

Contributions Of Effective Decision Making On Management Of Education In Cbc Era In Embu County, Kenya

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Abstract: *Effective decision making is the crucial ingredient that results to success in all dimensions in life. It's a rigorous process that involves consideration of all possibilities before finally settling on the most appropriate. The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) made a decision and recommended change of the education system in Kenya. Consequently, one of the most pronounced milestones witnessed in the education sector was the introduction of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2017. The curriculum is still in its inception stages and therefore imperative that effective decisions are made which propel it to the next level until its objectives are met. This study endeavoured to explore the contributions of effective decision making in the management of education in the CBC era in Embu County, Kenya. The study targeted the 143 public secondary school principals in Embu County. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample the participants where 30% of the target group was randomly selected leading to a sample size of 43. Interview schedules and participant observation technique were used to collect data. Piloting of the instruments was done prior to the data collection exercise to test their validity and reliability. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistical techniques and presented using percentages, pie-charts, frequencies and frequency tables. The study established that effective decision making in education management creates interest to learn in learners since learning becomes more enjoyable, improves teachers' morale to teach, creates a positive school culture and, a conducive teaching and learning environment. The study then concluded that effective decision making is a basic requirement for successful education management in the CBC era.*

Keywords: *Decision making, Management, Education, CBC*

I. INTRODUCTION

Review of the education curriculum is an imperative process for any country that endeavours to provide the best education to its citizens. As the world changes, new discoveries are made, more advanced technology crops in and advances are made in every field, it is essential that the education curriculum is revised to accommodate the changes taking place. This helps to produce an all-round learner who fits into the society wholly. The education curriculum in Kenya has been reviewed twice; first in 1985 following the recommendations of the Mackay Commission (from 7-4-2-3 to 8-4-4) and second in 2017 (from 8-4-4 to 2-6-3-3-3). The proposal to introduce CBC in Kenya was first made in 2009 in

a report prepared by the National Education Needs Assessment team. This was mainly to have a sector of education that was aligned to the constitution of Kenya and which endeavoured to achieve the goals of education of vision 2030. This decision was piloted and rolled out in December 2017 in the lower classes in primary schools following the guidelines laid in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017). The 8-4-4 system emphasized on technical and vocational training for the learner which was to be realized in selected subjects such as Home science, Music, agriculture and Art and Craft, and whose main goal was to achieve self-reliance among learners. However, the 8-4-4 system blundered in several ways including being too much theoretical and laying extreme emphasis on exams hence missing out on its

main objective which was to promote self-reliance and individual development among learners. It also ignored avenues for ICT incorporation in the education system and laid too much emphasis on coverage of the content specified in the course books by KICD while lacking adequate guidance on career choice. This was with a great margin missing the goals of vision 2030 in Kenya which include equipping the learner with skills of the 21st century that align to technology and entrepreneurship. This is echoed in the vision of the Ministry of Education in Kenya which endeavours to provide education that is highly competitive across the world and which embraces research and innovation for development that is sustainable. In countries where CBC has been implemented such as USA, Germany, Finland and Norway, CBC has produced innovative learners with high level of competency in the various fields of specialization. This narrative paper focused on exploring the contributions brought about by effective decision making in education management in the CBC era in Embu County. To realize this, characteristics of effective decision making were established, importance of decision making in the management education and the roles played by effective decision making in education management in the implementation of CBC.

II. LITERATURE

EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

Education managers are accountable for successes or failures of education in their institutions. Failure, just like success, is as a result of decisions that are made at a given time but, decisions which are ineffective. A decision that is effective is logical and realistic, influences an organisation positively and brings about positive change or impact in the organisation (Amalia, Komariah, Sumarto & Asri, 2020). Effective education management is achieved through influence of members in the organisation so that all people work towards achievement of same goals thus establishing unity of purpose (Torlak, Demir & Budur, 2022). The decisions effected in a school by education managers have a direct impact on the future careers of the learners and job gratification of the teachers (Babalola, 2019). They also determine the direction that an organisation takes, positive or negative. Any education manager, irrespective of their level of experience, training, knowledge or skills is expected to be productive. Therefore, an education manager must always focus on the quality of outcome of the decisions they make before implementing them. Consequently, effective decisions have to follow a step by step procedure that requires sobriety and consistency (Chi, 2019). In an education institution, the future of the learners is placed in a balance which can topple to either side that bears more weight. The principal's approach to various issues that affect the education and life of the learners is therefore a core exercise that cannot be overemphasized (Torlak, Demir & Budur, 2022). One of the roles of the education manager in ensuring a successful and impactful learning is teacher supervision as well as other members of staff. This helps to keep track of the quality of learning taking place in the institution (Mustafa, 2019).

However, a conducive atmosphere and good interpersonal relationship between the manager and the teaching fraternity has to exist for the success of the exercise to be realised. Noteworthy, is that the principal is also a teacher who has been handed over additional responsibilities of supervising the school and the primary business in a school is teaching and learning (Tijani, 2020). As a result, the school manager is believed to have the required knowledge, skills and experience to execute their duties as expected. It is therefore very basic knowledge that arm themselves with the required essentials of effective decision making.

IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATION

Effective decisions help education managers to execute their duties of education management without difficulty. Some of the basic functions in education management include planning, organising, directing, controlling and staffing (Ali & Mohamed, 2017). These require the manager to multi-task often without neglecting some roles. In this regard, effective decision making helps in the choice of a suitable action in the midst of many options. For example, with appropriate guidance, the learner is able to confidently make a choice of a career that they will finally undertake in life. CBC encompasses more use of psychomotor skills and therefore the learner requires sufficient guidance to identify their talents and interests as they lay the foundation for their career. Implementation of the CBC, in addition, requires the learner to take part in both theory and practical especially for the STEM subjects which are fully aligned with vision 2030 that aims at increasing the contribution of ICT to the digital and traditional economy to 10% of GDP (Maymina, Divina & Liula, 2018). This is also echoed in the education technology vision in Kenya which endeavours to achieve a competitive education, training and innovation system for development that is sustainable. Effective decision making will help the education manager to invent a design for an all-inclusive educational institution in terms of infrastructure, financial resources and human resources. This will expose the learners to maximum benefit from the curriculum. The manager is also likely to effectively execute their duties in an ample atmosphere thereby reducing the fatigue that comes with additional responsibilities. They thus become more productive and efficient. In an institution where the system runs without failure and interruptions, results are realized without strain. Another essence of making effective decisions is that it is used as a tool for evaluating the manager's competence in their work. The competence is measured by how successful an institution is, and success is dependent on the decisions made by the manager.

ROLES OF EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATION IN CBC ERA

Majorly, the roles of the principal are purely pegged on effective decisions and geared towards ensuring effectiveness in school. These include; supervising and facilitating curriculum implementation, fostering healthy interpersonal relationships between the teacher and the learner, creating a

healthy linkage between the school and the Ministry of Education, providing guidance in the school to both teachers and learners and overseeing good use of school property for it to benefit as many people as possible (Kentab, 2018). The principals therefore have many responsibilities attached to them and thus the need for effective decisions in their schools. Wise decisions reflect in all spheres in an educational institution. For example it's manifested in teachers' motivation in duty performance, learners' improved results, commitment of the non-teaching staff and good interpersonal relationships among the teachers themselves. Problems that arise in school trigger the principal into the process of decision making. Therefore, decision making by the principal is a deliberate action caused by matters that arise in a school. It is a cognitive process whose destination is a choice made from among many choices (Erwin, 2019). According to Babalola, 2019, there are problems that happen repeatedly and these do not require repeated solutions. Instead, policies are formulated to address such and in turn ease the principal's administrative roles.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The introduction of CBC in Kenyan schools in December 2017 was a decision that brought about many changes in the education system and curriculum in Kenya. Being a first time that this curriculum was introduced, a lot of input and combined effort from all stakeholders of education was required to complement the efforts of the teacher in actualising the dream of CBC in the learner. However, the impediments to implementing the CBC turned out to be as many as the challenges. The school managers therefore had a duty to come up with ways of dealing with challenges as many of them were not immediately addressed by the government, for example, teacher shortage, inadequate infrastructure and shortage of other basic resources in learning. Effective decisions became necessary and as a result some learners started benefiting more when enrolled in some schools as compared to others.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted to establish how effective decision making contributes to education management in the era of CBC in Embu County.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the contribution of effective decision making on education management in the CBC era in Embu County?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by contingency management theory by Fred Fiedler. According to this theory, a manager's success is based on their ability to distinguish needs within an organisation for adoption of an appropriate approach to address each need. Therefore, effectiveness in school management is as a result of choice of effective decisions by the principal to address emerging issues thus making it possible to thrive and succeed in the midst of many barriers

that could otherwise cripple provision of education in a school.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study targeted the 143 public secondary school principals in Embu County. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample the participants where 30% of the target group was randomly selected leading to a sample size of 43. Interview schedules and participant observation technique were used to collect data. Piloting of the instruments was done prior to the data collection exercise to test their validity and reliability. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistical techniques and presented using percentages, pie-charts, frequencies and frequency tables. The study established that effective decision making in education management creates interest to learn in learners since learning becomes more enjoyable, improves teachers' morale to teach, creates a positive school culture and, a conducive teaching and learning environment. The study then concluded that effective decision making is a basic requirement for successful education management in the CBC era.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected was cleaned then coded and categorised into three for easier analysis; data related to content delivery, data related to discipline and data related to learner motivation. It was then analysed, interpreted and discussed in narration. The research question that the study sought to answer was,

What is the contribution of effective decision making in the management of education in the CBC era?

The principals were subjected to interviews that sought to establish how content was delivered in their schools, how learners were engaged in learning and what kept the learners alert in learning.

V. FINDINGS

Data collected was analysed and revealed that most principals had a shortage of teachers in their schools and therefore some teachers handled a huge workload making them ineffective in content delivery since they sometimes lacked time to prepare adequately while other times they were so exhausted by the end of the day. In some instances, where there was no teacher to teach a particular subject, another teacher who is not trained in the specific subject area took up the learners and used their long time knowledge on the subject to teach.

Classes were reported to accommodate learners to full capacity due to increased number of enrolments. This resulted to an increase in discipline-related issues both in class and out of class. The most common were stealing of one other's items, use of inappropriate language, failure to finish assignments and drugs abuse. This was especially attributed to the high demands of the CBC curriculum that requires learners to

purchase so many items for practical use in class, demand of parental involvement in carrying out some assignments yet some parents are unavailable and failure of the parents to discipline their children at home.

Most learners seemed to enjoy being in school as a result of a working and reliable feeding (lunch) program. This was depicted in their high turn-up in school and excitement during meals time. Additionally, most did not finish teachers' written assignments but seemed to enjoy more the practical lessons. Therefore, inclusion of practical oriented subjects in the CBC was a major motivating factor towards learning.

VI. DISCUSSION

Ability of the principal to assess their school situation and make appropriate decisions results in effectiveness in the face of challenges such as those depicted in this study. The study revealed that while some students remained untaught due to shortage of teachers, some principals asked other teachers to embrace teamwork and ensure that the learners were taught as required, this saw learners opting to change from one school to another in search for better education. Similarly, some principals were more innovative and improvised materials that they did not have or which were viewed as expensive to purchase. For example where there was need to use plasticine in modelling, they used clay. This once more ensured that all areas of the curriculum were taught without omission. Learners were also encouraged and inspired to embrace creativity in their daily activities. The difference in the implementation of CBC curriculum in different schools was therefore brought about by the attitude of the principal towards the curriculum and their level of innovativeness and creativity in conducting the learning process.

VII. CONCLUSION

There are many challenges associated with education provision and management especially in the CBC era. It requires the principal to be keen in assessing the situation in their schools then making a suitable decision that will aid in either solving or minimising challenges. Effective decisions make learning to continue normally in the midst of issues that are likely to cripple the education process and system.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that principals need to explore different possible ways of handling issues in their schools for effective learning to be realized.

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