = 3.054, P<0.05), school academics (t = 3.147, P < 0.05) and co – curricular activities (t = 2.836, P<0.05) job satisfaction are statistically significant at 0.05 level in each case. However, the effect of teachers' participation in school financial management (t=.718, P> 0.05), conflict resolution (t = 1. 466, P> 0.05), staff's welfare (t = -.978, P > 0.05), disciplinary matters (t = -.296, P> 0.05) on job satisfaction are not statistically significant at 0.05 level.

The regression model is statistically significant in terms of its overall goodness of fit (F = 8.148, P < 0.05). In the estimated regression line above, bo (the constant term) is 122.146. This means that holding the value of elements of decisional participation constant, the value of job satisfaction will be about 122.146.

Considering the predictive power of each of the components of teachers' decisional participation on job satisfaction, participation on examination matters constitute the best single predictor of job satisfaction with a beta weight of .166 (17%), conflict resolution with a beta weight of .105(11%), school financial management with a beta weight of .047(5%), disciplinary matters with beta weight of .047(-2%) while the least predictor of teachers' decisional participation is staff's welfare with a beta weight of .73(7%).

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making on school financial management and job satisfaction

Item relating to teachers' level of participation in decision making in school financial management correlated with items on job satisfaction using Pearson product moment correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significant. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 presents the relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making on school financial management and job satisfaction. The results show that r-cal (.294) is greater than r -table (.195) at 0.05 level of significant. The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between teachers' level of participation in decision making in school financial management and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in conflict matter resolution and job satisfaction

In order to test the hypothesis, scores on teachers' level

Table 4. Pearson correlation of teachers' level of participation in school financial management and job satisfaction.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r - cal	r - table
Participation in school financial management	270	45.53	19.16		
Teachers' job satisfaction	270	199.35	48.94	.294	195

P < 0.05.

Table 5. Pearson correlation of teachers' level of decisional participation in conflict matter resolution and job satisfaction.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r -cal	r- table
Participation in school financial management	270	53.21	18.87	.222	195
Teachers' job satisfaction	270	199.35	48.94		

P < 0.05.

Table 6. Pearson correlation of decisional participation on examination matters and satisfaction.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r - cal	r - table
Participation in school financial management	270	66.03	21.64	.321	195
Teachers' job satisfaction	270	199.35	49.94		

P < 0.05.

of decisional participation in conflict matter resolution and job satisfaction were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson product moment correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 5.

The relationship between teachers' level of participation in conflict resolution matters and job satisfaction is presented in Table 5. The result reveals that r-cal(.222) is greater than r- table (.195) at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It implies that there is significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in conflict matter resolution and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation on examination matter and job satisfaction.

Scores on teachers' decisional participation on examination matters and job satisfaction were computed. These two sets of scores were subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson product moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that there exists significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in examination matter and job satisfaction (r = .321, P < 0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in examination matters and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5

There is no significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation on staff's welfare and job satisfaction.

In order to test the hypothesis, computed scores on teachers' decisional participation on staff's welfare and job satisfaction were subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson product moment correlation at 0.05 level of significant. The result is shown in Table 7.

Table 7 shows r-cal(.196) is greater that t table (.195). The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in staff's welfare and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6

There is no significant relationship between teachers'' decisional participation on disciplinary matters and job satisfaction.

Table 8 presents the relationship between teachers' decisional participation on disciplinary matters and job

Table 7. Pearson correlation of teachers' decisional participation on staff welfare and job satisfaction.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r -cal	r- table
Participation in school financial management	270	51.46	21.37	.196	195
Teachers' job satisfaction	270	199.35	48.94		

P < 0.05.

Table 8. Pearson correlation of teachers' decisional participation on disciplinary matters and job satisfaction.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r- table
Participation in school financial management	270	54.67	28.72	.457	.195
Teachers' job satisfaction	270	199.35	49.94		

P < 0.05.

Table 9. Pearson correlation of teachers' decisional participation on school academics work and job satisfaction.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r- table
Participation in school financial management	270	74.87	26.34	.303	195
Teachers' job satisfaction	270	199.35	48.94		

P < 0.05.

satisfaction. The result reveals that r-cal(.457) is greater than r -table (.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation on disciplinary matters and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 7

There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation on school academic work and job satisfaction.

In order to test the hypothesis, computation of scores on teachers' decisional participation on school academic work and job satisfaction were subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson product moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 9.

Table 9 presents the relationship between decisional on school academic work and job satisfaction. The result shows that there is relationship between teachers' decisional participation and job satisfaction at 0.05 level of significance, since r - calculated (.303) is greater than r table (.195). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 8

There is no significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in school curricular activities and job satisfaction.

Testing the hypothesis involves computation of scores on teachers' decisional participation in school curricular activities and job satisfaction. These sets of scores were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson product moment correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 10.

Table 10 presents the relationship between teachers' decisional participation on co – curricular activities and job satisfaction. The result shows that r -cal(.233) is greater than r- table (.195) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation on school co- curricular activities and job satisfaction is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the level of teachers' involvement

Table 10. Pearson correlation of decisional participation in co – curricular activities and job satisfaction.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r - cal	r table
Participation in school financial management	270	72.94	61.18	.233	195
Teachers' job satisfaction	270	199.35	48.94		

$P < 0.05$.

in decision making in Ekiti State Senior secondary Schools was low. This low level of teachers' participation in decision making in the school might not be unconnected with fact that many senior secondary schools' principals make themselves autocratic and unapproachable. They fail to involve their teachers while making decision. It is worthy of note that teachers would want to be involved in the decisional making process of their schools. The findings of this study contradict that of Folayin (1987), Charters and Pellagrin (1993), Adeniyi (2000) and Alebiosu (2006). They believe that there is no correlation between teachers' decisional participation and job satisfaction. The findings of this study corroborate that of (Adeniyi, 2000), who believes that there exists a relationship between teachers' decisional participations and job satisfaction. The study revealed that there was significant relationship between teacher's decisional participation and their job satisfaction. The reason for this result might be due to the fact that teachers who are allowed to participate in the decision making process of their schools would have high sense of belonging.

Teachers that are not involved in the decision making process of their schools are likely to be unhappy, dissatisfied and uncooperative on the job. The findings of this study corroborate that of Adeniyi (2000), that effectiveness and decisional participation lead to more job satisfaction. Dada (2008) emphasized that well applied decisional participation improves workers' job satisfaction.

It was found in the study that there was significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in school financial management and their job satisfaction. This could be as a result of the importance of funding in all life endeavors. This will enhance high job satisfaction of the teachers and high students' academic achievement and students' comportment. Bates (2001), Garret and Poole (2005) and Dada (2008) contended that workers' participation in school finance would enhance their job satisfaction and as well induce productivity in their workplace. Adeniyi (2000) opined that it profits the manager to involve staff in decision making on fiancés of the school as this would more beneficial to the school too in all ramifications.

The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between decisional participation in conflict resolution in school and job satisfaction. It would be inferred from the findings that involvement of teachers in resolution of conflicts and disagreement in their schools would further enhance such teachers' job satisfaction.

Teachers who are involved in conflict resolution would help to create and protect peaceful environment because of their high level of job satisfaction.

Teachers' involvement in conflict resolution would help such teachers to know the problems of individuals and the possible solution to forestall its prevalence. It would however complement management effort in ensuring ideal learning environment for learning. Whereas, teachers who are not involved in conflicts resolution in their school may not work hard and show positive interest in any issue that can hamper the peaceful co – existence of both staff and students in the school system.

The study has shown that there was no significant relationship between teacher's decisional participation on school examination matters and their job satisfaction. This means that the decision on the internal examination can be solely decided by the school principal and teachers are bound to comply with any directive given by the school management. The specifications for the periodic test and end of the term examination questions are still subjected to the school authority initiatives. Though the issue of examination is always taken serious in the academic environment and lapses by the teaching staff attract serve punishment that ranges from query, demotion, fines and probably termination of appointment. And more so, the teachers are now being paid examination hazard allowance. It is purely the statutory duty of the teachers to collaborate hazard allowance. It is purely the statutory duty of the teachers to collaborate with their school heads on the issue of examination, no matter the level of discontention.

But the study showed that considerable numbers of the respondents are involved in deciding the modes of setting questions, fixing date of examination materials. It therefore showed that either teachers are satisfied or not satisfied they are compelled to cooperate with their school management because that is what will be used to justify their input in their work place.

The study has shown that there was significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in staff welfares and their job satisfaction. Thus means that the active involvement of teachers in decision making process on staff welfares would enhance their level of job

satisfaction. The staff welfare is very crucial and significant, because its gravity and consistency will however boost teachers' morale to work hard. Good staff welfare packages will build up to high level of harmonious living. Once the school head prefers to co – opt teachers in deciding what, when and how to go about any issue that is concerned with teachers' welfare, it will definitely induce their level of job satisfaction.

The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation in disciplinary matters and their job satisfaction. It is expected that teachers, as a major actor in the education industry should not be in anyway excluded in the maintenance of discipline in schools system. Teachers are familiar to the students and know the better way of getting rid of the bad ones in their midst. More so, teachers stand a better position to offer counseling service without hesitation. It was found that there was significant relationship between teachers 'decisional participation in school academic and their job satisfaction. It means that teachers' participation in deciding academic matters such as time table for school lesson, preparation of scheme and record of work in subject basis, broad-sheet preparation, marking and recording of students' scripts and conduct of terminal or end of session exams will boost the level of job satisfaction. Teachers are likely to pursue shared realistic goals rather than what others have and had over to them they do not give rooms for originality on their side. However, teachers who participate in the decision making as regards school academic matters are likely to accept any responsibility given to them with pleasure because it was their joint resolution.

The study further revealed that there was significant relationship between teachers' decisional participation activities in co-curricular activities and their job satisfaction. The level of co-curricular activities in the school programme is used to determine the school standard. Bloom Taxonomy viewed learning under three dimensions viz: cognitive and psychomotor learning domain that will however help to ensure balance level of educational programme.

The more teachers are incorporated into the decision making on the co- curricular activities the more success they attain. Once teachers are incorporated into the decision making process on any aspects of the co-curricular activities the more they are elated and highly satisfied with their job.

Teachers' decisional participation in all variables of school management positively induces their level of job satisfaction. Better participation of teachers in school management variables such as school financial manage-ment, conflict resolution examination matters, staff welfare, disciplinary matters, school academic and co-curricular activities would positively enhance the teachers level of commitment because it will no doubt lead to high level of their job satisfaction. It is noteworthy that the variables of working conditions, student- teachers' relationships and teachers – principals' relationship would help to induce the level of teachers' job satisfaction. Teachers' decisional participation serves as an indicator to access the gravity of teachers' satisfaction with the job. If teachers are excluded from participating in the various aspects of school management, their level of job satisfaction could be adversely affected.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: - Teachers were not adequately participating in the decision making process on the various variables examined in the study. It was as a result of the school management that tends to be more autocratic, unfriendly and unapproachable. And it has caused demoralization on the part of the teachers because of the ill – treatment and unaccommodating leadership style of the school heads. The occurrence deteriorates teachers' interest and diminishes the gravity of job satisfaction.

The following recommendations were made:

1. Since the level of teachers' decisional participation in school management and teachers' job satisfaction were low, the stakeholders in the running of senior secondary schools education should ensure that teachers are more involved in the decision making process of their schools. Government should mandate principals to allow their teachers' initiatives while making decision in order to enhance higher level of teacher's job satisfaction.
2. The stakeholders in the secondary school education should put in place every possible incentive to enhance higher level of teachers' job satisfaction; such will include regular payment of salary, special allowances for special assignment, conferences and workshops. These will further boost the level of teachers' job satisfaction and eliminate the thinking of alternative job.
3. Teachers need to be introduced to in – service training that will instill an ideal spirit of leadership in them. The trainings need to cover the system of management and power sharing. Such training will help to balance the disparity between born and made leaders, and help in the realization of the education objectives at the secondary school level.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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How school climate predicts teachers' organizational silence

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This study aims to explore the relationships between school climate constructs and teachers' organizational silence (OS) and to analyze how school climate predicts teachers' OS. The study population comprised all teachers (2,237) working in private primary schools in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The sample consisted of 329 responses, which represented 14.7% of the original population. Structural equation modeling for path analysis between the main constructs (teacher behavior, principal behavior) and teachers' organizational silence revealed the influence of principal behavior on teachers' silence was significant. However, the influence of teachers' behavior on teachers' silence was found to be non-significant. The relationships between teachers' OS and four school climate constructs (supportive principal behavior, directive principal behavior, collegial teacher behavior, intimate teacher behavior) were negative, while the relationships between teachers' organizational silence and two school climate scales (restrictive principal behavior, disengaged teacher behavior) were positive. It is recommended that top educational management officials develop relevant policy procedures, such as legislating necessary regulations to protect whistle-blowers in the school environment. Given the increased popularity of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) in measuring school typology, we encourage the use of this questionnaire to predict other teachers' behaviors in the school environment.

Key words: School climate, Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), organizational silence, teachers' silence.

INTRODUCTION

The current era is characterized by a highly competitive, changing environment. In this context, organizations confront rapid changes in information processing and decision-making. Thus, organizations make use of their employees' thoughts and suggestions to enhance innovative initiatives and to promote organizational effectiveness. Recognizing their employees as a valuable resource of innovative thoughts and useful opinions, healthy organizations also seek their criticisms, complaints, and even notifications of irregularities and violations. Consequently, managers aim to create healthy and open organizational climates that urge employees to

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speak up with their ideas, concerns, complaints, and any information about the current issues in the workplace.

These actions and arrangements are consistent with the management literature, which stresses how critical employee voices and communication opportunities are within organizations (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008; Morrison and Milliken, 2000). However, unfortunately, many employees choose to remain silent and withhold their ideas, concerns, and information about issues in their work environments. Researchers and theorists (Çakıcı, 2007; Perlow and Williams, 2003; Milliken et al., 2003; Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Morrison and Milliken, 2000) have long demonstrated that employees are generally hesitant to speak up both to their supervisors and colleagues when they have potentially critical concerns or valuable thoughts to share. This behavior is identified as organizational silence (OS); more specifically, OS refers to the withholding of potentially useful information or critical concerns that employees fail to share with their supervisors or those in positions of authority (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Pinder and Harlos, 2001). In other words, it refers to an employee's tendency to not speak up when they have an idea, a suggestion, a concern about problematic issues in the workplace, or a disparate perspective that could be helpful or applicable to share (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Milliken et al., 2003).

Likewise, educational institutions are not far removed from these problems. Alqarni (2015) clarified that educational institutions confront many of the same problems that are associated with employees' behaviors in issues of organizational performance. These include a low tendency to participate in decision-making, weak involvement in initiative and innovative activities, hesitance to express their ideas and suggestions, withholding information regarding illegal practices in the workplace, and absolute acquiescence and obedience to their heads. Consistently, additional researchers (Çakıcı, 2007; Bayram, 2010) demonstrated that OS is a prevalent behavior in school environments and among educators.

Recent research has also revealed that OS is associated with negative organizational outcomes. Some researchers (Graham, 2002; Perlow and Williams, 2003) claimed that OS could decrease organizational learning, error correction, and crisis prevention. Moreover, organizational performance declines with significant levels of silence (Perlow and Williams, 2003). In line with these outcomes, Perlow and Williams (2003) added that "silence can exact a high psychological price on individuals, generating feelings of humiliation, pernicious anger, resentment, and the like that, if unexpressed, contaminate every interaction, shut down creativity, and undermine productivity" (p. 53). Similarly, Morrison and Milliken (2000) presented a model of the effects of organizational silence, which includes a "lack of variance in informational input, lack of analysis of ideas and alternatives, lack of internal negative feedback, employees' perceived feelings of not being valued and employees' cognitive dissonance" (p. 718). These adverse OS consequences impose a need to examine this phenomenon in terms of its causes and conditions. This issue becomes increasingly important for educational institutions in general and for schools in particular, which should be examples of healthy learning environments that reinforce effective communication, freedom of expression, smooth flows of information, and successful collegial work.

To address OS in educational institutions in general, and in schools in particular, we argue that organizational climate or school climate might provide us with a broader understanding of the real contributors or antecedents of this phenomenon. Based on an in-depth look at the concept of school climate, this assumption is supported by the fact that school climate represents:

The heart and soul of a school, psychological and institutional attributes that give a school its personality, a relatively enduring quality of the entire school that is experienced by members, which describes their collective perceptions of routine behavior, and affects their attitudes and behavior in the school (Hoy and Miskel, 1987: 226).

Pretorius and de Villiers (2009) described school climate as "a relatively enduring, pervasive quality of the internal environment of a school experienced by educators and/or learners that influences their behavior and proceeds from their collective perceptions" (p. 33). One core element in these definitions is that school climate affects school members' behaviors. Therefore, we argue that school climate dimensions might help explain teachers' OS. In support of this view, Hoy et al. (1991) introduced the Revised Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE), which investigates principal behavior and teacher behavior. These two components interact to characterize the *openness* of the school climate. When examining these two main interacting components and their sub-components, a question arises: Could school climate be a significant predictor of teachers' OS? Alternatively, could the OCDQ-RE be a potential index for predicting teachers' OS? To put it simply, Hoy et al. (1991) demonstrated that:

The typology of school climates developed by OCDQ-RE provides a framework for not only the study of leadership, motivation, and school effectiveness but also of organizational communication, school structure, decision making, goal setting, and control processes. There is a host of important research questions to be addressed, and the OCDQ-RE is a heuristic tool in the endeavour…it gives a reasonably reliable index of what might be wrong in a school functioning below par (Hoy et al., 1991: 37).

Taking these considerations into account, we hypothesize that school climate dimensions could

significantly predict teachers' OS.

Statement of problem

Very little research in Saudi Arabia is available regarding OS and how it relates to other organizational variables. To date, the country's K-12 education sector, whether in public or private schools, remains unexplored in terms of antecedent variables of OS. In addition, even though OS is an emerging concept in organizational psychology literature that has been associated with undesirable organizational consequences, little is presently known about its status and contributing factors in the Saudi context.

Therefore, it is necessary to investigate OS in Saudi K-12 education to explore how this relates to the school climate as this climate provides a reasonable framework for highlighting the behaviors that might be affecting school functioning. This research is also necessary because OS can weaken organizational effectiveness and performance. Based on this context, a further question arises: Might school climate be a significant predictor of teachers' OS in the Saudi context? Accordingly, this paper sought answers to the following research questions:

(1) How do Saudi teachers perceive their school climate?
(2) How do Saudi teachers perceive their OS?
(3) What relationships exist between school climate constructs and teachers' OS?
(4) How do the constructs of school climate predict teachers' OS?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Organizational silence

OS is a relatively new construct introduced by Pinder and Harlos (2001), Morrison and Milliken (2000), and Milliken et al. (2003). For Morrison and Milliken (2000), "it is a collective phenomenon where employees withhold their opinions and concerns about potential organizational problems" (p. 707). Consistently, Pinder and Harlos (2001) described OS as "withholding genuine expression about behavioral, cognitive, and/or affective evaluations of organizational circumstances to people who seem capable of changing the situation" (p. 334). These two definitions imply that OS is an intentional decision by an employee to remain silent and not convey any useful information or work-related concerns/critiques to those in positions of authority.

Research conducted on the consequences of OS has demonstrated that it is associated with undesirable organizational outcomes, such as low organizational performance, low retention rates (Perlow and Williams, 2003), lack of information, employee stress, dissatisfaction, disengagement (Morrison and Milliken, 2000), and a high turnover rate of people who speak up (Donaghey et al., 2011). It also denies an organization of potentially valuable knowledge (Detert and Edmondson 2011). Other research has asserted that it impedes "innovation and perpetuates poorly planned projects that lead to defective products, low morale, and a damaged bottom line" (Pentilla, 2003, p. 25). Moreover, OS is thought to be detrimental to a "bottom-up information exchange," which in turn "reduces the quality of top leaders' decisions" (Lu and Xie, 2013: 47).

Despite these risks, little research has been conducted on the antecedents and reasons underlying this devastating organizational phenomenon. Some research has reported that the organizational and contextual factors are hierarchal organization (Pinder and Harlos 2001; Milliken et al., 2003), abusive leadership (Detert and Trevino, 2010), an instrumental climate (Wang and Hsieh, 2013), a fear climate (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Morrison and Milliken, 2000), an unsupportive culture, an unsupportive supervisor style, a lack of closeness or a poor relationship with the supervisor (Milliken et al., 2003), procedural justice (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008), top management attitudes to silence, supervisors' attitude to silence, communication opportunities (Vakola and Bourades, 2005), perceived organizational support, and management openness (Çetin, 2013). Very recently, in an extensive review of the current knowledge about the inhibitors and motivators of silence and voice in organizations, Morrison (2014) reported "job and social stressors, climate of fear or silence, instrumental climate, hierarchal structure and change-resistant culture" as "contextual inhibitors of voice" (p. 186) in organizations.

Other researchers addressed individual factors such as a consideration of the costs and benefits of speaking up, a fear of speaking up to superiors (Detert and Edmondson, 2011), deeply held beliefs about the riskiness of using one's voice (Detert and Edmondson, 2011; Morrison, 2014), socially shared beliefs about silence (Morrison, 2011; Frazier and Fainshmidt, 2012; Morrison, 2014), lack of experience, a low-level position, fear of being treated as a troublemaker (Milliken et al., 2003), an individual's personal identity (Ashford and Barton, 2007), a sense of futility of voicing an opinion (Morrison, 2014; Milliken et al., 2003; Detert and Trevino, 2010), employee acquiescent behavior (Pinder and Harlos, 2001), and psychological detachments (Morrison, 2014; Burris et al., 2008).

In Saudi Arabia, three main studies have been conducted on this topic. In academia, Alqarni (2015) found that the top management attitude toward silence was the highest determinant of OS among faculty members, followed by communication opportunities, and managers' attitudes toward silence were ranked last. The study also revealed that OS is significantly correlated with silence climates in universities and that OS is negatively

correlated with trust in superiors, procedural justice, and organizational commitment.

Afandi (2008) investigated whistleblowing in various public sector institutions. She found that whistleblowing is not a common behavior in Saudi work environments. The study also found that barriers of whistleblowing include the following: weak religious faith, weak adherence to moral values, and absence of proper protection for whistleblowers. Alwehabie (2014), also exploring the public sector, found that "fear of negative feedback, lack of communication skills, lack of top management support, isolation, and fear of adverse reactions" (p. 389), all contribute to OS in public sector institutions.

As a researcher and observer of OS in the Saudi context, the context is not far removed from the factors and causes discussed by the relevant literature, whether in relation to individual, organizational, or contextual factors. It is noteworthy that the organizational context in Saudi Arabia confronts several problems, including leaders and administrators remaining in their positions for long periods, authoritarian leadership, and the lack of participatory styles of leadership. In its organizational structure, the majority of organizations, including educational organizations, tend to place most of the power and authority in the hands of senior leaders, which in turn stimulates individuals to remain silent to ensure job security and pursue their interests. With regard to individual factors, generally, individuals tend to avoid being the source of bad news and strive to maintain good and constructive relationships with their managers and colleagues alike. If we know that parental leadership prevails socially and organizationally due to considerations of seniority and expertise, individuals tend to remain silent and avoid disclosure because of their appreciation and respect for their older and more experienced leaders. In addition, certain deeply embedded social and religious values consider silence as a virtue in many situations for the sake of enhancing unity and preventing schism at both the societal or organizational levels.

In summary, OS has been investigated as a destructive phenomenon that is associated with negative organizational outcomes; therefore, it is worthwhile to research this topic to determine its contributors and antecedents to obtain a more complete picture and deeper understanding of this phenomenon. The current study is one such attempt in this direction.

School climate

Educators and researchers have researched school climate for over one hundred years (Cohen et al., 2009). As previously described, based on definitions provided by Hoy and Miskel (1987, 2005) and Freiberg (1999), school climate can be said to represent the collective perceptions of how school members experience the internal atmosphere, how they understand their relationships, and how they behave, interact, and influence each other. The definitions also stress the important point that school climate influences members' behaviors and that accordingly, schools can be distinguished from one another based on teachers' routine behaviors and attitudes.

Operationally, it is useful to distinguish school climate from other related confounded constructs, such as school culture and school-level environment. School climate has been described as the "quality and character of school life" (National School Climate Council, 2007: 5). According to the National School Climate Council (2007), it comprises school members' experiences, interactive relationships, as well as shared perceptions, attitudes, and feelings they have about the school. "School culture" is defined as "the long-term physical and social environment, as well as the values or beliefs of the school shared across individuals and time" (National School Climate Center, FAQs, n.d.). In other words, school climate can be categorized as the "attitude or mood" of the school, while school culture represents the "personality or values" of the school. Climate is perception-based, while culture is grounded in shared values and beliefs (Gruenert, 2008). The school-level environment is another related construct which refers to "teachers' perceptions of psychosocial dimensions of the environment of a school, which includes student support, affiliation, professional interest, mission consensus, empowerment, innovation, resource adequacy, and work pressure" (Webster and Fisher, 2004: 313).

Research conducted on school climate demonstrates that it highly influences teachers' behaviors. Pritchard and Karasick (1973) and Lawler et al. (1974) indicated that climate influences organizational performance, employees' satisfaction levels, and work motivation. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002) clarified that school climate could enhance or impede school educators' endeavors to fulfill their needs at the workplace. Consistently, Freiberg (1999: 11) reported that school climate "can foster resilience or become a risk factor in the lives of people who work and learn in a place called school."

More recently, the school climate has been widely proved as a critical factor that can influence school improvement and change initiatives (Daly, 2008; Sailes, 2008; Schoen and Teddlie, 2008). Consistently school climate has been widely used to investigate many school aspects, relationships, behaviors, and outcomes. For example, positive school climate is associated with higher levels of student learning and achievement (Goddard et al., 2015; Jones and Shindler, 2016; Stewart, 2008; MacNeil et al., 2009), dropout prevention (Dynarski et al., 2008), improved psychological well-being (Ruus et al., 2007; Virtanen et al., 2009), reduced aggression and violence (Goldstein et al., 2008; Gregory et al., 2010), reduced bullying behavior (Birkett et al., 2009; Meyer-

Adams and Conner, 2008), and reduced sexual harassment (Attar-Schwartz, 2009). Other researchers found that positive school climate enhances mutual trust, respect, group cohesion, and cooperative learning (Ghaith, 2003; Finnan et al., 2003). For teachers, teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy were found to be related to school climate (Aldridge and Fraser, 2016). Other researchers found that positive school climates significantly predicted teacher commitment (Collie et al., 2012). Similarly, healthy school climates are found to reduce teachers' stress and burnout and to increase their job satisfaction (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2009; Collie et al., 2012).

Given the importance of school climate, many theorists and researchers have developed measures to assess internal school environment aspects as evaluated by students, teachers, administrators, and parents. The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (2018) published a compendium of the most reliable and valid measurements across the U.S. that can be used as school climate assessment. Among those are the Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI), School Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ), Alaska's School Climate and Connectedness Survey (SCCS), Delaware School Climate Student Survey, the Authoritative School Climate Survey, School Climate Assessment Instrument (SCAI), the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Survey (EDSCLS), and the OCDQ-RE/OCDQ-RS. These inventories differ in terms of the school climate need assessment, the constructs they measure, and target respondent groups.

Out of these measurements, the OCDQ-RE/OCDQ-RS has received unprecedented interest and gained popularity among researchers of school climate in primary and secondary schools. Due to the popularity of the OCDQ-RE/OCDQ-RS and its proven merits in diagnosing the internal school atmosphere and employees' behaviors, it has been used to explain teachers' commitment levels (Akoto and Allida, 2017), teachers' organizational citizenship (Mabekoje, 2017), teacher self-efficacy, teachers' beliefs (Lacks, 2016), organizational health (De Villiers, 2006), faculty trust (Hoy et al., 2002), teacher leadership (Kilinç, 2014), and principal leadership (LaRoche, 2014).

Guided by the above merits of the OCDQ-RE, and considering that teachers' OS might negatively affect school performance and educational outcomes, this paper hypothesizes that the OCDQ-RE is an efficient tool in predicting teachers' OS.

School climate and teachers' organizational silence

As it is essential to take the characteristics of the school's organizational structure into account when investigating the attitudes and behaviors of its teachers (Sarason, 1996), teachers' silence could be predicted using the OCDQ-RE. Hoy et al. (1991) revealed that the "OCDQ-RE distinguishes between three dimensions of principal behavior (supportive, directive, and restrictive) and three dimensions of teacher behavior (collegial, intimate, and disengaged)." Accordingly, these two sets of dimensions can be used to identify the principal openness and teacher openness, and hence, "provide the basis for a four-celled typology of school climate: open, closed, engaged, and disengaged climates" (Hoy et al., 1991: 36).

In terms of silence and voice behaviors, teachers may demonstrate different levels according to these four contrasting types of school climate. An *open school climate* is "characterized by teacher relations that are professional, collegial, friendly, and committed to the education of students. The principal is supportive and professional and does not restrict or direct teachers with orders" (Hoy and Miskel, 2013, p. 4). In this climate, teachers are expected to freely express their ideas, feelings, and concerns to both the principal and to their colleagues. In such a safe and encouraging climate, teachers may take further steps by voicing their criticisms and sharing information about problematic issues in the school environment.

On the contrary, a *closed school climate* is "characterized by teacher relations that are disengaged, distant, suspicious, and not professional; the principal is directive, restrictive, and not supportive" (Hoy and Miskel, 2013: 4). Moreover, teachers appear to "be divisive, intolerant, apathetic, and uncommitted" (Hoy et al., 1991: 34). Principals are seen to be "unsympathetic, unconcerned, and unresponsive" (Pretorius and Villiers, 2009: 35). In such a climate, teachers may feel reluctant to speak up both to the principal and their colleagues. This type of school climate may cause a state of fear, a lack of security, a lack of trust, retrogression, and hesitance in which teachers no longer have the desire to share their knowledge and express their views.

An *engaged climate* is marked by "ineffectual attempts made by the principal to exercise and maintain control. The principal's style of leadership is rigid, autocratic, and characterized by high defectiveness, low supportiveness, and high restrictiveness" (Pretorius and Villiers, 2009: 35). On the other hand, teachers' behaviors are seen as highly professional, collegial, intimate, and engaged; and respect and intimacy prevail in their interactions. Regardless of the principal's ineffective leadership, teachers are "productive, cohesive, committed, and supportive" as well as "engaged" in their tasks (Hoy et al., 1991: 33). In such a climate, teachers may have few channels to share their ideas and concerns with the principal; the principal's focus on setting discipline through rigid control and close supervision may lead teachers to withhold information or suggestions regarding the improvement of work-related affairs. Instead of sharing ideas and information with the principal, teachers

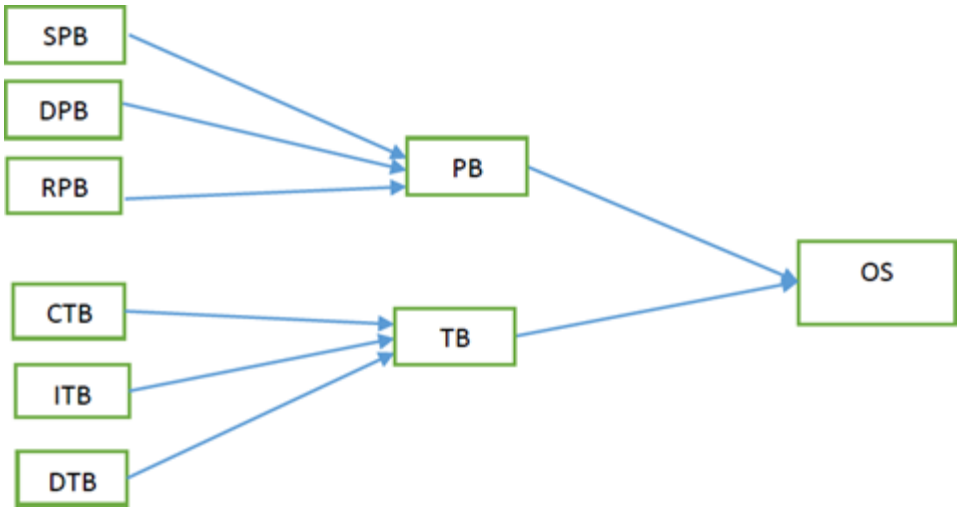

Figure 1. The hypothesized model used in the study. Supportive Principal Behavior (SPB), Directive Principal Behavior (DPB), Restrictive Principal Behavior (RPB), Collegial Teacher Behavior (CPB), Intimate Teacher Behavior (ITB), Disengaged Teacher Behavior (DTB)

tend to share some of their concerns with their colleagues because of their cohesive and strong social relations.

In a *disengaged climate*, principals are "open, concerned, supportive, flexible," facilitating, and non-controlling, but the "faculty tends to be indifferent or even intolerant towards the principal" (Pretorius and de Villiers, 2009: 36). Teachers demonstrate low intimacy and low collegiality, and they appear to be "divisive, uncommitted and disengaged" (Hoy et al., 1991: 34). Due to their indifference and the tendency toward disengagement, teachers may demonstrate silence because they are not concerned about the school's interests.

As school climate has been widely used to investigate many school aspects, relationships, behaviors, and outcomes, this study is consistent with this line but examines a new phenomenon in the school environment; teachers' OS. The hypothesized model is based on structural modeling that groups the constructs of principal behaviors (PB) and teacher behaviors (TB) into two higher-order constructs. Accordingly, the relationships between school climate and teachers' OS were examined using these two higher-order constructs. As school climate is recognized as a multidimensional construct (Wang and Degol, 2016), we sought to identify how principal behaviors-namely, supportive (SPB), directive (DPB), and restrictive (RPB)-influenced teachers' OS and how teachers' behaviors-namely, collegial (CTB), intimate (ITB), and disengaged (DTB)-influenced their OS. Based on our review of the literature above, as a school's climate significantly influences teachers' behaviors, and the OCDQ-RE is an efficient tool for identifying what is investigates how the OCDQ-RE dimensions might predict teachers' organizational silence as illustrated in the wrong with these behaviors; therefore, the present study model below (Figure 1).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We used quantitative methods to investigate school climate and teachers' OS in the private primary schools in Jeddah as perceived by teachers themselves. We analyzed and interpreted how constructs of school climate can relate and contribute to the existence of teachers' OS. As this study was conducted to interpret how constructs of school climate predict or forecast teachers' OS, a correlational prediction research design was used. In support of the use of this design, Creswell (2012) stated, "In correlational research designs, investigators use the statistical correlation test to describe and measure the degree of association (or relationship) between two or more variables or sets of scores" (p. 338). The prediction research design is a correlational design, which is used, according to Creswell (2012), "to identify variables that will predict an outcome or criterion" (p. 341).

Sampling

The research population comprised all the teachers working at private primary schools in Jeddah during the 2017/2018 academic year. This included 2,237 teachers working in 69 different schools. The private primary schools are geographically located in six main areas and are under the supervision of six educational offices. Private schools were selected for various reasons. First, Saudi teachers in private schools are paid by the owner of the school, and, therefore, they are likely to remain silent in order to retain their jobs and seek job security. Second, there is a large proportion of non-Saudi teachers working in private schools whose main concern is to remain in the Kingdom for financial reasons. Therefore, they tend to be silent and acquiescent to school principals and school owners. In any case, the fact that the study was confined to private schools is the main limitation of the present study.

Table 1 illustrates how the teachers are distributed across the six educational offices. Access was granted to the school and teacher database, and from which, a representative stratified random

Table 1. Sampling information.

N	Educational offices	Number of teachers	%	Distributed questionnaires	%	Receipt responses	%
1	Al-Naseem	375	16.8	113	16.8	47	14.3
2	Al-Safa	368	16.5	111	16.5	59	17.93
3	The South	271	12.1	81	12.1	43	13.07
4	The East	166	7.4	50	7.4	27	8.2
5	The North	678	30.3	203	30.2	102	31
6	The Middle	379	16.9	114	17	51	15.5
		2237	100%	672	30%	329	14.7%

sample was selected from the six offices (328 teachers, 14.66%).

Considering that there might be deficiencies in the survey response rate, we selected a sample size of 672 teachers (30% of the original population), as illustrated in Table 1. We expected a high attrition rate (from previous experience with other similar studies that we have conducted where participation was very poor). As a sample of 328 teachers was the minimum required sample size to represent the teacher population adequately, we oversampled from the intended population to cover for the expected non-response and high attrition. As expected, of the 672 participants, only 329 (14.7% of the original population) responded, which demonstrated a non-response rate of 51.04%. The two scales were sent via a web-based survey to the target teachers.

Instruments

School climate

The OCDQ-RE developed by Hoy et al. (1991) was used to investigate the teachers' perceptions of their school climates. The questionnaire was contextualized to the Saudi educational context through translation and back translation techniques. The OCDQ-RE is a 42-item survey distinguishing between three dimensions of principal behavior-supportive, directive, and restrictive, and three dimensions of teacher behavior-collegial, intimate, and disengaged (Hoy et al., 1991). The 42 items are rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from rarely occurs to very frequently occurs. Examples of the questionnaire are as follows:

(i) The principal rules with an iron fist.
(ii) The principal listens to and accepts the teachers' suggestions.
(iii) There is a minority group of teachers who always oppose the majority.
(iv) Teachers provide strong social support for colleagues.

Reliability of the subscales was calculated through Cronbach's alpha. The values of Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.727 to 0.895, indicating appropriate internal consistency. Nunnally (1978) suggests that a value of Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above is considered sufficient and is indicative of a strong inter-item homogeneity. Alphas of the subscales are as follows: SPB = 0.895, DPB = 0.848, RPB= 0.727, CTB = 0.776, ITB = 0.867, DTB =0.813.

Organizational silence (OS)

A short questionnaire, developed by Alqarni (2015), was used to explore teachers' OS. Alqarni (2015) developed the questionnaire for the Saudi educational context after a careful and in-depth review of related literature; in particular, research by Morrison and Milliken (2000), Milliken et al. (2003), Morrison and Milliken (2003), Morrison (2011), and Morrison (2014), as well as the scales developed by Vakola and Bourades (2005) and Van Dyne et al. (2003). This non-dimensioned questionnaire comprises nine items rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from rarely occurs to very frequently occurs. The value of Cronbach's alpha was .907, indicating a high internal consistency, and examples of the questionnaire items (that have been translated from Arabic) are as follows:

(i) So as not to be treated as a troublemaker, I avoid talking about work problems.
(ii) I lack the necessary support to report illegal practices
(iii) I lack the power to express my views freely

RESULTS

As this study was conducted to link teachers' perceptions of their school climates to their OS behaviors, the focus was on predictability and not on distinguishing one school from another in terms of openness and closeness. Therefore, teachers' collective perceptions were processed as a whole instead of focusing on the teachers of one particular school.

In terms of school climate dimensions, as illustrated in Table 2, the mean scores indicated that collegial teacher behavior was rated the highest (M= 4.22), followed by supportive principal behavior (M = 4.11), directive principal behavior (M=3.94), restrictive principal behavior (M = 3.68), intimate teacher behavior (M = 3.56), and finally disengaged teacher behavior (M = 2.25). In terms of OS behaviors, the teachers exhibited a relatively moderate level (M= 2.65). Examining the standard deviations of the posited variables, we found that they all exhibited satisfactory variations from the mean scores. This means that there is sufficient variability captured in the posited variables.

To study the relationships among the six constructs of school climate with OS, the scatter matrix and Pearson's correlation coefficients were examined. A Pearson correlation requires that the relationship between each pair of variables is linear (Conover and Iman, 1981). This assumption is violated if there is curvature among the points on the scatterplot between any pair of variables.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations.

N	Variable	Min	Max	Range	M	SD
1	Supportive Principal Behavior (SPB)	1.22	5.00	3.78	4.11	0.712
2	Directive Principal Behavior (DPB)	1.56	5.00	3.44	3.94	0.675
3	Restrictive Principal Behavior (RPB)	1.40	5.00	3.60	3.68	0.680
4	Collegial Teacher Behavior (CPB)	1.75	5.00	3.25	4.22	0.515
5	Intimate Teacher Behavior (ITB)	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.56	0.701
6	Disengaged Teacher Behavior (DTB)	1.00	5.00	4.00	2.25	0.872
7	Teachers' OS	1.00	5.00	4.00	2.65	0.951

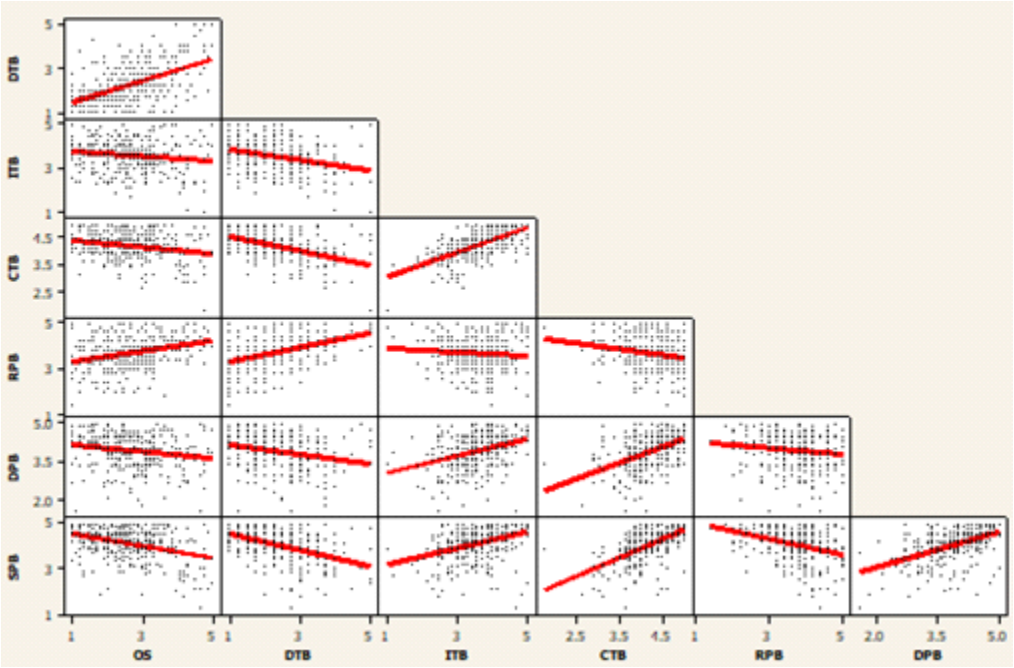

Figure 2. Scatter matrix of study variables.

From the first column of Figure 2, it is quite evident that out of the six constructs of school climate, only two constructs (DTB and RPB) have a positive relation with OS and the other four dimensions (ITB, CTB, DPB, and SPB) have a negative relation with OS.

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted among six constructs of school climate and teachers' OS to study the statistical significance of the relationships as depicted in the scatter matrix in Figure 2. Cohen's standard was used to evaluate the strength of the relationships, where coefficients between 0.10 and 0.29 represent a small effect size, coefficients between 0.30 and 0.49 represent a moderate effect size, and coefficients above .50 indicate a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). The effect size tells us something about how relevant the relationship between two variables is in practice. "Effect size based on the difference of averages is often referred to as Cohen's d, and effect size based on correlations is referred to as Cohen's r" (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1984: 361), but for the current study, we measured the relationships between the variables so we can use Cohen's r. Table 3 provides guidelines for the different effect sizes. Small effects are difficult to see with the naked eye.

Figure 3 presents the results of the correlations of the six constructs of school climate with teachers' OS. A significant positive correlation was observed between OS and DTB (r_p = 0.52, p = 0.001), indicating a large effect size. This correlation indicates that as DTB increases, teachers' OS tends to increase. A significant positive correlation was observed between OS and RPB (r_p = 0.36, p = 0.002), indicating a moderate effect size. This correlation indicates that as RPB increases, teachers' OS tends to increase. A significant negative correlation was observed between OS and SPB (r_p = -0.34, p < 0.001), indicating a moderate effect size. This correlation

Table 3. Guidelines for effect sizes.

	d	*r*	*r equivalent to d**
Small	0.20	0.10	0.10
Medium	0.50	0.30	0.24
Large	0.80	0.50	0.37

* where $r = \frac{d}{\sqrt{d^2 + 4}}$

Source: Rosenthal and Rosnow (1984).

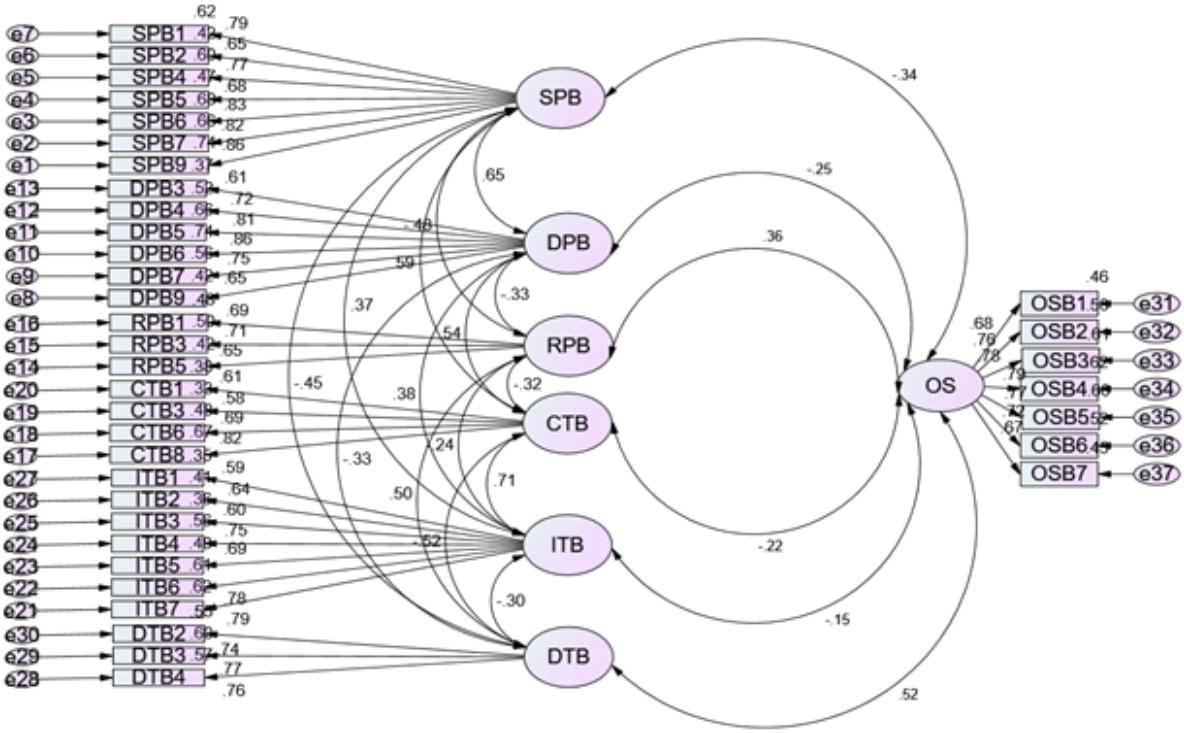

Figure 3. Correlations of school climate constructs with organizational silence.

indicates that as SPB increases, teachers' OS tends to decrease. A significant negative correlation was observed between OS and DPB (r_p = -0.25, p < 0.001), indicating a small effect size. This correlation indicates that as DPB increases, teachers' OS tends to decrease. A significant negative correlation was found between OS and CTB (r_p = -0.22, p < 0.001), indicating a small effect size. This correlation indicates that as CTB increases, teachers' OS tends to decrease. A significant negative correlation was observed between OS and ITB (r_p = -0.15, p = 0.030), indicating a small effect size. This correlation indicates that as ITB increases, teachers' OS tends to decrease.

To test the study hypothesized model, an analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which is considered to be a comprehensive approach for multivariate analysis. Among the two main variants of SEM, Covariance-based SEM was used, and the software for the analysis was AMOS 21.0. The analysis was in two parts, with the first part covering the analysis of the measurement model followed by the analysis of the structural model.

In the analysis of the measurement model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS. The objective of this analysis was to determine the validity and reliability of the model. All of the items were loaded into the respective constructs. During the analysis, the constructs were grouped into two higher-order constructs that represented principal behavior (PB) and teacher behavior (TB). Using the higher-order constructs and deleting items with low factor loadings, model fit was achieved with the parameters illustrated in Table 4. The verification for convergent validity was

Table 4. Measurement model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Model fit parameter	Criteria good fit/Acceptable fit	Measurement model (CFA) results	Structural model (SEM) results
CMIN/df	< 3.00/< 5.00	1.806	1.774
CFI	> 0.95/< 0.90	0.919	0.922
RMSEA (PCLOSE)	< 0.06 (non-significant)/< 0.08	0.050 (0.552)	0.049 (0.685)
SRMR	< 0.06/0.08	0.0770	0.0764

Table 5. Convergent and discriminant validity.

	Average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity	Fornell-Larcker matrix for discriminant validity			
	AVE		PB	TB	OS
PB	0.533	PB	0.730		
TB	0.589	TB	0.702	0.768	
OS	0.555	OS	-0.392	-0.282	0.745

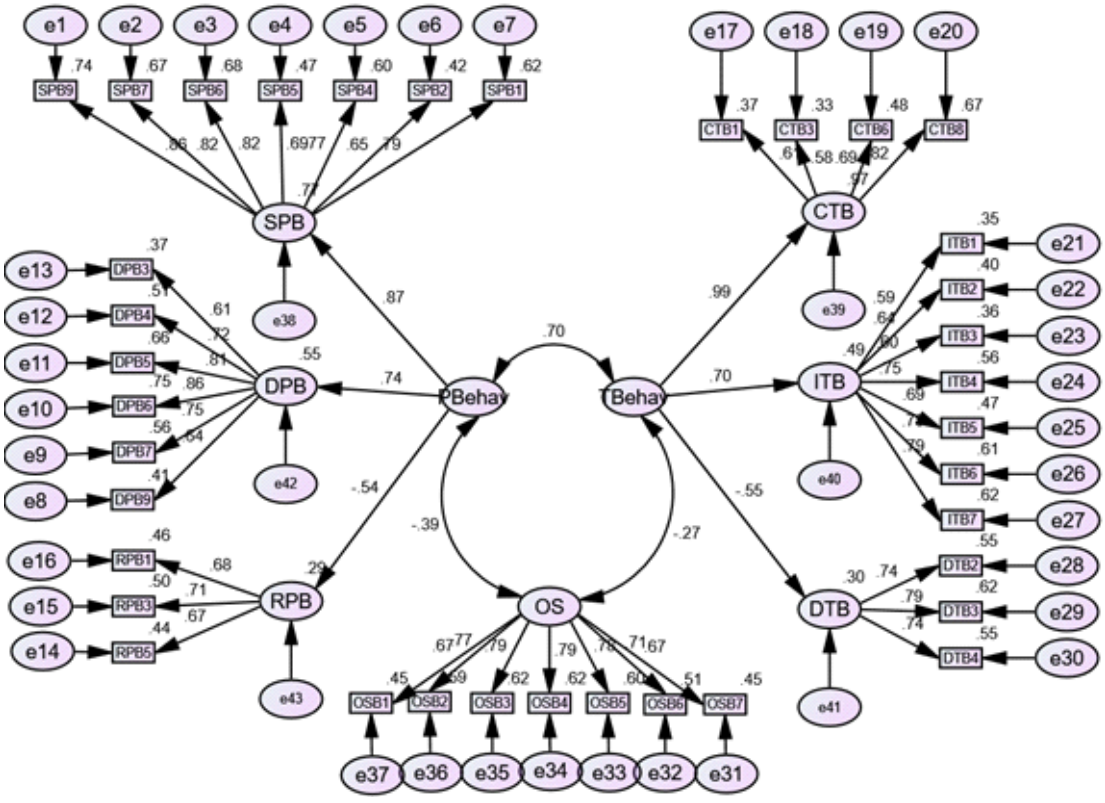

Figure 4. Measurement model (CFA) using second-order constructs.

based on the value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which was found to be less than 0.50 for all of the main constructs. For discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) criteria were used, which is illustrated in Table 5. The complete measurement model is illustrated in Figure 4.

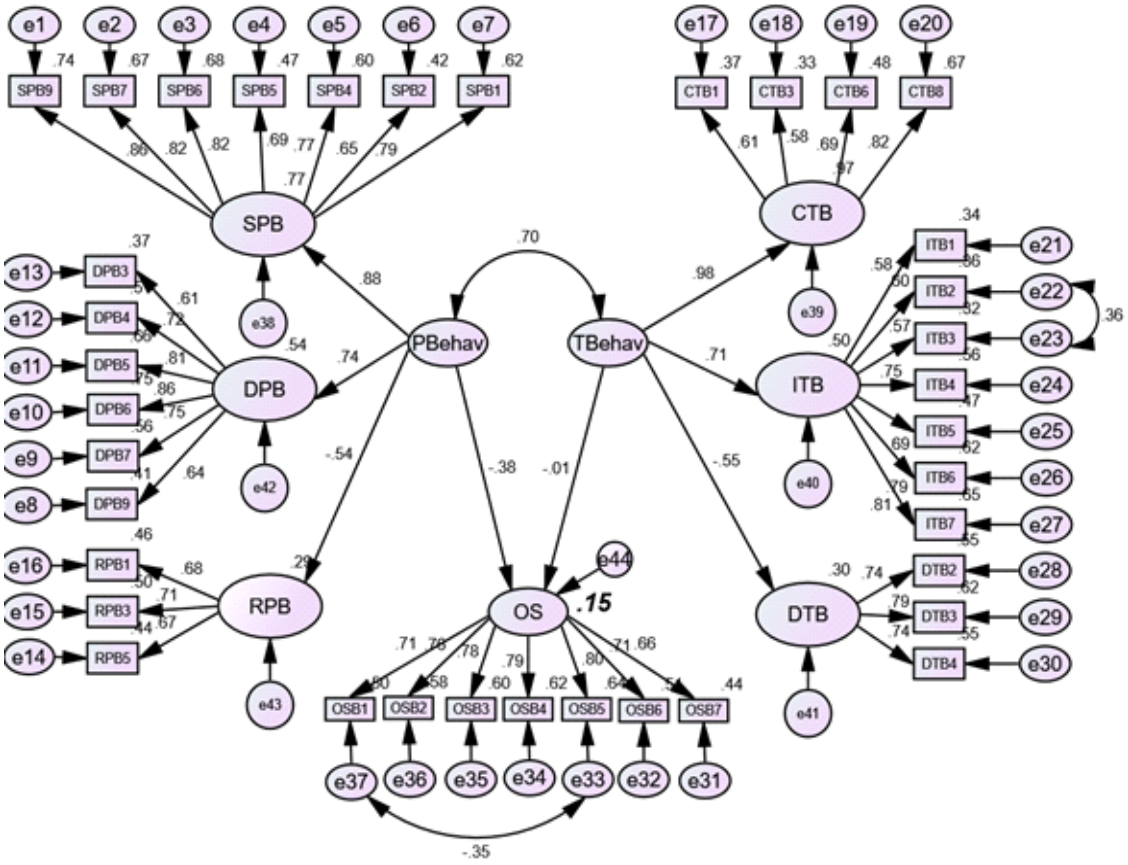

Figure 5. Structural model (SEM) for path analysis between PB → OS and TB → OS.

As the measurement model demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity among the constructs, as illustrated in Table 5, the next step was to model the structural relationships between the different constructs. The model was run again using SEM, model fit was achieved, and the results are illustrated together with CFA in Table 4. In the path analysis between the main constructs, the influence of principal behavior (PB) on organizational silence (OS) was significant ($\beta = -0.38$, $p < 0.05$). However, the influence of teacher behavior (TB) on organizational silence was found to be non-significant ($\beta = -0.01$, $p > 0.05$). The complete structural model is illustrated Figure 5, and the Coefficient of determination (R^2) indicated that the six constructs of school climate through the two higher-order constructs of PB and TB explained 15% of the variance in teachers' OS which, according to Cohen (1988), is a moderate effect size and also exceeds the minimum value as specified by Falk and Miller (1992).

DISCUSSION

Out of the three types of principal behavior, teachers reported that the principals of private schools in Jeddah display most often supportive behaviors followed likewise by the high directive and restrictive behaviors, respectively. In terms of teachers' behaviors, teachers tend to be highly collegial as well as highly intimate, but they have moderate disengaged behaviors. The diverse mix of these behaviors is due to the different climates and environments of the schools, the different leadership styles of the principals, the disparity of teachers' interrelations from one school to another, and the different personality traits.

In terms of teachers' OS, the teachers exhibited a relatively moderate level. This finding is similar to Çetin (2013)'s results that demonstrated a medium level of voice among teachers working in primary schools in downtown Ankara. Likewise, it is in line with the results of Alqarni (2015), who reported that faculty members demonstrated OS behavior from a weak to an almost moderate degree. However, the existence of this phenomenon, albeit at moderate levels, provides school administrators, as well as top educational management, with warning signals to take this issue seriously and to address its causes and consequences at the individual, organizational, and contextual levels.

The relationships between the six school climate constructs and teachers' OS are worthy of reflection and explanation. The relationships between teachers' OS and four school climate constructs (SPB, DPB, CTB, and ITB) were negative, while the relationships between teachers' OS and two school climate scales (RPB and DTB) were positive. Largely, teachers' OS tends to increase as disengaged teacher behavior increases. Therefore, it can be said that teachers' OS, which is at a moderate level, is due to teachers' indifference, a tendency toward disengagement, and a sense of unconcernedness. This type of OS has been articulated by Van Dyne et al. (2003) as acquiescent silence that represents "those who are fundamentally disengaged, resigned to the current situation and are not willing to exert the effort to speak up, get involved, or attempt to change the situation" (p. 38). In line with this view, Pinder and Harlos (2001) regarded disengaged behavior as "a deeply-felt acceptance of organizational circumstances, a taking-for-granted of the situation and limited awareness that alternatives exist" (p. 349).

Similarly, teachers' OS tends to increase as restrictive principal behavior increases. In support of this finding, Burris et al. (2008) revealed that employees' intentions of speaking up with suggestions were at a low level when these employees perceive that their supervisor is abusive. Elaborating on supervisors' attitudes towards employees' voices and silence, Milliken et al. (2003) revealed that a frequently reported reason was either a poor employee-supervisor relationship or a perceived unsupportiveness on the part of the supervisor. Explaining these managers' restrictive behaviors, Morrison and Rothman (2009) demonstrated that inflated feelings of power could cause leaders to become hostile or autocratic and reduce their responsiveness to employees' input, and thus, stifles employees' voices.

In contrast to principal restrictive behavior, teachers' OS tends to decrease, at a moderate level, as supportive principal behavior and directive principal behavior increase. In support of this finding, Miceli et al. (2008) reported that employees are more likely to comment on critical issues if they feel that their supervisor is supportive. This is consistent with Milliken et al. (2003), who found that employee-supervisor relationships and supervisors' supportiveness were significantly correlated with employees' voice intentions. Recent works that addressed employee voice and silence from the perspective of staff perceptions on supervisor openness have supported this finding. For example, Detert and Burris (2007) clarified that employees' voice tendency depends on their perceptions of the extent to which their supervisor is approachable, listens, is concerned with their input, and is properly interested in their views and contributions. Saunders et al. (1992) suggested that employees exhibited a greater likelihood of speaking up when they worked for a supervisor whom they regarded as approachable and responsive to their ideas and suggestions. Also, Morrison (2011) concluded that "the more open and supportive the relationship…the more positive will be the employee's perceptions of voice efficacy and safety" (p. 390). In the school context, Çetin (2013) reported significant correlations between teachers' voices and their perceptions of organizational support and management receptivity. The study also revealed that perceived management openness was one of the strongest contributors to teachers' voices. Alwehabie (2014) found that a lack of top management support was one of the predictors of OS in public sector institutions in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Alqarni (2015) found a significant positive correlation between OS among faculty and managers' attitudes toward silence. Consistently, Alqarni (2015) reported a negative correlation between the faculty's OS and trust in supervisors.

To a lesser extent, teachers' OS tends to decrease as collegial and intimate teacher behaviors increase. As respect, intimacy, friendship, and cohesiveness prevail in teachers' interactions, they tend to share their criticisms and concerns about problematic work issues with their colleagues. However, these attempts are kept minimal within the teacher community and do not go beyond this to the school leader or the top educational management. The relevant literature regards these attempts to voice as prosocial voice, "expressing work-related ideas, information, or opinions based on cooperative motives" (Van Dyne et al., 2003: 1371). This type of healthy relationship among coworkers leads to the creation of a favorable voice climate (Morrison et al., 2011) that is safe and reduces employees' tendencies to withhold their ideas and concerns.

The path analysis revealed that principal behavior is a significant, influential contributor to teachers' OS. This finding indicates that school leaders might lead their schools in traditional, individualistic, and authoritarian ways that prevent smooth and effective participation in decision-making and information exchange, and thus, create an unfavorable atmosphere, where discussing shortcomings and imbalances in the workplace is not possible. Consistently, the relevant literature provided considerable evidence that those in leadership positions play an influential role in enhancing employees' tendencies to remain silent against illegal practices or problematic matters. Many researchers have concluded that leadership behaviors have significant effects on employees' intentions to speak up (Edmondson, 2003; Morrison, 2011). Ashford et al. (2009) commented that leaders create an atmosphere for speaking up through formal and informal voice channels and influence the cognitive perceptions that drive their choice of whether or not to speak up. In contrast, the structural modeling for path analysis revealed no significance of the influence of teacher behavior on teachers' OS. One of the determinants that this study has revealed is the school leader's behavior and their overall leadership practice. This implies that the determinants of OS in the school

environment are associated with other factors beyond the scope of teacher collective behaviors.

Conclusion

In terms of school climate, teachers' perceptions indicated that the three behaviors (supportive, directive, and restrictive) of school principals were very high. This may be because teachers work with school principals who differ in their organizational behaviors and leadership styles. In terms of teachers' behaviors, teachers tend to be highly collegial and relatively highly intimate, but they had moderately disengaged behaviors. In terms of teachers' OS, teachers exhibit a relatively moderate level, which indicates that school environments are not far removed from this problematic phenomenon. From the results, the relationships between teachers' OS and the four school climate constructs (SPB, DPB, CTB, and ITB) were negative, while the relationships between teachers' OS and two-school climate scales (RPB, DTB) were positive.

A major conclusion of this study is that out of the main two constructs of school Climate, findings emphasized the significant role of principal behavior (PB) on organizational silence (OS), while the influence of teacher behavior (TB) on organizational silence was found to be non-significant. In this context, it is not surprising that the findings are consistent with relevant literature that highlighted the importance of supervisory and leadership behaviors in the emergence and growth of OS.

Implications

As the OCDQ-RE has been approved as a heuristic tool, top educational administrators and school principals are advised to make use of the OCDQ-RE to conduct periodic investigations of school climate openness and make any necessary decisions or initiatives to address any shortcomings or imbalances. Considering that teachers' OS exists in the school environment, this should illustrate to school administrators and top educational management personnel that they need to take this issue seriously and address its causes and consequences at the individual, organizational, and cultural levels. It is also recommended that top educational management develops various policy procedures such as legislating necessary regulations to protect whistle-blowers in the school environment.

As disengaged teacher behavior is positively related to teachers' OS with a large effect size, valuable implications arise for top educational leaders. They need to adopt original and innovative interventions to have highly engaged teachers. This can be done through well-planned programs or initiatives that ensure ongoing support and create a robust professional learning infrastructure for the teaching faculty. Typical strategies that address teacher disengagement include coaching and professional learning communities.

Principal behavior was found to be a significant contributor to teachers' OS in the school environment. It is hoped that this conclusion will draw the attention of officials and decision-makers in education directorates to take innovative initiatives that ensure the transformation of school leaders from traditional management styles to those that research has proved effective in reducing OS, such as ethical, transformational, and authentic leadership styles, stimulating voice behavior among teachers. In support of this implication, voice has been revealed to correlate positively with perceptions that an employee's boss is a transformational or ethical leader (Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009; Detert and Burris, 2007; Liu et al., 2010). Likewise, Hsiung (2012) found that authentic leadership was an efficient style in promoting positive affective states and nurturing positive social exchanges with their colleagues, who would be, in turn, more active in conveying their ideas, and in contributing effectively to work-related problem-solving.

Future research

Research with larger samples is necessary to explore whether the relationships we found could be generalized to other public or private schools across the country. Additional quantitative studies that use new assessment scales are also encouraged. In such studies, it would be necessary to adapt one of the widely-used assessment scales; for example, the scale developed by Van Dyne et al. (2003) could reliably assess OS types in the Saudi context. Considering that OS is a complicated phenomenon that is multisided in its antecedents, as addressed in the theoretical review, researchers may acquire a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon if further research is geared towards investigating individual, contextual, and other organizational factors in the school environment.

This research addressed teachers' OS through a self-reported survey; however, for a broader understanding of OS in the Saudi context, qualitative research, such as structured interviews and case studies, are also recommended. Furthermore, given the pressing need to reach a broader and deeper understanding of OS in the Saudi context, future research on additional correlational studies that investigate how leadership styles e.g., servant, ethical, authentic, and transformational leadership-correlate to and predict OS are also necessary.

Undoubtedly, given the increased popularity of the OCDQ-RE/OCDQ-RS and its widespread use in measuring the school typology, the use of this questionnaire to predict other teachers' behaviors in the school environment, such as work engagement, self-

efficacy, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship is required. Using other measurements of school climate to investigate teachers' voice and silence, future researchers could uncover the influence of other contributors other than those addressed in the study, and, hence, provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of these two phenomena. It is noteworthy that some personality traits make individuals disengage, such as deeply-held beliefs about silence, indifference, low self-confidence, a lack of enthusiasm, low self-efficacy, and other factors related to family upbringing. Subsequently, more individual-level factors should be included in future studies.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Policy strategies for effective implementation of inclusive education in Kenya

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Educational frameworks mandate schools to adopt, design and implement strategies that support inclusive education. Despite the inclusive education policy, disability remains a major course of exclusion in learning institutions. The paper discusses the impact of school strategies in overcoming physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education. The actual sample constituted 151 respondents. The data were collected using questionnaires to identify views from 100 teachers teaching learners with disabilities, interviews from 11 learners with disabilities to discuss personal experiences on physical barriers and 5 focus groups discussions with non-disabled learners learning in the same classroom with learners with disabilities. The study was guided by Social Model of Disability and adopted a mixed method research design. Quantitative data were analyzed using inferential statistics. The ANOVA and t-test were done to test the study hypotheses. Qualitative data were organized by developing codes, then categorized into themes and presented in a narrative form. Linear regression was carried out to check the linear relationships between the variables. The study established the school strategies were not anchored in overcoming physical barriers that hindered the implementation of inclusive education, with various challenges affecting the strategies. For this reason, learners with disabilities have to adjust to get the needed education or drop out of school. Therefore, the study concluded that ineffective school strategies contributed to lack of overcoming physical barriers and this negatively impacted the implementation of inclusive education in schools. School transformation founded on clear inclusive education vision and philosophy, policies and inclusive strategies are necessary to overcome physical barriers hindering the implementation of inclusive education.

Key words: Practices, policy, inclusion, school strategies, physical barriers.

INTRODUCTION

Creating inclusive schools remains a major challenge that faces the education systems worldwide (Mitchell, 2015).

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An all-embracing education remains a multi-layered and challenging issue as the development of inclusive practices in schools is not well understood (Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2012; Winzer and Mazurek, 2017).

Inclusive education affects not just in principle and the nature of education provided for students with disabilities, but it calls into cross-examining the broader aims of education, the purpose of schools, the nature of the curriculum, methods of assessment, and schools' accommodation to diversity. The way in which regular schools respond to students with disability can be a measure of quality education for all students (UNESCO, 2015). Weber and Ruch (2012) maintain that a good school is good to all students and labours for the success of all learners. This calls for a need to modify school strategies and the environment to meet learners' diversity (Agarwal and Chakravarti, 2014).

The notion of inclusion dates back to the 20th century, with many countries struggling to accept and advance the education for students with disabilities. The movement towards inclusive education for learners with special learning needs began in the 1960s. The United Nations has made influential declarations regarding inclusive education, such as the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) that mandated persons with disability to access education without discrimination. The declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975) guaranteed the respect and dignity of the persons living with disability and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) endorsed the right of every child. Similarly, the World Conference of 1990 (Jomtien Declaration) in Thailand, set goals of Education for All (EFA), which was reaffirmed in the Dakar Framework of 2000 in Senegal. Consequently, the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on learners with disabilities in Spain (UNESCO, 1994) approved the norms of inclusive education and gave a key motivation for inclusion. The Salamanca Statement is possibly the most momentous international manuscript in the field of special education (Budlender, 2015). The major recommendation of Salamanca Statement was that every child with special learning needs is entitled to access learning in a regular institution. The governments were required to give priority on their policy, legal and budgetary provision to restructure the education system to cater for learner diversity (UNESCO, 2015).

Subsequently, there has been considerable efforts by many nations to work on their educational policies and practices towards inclusive education, although questions arise on its efficacy and efficiency (Kalyanpur, 2014; Mukhopadhyay, 2015). Although several countries' legislations and policies appear to be committed to inclusive education, practices in schools may not meet this rhetoric (Ashwini et al., 2015). In USA, for example, one of the painful policy demands to challenge American education was the placement and aiding the learners with disabilities in the best inclusive setting, as stipulated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997. Although IDEA mandates educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, students with disabilities in public schools located especially in poor or urban areas, have difficulty navigating unmodified school facilities due to the high cost of modification. The dominant issues hindering teachers to teach inclusively include attitudinal barriers and lack of possessing the skills to implement inclusive practices and strategies (Sharma and Michael, 2017).

The evidence underpinning inclusive education in African countries is weak and fragmented (Howgego et al., 2014). Inaccessible environments, lack of reasonable accommodation, negative attitudes, discriminatory application and admission procedures and lack of disability policies and choices disadvantage students with disabilities in Africa (Chataika et al., 2012). Despite the fact that Nigeria enacted inclusive education policy in 2008, it experiences socio-economic barriers, inadequate funding, lack of infrastructural facilities and a lack of teacher preparedness on inclusive practices, which is compounded by administrative problems within schools. Many schools have decrepit structures with no libraries, laboratories and other support facilities (Ibok, 2015; Igbokwe et al., 2014). Similarly, inclusive education in Ugandan experiences major hitches which include negative cultural attitudes towards disability, shortage of resources, poor funding and inadequate teacher training in inclusive practices and lack of mobility devices, which discourage resource allocation to learning institutions (Abimanyi and Mannan, 2014).

Kenya is among the African countries that has made remarkable advances in the pursuit for inclusive education (Nungu, 2010, Republic of Kenya, 2008, 2009, 2010). The government has embraced and supported the practice of inclusive education by domesticating various international agreements in its laws (Njoka et al., 2012). The policy framework (Republic of Kenya, 2005, 2009, 2012) recommended that all secondary schools adopt, design and implement programs that carry out inclusive education. In spite of inclusive education policy, disability remains a major course of exclusion in schools. The study analysed the impact of school strategies in overcoming physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education in public secondary schools in Kenya.

General objective

To examine the effectiveness practices of policy towards the implementation of inclusive education policy in Tharaka-Nithi County Kenya

Research objective

To determine the influence of school strategies in

overcoming physical barriers that hamper the implementation of inclusive education in public secondary schools.

Null hypotheses of the study

There is no significant relationship between school strategies and overcoming physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive education policy guidelines on school strategies

Inclusive policy guidelines on school strategies to overcome physical barriers are critical towards the successful implementation of inclusive education as the approaches address the needs of every learner. Policy guidelines on inclusion enable schools to restructure their strategies that enable every learner to access course content, fully participate in learning activities and demonstrate their strength at assessment (Republic of Kenya, 2019). Inclusive guidelines focus not only on education quality for all learners but also demands that the learning environment should be restructured to accommodate diversity. Simply dumping learners with disabilities in regular schools without addressing issues of instructional, human and structural support towards educational diversity, condemns inclusion to failure (Hughes, 2015). Schools that nurture diversity, adopt strategies that not only develop equal opportunities for learners to participate in the school curriculum but also need the development of financial support systems that provide resources essential for learners with special education needs.

Variables influencing school strategies

Inclusive education strategies can only be recognized when all relevant variables that regulate the implementation process are in control. This is because policy implementation is concerned with working within the school systems through which policy goals are put into practice. Some of the problems associated with practices of inclusive education policy that are evident during implementation are as a result of errors made from the other stages (Gallup, 2017). According to Mulugeta (2015), five variables influence school strategies towards policy implementation namely; the policy content and the context through which the policy must be implemented. The commitment of implementers towards the policy, the capacity of the implementers to implement the policy and the support of policy consumers and partners whose interests are affected by the policy (Tesfaye et al., 2013; Puhan et al., 2014).

Policy content is one of the crucial pillars on which school strategies on inclusive education policy are founded. The content of policy is generally viewed as a fundamental factor in creating the parameters and guidelines for implementation, although it does not determine the exact sequence of implementation (Fullan, 2015; Bell and Stevenson, 2015). The policy content includes: what it sets out to be done; how it communicates about the problem to be solved and how it aims to resolve the problem. Commitment of policy implementers is usually assumed to be the most significant factor in policy objectives achievement process. Commitment is biased and very hard to measure, (Gallup, 2017). However, there are pointers that show the level of commitment of a school to a particular mission. One pointer is accomplishing responsibilities and assurances, especially when the school knows what its roles are towards policy implementation. Practices of policy may be noble, but if the implementers are reluctant to come up with effective strategies to carry it out, implementation will not occur (Mason, 2016; Pont, 2017)

Formation of policy consumers and partners, among those affected by the practice of policy is one of the most central components during the implementation process. The success or failure of practices of policy, in this case, school strategies, depends on the support the policy produces among those who are affected (Hopfenbeck et al., 2015). Policy implementation researches have revealed that the understanding of any public policy rests on the capability to implement it (Hess, 2013). It is mostly known that many development efforts are unsuccessful in many countries because they lack organizational ability to implement and sustain the practices of policy. Capacity is normally defined as the ability to accomplish policy functions, solve problems, set and realize policy objectives (Hopfenbeck et al., 2015; Bell and Stevenson, 2015). The general organization's ability, as the structural, functional and cultural capacity is to implement the policy objectives (Burns et al., 2016). An institutional (school) capacity to modify its strategies and systems to enhance accessibility for all learners is crucial to the implementation on inclusive education policy. These strategies include: authorization, financial investment, building an enabling environment, ethos, and the way the individuals and institution intermingle in the public sector and within community as a whole (Bell and Stevenson, 2015). The school is a key player to the implementation of practices of inclusive education policy

School capacity to develop effective school strategies

The central role of the school managers is to create

inclusive schools that are both excellent and equitable for all students. Inclusive schools develop and adopt a variety of strategies. These strategies include: (a) coming up with a collective inclusive vision and mission, (b) independent inclusive implementation strategies, (c) utilization of staff to ensure effective inclusive service delivery, (d) developing collaborative agendas and teams, (e) providing continuous professional development opportunities to staff, (f) regularly monitoring and evaluation of service delivery, and (g) deliberately creating a positive school environment (Causton and Theoharis, 2014; McLeskey and Waldron, 2015). Like many reforms, inclusive education involves reforming the cultures, practices and strategies within the schools so that they respond to the learners' diversity, (Cheung, 2012; Bell and Stevenson, 2015). A key question that arises is; what indication is there that regular schools can perform in approaches that respond to learners' differences and to nurture participation in their ethos, curriculum and school communities? Despite the enactment and domestication of international laws on inclusive education, there is still a big gap between policy frameworks and inclusive practices on the ground (UNICEF, 2019). Schools need to put in place systems related to inclusive strategies in order to respond effectively to learners' education needs and that to minimize barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education. Adjusting the school systems refers to altering the general school atmosphere to inspire barrier-free learning environment (Fullan, 2015).

School practices that hinder the implementation of inclusive education

Acceptance of the notion that learners can be excluded from mainstream education because they are labelled as disabled amounts to institutional discrimination. Students with disabilities cannot attend school if buildings are physically inaccessible. To ensure equity for learners with disabilities to an education, accessibility must be addressed broadly, in relation to entry and exit pathways to key resource rooms, appropriate seating arrangement, modified furniture and facilities, and transportation to the educational facility (Banham, 2018). Negative attitudes and damaging beliefs create a significant barrier to the education for learners with disabilities. These learners may face violence, abuse or social isolation from their non-disabled colleagues (WHO, 2011). The negative attitudes towards learner differences that result in discrimination and prejudice in the school and the society manifest itself as a critical barrier to the learning process. However, such obstacles can be overcome through inclusive school strategies that nurture access and participation for all learners regardless of their disabilities. Economically, learners with disabilities may be required to pay schools fees, examination fees, purchase books and school uniform. Fees and other school levies pose a particular obstacle especially for those living in poverty, which is experienced in disproportionately high rates by students with disabilities and their families (Cheshire, 2018).

Other barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education include inadequacies in policy and legal support, resources and facilities, specialized staff, pedagogical techniques, flexible curricula, supportive leadership, and cultural attitudes. It is imperative that schools put more energy on useful inclusive education practices and strategies that value students' welfare, dignity, self-sufficiency and contribution to the society. Hence, learners with disabilities fully access and participate in the learning alongside their non-disabled colleagues (Cobley, 2018; Florian et al., 2017; Hehir et al., 2016; UNESCO-IBE, 2016). The physical environmental barriers of the playgrounds can contribute to segregation of learners with physical disabilities. Discrimination from playgrounds occurs through different mechanisms, most of which are neither deliberate nor acknowledged as exclusionary. Marginalization occurs through the operationalization of policies, or the types of material and surfaces that are used. In research interviews, learners with disabilities have termed school playgrounds as places where they experience tremendous segregation. Other barriers associated with physical activities include lack of trained teachers to assist students with physical activities and damaging actions such as bullying from non-disabled learners. Addressing these barriers means focusing on the social experiences on physical activities, hence, misunderstandings of disability, lack of knowledge about the benefits of enhanced physical activities (Kumari and Raj, 2016), concerns about safety, and lack of funding are barriers that need to be addressed.

Inclusive education as a guiding principle for school transformation

Embracing inclusive education as a guiding principle naturally requires transformation of education systems, and this change process is consistently challenged with several encounters. To understand change within the school, it is important to discern what change looks like from different points of view (Sarton and Smith, 2018). Reforming school systems to become inclusive is not only about putting in place developed inclusive policy guidelines that meet the needs of learners, but also about transforming the schools' strategies, believes and values (UNESCO, 2014). It is important to note that the transformation process towards inclusion involves overcoming some obstacles such as; a) existing non-inclusive ethos, beliefs and tenets (Elder et al., 2016), b) lack of understanding of inclusive policy, c) lack of inclusive education skills among teachers, d) limited

physical, human and financial resources and e) unsuitable school organization. Well-intentioned transforming process develops confidence, applicability and the yearning to get better results. Accountability and improvement can be meritoriously intertwined, but it requires great expertise. There are several crucial strategies that contribute to successful transformation process towards inclusion in a learning institution. This include; a) clarity of purpose, b) having realistic goals on inclusive education, c) motivating the key player and partners, d) support to the implementers, e) provision of necessary resources, f) monitoring and evaluation of the entire process of transformation (Schuelka, 2018; Timmons and Thompson, 2017; Carrington et al., 2017; UNICEF, 2015; Subban and Mahlo, 2017)

One of the fundamental ways of determining the impact of school strategies that aid in overcoming physical barriers towards the implementation of inclusive education is through quantifiable tools that measure the access and participation of learners with special education needs. It is a straight forward method of counting the number of learners previously and currently enrolled in schools. However, measuring the success of inclusive education strategy in a school should go beyond merely counting students to evaluate access, but should include measures of educational quality, learning outcomes, completion rates and students' personal encounters (UNESCO, 2017; Carrington et al., 2017; EASNIE, 2017; Sailor, 2015; Shogren et al., 2015). A well-known measurement tools such as the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow, 2011) provides an approach to developing schools and educational institutions based on three-dimension process namely; a) school culture that build relationships deeply rooted in establishing shared inclusive values and beliefs, b) policies that enable the school to plan for change for the purpose of increasing participation for all and c) practices that deal with what is learnt and taught and that promote positive interactions. Loreman et al. (2014) suggest that evaluating effective school strategies to successful inclusive education can be identified through Inputs, Processes, and Outcomes. Arguably the most significant strategy is the transformation of school systems, making it possible for inclusive education to take place structurally and culturally. This increases access, presence, participation and success for all students in education (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Hence, the schools identify and eliminate both structural and cultural barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education.

Theoretical framework

Social model of disability recognizes that all learners have diverse needs and at the same time have equal rights to access and participate in all circles of the society including the education system. The model recognizes that social perceptions, attitudes, institutions and policies can all be modified to respond to learner diversity and for accessibility to equal opportunities of people with disabilities (Ahmad, 2015). The school contextual components include physical, social, cultural and institutional context. These components within mainstreamed schools have been designed to cater for the education of non-disabled learners. The buildings, highly structured curriculum, teachers and environmental background, were structured and prepared to handle learners with no disabilities. The school beliefs, rituals and values that give the school its identity were socially constructed. These values and beliefs are highly upheld and easily influence the school activities and perceptions which influence the behaviour of its members towards learners with disabilities (Cook and Polgar, 2014; Hendricks, 2016).

Application of social theory of disability in the study

The concepts of structures, systems, and practices that are dominant in the social theory of disability are relevant to this research. Among the practices of inclusive policy are school strategies and systems, whose alterations are crucial for accessibility and participation of learners with disabilities. From the social model of disability, a school that implements inclusive education policy ensures that strategies and systems are modified to provide a barrier free environment for learners with disabilities. Devoid of effective school strategies and systems create physical and attitudinal obstacles that are not only barriers to the learning process but also become disabling to learners with disabilities. Schools are called to remove these barriers and to ensure that its systems and strategies are supportive and build communities that value, celebrate and respond to learner diversity. This is reinforced by respectful relationships between learners and school community members. To celebrate this diversity, the school is supported by collaborative relationships with parents and other key stakeholders through continuous communication, learning partnerships, participation and a consultative decision-making. Hence, the school provides high quality education to all learners, view differences as a resource and responds constructively to learner diversity. And more importantly, such a school ensures that inclusive education strategies are embedded in the school vision, mission and initiatives.

The ultimate outcome is improved accessibility and participation for all learners to thrive intellectually and socially. Intellectually, it makes learners have a positive attitude towards learning and improve their academic potentials, resulting in increased educational success in acquiring personal educational goals. This closes the performance gap that already exists between the non-disabled learners and learners living with disabilities.

Similarly, more students with special education needs get enrolled in mainstream schools hence, closing the enrolment gaps. Socially, students feel accepted and

Table 1. Teachers, Learners with disabilities and Non-Disabled Students' (NDS) sample size.

Schools	No. of LWD	Girls with disabilities	Boys with disabilities	Classes with LWD	Focus groups	No. of Teachers
School - A	4	0	4	Forms 1 and 4	2	10
School - B	2	0	2	Forms 1	1	6
School - C	3	3	0	Form 1	1	8
School - D	2	0	2	Form 4	1	6
12 Schools	0	0	0	None	None	70
Total - 16	**11**	**3 Girls**	**10 Boys**	**5 Classes**	**50 NDS**	**100**

Note: The 12 schools had no students admitted currently but had previously admitted learners with disabilities and therefore participated in the study; LWD= learners with disabilities; NDS= Non-Disabled Students.

connected to others, with improved academic standards. To celebrate this diversity, the school is supported by collaborative relationships with parents and other key stakeholders to provide an enabling learning environment for all learners to prosper. Hence, the school provides high quality education to all, view differences as a resource and responds constructively to the special needs of all learners. And more importantly, such a school ensures that practices of inclusive education policy are embedded in their mission, objectives and initiatives

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study employed mixed methods research designs, in order to provide an in-depth and complete perspective on the impact of school strategies in overcoming physical barriers that hinders the implementation of inclusive education in secondary schools in Kenya (Creswell and Clark, 2011). The benefit of employing mixed methods research design is that the researcher combines the fundamentals of qualitative and quantitative methods by drawing from the strengths of each technique. A mixed-methods approach allowed the researcher to gain a broader perspective and deeper understanding of the impact of school strategies in overcoming physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education in schools. Within a mixed method research design, the study precisely utilized the convergent parallel method, which involved collection and analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data separately in the same time-frame, analyzes the two components independently, and the two data sets of results are merged for an overall interpretation. The purpose of the convergent parallel method was to develop a more understanding of inclusive education by comparing and contrasting various results from the same sources. Concurrent timing gives the priority to quantitative and qualitative methods equally, (Creswell and Clark, 2011). The study analyzed the impact of school strategies in overcoming physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education in schools with physical disabilities.

Target population and sample size

Target population for this study comprised 156 principals, all teachers and secondary school students. The sample size comprised all extra-county and county secondary schools who have/had enrolled learners with disabilities (LWD), non-disabled learners, studying in the same classes with LWD and class teachers teaching learners living with disabilities. Aggregated data for learners living with disabilities currently or previously admitted in public secondary schools was lacking at the Tharaka-Nithi County, hence the researcher made call to 56 school principals of all the extra-county and county schools in Tharaka-Nithi County to find out whether there were LWD admitted in their schools. Sixteen (16) schools out of 56 schools had enrolled learners with physical challenges. The researcher targeted extra-county and county schools because they are well-resourced financially, physically and in human resources. Hence, the researcher felt that such schools were capable of implementing inclusive education without challenges. All the learners with disabilities in sampled schools were purposively included for the interviews. Non-disabled learners studying in the same classes were randomly selected to participate in the focus group discussions. The researcher used the proportionate sampling techniques to get the required sample size of teachers as indicated in Table 1.

Data collection procedure

Before the administration of the research instruments, the researcher obtained ethical approval from the Ethical Review Committee (Pwani University) and a research permit from the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) because the study involved interviewing the learners with physical disabilities. The researcher made courtesy calls to the Education Officers for clearance to conduct research in the respective areas. The researcher then visited the 16 selected extra-county and county secondary schools. She then wrote letters to the principals explaining the details of the research to be conducted.

The research instrument for data collection in this study was one questionnaire for all the teachers. The questionnaire for teachers was developed to provide the quantitative data. The questionnaire had both closed ended and open-ended items. Closed ended items facilitated straightforward scoring of data and data analysis. Open-ended items gave the teachers an opportunity to give their opinion and provide in-depth information. The interview for learners with disabilities was meant to give them chances to express their experiences in the school and focus group discussions for non-disabled learners studying in the same classes with LWD. The researcher conducted the interviews with the learners with physical challenges, which was done on one- on-one basis. A total of 11 learners with physical challenges were interviewed. The duration of the interviews took 10-15 min. The researcher also conducted 5 focus group discussions each with the 10 non-disabled learners, which lasted 20-35 min. The focus group discussions were audio-

Table 2. Teachers report on learners with physical challenges currently enrolled in their Schools.

Number of physically challenged learners in schools	Frequency	Percentage
4 students	10	10
2 students	06	06
3 students	08	08
2 students	06	06
None	70	70
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 3. Teachers report on learners with physical challenges previously enrolled in their schools.

No. of PC enrolled in the past in the schools	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	59	59.0
6-10	7	7.0
10+	4	4.0
None	30	30.0
Total	100	100.0

taped so that the researchers could listen carefully to the responses later after the interview. Moreover, using a tape recorder was considered important so the researcher could concentrate on what the respondents were saying rather than writing notes.

Data analysis

Quantitative analysis was based of numerical measurements of a specific aspect of the population. In the data analysis process, the raw data gathered from the questionnaire was keyed into SPSS version 20 in order to make inferences about the population using the information provided by the sample. Descriptive statistics tables, bar graphs and pie charts were used to analyze quantitative data by use of frequencies and percentages. Hypothesis testing was carried out via the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-tests. A linear regression analysis model revealed that school strategies as independent variable predicted the implementation of inclusive education in secondary schools as dependent variable.

Qualitative analyses involve obtaining detailed information about phenomenon being studied and establishing patterns and trends from the information collected (Creswell, 2014; Viswambharan and Priya, 2016). The researcher transcribed all interviews and organized them into meaningful categories and grouped them into related codes. The coded information was organized into themes and presented in a narrative form. The data facilitated in making conclusion and recommendations, including recommendations for further research.

RESULTS

Instrument return rate

A total of 100 out of 120 teachers, constituting 83.3% response rate, completed and returned the questionnaire. On the other hand, 11 out of 13 learners with physical challenges were interviewed, which was an 84.6% response rate. Similarly, 5 focus group discussions, each with 10 non-disabled students participated in the study. The return rate of 75% and above was considered sufficient to provide information about a given population. Best and Kahn (2006) suggest that a 50% response rate is adequate, while 60 and 70% are good and very good respectively. The researcher made follow up telephone calls with the school principals to establish whether the questionnaire was ready for collection. Best and Kahn (2006) support the use of vigorous follow-up measures to increase the questionnaire return rate.

Physically challenged learners enrolled schools

The study sought to establish the number of physically challenged students that had been registered in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County. The information is represented in Tables 2 and 3. Majority of the teachers (70%) indicated that they had no learners with physical disabilities currently admitted in their schools, while 10 teachers reported that they had 4 such students in their school. Similarly, 6 teachers revealed that their school currently had only 2 students living with physical disabilities, while 8 teachers indicated their school had 3 such learners. Finally, 6 teachers indicated that their school had only 2 learners with disabilities. This report implies that there are very few learners with physical disabilities that are currently enrolled in public

Table 4. Teachers' views on the adequacy of school strategies in overcoming physical barriers that hinder inclusion of learners with physical disabilities.

	Adequately done %	Not done at all%
Regular monitoring and evaluation of physical resources to enhance safety of learners with physical disabilities	14.0	86.0
Frequency in updating the school playground/landscape for easy accessibility	22.0	78.0
Establishing safe accessible school buildings (Doors, stairs/ramps, sanitation/wash areas, corridors/verandas)	20.0	80.0
Modified furniture in key resource rooms for safe usage by learners with disabilities (computer & science laboratories, libraries)	28.0	72.0

Adapted from: The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework, (2009), Republic of Kenya. Art 23.

secondary schools in Kenya. In these four schools, the researcher conducted the interviews for learners with disabilities and focus group discussions for non-disabled students. From Table 4, 59 teachers revealed 10 schools had previously admitted between 1 and 5 learners with physical challenges while 7 teachers indicated that their school had previously admitted 6 -10 students with physical challenges. Only 4 teachers indicated that their school had previously admitted more than 10 such learners. A significant number of schools (30%) had never admitted learners with physical challenges previously. The information was crucial as it enabled the researcher to identify 12 schools (70%) where data was collected through questionnaire for teachers only as the schools lacked learners with disabilities.

The analysis presented in Table 1 shows that majority of teachers (86%) felt that in most schools, regular monitoring and evaluation of physical resources to enhance the safety for learners with physical disabilities was not done at all, while 14% felt that it was adequately done. Further, 78% of teachers felt that schools were not frequently updating their playgrounds/compounds to accommodate learners with disabilities, while 22% of teachers indicated that schools were adequately doing it. Among the sampled teachers, 80% indicated that most schools' buildings were not safely accessible to learners with disabilities while 20% felt that the buildings were adequately safe for accessibility by all learners. Finally, 72% of teachers felt that schools lacked modified furniture in key resource rooms for safe usage by learners with physical disabilities while 28% indicated that schools had adequately modified their furniture in key resource rooms.

Interviews for learners with disabilities

Excerpt 1: Interviews

Researcher: What physical barriers have you encountered since you came in this school?

Interviewee 1: A form four student with prosthesis leg shared the following:

"I was climbing down from the school library located in the second floor when I slipped off a steep staircase. I lost balance and fell dangerously. My prosthesis which is connected at the knee got dislodged. As I tried to stand up with the help of handrails I felt some sharp pain near the ankle of the other leg. The other students carried me to the school nurse. Upon examination, the normal leg had a small crack. I became frustrated and contemplated discontinuing with the school. That marked the end of attending library classes until I completed the school".

Interviewee 2: Form 1 students with a leg with disability

'I was in form one and very new in the school. I was allocated some simple manual work to collect rubbish around the school compound. One day, I stepped on a hole with my crippled leg. There was over-grown grass which covered the hole. The other students had to lift me up to free myself from the hole. I never got hurt but I was scared of stepping on a snake. From that day the teacher instructed that I should not be given any manual work'

Interviewee 3: Form one student with one short leg

"I had just reported in form one. I went for a short call in toilet which was not clean and the floor was wet. Hardly had I closed the door than I slipped off and I fell on that filth. My pair of trousers became dirty and smelly. I never got physically hurt but I was very annoyed and devastated. The toilets were connected to the bathrooms. Someone had left some small pieces of soap. I picked them, got into the bathroom washed my trousers and worn them wet. I got my other trousers and went to class but very frustrated"

Interviewee 4: Form four students with speech difficulty

"I don't know why I speak like a small girl. At first I was a

very frustrated boy especially when I was in form one and two but I have learnt to live with it and to accept myself. The other boys call me a homosexual and they think I change the voice to attract them. I am not a homosexual and I don't feel attracted to boys. It really hurts to be called so. When I was in form one I almost dropped out of school. Guidance and counselling teachers really helped me. I have gone to different hospitals but nothing has been done to alleviate my problem. Other students mimic me. I don't speak in the presence of girls and when they speak to me I give a gesture to show that I have lost my voice. This is very frustrating'.

Interviewee 5: Form 1 with a short physique

"My short structure made it difficult for me to get anything that could fit me. Before they made the right sized chair and desk things were very bad. The chairs were too high such that my legs were hanging the whole day in class and swelling. The school uniform was too big for me. It took one month for the school to provide all the necessary things I needed. Today I am comfortable and happy".

Some of the traumatizing real experiences made the students with disabilities very vulnerable. One focus group shared on how some students dropped out of school and others were withdrawn by their parents who felt that the school was not prepared to cater for the needs of their children. Feeling of powerlessness may come into play when other non-disabled students feel that there is nothing they can do to change the situation of their vulnerable colleagues. In fact, Cologon (2019) argue that it is indeed easier to formulate policies on inclusive education than to practice them. Caring and supportive environments are key components of an inclusive school.

Focus group discussion for non-disabled learners

What is the current state of your school playground/ landscape for usage by learners with physical disabilities? (Topography, terrain, general safety)

G5: Topologically, the school is quite hilly. Students climb several small hills from classrooms to science laboratories, to the dining hall and even to the staffroom. The hilly terrains are not only dangerous to learners with disabilities but also to the non-disabled students. Often you meet several non-disabled students with crutches because they fall and get fractured limbs. Leveling the landscape is a necessity in our school. The school playground is in a bad shape and no learner with physical challenges can play on the ground.

G3: The school landscape is quite flat and quite safe for learners with disabilities. The playground is quite unsafe for all learners to play because it has many big pot holes and quite bumpy. This is unsafe for all learners but dangerous for learners with disabilities. The school should invest in making the playground leveled for the safety of all students

How safe are school buildings for learners with physical disabilities? (Doors, stairs, sanitations, corridors/verandas)

G2: Most of the school buildings are not easily and safely accessible for learners with physical disabilities. The key resource rooms such as school library, computer room, some classrooms and some dormitories are located on the upstairs are accessed through steep staircases which are quite dangerous to learners with physical disabilities and the elderly teachers. We have had several major accidents for both non-disabled students and learners with disabilities. The joining corridors and verandas are narrow and slippery. Our school has no modified toilets and sanitations. Students with disabilities use the same toilets with non-disabled learners.

G4: All the school buildings are accessible because our school has no upstairs. Students are able to access all school buildings without problems. During rainfall students with physical disabilities experience some difficulties because of the muddy pathways. The school does not have even one modified toilet/latrine and bathrooms. The student with disability uses the same wash rooms with other students who are a bit careless especially the toilets.

G3: In all the school buildings the doors and corridors are very narrow. A student on crutches in our school finds it hard to maneuver through them. The school has only one modified toilet but no modified bathrooms.

G1: The school lacks modified bathrooms and latrines for learners with physical disabilities. It is very difficult for them to use pit latrines used by all non-disabled students who are careless when using them

How safe are the furniture found in key resource rooms for students with disabilities? **Cite examples**

G5: The school totally lacks modified furniture in all the key resource rooms. The worse hit is the science laboratories where the stools are dangerously high for any learner with disabilities. The experimenting tables are also quite high.

G2: Classroom desks are quite strong and comfortable for learners with disabilities. Classes are congested and lack pathways for passage. Hence it is very hard for

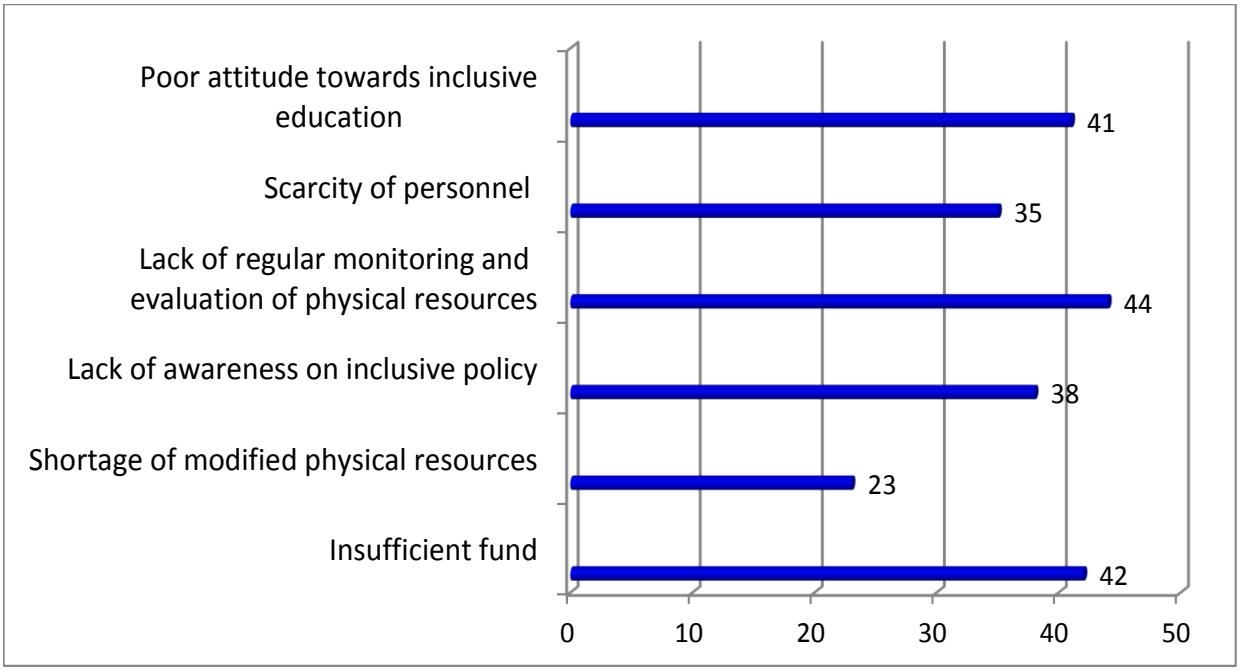

Figure 1. Challenges affecting school strategies in overcoming physical barriers.

students with disabilities to maneuver their way out of the classroom. In case of an accident it will be disastrous. Science laboratories lack modified seats and table for learners living with physical disabilities.

G4: The furniture in our school is quite weak and keeps on breaking. They are not good for any usage of any learners, worse for those with physical disabilities. The school needs to invest in modified furniture especially for learners with disabilities.

Challenges facing school strategies in overcoming physical barriers

Teacher identified several challenges to school strategies in overcoming physical barriers. The results are presented in Figure 1. In Figure 1, 44 teachers identified lack of regular monitoring and evaluation of physical resources as a major challenge affecting school strategies towards inclusive education. Further, 42 teachers identified insufficient funds to restructure the schools. Lack of awareness on inclusive education policy and shortage of modified physical resources to enhance safety for learners with disabilities was cited by 38 and 23 respectively. The other challenges identified by teachers included; scarcity of personnel, 35 teachers and poor attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education 41 teachers. Many countries in the developing countries have not been able to effectively implement inclusive education policy framework. This is mainly due to poor policy implementation and the prevailing challenges that become a hindrance to inclusive education. Thus, lack of proper strategies on how to minimize or eradicate the aforementioned challenges, negatively affect the success of inclusive education

Suggestions for overcoming challenges facing school strategies

Teachers stated the following ways of overcoming challenges facing school strategies in order to overcome physical barriers hindering the implementation of inclusive education as illustrated in Figure 2. Figure 2 reveals that, 45 teachers cited employment of teachers with special education skills as a strategy to overcoming physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education. A significant 54 participants cited regular monitoring and evaluation of physical resources to meet the needs of learners with physical disabilities as a key strategy to inclusion. According to 42 teachers, modifying of school resource and facilities was identified as an inclusive strategy in schools. Further, mobilization of funds was cited by 34 respondents, while sensitization of key stakeholders on inclusive education policy and fitting of new school buildings with ramps respectively was identified by 50 and 45 of the participants. In this regard, the above-mention strategies imply that the schools need to make crucial changes to provide opportunities and supports for learners with special education needs. The willingness to accept and to take

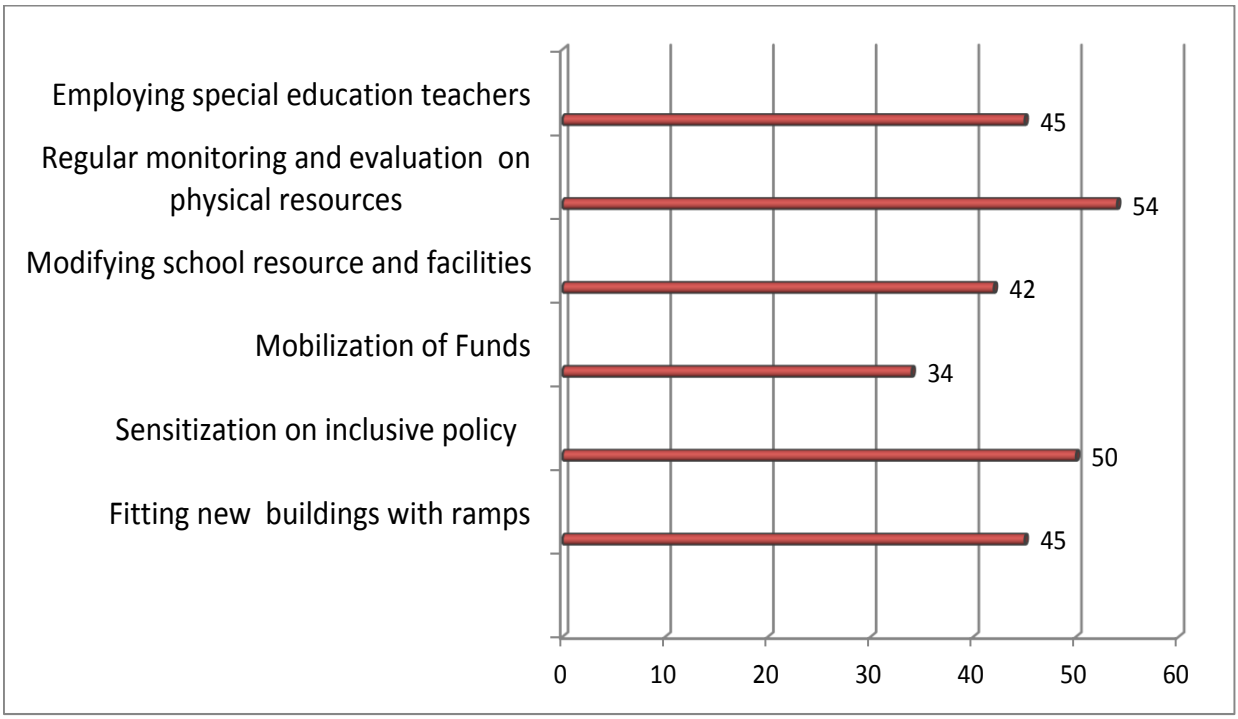

Figure 2. Suggestions for overcoming challenges facing school strategies.

Table 5. Model Summary for the influence of school strategies in overcoming physical barriers that hinder implementation of inclusive education.

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	P-values
School Strategies	0.223	0.050	0.040	3.61869	0.026

an active role in the lives of learners with disabilities, largely depend on a profound change of school culture, beliefs, and practices that adversely affect inclusive education.

Testing the null hypothesis

The study employed Linear Regression Model to measure the linear relationship between overcoming physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education as the dependent variable and school strategies as independent variables.

The results in Table 5 show a moderate positive correlation on the effectiveness of school strategies in overcoming physical barriers. The regression model also shows that there was a significant linear relationship between school strategies and overcoming physical barriers (p-value = 0.026, < 0.05). The coefficient of determination (R Square) shows that only 5% percent variation in overcoming physical barriers was accounted for by school strategies. The model has a poor fit indicating there are also some more factors that influence inclusive education apart from school strategies.

Table 6 shows the results from regression analysis where school strategies were the independent variable while overcoming physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education was the dependent variable. The unstandardized beta coefficient shows the increment in overcoming physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education with respect to the marginal increment in school strategies.

Moderation of administrative support on the relationship between school strategies and implementation of inclusive education

Table 7 shows high positive correlation between school strategies and implementation of inclusive education with a correlation of 62.4 percent. The coefficient of determination (R Square) shows that 39 percent variations in the implementation of inclusive education is due to variations in the Administrative support* School

Table 6. Regression Coefficients for the Influence of School Strategies and Overcoming Physical Barriers that Hinder the Implementation of Inclusive Education.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	16.586	1.697		9.775	0.000	13.219	19.954
School Strategies	0.506	0.223	0.223	2.264	0.026	0.063	0.949

Table 7. Model summary for moderation of administrative support on the relationship between school strategies and inclusive education.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	P value
0.624[a]	0.390	0.371	2.92963	0.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Administrative support*School strategies, School strategies				
b. Dependent Variable: Inclusive education				

Table 8. Regression coefficients for moderation of administrative support on the relationship between school strategies and inclusive education.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	6.547	6.583		0.995	0.322	-6.520	19.614
School strategies	0.361	0.926	0.160	0.390	0.698	-1.477	2.199
Administrative support	1.856	0.779	0.933	2.385	0.019	0.311	3.402
Administrative support_x_Strategies	-0.073	0.105	-0.468	-0.695	0.489	-0.281	0.135

Where; Administrative support _x_ School strategies - Administrative support* School strategies.

strategies and School strategies. The p-value was 0.000, less than 0.05 hence concluding that there was a significant linear relationship between the predictors (Administrative Support* School strategies and School strategies) and the criterion variable (Inclusive education).

The result in Table 8 indicates that administrative support is an insignificant moderator in the relationship between school strategies and implementation of inclusive education. This can be observed because the interaction variable administrative support* school strategies has a p-value of 0.489 that is more than 5 percent significance level. According to Mike (2017), a moderating variable can reinforce, weaken, contradict, or otherwise alter the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Moderating variables can also change the direction of this relationship. In a research by Graham and Spandagou (2011) it is found that principals' perceptions of inclusion are formed by their own understandings of inclusion and the context of the school they are in. This influences their attitudes towards the decisions and strategies made in the implementation of inclusive education. Certainly, this impacted negatively their attitudes towards inclusive education.

DISCUSSION

School strategies and overcoming physical barriers

It is disheartening that regular monitoring and evaluation of physical resources to enhance safety for all learners was not done at all in most schools according to the study findings. Devoid of effective monitoring and evaluation of physical resources hints that no tangible action plans were put in place in relation to physical resource modification (UNESCO, 2009). As a result, physical barriers become limitations for learners with physical disabilities in accessing educational facilities with ease. The way schools articulate the strategies to overcome physical barriers enable learners with disabilities to access and participate fully in their learning process. Moreover, modified physical resources are needed for the success of students with disabilities in an inclusive learning environment (Smith and Tyler, 2010; Florian and Linklater, 2010; Baldiris-Navarro et al., 2016). In addition, the findings further established that updating of schools' playgrounds and landscape for easy accessibility was poorly done as attested by learners with

disabilities. This implies that learners with physical disabilities are not able to get involved in any physical activities. Playground activities can promote physical and emotional fitness and social well-being, which nurtures self-esteem for learners with disabilities. More precisely, playgrounds provide chances for the growth and upkeep of fine motor skills, physical endurances, and social networking among such learners. Therefore, participating wholly in physical activities has far reaching benefit that extends beyond school life. With such positive returns, students who are excluded from physical activities are at risk for negative social, learning and health consequences (WHO, 2017; UNESCO, 2015).

In addition, in the study findings, establishing safe accessible school buildings was not done. The implication is that students with disabilities have continued to experience physical barriers due to lack of safe wide doors, ramps, unmodified sanitations and narrow connecting corridors. Learners with physical disabilities were hurt when accessing key resource rooms. Other students have contemplated dropping out of school and/or forcing their parents to withdraw them. Tugli et al. (2013) affirm that physical environment constitutes a great barrier to learning and makes learners living with disabilities vulnerable and unsafe. In confirmation, UNICEF (2016) recommends that a learner-friendly school should be frequently updating their learning environment so that all learners are free from fear, nervousness, danger, disease, or injury. The Kenyan Constitution: Section 54(1) (c) mandate that individuals with disabilities are entitled to access any facilities that are integrated into the society to get the services needed. Adjusting key areas with modified furniture and accessible surroundings is paramount for learners with disabilities to participate fully in the leaning process.

Challenges affecting school strategies to overcome physical barriers that hinder inclusion

The study established that most schools lacked regular monitoring and evaluation of physical resources to enhance the safety for learners with disabilities. With irregular monitoring and assessment of physical resources within the school led to unmodified physical resources and these hindered learners with disabilities from accessing key areas in the school. Poor attitudes towards inclusive education policy by key stakeholders and lack of finances led to poor strategies to overcome physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education.

Suggestions for overcoming challenges facing school strategies

The study established several significant suggestions by teachers that can overcome challenges to school strategies. It was encouraging that teachers identified regular monitoring and evaluation of physical resources to enhance their modification as a major solution to access and participation for learners with physical disabilities. Sensitization of key stakeholders on inclusive education policy is paramount to elicit support and ownership of inclusive education project in the school. Teachers are key stakeholders in the implementation process; hence, employing teachers with inclusive education skills is vital for the achievement of inclusive education objectives. With enough funds, schools are enabled to fit all the new school buildings with ramps and other modified facilities to promote the implementation of inclusive education successfully

Conclusion

School strategies and the implementation of inclusive education

The study findings revealed that inclusive strategies were not put in place to overcome physical barriers in most schools. Regular monitoring and evaluation of physical resources to enhance safety for learners with disabilities was significantly lacking in most schools. In the absence of regular monitoring, most schools were unable to up-date their playgrounds/compounds, to provide safe accessible buildings and modify furniture in key resource rooms such computer and science laboratories, classrooms and libraries. Therefore, the study concludes that the school strategies were not anchored in overcoming physical barriers that hindered the implementation of inclusive education. For this reason, learners with disabilities have to adjust to get the needed education or drop out of school

Challenges affecting school strategies

Various challenges affecting school strategies that overcome physical barriers towards the implementation of inclusive education were prominent. The findings suggest a probable connection between the challenges and the weak practices of policy towards the implementation of inclusive education in schools. The conclusion drawn is that a weak policy framework weakens the development of effective school strategies that positively influence the implementation of inclusive education. Furthermore, the weak policy atmosphere contributed to irregular physical resource inspection, infrequency in updating school playground/landscape, lack of establishing safe accessible school buildings and unmodified furniture in key resource rooms for safe usage by learners with disabilities. Thus, the study concluded that lack of effective school strategies was a major obstacle in overcoming physical barriers that hinder

the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) Based on the results, a coordinated and multipronged action plan is needed to restructure school strategies in order to effectively overcome physical barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education. When implemented, the plan should stimulate requisite policy reforms, system alignments and funding strategies that will ensure effective implementation and sustainability of inclusive education in all learning institutions.
(ii) In order to restructure the schools, the governments should come up with inclusive standardized strategies to serve as indicators of knowledge, skills and dispositions. The strategies will provide the impetus for radical transformation of school programmes and systems leading to effective implementation of inclusive education.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Balancing work, family and personal life: Perspectives of female staff at the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana

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The study examined how female staff of the College of Distance Education (CoDE), University of Cape Coast (UCC) balance work, family and personal life roles, amidst their busy work schedules. A 21-item well-structured questionnaire was developed to collect primary data. Using the convenient sampling technique, 32 female staff was selected for the sample. Statistical tools such as percentages, mean, standard deviation as well as regression analysis were used to examine the relationship between organizational, family and personal life roles of the respondents. The findings of the study revealed that female staff of CoDE is not able to balance work, family and personal due to situational roles and their busy work schedules. The study also show that the university does not support female staff with policies and programmes that would assist them in this regard. The urgent need for the university to enact institutional policies and to show commitment in establishing a work- family friendly environment was recommended. This is important since the female staff at CoDE work 15 h on the average daily, which far exceed their contractual working period of 8 h.

Key words: Balance, work, family, personal life, perspectives, staff.

INTRODUCTION

Balance in work, family and personal life roles is an emerging challenge for both employers and employees. Experts say there is no single definition for work- family and personal balance. Allen (2002) for example defines the construct as the extent to which an individual's effectiveness and satisfaction in work- family roles are compatible with the individual's life role priorities at a given point in time. A balance in work, family and personal life is expected when there is a proper functioning at work, home and at personal levels with minimum role conflict. The incompatibility between the demands from work and non-work domain result in conflict and consequently, employees experience a lack of work balance. Research shows that employees who believe they do not have time for personal life are always drained and distracted at work. In addition, the spillover of the negative aspect of work into an employee's personal life could lead to job exhaustion, disruption of relationships with family and friends, loss of enjoyment and increased stress. Work, family and personal life balance is about

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creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments that enable employees to have balance between work, family and personal responsibilities and thus strengthen loyalty and productivity.

A common dilemma for many employees is how to manage all the competing demands of work and non-work roles to avoid any negative effects of spill over into their personal lives. According to the 2007 study by Duxbury and Higgins (2015), 1 in 4 Canadian employees report that their work responsibilities interfere with their ability to fulfil their responsibilities at home. The authors maintained that, women are more likely than men to report high levels of role overload and caregiver strain. This is because women devote more time per a week than men to non-work activities such as childcare, elder care and are more likely to have primary responsibility for unpaid domestic chores.

Statement of problem

The college of distance education at the University of Cape Coast has a unique pattern of work as against the work pattern of the conventional campus-based environment. This is due to the peculiar needs of the distance learners that serve as their clientele. As a result, staff of the College work seven days in a week, rarely, go on leave with the view to providing proactive support to distance learners for their success. The unique pattern of work at CoDE affects all staff. However, many stakeholders of education wonder how the female staff of CoDE can balance work, family and personal roles amidst their heavy work schedules for a productive work engagement. Many research studies, two meta- analyses (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998; Allen et al., 2000) as well as two recent reviews of literature on the same subject (Canadian Council on Social Development, March, 1999) affirm that women are prone to role overload, resulting from multiple conflicting expectations from other roles. The authors further argue that work, family and personal life roles appear to be the most difficult challenging issues career women face in contemporary society. Clearly, it is essential to recognize and address the need for institutional policies and the commitment that support female staff at CoDE at UCC before the institution can fully benefit from their engagements. Moreover, it appears there has not been any form of related research in area to serve as a springboard for the university in this regard hence, the motivation for this study. The purpose of this study therefore is to illicit the perspectives of the female staff at CoDE, UCC on how they can balance work, family and personal life for productive work engagement. This is a research gap that needs bridging.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The increased participation of women in the workforce globally, has been a key historic economic development issue in contemporary society. As women participate massively in the workforce, there have been several changes in the family dynamics especially the roles that women play in the family systems both nuclear and extended forms. In the family systems in contemporary society, women do not only play the role as housekeepers but have also become bread winners providing income to support the family. Despite these changes, it appears, there are no gender advocacies to advance the formulation of state legislature on gender roles and equality in society, especially at the workplace.

Reddy (2015) in support of this argument opined that generally, efforts by all stakeholders aimed at promoting healthy balance of work, family and personal life roles, especially for career women, have been quiet low in many countries. Ghana is no exception. Although the issue appears to be a challenge for most people in the working class in contemporary society, women are the most vulnerable. This is happening as a result of gender stereotyping, some cultural norms and values in some societies of the world especially in Africa. Role imbalance appears to be the most challenging issue of most career women in the world of work today. Traditionally, work, family and personal life balance involve the ability of an individual to give equal amount of time to work and non-work roles. However, this is not feasible for most career women in the world of work today. The challenge appears to be critical for most carrier women, as society still expects men to focus on their careers ambitions for women to take care of the family (Reddy, 2015).

Not many decades ago, it was pretty much expected that women, once married, would dedicate their lives to raising children and managing the home. The roles of women in society today have changed tremendously. The home-based mother concept has been relegated to the background. Urbanization, industrialization, migration, liberation of women's rights, awareness of the rights, influence of the media, westernization and the expansion of access to education to some extent, have provided new opportunities for women to participate fully in the work force (Glinskayai, Lokshin et al., 2000). In the 21st century society, women appear to be doing the same work which was once considered exclusively for men (Smith and Apicelli, 1982). For instance, women have gone to space, joined guerrilla groups and armies, headed the administration of countries, participated in sport and games and fought at the battle fields (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1991). Women are now very active in politics and wars. For instance, in Vietnam, legend has it that some years ago, two princesses overthrew a Chinese oppressive government for the first time in the history of the world (United Nations, 1997).

In most societies today, women take up the responsibilities of males and head households irrespective of the status of their spouses. Many women have assumed the bread winner's role in addition to their domestic roles. Everywhere in the world in modern

societies, women now have two jobs; one in the home and one outside the home. Women are important economic actors providing for themselves, husbands, children and other members of the family and advance on their careers and personal lives. The economic and socio-cultural changes of the lives of women in contemporary society have created role imbalances in their daily routines, many women are no longer able to reconcile the realities of family, work and personal life demands. The lack of harmony between life roles for most career women has a significant impact on the individual and all social actors (health, social and economic) (Kofodimos, 1993). As women aspire to take on management positions in the Labour market, many of them are becoming career-oriented, with high educational aspirations and greater extrinsic ambitions and at the same time maintaining societal traditional values of family nurturing. Ideally, it is expected that in a family where both parents work at outside the home, responsibilities should be shared; this is always not the case.

Kofodimos (1993) explains balancing of life roles as “a satisfying, healthy and productive life of an individual that includes work, play and love for the family in an equilibrium, devoid of role conflict and overload. The author further argues that work, family and personal life balance is generally thought to promote well-being. The imbalance of which results in high levels of stress, detraction of family cohesion, quality of personal life and ultimately, the reduction in the individuals’ effectiveness at work. (Greenhaus et al., 2003) believe that balanced individuals are primed to seize the moment when confronted with a role demand, because no role is seen as less worthy of one’s alertness than any other. By this reasoning, balanced individuals experience low levels of stress when enacting roles, presumably because they are participating in role activities that are salient to them. The authors argue that balanced individuals experience less role overload, greater role ease, and less depression than their imbalanced counterparts. Moreover, a balanced involvement in work, family and personal roles may also reduce frequent work, family and personal life conflict. This is because balanced individuals are fully engaged in all roles, they do not allow “situational emergencies” to hinder role performance chronically. Instead, they develop routines that enable them to meet the long term demands of all roles, probably avoiding extensive work, family and personal life conflicts.

However, the beneficial effects of balancing role performance are assumed to be of a positive balance. Empirical research study by Reddy (2015) suggests that with positive balance, an equal high investment of time and involvement in work, family and personal life is exhibited. By contrast, individuals who devote only a limited amount of time to combined work, family and personal roles, distribute the limited time equally between roles, exhibit negative involvement balance. Individuals benefit as well as institutions, organizations and governments, as a balance between work, family and personal life increases productivity and the well-being of individuals.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conciliation: A gender problem

This study was underpinned by the theory of conciliation as a gender problem. Conciliation is the attempt to harmonize, seeking conciliate between the demands of work family and personal life. It is a challenge that goes beyond the private sphere which is becoming a public issue for governments and many labour organizations in most countries. Seagal (2014) defines conciliation as a set of social, institutional and entrepreneurial actions with the purpose of developing a more egalitarian and fair society. It is a way of organizing the work environment that facilitates men and women to carry out their job, personal and family responsibilities in harmony. Conciliation does not mean working less to compensate any social role. As the traditional roles of women change, the major challenge most women encounter as they join the work force, is how to balance work, family and personal life thus making it difficult for women to conciliate their roles at the different aspects of life cycle. Historically, gender stereotyping has become part of the social and economic development of society. The roles of women have always been linked to reproduction, nurturing of children, provision of physical and psychological support in the domestic environment privately. On the other hand, men have been associated with the provision of food and other basic needs of the family usually done in the public domain. However, several events of the world in contemporary society such as technological advancement, women empowerment and the related consequential mass incorporation of women in the job market is changing the state of gender stereotyping in many cultures of the world today. Although work, family and personal life are areas always linked, the changes in the workforce in contemporary society, pressure at workplaces, globalized economy and the real extension of the working day have intensified the interdependency. This situation makes it more difficult for career women to strike the balance between these competing roles in their daily routines. However, it is important for career women to discern the balance between family, work and personal life in their work environment to enable them works in a stress/conflict free environment for optimal productivity.

Faisal (2011) mentions that institutions, groups andpeople committed to present new ideas around the gender issues have a second wind. The author further opined that studies on conciliation between work, family and personal life in many countries are still in its early stages, despite the interest of government initiatives to

promote equality between men and women in the work environment. However, such effort shows an evident change in the structure and dynamics of the family and women's involvement in the world of work in contemporary society. Although not the same in all cultures, there is the need to transform the social policies of today on conciliation, in order to guarantee the equal participation of men and women in domestic and non-domestic activities-either paid or unpaid and to ensure fair labour conditions that allow women to develop in full. Such efforts can be achieved through policies that promote harmonization. It is therefore important to promote balance between work, family and personal life of every individual.

Duxbury and Higgins (2015) affirm that Canadian research experts on conciliation proved that an adequate balance is related to more commitment of workers to remain on jobs, less stress, lower absenteeism, and more job satisfaction for individual workers as well as the company or organization. At the family level, effective conciliation promotes family cohesion and adaptation, positive parenthood and satisfied family life. At the personal level it means lower stress, less depressive mood, less tiredness and more satisfied health status and life in general. Socially, it means less demand on healthcare for the benefits of individual workers and organizations because of a balance between work, family and personal life.

METHODOLOGY

This study examines how female staff of CoDE at UCC conciliates work, family and personal life amidst their busy work schedules. The quantitative method of research was used to examine the phenomenon from different perspectives on balancing work, family and personal life. Data was collected by a survey using a 21-item questionnaire developed by the researcher. A mean value of less than 2.5 for an item to be within an acceptable level was imposed. The developed questionnaire was sent to experts for validations. Participants were full-time female staff of CoDE. The study assumed that these women are exposed to strong pressures at the workplace that demand greater amount of time than the established eight hours official job time.

Criteria for the selection of participants

1. To be a full-time female staff working at the CoDE for more than 8 h or more which makes it difficult but not impossible, working independently every day to provide proactive support for distance learners' success.
2. To be working in a Unit in CoDE with specific administrative responsibilities which give the participants certain degree or status within the College/University and increases the level commitment and heavier workload.

The quantitative method of research was used. Using a convenient sample and Convenience sampling technique, 32 female staffs were selected due to time and resources available to the researcher.

Participants were not excluded by age, having children or not, because the diversity of cases were considered beneficial to understand the problem of balancing work, family and personal life from a wider perspective. The only criteria for exclusion covered National services personnel who were on part-time contract with the university. Such persons were not included.

Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was administered to female staff at CoDE who expressed interest to participate in the study. Participants were called on phone and appointments for the administration of the questionnaire were made at their convenience. The questionnaire was administered to participants in their offices during their break time. The purpose of the research and the key topic areas of the study were discussed, and consent were also sought to respond to the questionnaire.

RESULTS

The results are presented based on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, roles of the organisation as an employer, analysis of family roles and personal life roles of the respondents as well as the relationship between family life and organizational roles (Tables 1 to 5).

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Information was collected on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Information was collected on age distribution, educational qualification, number of children as well as the number of dependents. Results are presented in Table 1. The study revealed that 37.5 and 34.4% of the respondents were between the ages of 40-50 and 31-39, respectively, while 15.6% were 51-60 years and the remaining proportion were 25-30 years. With respect to marital status of the respondents, it was observed that 84.4% were married women, and 6.3% were divorcees. Only 9.4% were single. Also, 53.1% of them were Post-Graduate Certificate holders whiles 34.4% have First Degree certificates. Furthermore, 6.3% of them were Diploma and others certificate holders. Similarly, 28.1% have 2 children, whiles 18.8% each represents those with and/or without a child. This was followed by 12.5% each for those with 3 and 4 children respectively, whiles 6.3 and 3.1% respectively represent those with 5 and 6 children. In the case of the women with dependents, 31.3% have 2 dependents; whiles 25% have a dependent. Respectively, 18.8 and 15.5% represent those with 3 and 4 children. However, only 9.4% of the women have no dependents.

Roles of the organisation as an employer

The researcher sought to find out the role of the organisation as an employer towards ensuring that its female staffs have a balanced work family and personal life which is evident in the work/life family border theory.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents.

Demographic variable	Percentage
Age distribution (Years)	
25-30	12.5
31-39	34.4
40-50	37.5
51-60	15.6
Marital status	
Single	9.4
Married	84.4
Divorced	6.3
Educational qualification	
Diploma	6.3
Degree	34.4
Post-Graduate	53.1
Others	6.3
Number of children	
No child	18.8
One child	18.8
Two children	28.1
Three children	12.5
Four children	12.5
Five children	6.3
Six children	3.1
Number of dependents	
No Dependent	9.4
One Dependent	25.0
Two Dependents	31.3
Three Dependents	15.5
Four Dependents	18.8

Source: Field Survey (2019).

As opined by Clark (2000), the work/life family border theory helps in defining work-life balance as 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict'. The responses are presented in Table 2.

The results as presented in Table 2 show that all the employees in the sample were working on full time basis. Another 40.6% of them were supervisor whiles 12.5% were managers. About 47% (46.9%) hold other positions aside from managerial and supervisory roles. It can be concluded that majority (46.9%) of the respondents are holding other positions in the organization. Also, 50% of the HODs of the employees were females. And each employee has 8 basic hours of work every day. In addition, another 78.1% of them normally work pass the basic working hours whiles 18.8% work within the stipulated basic working hours. This indicates that more than three-fourth of the employees work above their basic working hours every day. Similarly, it was observed that there is no allowance for flexi time as indicated by 65.6% of them whiles the remaining proportion agreed that there is allowance for flexi time. Also, there is no indication of availability of programs and policies designed to help women balance work and family life as indicated by 90.6% of them. Likewise, the organization does not have childcare facilities.

Analysis of family roles

It was of interest to examine the family roles of the respondents with respect to their work and the

Table 2. The role of the organisation as an employer.

Variable	Percentage
Status of employees	
Full time	100.0
Positions held by employees	
Supervisor	40.6
Manager	12.5
Others	46.9
Gender of HOD	
Male	50.0
Female	50.0
Working hours	
Eight hours	100.0
Working pass basic working hours	
Yes	81.2
No	18.8
Allowance for flexi time	
Yes	34.4
No	65.6
Availability of programs and policies	
Yes	9.4
No	90.6
Availability of child care facilities	
Yes	15.6
No	84.4

Source: Field Survey (2019).

Table 3. Mean analysis of family roles.

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
I can focus on work issues when I have pressing family responsibilities	32	2.156	1.450	1.000	5.000
My employee is empathetic to my family issues	32	2.219	1.128	1.000	5.000
I have been penalized in performance appraisal due to my family responsibilities	32	2.250	0.880	1.000	5.000
I feel I fulfill my family obligations successfully, despite pressure at work	32	3.406	1.292	1.000	5.000
Attending to family demands interferes with my work performance	32	2.256	1.125	1.000	5.000
My family responsibilities prevent me from being assigned challenging work projects	32	2.094	0.995	1.000	4.000
My spouse/partner is supportive to my work achievement	32	3.063	1.523	1.000	5.000
My spouse/partner assists with family responsibilities	32	2.906	1.489	1.000	5.000
I put off family activities due to work commitments	32	2.400	1.295	1.000	5.000
I can meet work deadlines whilst taking care of my family	32	2.094	1.573	1.000	5.000

Source: Field Survey (2019).

organisation. The responses are presented in Table 3. The table provides information on the family roles of the respondents. From the table, the mean scores are; 2.156, and 2.094 with their corresponding standard deviations, minimum and maximum for items 1, 2, 3 to 10 respectively. The mean values of items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10 are seen to be less than the mean of 2.500 to 5.00 for acceptance level of an item. This means that the

Table 4. Mean analysis of personal life roles.

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
I can have time for church activities	32	1.969	1.092	1.000	5.000
I can have time for my leisure	32	1.844	1.051	1.000	5.000
I can attend funeral activities	32	1.719	0.851	1.000	5.000
I can have time for friends and family members who visit	32	2.031	1.062	1.000	5.000
I can attend weddings	32	1.781	0.941	1.000	5.000
I can further my education despite family responsibilities	32	3.219	1.289	1.000	5.000
I can visit the saloon every week	32	1.969	0.933	1.000	4.000

Source: Field Survey (2019).

female staff at CoDE: are unable to focus on work issues when they have pressing family responsibilities; employees are not empathetic to their family issues; have been penalized in performance appraisal due to family responsibilities; attending to family demands interferes with their work performance; family responsibilities prevent them from being assigned challenging work projects; put off family activities due to work commitments; and finally, unable to meet work deadlines whilst taking care of families. However, the female staffs feel they fulfill their family obligations successfully despite pressure at work; spouses/partners are supportive to their work achievement and assist with family responsibilities.

Analysis of personal life roles

The researcher sought to find out from the female staffs whether their works interferes with their personal life roles. The responses from the respondents are presented in Table 4.

The table provides information on the personal life roles of the respondents. From the table, the mean scores are; 1.969, 1.844, 1.719, 2.031, 1.781, 3.219 and 1.969 with their corresponding standard deviations, minimum and maximum for items 1, 2, 3 to 7 respectively. The mean values of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 are seen to be less than the mean of 2.500 to 5.00 for acceptance level of an item. This means that the female staff at CoDE is: unable to have time for church activities; unable to have time for their leisure; unable to attend funeral activities; unable to have time for friends and family members who visit; unable to attend weddings and unable to visit the saloon every week. However, the only family life role the female workers at CoDE can achieve successfully is their ability to further their education despite family responsibilities.

Relationship between family life and organizational roles

The researcher sought to examine the relationship between the family life of the respondents and their organizational roles. The organizational roles of the respondents considered are positions held within the organization, working pass basic working hours as well as the allowance for flexi time at the place of work. The positions held within the organization, working pass basic working hours as well as the allowance for flexi time at the place of work were regressed on the family life of the respondents to ascertain this relationship. The result is presented in Table 5.

The table presents information on the relationship between family life and organizational roles of the respondents. A negative relationship was observed between the family life of the respondents and the position they held. That is, unlike directors, supervisors, managers and other position holders' role have negative effects on their family life. Hence, the position occupied by a person has negative effect on his/her family life. The result is the same for those who work past the basic working hours of 8, as well as those without flexi times. Thus, those who work past the basic working hours of 8 and without flexi time allowance have problems with their family lives. On a whole, organizational roles of the respondents have negative effects on their family lives, and hence that culminated in their inability to manage their family lives and roles properly. However, an r-squared of only about 23% was recorded. This indicates that about 23% of the variations in family life is caused by changes in positions held as explained in the model. As a result, it can be concluded that the positions one hold can create an imbalance in work and family life of the respondents. It also shows that about 77% of the factors influencing work and family life balance are explained outside the model. However, this only indicates that whenever we observe a variation in the family roles of the respondents, only about 23% of it is due to the model (or due to positions held, availability of flexi time, as well as working past the basic working hours) and the remaining proportion is due to error or some unexplained factors. Hence, there may be other factors that may be accounting for the imbalances in work and family life of the respondents.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was carried out with a purpose to investigate

Table 5. Relationship between family life and organizational roles.

Term	Coefficients	SE coefficients	P-Value
Constant	3.449	0.497	0.000
Supervisor	-0.601	0.434	0.178
Manager	-1.204	0.544	0.036
Other positions	-0.276	0.461	0.555
Working past basic working hours	-0.249	0.338	0.468
Allowance for flexi time	-0.167	0.283	0.560

Source: Field Survey (2019).

the balancing of work, family and personal life of female staff of the CoDE, UCC. The study concentrated on senior members, senior staff (Unit Administrators, Principal Administrative Officers), and other officers. The study revealed that majority (84.4%) of the respondents was between 25 to 50 years. Another majority (90.7%) have marital experiences, whiles 87.5% were Post-Graduate and First-Degree certificate holders. Also, most (81.2%) of the women have between 1 and 6 children whiles another 90.6% of the women have between 1 and 4 dependents. In addition, the study revealed that all the employees in the sample were working on full time basis with the UCC. Another majority (46.9%) of them hold other positions in CoDE apart from being managers and supervisors. Also, 50% of the HODs of the employees were females. And each employee has 8 basic hours of work every day. Furthermore, more than three-fourth of the employees work above their basic working hours every day. It was also observed that there is no allowance for flexi time as indicated by 65.6% of the employees. There is no indication of availability of programmes and policies designed to help women balance work and family life as indicated by 90.6% of them. Likewise, the university does not have childcare facilities.

With respect to the family life roles of the staff, the study revealed that the female staff at CoDE: are unable to focus on work issues when they have pressing family responsibilities; employees are not empathetic to their family issues; have been penalized in performance appraisal due to family responsibilities; attending to family demands interferes with their work performance; family responsibilities prevent them from being assigned challenging work projects; put off family activities due to work commitments; and finally, unable to meet work deadlines whilst taking care of families. However, the female staff feels they fulfill their family obligations successfully despite pressure at work; spouses/partners are supportive to their work achievement and assist with family responsibilities. Also, with reference to the personal life roles of the respondents, the study indicated that female staff at CoDE are: Unable to have time for church activities; unable to have time for their leisure; unable to attend funeral activities; unable to have time for friends and family members who visit; unable to attend weddings and unable to visit the saloon every week. However, the only family life role the female workers at CoDE can achieve successfully is their ability to further their education despite family responsibilities.

Finally, it was observed that organizational roles of the respondents have negative effects on their family lives, and hence culminating into their inability to manage their family lives and family roles properly. Thus, there was exhibition of negative balance involvement of roles female employees at CoDE. The research findings indicate that a considerable attention should be given to working hours of female staff at CoDE, UCC.

Hence, it is recommended that child and elder care facilities should be introduced through proper Human Resource planning. Additional staff should be recruited to reduce the heavy workload of the female staffs and prevent role overload and unnecessary stress. Also, good relationship among employers, employee, coworkers, supervisors and subordinates should be encouraged and maintained for effective teamwork. Moreover, there should be seminars, workshops and training programmes on stress reduction and time management to help employees to achieve good work life balance. Finally, female staffs should be given some flexibility on strict deadlines and heavy workload.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Participatory monitoring and evaluation for quality programs in higher education: What is the way for Uganda?

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Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) is an approach that higher education institutions should use to ensure achievement of objectives especially quality academic programs, research, consultancies, outreach services and administrative functions. Indeed, over the past 10 years PME has gained increased prominence over more conventional approaches to monitoring and evaluation in public management, corporate management, business management and project management. PME process can enhance participation, empowerment and governance, thus enhancing the performance, efficiency and sustainability of interventions. Uganda developed a National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy for the Public sector, which provides a framework for all public sector entities to follow up their performance. However, the policy is not well disseminated and public sector entities are not sufficiently compelled to undertake participatory monitoring and evaluation as an approach. This paper analyzes the role played by PME to ensure quality programs in higher education institutes in Uganda. It draws conclusions and proposes remedy on what is still hampering effective participatory monitoring and evaluation practices in Uganda's higher education institutes.

Key words: Participatory monitoring and evaluation, higher education, quality programs, effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

The present wave of globalization is rapidly developing into a complex system of exchange, interactive dynamics, and structures that collectively interact to effect rapid changes in virtually all aspects of human life. The consequent changes in higher education relative to evaluation approaches and quality control have accordingly become an important issue for debate. UNESCO (2013) observes that globalization has brought with it an increased level of academic fraud, such as 'diploma mills', 'fly-by-night providers', and 'bogus institutions', or fake credentials. This poses a danger to employers since they end up recruiting substandard candidates for superior assignments leading to insufficient performance at work and thus, dwindling productivity and development (UNESCO, 2013). Recruiting lukewarm staff members also leads to non-achievement of the organizations' set targets, goals and objectives, which increases the demand for trustworthy organizations that can establish confidence using quality assurance methods.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) is an approach that institutions of higher education should use

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to ensure close follow up on targets, goals and objectives so that these institutions maintain the quality standards in their academic programs, research, consultancies, outreach services and administrative functions. PME is a process through which stakeholders at various levels engage in monitoring and evaluating (Onyango, 2018). The process involves monitoring and evaluating particular project, program or policy intervention; share control over the content, the process and the results of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activity and engage in taking or identifying corrective action (World Bank, 2013). Indeed, over the past 10 years, PME has gained increased prominence over more conventional approaches to monitoring and evaluation in public management, corporate management, business management and project management (Coupal, 2001). Hilhorst and Guijt (2006) also posit that PME process can enhance participation, empowerment and governance, thus enhancing the performance, efficiency and sustainability of interventions. PME picks a lot of interest from a wide range of stakeholders; citizens, service providers, government agencies and projects, programs or partnerships. The paper investigates the role of PME in ensuring quality programs in the higher education sector.

Objectives

The aim of the paper is to analyse the role played by PME to ensure quality programs in higher education institutes of Uganda.

Specifically, the paper aims at:

(1) Identifying the best practices under PME.
(2) Finding out the benefits of deploying PME on quality higher education institutions' programs.
(3) Drawing conclusions on what is still hampering effective PME practices in Uganda's higher education institutes.
(4) Proposing remedy for the identified encumbrances towards effective implementation of PME.

METHODOLOGY

The paper was based on the interpretivist approach where the Uganda National Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Policy was reviewed together with other scholarly articles especially on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in the Education Sector. The authors' experience in the governance arena, specifically as Head of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Department in a higher education Institute, also facilitated ease of interpreting the captured literature. A detailed review and analysis of literature and documents on participatory Monitoring and Evaluation; as well as reports on quality programs in the higher education sector, was undertaken. Legislation on PME as well as the legal framework for quality assurance in Uganda's higher education sector has also been reviewed to allow concluding on how participatory monitoring and evaluation may influence quality of programs in the higher education sector. Content analysis technique was used during data analysis, where the data was coded and categorized depending on arguments of different scholars and authorities (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). This allowed identification of different patterns of arguments which informed interpretation and thus, deriving understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Conclusions on how PME approach may affect quality of programs in higher education sector of Uganda were then made from the analysis of the qualitative data that was generated.

Significance of the paper

Performance in higher education institutions has become a major point of focus for public educational institutions in Uganda, if they are to survive the ever-increasing competition coming from their private counterparts. PME has as such been embraced by several institutions with an aim of ensuring that stakeholders are involved during following up on performance. Nonetheless, amidst this institutional zeal, the capacity of stakeholders to undertake PME has not been well emphasised. It is therefore hoped that once this study is undertaken, Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government will make use of study findings to promote PME activities in their respective institutions as they embark on ensuring improved performance.

Study findings may also make a great contribution to the scholarly world by adding facts on the body of knowledge, on how the implementation of PME in higher educational institutions has been effected; and on the extent that roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders have been clarified. Finally, the study presents the various challenges affecting the implementation of PME approach in higher education sector.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The PME approach

According to SEWA (2005), the main reason to monitor and evaluate is to improve decision-making. Monitoring and evaluation present ways to engage people in active learning and reflection about their work and can be confidence-building and affirming for all involved.

Kananura et al. (2017) posit that PME is involving all relevant groups in designing the entire monitoring and evaluation approach. They singled out four core principles of PME to include participation, learning, negotiation, and flexibility. World Bank (2002) also defined PME as a process through which stakeholders at various levels; engage in monitoring and evaluation of a particular project, program or policy; share control over the content, process and results of the monitoring and evaluation activity; and engage in taking or identifying corrective actions. Participation in general is defined by World Bank (2002) as; *"process through which stakeholders including the poor and marginalized influence and share control over development initiatives and the resources and decisions that affect them"*. In the context of Uganda's higher education sector, Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation refers to the process of involving key stakeholders during the implementation of development initiatives. Such stakeholders include the students, teaching and non-teaching staff members, governing board/council

members, local leaders, local authorities, opinion leaders (who may include religious leaders, traditional leaders and retired public officers), Civil Society Organisations, funders/donors and community members.

Guijt et al. (1998) also posit that there are several factors that influence participation of stakeholders in PME. These include perceived benefits of PME, relevance of PME to priorities of the participating groups, quick and relevant feedback of findings and flexibility of the PME process to deal with diverse and changing information needs. Other factors include meeting expectations that arise from PME such as acting on any recommendations made and the degree of maturity, capabilities, leadership and identity of groups involved, including their openness to sharing power. There is need for local political history, as this influences society's openness to stakeholder initiatives. Experience from higher education service delivery indicates that the more stakeholders are involved during follow up of development initiatives, the more they own up the projects. For instance, if a classroom block is being constructed at an institution, chances are that the contractors will ensure quality works especially when they are in the know that stakeholders will undertake frequent monitoring of the structure under construction.

Literature has further indicated that Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation approach still faces a lot of challenges, when it comes to its implementation, yet in several instances there are clear roles and responsibilities. Most literature accessed focuses on participatory approaches in the ecological and natural resources sector like Siddappa, Kamal, Tamara and Made (2008), who investigated evaluation of participatory resource monitoring system for non-timber forest products, the case of Amla (phyllanthus supply) Fruit harvest by soligas in South India. There is therefore scanty literature on implementation of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation approach in higher education sector.

Role of PME to ensure quality programs in Uganda's higher education sector

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2014) indicates that quality control is the process for checking that the academic standards and quality of higher education provision meet agreed expectations. According to the European Standards and Guidelines [ESG] (2015), there is increasing interest in quality and standards all over the world, reflecting both the rapid growth of higher education and its cost to the public and private purse. As higher education institutions in the developing world struggle to meet growing demand, the issue of quality assurance is in the spotlight (Kawachi, 2014). In Uganda, this is attested to by the fact that most higher education institutions endeavour to put in place policies on participation of key stakeholders in the follow up of initiatives. Some have established functional monitoring and evaluation systems, which have a major component on participation of key stakeholders during follow up of development initiatives.

Explosion of knowledge and technology is driving governments and higher institutions of learning to revisit their education systems, including their evaluation approaches, in order to realise appropriate quality that satisfies the needs of a global academic industry. Quality control in the East African region has also had a focus on increasing stakeholder involvement as a key part of quality enhancement (Mayunga et al., 2012). For instance, in Uganda, some higher education institutions at university level, like the Uganda Management Institute have established Joint Quality Assurance committees which closely scrutinize the process of ensuring quality during product development and service delivery.

According to Pavel (2012), quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multilevel, and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an educational model, to the institutional mission and objectives, as well as to specific standards within a given system, institution, programme, or discipline. Pavel (2012, p. 124) asserts:

"Quality may thus take different, sometimes conflicting, meanings depending on: the understanding of various interests of different constituencies or stakeholders in higher education (e.g. students; universities; disciplines; the labor market; society; a government); its references: inputs, processes, outputs, missions, objectives etc.; the attributes or characteristics of the academic world worth evaluating; and the historical period in the development of higher education".

Borrowing from the experience on Uganda's higher education sector, all higher education institutions in Uganda are regulated by the National Council for Higher Education, which makes emphasis on ensuring involvement of key stakeholders during educational service delivery. The Council also makes emphasis on ensuring that all these institutions are closely monitored for compliance to the set standards.

Hrnciar and Madzik (2013) also posit that the interest in improvement of quality of education, as declared by university managers, is a precondition for the success of such quality management systems, but it must be based on the principle of involvement of each individual teacher and university employee in the process of quality improvement. In general, it is possible to specify preconditions necessary for implementation of this approach in the university environment. This further highlights importance of involvement of key stakeholders in higher education sector, if there is to be improved quality programs. Bunoti (2011) asserts that the quality of higher education in developing countries is influenced by complex factors that have their roots in commercialization, general funding, and human population growth. Bunoti (2011) further reiterates that challenges in higher

education are influenced by several factors including, economic factors, political factors, quality of students and faculty, administrative factors and academic factors etc. In Uganda's higher education sector, challenges like unrealized resources are pronounced. Many forecast receipts from tuition fees, yet some students may drop out along the way, which tremendously affects educational service delivery.

Quality programs are a central management function in all institutions of higher learning the world over. However, studies have also indicated that if there is to be quality service delivery in the higher education sector, then key stakeholders should as much as possible be involved in the various processes. A study on quality improvement of higher education in Nigeria indicated that there are various stakeholders that have a key role to play in higher education, both internally and externally. Internal stakeholders include: University Administration Board, the Governing Council, students, government, academic and non-academic staff, and University administrators. External stakeholders include: National University Commission, NGOs/CBOs, firms/industries, private sector, development agencies and trade unions. These and more stakeholders are key if higher education Institutes are to perform to expectation (Asiyai, 2015). The situation is not any different for the Ugandan higher education sector, where, for instance, universities have different organs that play an oversight function. These include governing councils (boards), council committees, the senate, top management team, staff associations, among others. Externally, higher education institutions deploy external examiners to assess their students, external reviewers to assess quality of research proposals and dissertations, as well as guest speakers. These come with an independent eye so as to ensure quality products and services.

The Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) has prioritized the concept of quality assurance in the sector across attainment of education at all levels (Uganda, 2004). In the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2004 – 2015, the MoES has one of its objectives as ensuring an effective and efficient education sector, through quality assurance and accountability. This is expected to be met through developing and maintaining a coherent and feasible system of standards and performance monitoring. The National Council for Higher Education [NCHE] (2018) further indicates that the increase in enrolments has created many problems; foremost among them is a drop in quality.

Quality assurance in higher education institutions has become a major point of focus for public educational institutions in Uganda and the world over, if they are to survive the ever-increasing competition coming from their private counterparts. PME has as such been embraced by several institutions with an aim of ensuring that stakeholders are involved during following up on performance. However, amidst the institutional zeal on participatory approaches, PME has not been well harnessed in the public sector in general and in the higher education sector specifically. Experience has shown that during the promotion of participatory monitoring and evaluation approach, several players initially contest the approach arguing that monitoring and evaluation specialists should undertake the activities as their mandate. It is usually after a long engagement that the PME approach may be harnessed in higher education institutions after realizing that it helps managers assess achievement of their own set targets and show their contribution towards institutional objectives achievements.

There has been a campaign over years to promote participatory approaches in all sectors in Uganda, and specifically the higher education sector. In the context of the Result Oriented Management [ROM] policy - presupposing participatory and team-based approaches to programme planning, monitoring and evaluation, PME endeavours to put emphasis on achievement of democratically defined and measurable impacts that should translate into enhanced programme delivery through democratic programming, decision making effectiveness and accountability (Onyango, 2018). Accordingly, this should have been reflected in targets, goals and objectives so as to enable higher education institutions maintain the quality standards in academic programs, research, consultancies, outreach services and administrative functions (Mamdani, 2007). Nonetheless, Mamdani's views on institutional planning, monitoring and evaluation issues appear not to be engrossed by Bloom et al. (2006), who instead hype praises on the relative growth and development of higher education institutions.

The National Policy on Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation of Uganda (OPM,2011) reiterates that Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), where the Ministry of Education and Sports is one, and have different roles and responsibilities when it comes to monitoring and evaluation. Among the roles and responsibilities is to utilise the new Program Based System during following up on performance. The policy advocates for utilisation of participatory approaches during monitoring and evaluation undertakings of the respective MDAs and local governments. The higher education sector, therefore, is also required to ensure that there is sufficient involvement of stakeholders during monitoring and evaluation if quality programs are to be ensured.

Accordingly, NCHE (2018) promotes that a higher education institution must involve the Ministry of Education and Sports, which is the parent ministry, with different roles and responsibilities when it comes to monitoring and evaluation. Firstly, it is supposed to produce annual results-oriented, ministerial policy statements linked to the corresponding budget framework paper and Sector Strategic Investment Plan. Secondly, it

has to ensure that all planning units (within different sectors), assign one or more positions responsible for statistical production, monitoring and evaluation. Thirdly, it has to ensure that a management information system (MIS) for monitoring and evaluation is put in place. It has also to plan and budget for monitoring and statistics annually, while, the sector has to prepare quarterly performance review meetings to determine progress towards output targets. The sixth step is the provision, on a quarterly basis, of data and explanatory information on progress against performance indicators through the Program Budgeting System (PBS). Seventh, the sector has to ensure proper coordination and oversight of monitoring and evaluation activities, while at the same time, it has to plan and budget for evaluations (especially for large projects). The policy also indicates that the sector has to ensure utilization of monitoring and evaluation findings to inform program, policy and resource allocation decisions. It also has to maintain a Recommendation Implementation Tracking Plan to ensure that complete and approved monitoring and evaluation reports are made easily available to the public in a timely manner (OPM, 2011). All the indicated roles and responsibilities of the ministry are cascaded downwards to higher education institutions heads of monitoring and evaluation, a position that was also dictated to ensure that entities assign one or more positions to coordinate the function.

Literature has shown that if higher education institutions are to sustain quality service provision, students and staff should as much as possible participate in the various processes including monitoring and evaluation. According to Zuo and Ratsoy (1999), students as clients of the university have a right to participate in making decisions that influence them. They further argue that administrators and academic staff need student input in decision making. Students' motivation for participation in university governance is to improve university governance; gain experience; for social reasons; desire to serve other students; and due to influence from friends or parents. Zuo and Ratsoy (1999) further posit that student roles in decision making include presenting information and perspectives, sharing knowledge and understanding, and arguing strongly for student interests.

Challenges on PME implementation in the higher education sector

According to Obondoh (2003), decentralization of leadership accountability to faculty and associated departments or units has proved to be the greatest management challenge to campus administration in our times. Obondoh posits;

"as higher education expands, management of our universities continues to be characterised by: apparent mismatch between authority and responsibility of primary management units; limited authority at lower units; entrenched cultures giving rise to slow decision making processes and sluggish response to change; over reliance on the committee system; and diminishing institutional and group culture, among others".

When students are not involved in several processes of the higher education institutions, there may be several challenges. Obondoh (2003) further asserts;

"the current student unrest and staff disenchantment are often reflection of demands for their involvement in campus governance. Rejectionist tendencies of students and their negative reactions to policy statements from university authorities and/or decisions by their own leaders indicate ordinary students are not adequately involved in processing of decisions".

Literature and experience have as such shown several challenges that have hampered effective implementation of PME approach in Uganda's public sector, especially the higher education sector. Presented below are several of such challenges and issues on PME implementation in Uganda. Challenges are categorized into methodological issues, institutional issues, documentation issues, policy enforcement issues, participation issues and absence of incentives to participate.

Methodological issues

Among the challenges towards implementation of PME approach are the methodological issues, including what is needed for PME and when to use more conventional forms of PME (Guijt et al., 1998). World Bank (2002) also reiterates that major challenge towards PME implementation is methodological in nature, including how to find entry points, how to constructively engage stakeholders and how to creatively engage. Public institutions like the higher education sector are interfaced with a challenge of role ambiguity while undertaking participatory approaches like PME. This also justifies why managers in the higher education sector take long to appreciate the whole concept of PME with the argument that such activities should be undertaken by monitoring and evaluation experts.

World Bank (2002) further reiterates that the other challenge towards PME implementation is insufficient capacity of stakeholders to participate in monitoring and evaluation activities. Turnhout et al. (2010) also indicate that the PME tools and techniques present some challenges in their use to many stakeholders. Experience from Uganda's higher education sector is that there is a capacity gap among players in the field of monitoring and evaluation which hinders effective participation. Though any stakeholder can ably participate during monitoring

activities, they would at least require clear templates to enable them focus and report thereafter. On the other hand, not any stakeholder may easily participate during evaluation activities since these require some technical knowhow in the evaluation arena; either from evaluation experts or professionals in the field to be evaluated. This again may hinder effective PME approach implementation in the higher education sector.

Institutional issues

Guera-Lopez and Hicks (2015) posit that the other challenge towards PME implementation are the institutional arrangements for influencing decision making; as well as capacity development for civil society groups and other stakeholders are still a major challenge towards PME implementation. The other challenges have to do with institutional learning to adjust procedures, tools and attitudes in support of PME and the new challenge for PME on policy and macro level issues. Institutionalising PME approach in Uganda's higher education sector is also presented as a major challenge since it does not come easy to win stakeholder buy-in regarding processes. Experience shows that managers in the sector do not easily allot time towards follow-up of their own strategic actions and tasks with the argument that they would be so engaged in their own mainstream undertakings. This may pose a challenge since without close follow-up on one's strategic direction, objectives may not be easily met since there would be no data to inform decision making.

Documentation issues

The other challenge towards PME approach implementation as posited by Onyango (2018) has to do with documentation especially where there is little documentation to facilitate the PME processes. The higher education sector in Uganda is also faced by the challenge of insufficient documentation of performance among institutions. This makes it difficult to follow up on performance using the PME approach.

Policy enforcement issues

Uganda's National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (OPM, 2011) is a guiding framework for monitoring and evaluation in public sector of Uganda. The policy advocates for wide involvement of key stakeholders during monitoring and evaluation undertakings. However, this policy has not been widely disseminated to the players and actors in the public sector in general and in the higher education sector specifically. Neither does the policy come out to compel managers in the public sector and specifically in the higher education sector to deploy the PME approach. It does not indicate incentives and disincentives to utilize the PME approach.

Participation issues

Onyango (2018) presents several emerging issues on PME implementation including participation issues especially how to decide who gets to be involved, degree of involvement and sharing decision making power. This is another challenge observable in the higher education sector of Uganda since faculty members tend to prefer the traditional approach of leaving monitoring and evaluation to the experts other than participating fully and allowing their subordinates to participate during these undertakings.

Absence of incentives to participate

Absence of incentives for wide stakeholder engagement is another key challenge towards PME. Sectors, like the higher education sector find it difficult to stimulate civic engagement and public debate around results (Bassler et al., 2008). This makes it rather difficult for managers in the higher education sector of Uganda to prioritise deployment of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) approach.

Conclusion

Literature has shown that the higher education sector of Uganda has over the years attempted to practice participatory approaches. This paper has demonstrated how PME approach has faced a lot of challenges to implement at a time when the Government of Uganda has been promoting and advocating for participatory approaches across the development sphere. The Government launched the National Policy on Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation of 2011, so as to guide monitoring and evaluation processes in the public sector, where the higher education sector is part. The policy laid down guidelines for effective monitoring and evaluation, including involvement of stakeholders during the processes. However, it has been observed that the said National Policy on Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation has not been well disseminated among key players in the public sector. Thus, the policy has just been kept in the shelves of players in the public sector instead of making reference to it while undertaking monitoring and evaluation activities.

Therefore, PME as an approach, if emphasised in the higher education sector of Uganda would come with a lot of merits. There will be enhanced ownership of the sector's interventions among stakeholders, while still, constraints will be appreciated faster and this will easily guide decision making towards objectives achievement.

Also, though participatory approaches are being promoted in Uganda's higher education sector, they are not deliberately informed by the PME approach. People can still afford to ignore the approaches, if that is what would fulfil their desires and interests. There is still insufficient capacity of stakeholders to participate effectively during monitoring and evaluation processes, while there is also no clear incentives for participating in the monitoring and evaluation processes in the public sector, where higher education sector falls part.

What is the way for Uganda?

Various recommendations to remedy the prevailing challenges towards PME implementation in the higher education sector of Uganda are presented below:

(1) Complexity of such PME tools and techniques may lead to difficulty in use and thus, need for capacity enhancement of participants in monitoring and evaluation activities if such approaches are to serve their main intention, usually efficiency and effectiveness. The higher education sector may also focus on ensuring that participants have the requisite competencies for effective participation in PME activities. The higher education sector may also emphasise reference to data from PME activities during the decision-making process, if learning from performance is to be achieved.
(2) On issues to do with policy enforcement, insufficient capacity of participants and incentivizing PME approach, the Government of Uganda needs to ensure that the National Policy on Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation of 2011is widely disseminated among key players in the public sector, including the higher education sector. The policy may also be reviewed to compel all Accounting Officers to implement the PME approach as a guiding framework for monitoring and evaluation undertakings.
(3) Participation of stakeholders during monitoring and evaluation may also be enhanced if there are incentives and disincentives. For instance, through timely feedback on their recommendations from the PME activities, making the undertakings as flexible as possible and building participant capacity in PME. Accounting Officers who do not comply with implementing the PME approach may be penalized by respective supervisors. Incentives like reference to performance of the PME approach during consideration for promotions in the public sector may be introduced to popularize the approach. Rewards and recognition schemes may also consider performance of public officials regarding PME undertakings.
(4) The Program Budgeting System (PBS) should also measure the process of capturing performance data at outcome and output levels to establish participation and involvement of stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation activities. This may also enhance accuracy of the data captured in the PBS. Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs), specifically higher education sector, as well as local governments should be compelled to keep all reports from various participants during monitoring and evaluation processes.
(5) Students and staff in higher education institutions need to be more involved in campus affairs so as to reduce the unrest and demonstrations that are a common occurrence in many public higher education institutions.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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The teacher-parent nexus in the competency based curriculum success equation in Kenya

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Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) is based on learners demonstrating the ability to apply the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they acquire as they progress through their education. Despite initial resistance, this curriculum is now under implementation in Kenya after a pilot study conducted across counties. Successful implementation of this curriculum requires the concerted efforts of teachers and parents. The purpose of this study is therefore to establish the CBC activities that require parental involvement, parents' opinion towards this expectation, teachers' perceptions of CBC and the challenges they experience in the implementation of the CBC. The study was anchored on Vygostsky's social constructivism theory and employed an exploratory research design. A sample of 56 participants took part in the study. Data were collected using open-ended questionnaires and in depth interviews, and analyzed thematically. Findings revealed that, parents were expected to work as co-educators with teachers and provide learning materials for practical sessions, but they were reluctant to do this. The teachers appreciated the sustained interest in learning brought about by CBC but cited numerous challenges like lack of materials, parental support, time, curriculum structure and class size among others. The study recommends that parents should be sensitized about their role in CBC, schools maintain optimum class sizes, the government provides adequate funding, and TSC improves staffing in public primary schools. In addition, talent schools should be established.

Key words: Competency based curriculum, constructivism, optimum and parental involvement, teaching and learning, educational policy.

INTRODUCTION

Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) is an approach in which students work at their own pace to demonstrate mastery in the competencies necessary for their chosen field of study (Gruber, 2018). According to Jallow (2011), when students demonstrate a competency, they are demonstrating their ability to do something. One of the strongest outcomes of CBC is increased students' engagement which results from students' ownership of the learning process. CBC also promotes individualized learning and accommodates a variety of learning styles, making it a truly personalized experience (Gruber, 2018). In addition, learning outcomes in CBC emphasize

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competencies that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions (Frost et al., 2015). Mosha (2012) pointed out that a curriculum that is competency-based, contains the specific outcome of statements that show the competencies to be attained. Expected behaviours or tasks, conditions for their performance, and acceptable standards are shared with students.

Sullivan (2005) alludes to a participatory approach in the selection of the competencies for the curriculum. He states that, it requires interaction and collaborative work between the subject matter experts (SMEs) – curriculum developers, the learners/students, and members of the community/employers. Employers and other community members are able to identify what it is they want the children to be able to do. The SMEs understand what competencies can be attained within the confines of the content while the teachers know how to teach the content so that the competencies are attainable. This in turn provides focus on learning outcomes with specific, measurable definitions of knowledge, skills and learner behaviour (ADEA, 2012).

In Kenya CBC is in the initial years of implementation. This Curriculum of 2-6-3-3 system replaces 8-4-4 which in turn replaced 7-4-2-3 education system adopted at independence. The 8-4-4 system is deemed to serve best those who score high grades in the traditional subjects (English, Maths, Sciences, and Humanities) at the end of secondary education, and then proceed for higher education and take up white-collar jobs. It also ignored many children whose aptitude, interests, and abilities lay in vocational education, arts, and sports (Kabita and Ji, 2017). The introduction of CBC was meant to close this gap. The implementation of CBC in Kenya is hinged on the report of the "The task force on the re-alignment of the education sector to the constitution of Kenya 2010" released in 2012 (RoK, 2012). The task Force recommended a structure of 2 years of Pre-primary, 6 years of Primary (3 years lower and 3 years upper), 6 years Secondary (3 years junior and 3 years senior), 2 years minimum of Middle level Colleges and 3 years minimum University education (2-6-3-3). The rationale for the revised structure was to ensure learners acquire competences and skills that will enable them to meet the human resource aspirations of Vision 2030, ensure the attainment of 100% transition rate from primary to secondary, thereby reducing wastage by introducing automatic progression to the junior secondary phase based on the acquisition of core skills and competences (literacy, numeracy and communication skills), focus on early identification and nurturing of talent in individual learners. Along with CBC came the introduction of a system of Competence Assessment Tests (CATS) measuring knowledge, skills and competences, the results of which will be cumulative and form part of a formative assessment process. This is meant to align the Kenyan structure with international best practices and provide a system that is not examinations oriented. The new curriculum carries expectations of parental involvement in certain learning activities of their children to complement the effort of the teachers. It is against this background that this study sought to establish how the teacher parent nexus could contribute to the successful implementation of CBC. Specific objectives of the study were to establish: the CBC activities that require parental involvement, parents' opinions of their involvement in CBC, teachers' perceptions of CBC and the challenges that they experience in the implementation of CBC.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars trace the idea of the competency-based curriculum to 1957 in the United States of America (USA). It developed as a reaction to the Soviet Union's launch of the first satellite (Hodge, 2007). In Australia, observed weaknesses in the skills level of the workforce following changes in the economy and the pace of technology led to the introduction of CBC in 1990 (Smith, 1996).In Africa, the competency-based curriculum was pioneered by South Africa in 1998 as a result of an acute shortage of professionals such as engineers, technicians and artisans. The adoption of this system was meant to change the attitudes of all South Africans and equip them with employable skills to cope with challenging issues in the 21st century (Mulenga and Kabombwe, 2019). Other African countries have gone the CBC way. In Rwanda, the competency-based curriculum (CBC) was launched in April 2015. The new curriculum has been lauded for being less academic and more practical oriented, more skills-based and tailored to a working environment and daily life (REB, 2015). In schools where teachers used CBC techniques, learners enjoyed learning; attendance improved and passes rates increased. However, there were challenges like insufficient teaching and learning materials, large classes hindering effective delivery, lack of parental support and lack of enough qualified teachers to implement the curriculum (Urunana, 2018). In 2013 the Zambian education system revised its curriculum from a knowledge-based one to a skills based one in a bid to prepare learners for future challenges in the rapidly changing world (MoGE, 2013). The aim was to produce self-motivated, life-long learners, confident and productive individuals, holistic, independent learners with the values, skills and knowledge to enable them to succeed in school and in life (Zulu, 2015).

In Kenya the impetus for curriculum reform was that, the current system was too rigid and had limited opportunities to align basic education with children's career interests, aptitudes, and abilities. The CBC design posted by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) seeks to make learners competent in seven key areas: communication and collaboration, critical thinking

and problem-solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, learning to learn and self-efficacy. The curriculum hopes to impart eight core values: love, responsibility, respect, unity, peace, patriotism, social justice and integrity (Warrio, 2019; KICD, 2017). In a bid to equip teachers for successful implementation of CBC, teachers have been undergoing training during the holidays. According to Muraya (2019), a team of 181 master trainers has since trained 1,165 regular and special needs education curriculum support officers and 1,320 CBC champions as the trainer of trainers. It is further stated that, at the end of the training, all teachers are expected to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective implementation of CBC, apply innovative pedagogical approaches and models, demonstrate competencies in assessment and be self- reflective, self-improving and supportive learners themselves.

Despite the training, teachers feel that the system has tripled their work. They have a lot of work to do in keeping the records of each child since marks are not awarded based on academic output only but on extra-curriculum activities as well. In addition, CBC has come with new costs that must be borne by the parents which could further drive many learners out of school (Otieno and Onyango, 2019).The teacher's role in the current system is that of a facilitator in the learning process. The teacher is expected to keep learners' data on individual skills and weaknesses through regular assessments in a portfolio. This is a folder which officially keeps the record of a learner's efforts, progress and achievement through which the teacher keeps parents and guardians informed, and informs the symbiotic relationship of the parent and teachers in the child's learning process. The portfolios feed the end-of term reports (Warrio, 2019).

KICD recommended that**,** reporting in formative assessment should be frequent and ongoing communication between the teacher and the learner, and with the parents about the progress the learner was making towards meeting the curriculum outcomes. The reporting should focus on a series or cluster of learning (KICD, 2017). KICD also suggested that, at different points during the year, this portfolio could be used to discuss with the learner regarding their progress as well as with parents, administrators or other staff members providing services for learners. Teachers should be honest, fair and provide sufficient detail and contextual information. They need to keep detailed records of various components of assessment with descriptions of what each component of the assessment measured, accuracy, against the criteria and learning outcomes and supporting evidence. Learners' ability is rated in terms of whether they are exceeding expectation(80 - 100%), meeting expectation (65 - 79%), approaching expecting (50 - 64%), and below expectation (0 - 49%). A remark against the rating provided is then provided. The KICD report indicated that key among the challenges facing CBC implementation was the issue of teaching and learning resources. While a number of private schools had the resources, there was a near total lack in public schools, a circumstance that compromised the implementation of the curriculum. Another challenge was the issue of teachers' knowledge of CBC pedagogy. Few of the teachers understood CBC pedagogy. Most of them were struggling with the concept and lacked the capacity demanded by the curriculum.

The successful implementation of CBC depends not just on the classroom teacher who acts as facilitator in the learning process, but also on the involvement of the parent. This is because some of the demands of the curriculum transcend boundaries of school. Parents are expected to play a very important role in the success of their children's education by providing an enabling environment that is conducive to learning, motivating learners to fulfill their potential through completion of assigned tasks, and monitoring and guiding children in doing homework, providing required aids and materials for practical activities, collecting and sending evidence of children completing tasks assigned by teachers (Gitahi, 2019). They are also expected to ensure that their children's bio data is correctly captured in the Kenya Early Years Assessment database. This clearly demonstrates that, nurturing and building competencies which is at the heart of CBC cannot be left to the teachers alone. Teachers and parents have to work as collaborators and co-educators in enhancing the acquisition of the right competencies and skills among the learners. Parental involvement is expected to have positive learning outcomes for learners and shape other aspects of their behaviour. The overriding question the study sought to answer was how could the teacher parent nexus contribute to the successful implementation of CBC? Specific research questions culminating in the above question and which guided this study were:

(i) What Competency Based Curriculum activities require parental involvement?
(ii) What are the parents' opinions of their expected involvement in Competency Based Curriculum activities?
(iii) How do the teachers' perceive the Competency Based Curriculum?
(iv) What are the challenges that they experience in the implementation of Competency Based Curriculum?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Vygotsky's social learning/social constructivism theory which emphasizes the collaborative nature of learning. The theory was developed by post-revolutionary Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky who the saw the world of learning as defined by interpersonal interactions between a student and teacher, or student and peer, or student and adult. He also believed in the broader socio-cultural and historical

influences on learning and the learning environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky emphasized that crucial learning by the child happens through social interaction, indicating the need for an involved community and family (Lawton, 2017). Central to Vygotsky's theory is what is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is a zone or gap that exists for children on their own and what they can achieve or accomplish with the help of more knowledgeable others (Orla, 2000). These more knowledgeable others are parents and teachers. This study aims at investigating how parents' involvement in their children's learning as co-educators with teachers could contribute to successful implementation of CBC. Vygotsky's ZPD refers to the observation that children, when learning a particular task or body of knowledge start by not being able to do the task. They can do it with the assistance of an adult. In Vygotsky's thinking, learning extends to the home and out-of-school environment. This is what makes this theory relevant to the current study because when learners leave school, and get into the home environment, it is parents who take over to assist with completion of tasks assigned by teachers as well as preparation of required materials. This essentially makes learning a social and collaborative activity that Vygotsky intended it to be. By extending learning to the home and out-of-school environment, parents are expected to play their role in the transfer of knowledge and skills to their children. This is a symbiotic relationship between parents and teachers at the heart of CBC, and the gist of this study. Vygotsky sees children as being ready not only when they have their own knowledge but also when they receive extra help and encouragement (Wood, 1988), which would inevitably come from parents as well as teachers hence the need for parental involvement in children's learning. According to Vygotsky, important learning by the child happens through interacting socially with a competent instructor. The student searches for understanding through the instructions or actions given by the parent or teacher and then internalizes the information. The internalizing of these instructions or actions directs the child's accomplishment and leads to advanced thinking skills. Parents and families are regarded as prime educators. They know what their own children want and need. They can let the teachers know their child's capabilities and characteristics (Ailincai et al., 2016). This is a requirement in the current CBC where parents are expected to be co-educators with teachers by identifying their children's natural talents and abilities, and working with teachers to nurture them (KICD, 2017). Parental involvement is also expected to complement the teachers' effort outside the classroom (Mogambi, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This exploratory study follows a qualitative approach, with open Ended questionnaires and in depth face to face interviews. Exploratory research design deals with exploring into the phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2012). The choice of an exploratory qualitative design was to gain an understanding of how parents and teachers could work together for successful implementation of CBC. Exploratory research "tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done" (Brown, 2006: 43). The choice of this design was thus due to the fact that, CBC was in the initial implementation stages with the first Competency Based Assessment (CBA) underway even as the study was being conducted. There were hardly any empirical studies on CBC then, and exploratory research was expected to provide a better understanding of the teacher-parent nexus in the CBC success equation. The study also sought views on the perceptions of respondents pertaining to CBC related issues. Flexibility is important in exploratory research and it is bound to result in new ideas, revelations and insights (Abhijeet, 2018). This research was conducted in a relatively new area with issues that needed clarification and further insights. The information gathering required the flexibility offered by the exploratory research design.

Sample and sampling procedures

There are no rules for sample size in qualitative research as this depends on what one wants to know, the purpose of the study and practical factors. The validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative studies have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected (Hudelson, 1994). Guided by this principle, this study was carried out in Sabatia sub county (Vihiga) and Kakamega Central (Kakamega). These are counties in close proximity to each other and the intention was to get a general overview of the CBC implementation. All the schools in the two sub counties were stratified as shown in Table 1. Thereafter 10% of the schools were randomly sampled. Purposive sampling was used to select all the head teachers and at least one teacher of lower primary school (the level at which CBC is being implemented). In two schools, one additional lower primary school teacher participated. Purpose sampling was based on the reasoning that, qualitative samples are purposive and selected by virtue of their capacity to provide richly textured information relevant to phenomenon under investigation (Luborsky and Rubinstein, 1995; Marshall, 1996). This study utilized 56 participants(44 participants from the schools and12 parents who had children enrolled in lower primary school who were identified using snowballing). Creswell (2012) stated that, a qualitative study characteristically examines a small number of cases. Ritchie et al. (2003), suggest that studies employing individual interviews conduct no more than 50 interviews so that the researchers can manage the complexity of the analytic task. Similarly, Britten (1995) stated that, large interview studies will often comprise 50-60 people. This sample of 56 participants was considered good enough. In addition, the fact that, the value of a researcher in giving an in-depth analysis as well as reporting verbatim responses diminishes with each additional person (Lawton, 2017) influenced the sample size. Often qualitative researchers refer to the redundancy criterion: that is when no new information is forthcoming from sampled units, data collection stops. In this study, once a point of saturation had been reached with the respondents, it was considered uneconomical to sample additional participants. This is in line with the proposal by Lincoln and Guba (1985) that sample size determination be guided by the criterion of informational redundancy.

Data collection instruments

Data were gathered using open ended questionnaires (Appendix 1)

Table 1. Sampling procedure.

Category	No. of schools	No. of sampled schools	Head teachers	Teachers	Parents	Total
Public primary (Day)	136	0.1×136=13.6=14	14	18	7	39
Private Primary (Day)	33	0.1×33=3.3=3	3	3	2	8
Private Primary (Day and boarding)	25	0.1×25=2.5=3	3	3	3	8
Total	194	20	20	24	12	56

and in depth unstructured face to face interviews (Appendix 2 and 3). Unstructured interviews are the most popular primary data collection method with exploratory studies. Talking to people involved in actual CBC implementation using this technique was expected to help achieve the objectives of the study more easily. Best and Kahn (2003) assert that, the purpose of open interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind but to find out what is on someone's mind. Indeed the level of the structure of questions in qualitative interviewing has been found to influence the richness of the data generated (Ogden and Cornwell, 2010). The exploratory nature of the study demanded a lot flexibility offered by the in depth unstructured interview. It was possible to establish the respondents' views on the teacher-parent nexus in the success of CBC. In addition, the respondents expressed their opinions, pointed out challenges experienced and raised inherent concerns over the system. The in-depth interviews lasted for at least 45 min and at most 2 h. The interviews were carried out during break time, lunch break or after school hours to minimize interruption of teaching and optimize responses. The interviewer probed respondents by using the answers they provided and turning them into related questions for more detailed answers.

Validity and reliability

Experts agree on the need to assure validity, and reliability in qualitative studies (Konradsen et al.,, 2013). In qualitative research, validity (or trustworthiness) and reliability or (consistency) are discussed in terms of the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirm ability of the instrumentation and results of the study.

To assure credibility (internal validity) the study employed appropriate strategies such as triangulation. There was use of open ended questionnaires and in depth face to face interviews. The data collected were therefore corroborated. In addition, saturation was used. To establish transferability (external validity) the study offered "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973), and verbatim reporting of findings. There was also variation in participant selection. The study used head teachers and teachers involved in actual implementation of CBC. Parents with children in lower primary (the level at which CBC is being implemented) also participated in the study.

To be more specific with the term of reliability in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985: 300) use "dependability." In this study, dependability was established through triangulation (Casey and Murphy, 2009). Similarity in responses among the participants throughout the interview was corroborated by multiple research instruments and the accuracy of responses ascertained (Stevenson and Mahmut, 2013). Confirm ability (the qualitative counterpart to objectivity) was established through reflexivity.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data (Frequencies and percentages) and provide an overview of what the general responses were. Tabulation of this information indicated how many respondents shared certain opinions. Thereafter, thematic analysis which involved analyzing transcripts and identifying themes within the data was used (Burnard et al., 2008). While some of the findings are paraphrased, most of the key findings are reported under the main themes generated from open coding. In addition, findings under each theme are also reported using verbatim quotes to illustrate the sentiments of the respondents (ibid). This aspect of reporting was adopted because it enables one to understand the feelings/emotions of the respondents underlying the opinions raised.

FINDINGS

Aspects of competency based curriculum that require parental involvement

Teachers from the sampled schools were asked to indicate the activities that required parental involvement. Table 2 shows the number of teachers who were affirmative on each expectation. The respective percentage is provided in brackets to two decimal places.

Pictures

The results in Table 1 show that most teachers (37; 84.09%) expected parents to take pictures for in filing portfolios. Portfolios are files/folders that contain learners' records of accomplished activities or activities being carried out by learners. Sample portfolios availed for perusals during interviews with the respondents are shown in Figure 1.The portfolios on the left are made out of manila papers while those on the right are readily purchased from the bookshop. Teachers require a lot of improvisation to make competency based curriculum work. Teachers explained that:

> In a recent task assigned, learners were supposed to make their beds at home and have their parents take a photograph of the activity as they carried it out, print the pictures and send it to the teacher for filing in the portfolio.

There were also other activities that required pictures to be taken and sent to school as the teachers explained:

> Activities are numerous, almost on a daily basis. Learners may be required to plant a tree seedling, and have a picture taken and brought to school. Any time there is such a requirement, the involvement of the parent is inevitable.

Table 2. Competency based curriculum activities that required parental involvement.

	Activity	School category				Total
		Public		Private		
		H/teacher (N=14)	Teachers (N=18)	H/teacher (N=6)	Teachers (N=6)	
1	Taking pictures of accomplished/ongoing tasks, printing them and sending them to school for portfolios.	12(27.27)	16(36.36)	4(9.09)	5(11.36)	37 (84.08%)
2	Helping with homework and assigned activities	14(31.81)	17(38.63)	5(11.36)	4(9.09)	40(90.89%)
3	Environmental related activities	13(29.54)	15(34.09)	6(13.63)	5(11.36)	39(88.62%)
4	Provision of materials for practical lessons	14(31.81)	16(36.36)	5(11.36)	5(11.36)	40(90.89%)

Figure 1. Portfolios.
Source: Participants during interview session.

Teachers also expressed the view that,

> Filing documents in the portfolio is a daily practice because virtually all practical sessions yield information for the portfolio and activity based learning is what CBC is all about.

Homework

Most of the teachers (40; 90.89%) explained that, occasionally, parents had to assist their children with certain tasks. Preparation of sweeping and cleaning instruments in a market cleaning activity which had been carried out by primary school children in the entire country was frequently cited. Parents were supposed to help with making of brooms and protective gear like gloves, masks, aprons and scarves. Figure 2 shows how the learners were dressed during the cleaning exercise. Other teachers mentioned sorting of items according to colours as an assignment learners may be expected to do with assistance of their parents. At home, parents may help their children do this by using plates, cups, bottle tops, clothes, etc and explaining the different colours.

Environmental activities

Out of the 44 teachers who participated, 39(88.62%) said parents were required to assist children with actualizing some environment related activities. They pointed out that, a number of activities in the curriculum under caring for the environment required parental involvement. Some of these include caring for animals, cleaning equipment used for feeding and watering animals, demonstrating willingness to use water sparingly at home.

Figure 2. Primary school pupils' community cleaning exercise.
Source: File Photo

One teacher explained that,

> In school, we do not rear animals but we believe since our school is in a rural set up, our learners come from families where there are cows, goats, etc. They can use these to learn how to care for animals.

Teachers observed that,

> The cleaning exercise carried out by primary school children was meant to inculcate the culture of community service as well as the desire to keep the environment clean. It was an opportunity for them to learn that they are responsible for the cleanliness of the environment they live in. A dirty environment affects health.

Provision of materials for practical lessons

The majority of the teachers (40; 90.89%) expected parents to provide materials for practical lessons. They were of the view that,

> All learning areas have practical lessons with specific material requirements. For example, drawing and colouring require drawing books, pencils, crayons and coloured pencils; when they are learning hygiene and taught how to brush their teeth, the parents have to provide tooth brushes and tooth paste; an item of crockery may be required to practice cleaning. The list of activities is actually endless and parents' cooperation is very important.

Teachers said learners may be required to learn how to wash an item of crockery. This means parents should allow their children to carry cups, plates etc to school as need arises (Figure 3). Drawing requires coloured pencils or crayons which parents are supposed to provide. It is the colour that brings out the beauty of a drawing.

Parents' opinions about their involvement in CBC

Parents with children in lower primary school in public and private schools were identified using the snowballing approach. One identified parent identified another. Out of the 12 parents interviewed seven had children in public schools while five had children enrolled in private schools. Table 3 shows opinions as expressed by parents. The respective percentage is provided in brackets to two decimal places.

Willingness to be involved in children's CBC tasks

Most parents (11(91.66%) were generally opposed to being involved in their children's tasks. Some parents from private schools expressed the view that:

> Parents should be totally left out of CBC affairs. I have paid fees and sent my child to school. My own work is so demanding that when I come home, it is either too late or I am too tired to start finding out about the tasks my child has been assigned and then get involved. It is precisely because I have no time even for myself that I took my child to boarding school.

On provision of tools for the cleaning exercise carried out countrywide by learners, one parent with a child in a public school observed that,

> "There are people paid by the county to sweep roads and clean markets in this county. They even have the right cleaning equipment provided by the employer. I should not be made to go destroying a neighbor's fence because I am looking for branches for a broom. And then, when our children went out

Figure 3. Practical lesson on how to brush teeth.
Source: File Photo.

Table 3. Parents' opinions about their involvement in competency based curriculum.

	View/opinion	School category		Total
		Public (n=7)	Private (n=5)	
1	Not willing to be involved in my child's school related tasks.	7(58.33)	4(25.00)	11(91.66%)
2	I do not have the required facilities e.g camera enabled phone and printers	7(58.33)	2(16.66)	9(75.00%)
3	I was not informed of this expectation	7(58.33)	5(41.66)	12(100%)
4	I do not think it is my responsibility	6(50.00)	4(33.33)	10 (83.33%)
5	I do not know how to identify talent.	6(50.00)	5(41.66)	11(91.66%)

> cleaning, what work did these people do on that day? Did they get paid?"

Parents from public schools equally felt they did not have the time either.

Equipment

Many parents 9(75.00%) especially those with children in public primary schools did not even have camera enabled phones and they did not have cameras to take pictures in the first place. They were of the opinion that, they had more pressing economic issues to attend to. They considered having expensive phones with which to take pictures a luxury. In fact, quite a number of these "parents" were actually grandparents! They felt that, even if a good neighbor took pictures of the accomplished task, there should be provision to have them printed in school. Again, they also said even if they were to take pictures or ask someone to do it, they would require to travel to market centres where there were cyber cafes to print. One explained,

> I know of someone who went to print the picture, there was no power. He gave up on waiting for power to be restored and came back without the picture. Perhaps, the government should think of providing machines for printing pictures in the school.

Another parent retorted,

> This curriculum expects our children to have beds which we have not been given. How do I *take a*

Table 4. Teachers' perceptions of the competency based curriculum.

	Perception	School category				Total
		Public		Private		
		H/teacher	Teachers	H/teacher	Teachers	
1	Learning is learner centred	13(29.54)	18(40.9)	5(11.36)	5(11.36)	41(93.18%)
2	Learners are more engaged	14(31.81)	17(38.63)	5(11.36)	4(9.09)	41(93.18%)
3	Activities are interesting	12(27.27)	15(34.09)	6(13.63)	6(13.63)	39(88.63%)
4	Class attendance has improved	14(31.81)	17(38.63)	5(11.36)	6(13.63)	42(95.45%)
5	Assessment is child friendly	14(31.81)	18(40.90)	6(13.63)	5(11.36)	43(97.72%)

picture of a child making a bed that she does not have! If I have a child who sleeps on the floor on a mattress provided by her aunt how do I take a picture of that? So that others can laugh at her?

Yet another with a child in a private school wondered,

My child is in a private day school. I was expected to take a picture of the child planting a seedling and send to school. Now, I have rented a house. My house is on the third floor. Where this child should be planting the seedling?

Sensitization

Parents' reluctance to be involved in children's learning tasks was attributed to lack of sensitization at the introduction of the new curriculum. Apparently all the parents interviewed (12; 100%) were never informed about this expectation. They felt they were neither involved nor sensitized on their roles. According to one parent,

When this curriculum was rolled out, nobody told meI was about to become a teacher. Nobody asked me whether I wanted to be a teacher or not. You see not all of us can be teachers.

Role conflict

Most parents (10; 83.33%) said facilitating CBC implementation was not their responsibility. This assertion was best summed up in the remark of one parent, who clearly stated that:

Please let teachers do their work and parents theirs. There are very clear roles defined here. If we all abide by them, there will be no conflict.

Talent identification

Most parents (11; 91.66%) had no know-how of talent identification. One parent said,

My son can sing, play football and run. In fact, he outruns me and yet he is only nine and in grade three! He also imitates his teachers sometimes. So can I say he has all these talents? So again am I supposed to make him now concentrate on one? Which one will that be?

Another one said,

My daughter is in boarding school. The teachers spent more time with her than I do. Who can tell better what she is talented in, the teachers or me?

Yet another remarked,

Am I expected to sit around the whole day observing a child to spot talents surely? If this is the way to identify talent, let my daughter concentrate on class work.

Teachers' perceptions of CBC

Teachers are the implementers of CBC. Their perceptions were sought on what they thought about the new curriculum which was in its initial years of implementation. Table 4 summarizes their perceptions on the factors evaluated. The percentages are provided to two decimal places in brackets.

Learners' centredness

All the teachers interviewed clearly indicated that CBC has revolutionized instruction. The majority of the teachers (41; 93.18%), irrespective of whether they were from public or private schools, lauded the new curriculum for being learner centred. According to one teacher:

In this new curriculum, you guide learners in the learning process. There is so much that the learners should be able to do but as teacher, you just guide them. Basically, most learning is child centered, but there is supervision and involvement in the activities

too.

Learners' engagement

Most of the teachers (41; 93.18%) said that, learners were more engaged in the process than ever because learning was very interesting. A teacher observed that,

> Today, learners are very enthusiastic about their classes. Sometimes you have to force them to stop an activity because it is time for another strand.

Interesting activities

Generally, as indicated by most teachers (39; 88.63%), the learning activities are tailored towards sustaining the interest of the learners. Learners no longer wear faces of boredom because there are interesting learning activities inbuilt in the learning areas. A teacher observed that,

> In the past I struggled to keep the learners focused. Some would doze off in class. This has changed since introduction of CBC. There is a lot of learning through inbuilt play activities. Learners have an opportunity to freely explore and satisfy their curiosity and in the process they learn.

Even market cleaning, which most parents had abhorred incidentally turned into an interesting learning activity for the learners. One principal of a private day school was in favour of the market cleaning activity. He said although some of his parents were opposed to it, the children enjoyed it. He disclosed that, he had safely kept the cleaning implements which would now be used in the school cleaning activity once in a while to teach children the importance of clean environments.

Class attendance

According to 42 (95.45%) teachers interviewed, the CBC had considerably improved class attendance. As one teacher remarked,

> My class is constantly packed. In the past, pupils used all sorts of excuses to be away from school. Some were sick form Monday to Friday! This has changed after the introduction of CBC. Most pupils can't wait to come to school!

Assessment

It was observed that, assessment is relaxed. Most teachers (43; 97.72%) affirmed that the tension previously witnessed at examination time is history. They were in favour of this mode of assessment. Commenting on the grade 3 assessment that was being concluded at the time, they expressed the opinion that,

> In the new assessment criteria there was no competition so there was no pressure. Learners were encouraged to be natural and the assessment was carried out in the usual learning environment where there was no spacing of learners or interfering with their consultation. Even the bright ones who love shielding their work so that others do not copy did not have to do this at all. The assessment atmosphere was the best ever.

Another teacher observed that,

> There was no tension because there was no fear of failure. Learners treated the assessment as the usual class work.

Challenges teachers face in the implementation of CBC

Teachers were asked to highlight the challenges that were hindering the successful implementation of CBC. Their views are summarized and presented in Table 5 and percentages given to two decimal places.

Lack of parental support

Most teachers (37; 84.09%) expressed lack of parental support. Even where parents could easily source for materials required for implementation of CBC, they were unwilling to do so. Some teachers reported that,

> There were parents who did not want to see their children dressed up in sacks during the cleaning exercise and yet they still could not purchase whatever they felt acceptable for their children to wear! Others did not want their children to do the cleaning.

Another teacher said that,

> Even parents who stay in the village set up and could improvise cleaning brooms and other implements simply refused to do so. We had to pluck leaves and branches in the morning to make brooms for our learners so as to carry out the exercise since it was a requirement.

Nature of the school

Teachers (10; 22.73%) from private day and boarding schools observed that, they are unable to involve parents in some of the tasks that require their involvement.

Table 5. Challenges of implementing the competency based curriculum.

Challenge		School category				Total
		Public		Private		
		H/teacher	Teachers	H/teacher	Teachers	
1	Lack of parental support	13(29.54)	16(36.36)	4(9.09)	4(9.09)	37(84.09%)
2	Nature of the school	-	-	5(11.36)	5(11.36)	10(22.73%)
3	Stringent Curriculum structure	14(31.81)	18(40.9)	4(9.09)	5(11.36)	41(93.81%)
4	Limited number of staff	13(29.54)	17(38.63)	-	1(2.27)	31(70.45%)
5	Large class sizes	13(29.54)	15(34.09)	1(2.27)	2(4.54)	31(70.45%)
6	Lack of required materials	14(31.81)	16(36.36)	1(2.27)	1(2.27)	32(72.72%)
7	Lack of sufficient time	12(27.27)	17(38.63)	4(9.09)	3(6.81)	36(81.81%)
8	Inadequate training	14(31.81)	18(40.9)	2(4.54)	3(6.81)	37(84.09%)
9	Additional costs	14(31.81)	17(38.63)	1(2.27)	2(4.54)	34(77.27%)
10	Too much paperwork	12(27.27)	18(40.9)	2(4.54)	4(9.09)	36(81.81%)

Teachers recounted how they were forced to carry out tasks that should have been done by pupils and their parents because the learners, though in lower primary schools, are either in boarding school or in private schools and parents had no time for certain things. This was tantamount to a teacher setting a task to be done by learner in collaboration with the parent, but again assuming role of the parent in the accomplishment of the task.

Head teachers and teachers in boarding schools thus pointed out that, while numerous tasks required parental involved, it was difficult to get their parents involved because of the nature of their schools. It was therefore inevitable for teachers in such schools to assume parental roles. One head teacher of a boarding school said:

> Our class three pupils were meant to prepare cleaning instruments made from locally available materials. However, since they are boarders, our teachers were compelled take the place of parents and work on this task with the pupils after classes instead of going home after their official duty was over. And it did take quite some time since it involved making sweeping brooms, improvising dustbins, gloves, masks and other protective gear.

Curriculum structure

On the curriculum and implementation challenges, most teachers (41; 93.81%) were of the opinion that, the curriculum is structured in such a way that, if for some reason, a pupil missed school two or three consecutive times, it would be a big problem catching up because learning activities were stringently scheduled. A teacher said,

> Consider the cleaning exercise that was carried out by all grade 3 learners. You notice it all schools were doing that at fairly the same time or during the same week. That is how activities are scheduled. When a learner misses a number of sessions it's not easy catching up. In addition, his/her portfolio will have a gap.

Class size and staffing

Another problem with curriculum implementation was staffing and class sizes. The most affected were public schools as indicated by 31(70.45%) teachers, most of who were from public schools. The schools had high enrolment in lower classes but with only one teacher per class. A teacher reported that,

> The current curriculum requires fairly individualized attention. As teachers, we are expected to work closely with learners for acquisition of relevant competencies, talent identification and nurturing. Large class sizes work against this. Secondly, because of gross understaffing, any time a teacher has to be away due to unavoidable circumstances (like illness or bereavement), there is hardly anybody to cover her class.

Ironically, this problem did not significantly affect private schools which had allocated two teachers per class for their lower primary grades. The learners in these schools were well cushioned in case one teacher had to be away from school for one reason or another. Again due to understaffing, each lower primary school teacher in public schools handled all the nine learning areas (literacy and indigenous languages, Kiswahili, English language, mathematical, environmental, hygiene and nutrition, religious, movement and creative activities, and pastoral programme of instruction). This was overwhelming for the single teacher. One teacher said,

> I handle a class of 86 learners alone. There is so much to do because of their young age and the requirements of the curriculum. It leaves me drained physically and mentally.

In a unique scenario, in one public primary school, the three teachers assigned to handle the lower classes shared the teaching of the learning areas across grades. This too cushioned their learners in case one had to be absent.

Materials

Most teachers 32(72.72%), the majority of who were from public schools, lamented about the lack of appropriate learning materials. There was the issue of the portfolio, a folder that contains pupils' progress work. Every learning strand resulted into evidence for a learners' portfolio. There were nine learning areas per week, 35 lessons per week. This translated into 35 items for each learner's portfolio. A teacher disclosed that,

> Apart from the portfolio, we also maintain "a show case folder" for each pupil where their best work is filed. To begin with, the files are not readily available and we have to improvise by using manila papers. Where classes are large, preparing a folder for each child is a time consuming process. Helping each pupil identify documents for their show case folder is equally taxing because it this informed by a discussion with the learner.

Apart from the portfolios, learners required coloured pencils/crayons, balls etc which were not available. One teacher remarked that,

> These were meant to enhance learners' talents. In their absence how would one identify a talented drawer, cartoonist, painter or player?

Time

Teachers acknowledged that the learning activities were interesting but they were time consuming. Many teachers (36; 81.81%) decried lack of adequate time for completion of certain activities. A teacher revealed that,

> Some of these activities are quite demanding and the time allocated is inadequate. For example in teaching and assessing motion in movement and creative activities, the time allocated is only 35 minutes and this is insufficient where the classes are large because you are expected to assess all the learners. Time ends before you can do all the assessments!

Training

Teachers of both public and private schools admitted that there had been some training. However, the majority (37; 84.09%) felt that, the training received was not sufficient in preparing teachers for CBC implementation. Some of the teachers had no sound knowledge on how to implement certain aspects of CBC. One teacher mentioned that:

> I was supposed to sing in an activity where a song is actually provided but there were no musical notes for guidance. Nobody has trained you on how to generate notes for a song. What is one expected to do?

Assessment costs

Most teachers (34; 77.27%) especially those from public primary schools raised the issue of cost in the grade 3 assessment. They felt that the system was costly and burdensome to the schools and parents as well. According to the head teachers of public primary schools,

> The assessments required individual learners to have their own copies. The Mathematics assessment alone was 8 pages long. It was supposed to be downloaded and printed, then photocopied for each pupil. In addition to this, there was the language assessment and the integrated assessment with similar cost implications not met by the government.

Head teachers of private schools had no problem with this cost implication because parents comfortably provided the funds. One head teacher of a private school explained how he bailed out two head teachers of neighbouring public schools by photocopying the assessments for their learners. One head teacher of a public primary school said the costing of the government for the assessment was six shillings per learner which was inadequate because the number of learning areas under assessment and the pages per learner. In an interesting twist to the cost factor in public primary schools, one head teacher said she did not incur this. She explained that, "I downloaded the work and loaded it on each of the learners' tablets. They took the assessment and their results were sent online."

Paper work

Teachers from both public and private schools decried too much paper work which was oppressive to the teachers. Teachers explained that, they had to download and then write very long schemes of work and lesson plans. It was very grueling and teachers did not understand why the education officers insisted on this!

> What I do not understand is why we have to download these schemes then handwrite them! They are so long and writing them takes too much time that would have been utilized for some other work. Is someone out to just punish teachers? What is the motive behind this really?

CBC areas of concern and grey areas

During the interview, teachers raised pertinent issues pertaining to CBC which emerged during the interviews. These concerns had not been captured by the objectives of this study but were nevertheless worth thinking about. They felt if these were voiced during the conference at which this paper was presented and disseminated through publication, they would hopefully be addressed someday. It would be a disservice if I failed to highlight these issues. I chose to treat them under the above sub title and they are as follows:

Talent and talent identification

Teachers expressed the view that, there was a high likelihood of mistaking peer pressure for talent. This was because there were learners who would exhibit a talent because of the company they kept, that is their friends. However, when gauged against their friends, these talents paled into insignificance.

Secondly, there is a danger of placing children in wrong talent if the talent identification is done too early. This is because young children were fond of experimenting with diverse talents quite unconsciously, and without necessarily being keen on developing them. Thirdly, at a young age, there are masked talents that would take time to be identified and nurtured. In addition, not all talents can be discovered at school level. A fourth concern was that, after talent identification, would the learners move to talent schools for nurturing of these talents or remain in the mainstream education system? Are there talent schools, well stocked with the right facilities to absorb and grow identified talents?

Assessment and progression

Teachers were concerned about the nature of assessment. During the Grade 3 assessment, learners took the assessment in a natural environment. There was no stringent supervision. Some learners sat in groups while others were spaced out (depending on the schools' interpretation). After the Grade 6 assessment, learners were expected to transit to junior secondary school. Teachers wondered whether the Grade 6 assessment would be like Grade 3. And if this was the case, then what criteria would be used to identify which learners would transit to specific junior secondary schools (National, county, extra-county etc). A second concern was, would they join junior secondary in their primary school which will still have standard sevens progressing to class eight or would they move to the high schools, start junior secondary, then later have class eight joining form one in the same schools? And finally, will categorization of schools (National, extra-county etc) change so that all schools would be at the same level.

With the 100% transition rule from one grade to another, the teachers wondered what would happen to learners who failed to acquire the required competencies in a particular grade. If the essence of the system was for the learners to acquire skills and competencies, whenever the assessment revealed lack of this by a learner, what would happen? Repetition of classes was outlawed. Would learners transit from level to another without mastery of the required competencies? Teachers wondered why there was no remuneration for those involved in grade three assessments. They said in future grade 3 and grade 6 assessors should be paid just like the KNEC examiners.

Portfolios and show case files

Preparation of portfolios and show case files was demanding. Secondly because of evidence requirement of the numerous tasks, the folders kept filling up and new ones being opened. By the time a pupil reaches grade six he/she would have too many portfolios. This poses a storage problem.

DISCUSSION

Competency based curriculum activities that required parental involvement

Findings of this study revealed that, parental involvement was required in successful implementation of CBC. According to Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, when learning a particular task or body of knowledge, children can do with the assistance of an adult. When learning extends to the home and out-of-school environment, it is parents who take over to assist with completion of tasks assigned by teachers as well as preparation of required materials. It is in line with this expectation that, parents were supposed to take pictures of children's tasks (completed or in progress), print and send them to school. This would provide information for the portfolios and inform teachers of their learners' abilities. This could in turn make it possible for teachers to address the gaps in skills and knowledge. Parents were also expected to assist with homework, nurture good environmental practices and provide learning materials. This is the symbiotic relationship between parents and teachers at

the heart of CBC which echoes the thinking of Vygotsky. These findings concur with what was reported by Gitahi (2019) indicating how parents should play a role in the success of their children's education. According to Gitahi, parents were expected to guide them in doing homework, provide required materials and send evidence of assigned tasks to teachers.

Parents' opinions about their involvement in CBC

This study revealed that parents were reluctant to be co-educators with the teachers. While Vygotsky intended learning be a social and collaborative, that it extends to the home and out-of-school environment, parents in this study wished to restrict learning to the school environment. Parents were thus reluctant to play their role in the transfer of knowledge and skills to their children as envisaged by Vygotsky. The findings of this study therefore contrast with Sullivan (2005) who stated that a participatory approach involving the community of which parents are part, is important. This explains the uncooperative stance of the parents because of the lack of buy-in approach. Parents in this study blamed authorities for lack of sensitization on their role in the new curriculum. The findings are also in sharp contrast with the expectation of KICD (2017) that parents identify their children's talents and help teachers to nurture them. Parents in this study said they had no know-how on talent identification. Again while Mogambi (2017) said parental involvement should complement and complete teachers' effort outside the classroom, in contrast, the parents said they had no time and they did not think it was their responsibility. They also lacked cameras and printers without which they could not meet the teachers' expectations.

Teachers' perceptions of CBC

This study found that, CBC was lauded for being learner centred, engaging learners, having interesting activities, improving class attendance and learner friendly assessment. The findings agree with those of Gruber (2018) that, one of the strongest outcomes of CBC was increased learner engagement, and that CBC accommodated a variety of learning styles making a truly individualized experience. This in turn improved class attendance. These findings resonate with Vygotsky's social learning/social constructivism theory which emphasizes the collaborative nature of learning. The collaborative nature of learning under CBC as enhanced by interpersonal interactions between the learners and teachers, as well as learners and peers, and learners with parents is what is likely to have resulted in increased learner engagement, and improved class attendance. Learning is interesting because of the activities and opportunities for collaborative work in groups.

Challenges teachers faced in the implementation of CBC

The study found that teachers faced numerous challenges in the implementation of CBC. While parental involvement was important because it accorded parents an opportunity to let the teachers know their child's capabilities and characteristics, this study revealed lack of parental support hindering successful implementation of CBC. In addition, there was a problem of a stringent curriculum, understaffing, large classes, and lack of materials, inadequate training, high assessment costs and a lot of paper work. These challenges were similar to what was experienced in Rwanda according to Urunana (2018). The similarity may be attributed to the fact that, CBC was implemented in the two countries at fairly the same time. Although Muraya (2019) indicated that there had been training, and the teachers in this study also acknowledged this, the training was inadequate. This agrees with KICD (2017) that teachers' knowledge on CBC pedagogy was a problem. Although according to Vygotsky, important learning by the child happens through interacting socially with a competent instructor, the desired learning might not effectively take place because teachers' knowledge on CBC pedagogy was a problem. Findings on costs echo an observation by Otieno and Onyango (2019) that, there were additional cost requirements to be borne by parents which could drive learners out of school. Findings also show that teachers keep track of learners' progress in portfolios which feed end of term reports, agreeing with Warrio (2019). Findings on lack of resources in public primary schools echo a report by KICD (2017), that key among the challenges facing CBC implementation was the issue of teaching and learning resources. While a number of private schools had the resources, there was a near total lack in public schools, a circumstance that compromised the implementation of the curriculum.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications for parents

It is concluded that parents' reluctance to be involved in CBC activities was affecting successful implementation. It is recommended that, parents play an active role in the learning of their children. There are activities that certainly and ultimately require their involvement as enshrined in the curriculum.

Implications for the government

It was concluded that parental involvement has hardly

worked for the success of CBC. From most respondents, it has been more of a hindrance than a help. It is therefore recommended that, parents' be sensitized about their role in the successful implementation of CBC. If this is not workable, the Ministry of Education should through KICD make their role in CBC affairs minimal. Head teachers decried the problem of funding. There are hardly funds for the assessment programs and yet they are not allowed to ask learners to funds for the exercise. The government should provide sufficient assessment materials for all learners or alternatively adequate fund schools to procure the assessments for all the learners.

The training received by teachers who were implementing CBC was grossly inadequate. The government should provide adequate training beyond that of two weeks offered during school breaks. In addition, the training in Teacher Training Colleges should be tailored to meet CBC requirements. For talent identification to have the required impact, the government should provide special talent schools and equip them according to talents to be nurtured.

Implication for the teacher's service commission

Most public primary schools are still grappling with over-enrolment and understaffing which affect effective implementation of CBC. The teachers Service Commission (TSC) should improve staffing levels in schools for effective implementation of CBC. If there are at least two teachers for every lower primary grade, schools will have optimum class sizes and this will make CBC implementation easier.

Implication for the Ministry of Education

The implementation of CBC was in itself a time consuming process. It is therefore recommended that, the paper work done by teachers and clerical work done by the teachers be minimized. For example, teachers should be allowed to downloaded schemes and lesson plans and use them. The education officers should not insist on teachers' handwriting downloaded materials! Schools could exchange assessors to lend credibility to the entire exercise and inject objectivity during the national assessment exercises at Grade 3 and 6.

Implication for the teachers

While talent identification at an early age may be fine, it should not be emphasized at the expense of academic achievement. System should emphasize mastery of basics first then talent to prepare learner for life beyond the talent. This is because there are talents that cease to be beneficial whenever someone is above a certain age e.g football and athletics. They are age bound. Teachers have to work closely with parents in order to identify the right talents and those that can endure.

Theoretical contributions

Both theory and empirical findings contribute to the understanding of how parental involvement could enhance successful implementation of CBC. This study investigated how teachers could work collaboratively with parents for the successful implementation of CBC. The study found that, parents have a key role to play in their children's education because there are several CBC activities that call for their participation. These activities contribute to formative assessment of their children because they provide information for portfolios. This study further contributes to an understanding of the question, what are the opinions of parents towards their expected involvement as well as how the teachers perceive CBC. Qualitative data, prevalent in this study, and collected using including interviews and open ended questionnaires, are most appropriate for research where theory is nascent, and the research questions are exploratory as is the case in this study.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

There are three limitations to this study that have implications for further research work. To begin with, this study used a sample of 20 schools and 56 respondents. Secondly, it also confined itself to two sub-counties in two counties. Thirdly, it was majorly exploratory. This calls for a further nationwide research using different research designs and bigger sample sizes. This study was carried out when CBC was in the initial implementation stages. Since change is an ongoing process, there is need for a follow up study on CBC especially when it is at the sixth 6 grade to determine the degree of successful implementation at that level.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Open-ended questions applied to get data from teachers on:
"Theteacher-parentnexusinthecompetencybasedcurriculumsuccessequationinKenya"
(1) Your position in school (Tick as applicable)
(i) Head teacher……ii. Lower Primary teacher……..
(2) Your school type (Tick as applicable)
(i) Public Day primary……ii.Private Boarding……iii. Private Day and Boarding….

S/N	Question
1	List what some of the tasks you expect parents to assist their children to do in order to make CBC implantation successful
2	Explain how you get parents to be involved CBC implementation
3	How has CBC changed teaching?
4	How CBC changed learning?
5	How does the parents' attitude facilitate or hinder implementation of CBC?
6	What are the challenges of involving parents in CBC implementation?
7	What do you think should be done to enhance smooth implementation of CBC?

Appendix 2. Interview questions applied to get data from teachers on:
"Theteacher-parentnexusinthecompetencybasedcurriculumsuccessequation in Kenya."

S/N	Question
1	Tell me about the competencybasedcurriculum
2	Please state what you expect parents with children in lower primary school (Grade 1, 2 and /or 3) to do to make CBC implementation successful.
3	To what extend do the parents in your school get involved in the tasks you assign their children?
4	How often do you expect parents to get involved in their childrens' learning activities?
5	On your experience with CBC, please explain you like about it.
6	What would you say has made implementation of CBC difficult?
7	How do you think CBC has improved learning?
8	How does the engagement of CBC learner contrast with the learner in the previous system and why?
9	What aspect of CBC would you say you are unhappy with and why?
10	What are your final thoughts on CBC?

Appendix 3. Interview Questions applied to get data from Parents on:
"Theteacher-parentnexusinthecompetencybasedcurriculumsuccessequationinKenya"
(i) Your child is in school type
(ii) Public Day primary……
(iii) Private Boarding…….
(iv) Private Day and Boarding….

S/N	Question
1	Are you aware that with the Competency Based Curriculum, teachers expect you to help your child accomplish certain tasks?
2	Please explain what teachers expect to you to do to make CBC implementation successful.
3	How often do you get involved in the tasks assigned to your child?
4	What do think about helping your child accomplish tasks assigned by his/her teacher?
5	As a parent, what has been the greatest hindrance to helping your child with assigned tasks?
5	What expectation of CBC have you found most difficult and why?
6	What are your final thoughts on CBC?

Related Journals: