Influence of Afrocentric Curricular Activities on Inculcation of Societal Norms among Secondary School Learners in Meru County, Kenya

Joseph Muriungi Kirugua
Chuka University

Prof. Njoki Wane
Department of Social Justice Education
University of Toronto, Canada

Prof. George M. Muthaa
Department of Education, Chuka University

Dr. Dennis Murithi
Department of Physical Sciences, Chuka University

Abstract

Modern societies have entrusted schools as key socializing agents. However, cases of negative behaviors that do not conform to acceptable norms have been on the increase despite numerous interventions by government through policy reforms which raises concern among scholars and stakeholders. This study sought to examine the application of Afrocentric curricular perspective to enhance societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County, Kenya. The specific objective of the study was to establish the influence of Afrocentric curricular activities on societal norms among secondary school learners. The study adopted descriptive research design and correlational research design. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select teachers and students from the selected schools. The study utilized questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data. Data was analyzed by use of descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that integration of

African traditional music and dance, social, moral and sex education into the contemporary school system enhances societal norms. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that integration of Afrocentric education perspective into the contemporary school system would influence societal norms among secondary school learners. The researcher recommends that there is need to integrate Afrocentric curricular perspective into contemporary school system to enhance societal norms. The findings of this study will provide knowledge regarding societal norms and provide a basis for further research.

Key Words: *Influence, Afrocentric, Curricular Inculcation, Societal Norms.*

Background Information

Societal norms are vital because they create the foundation of correct behavior and ensure order in the society. Societal norms are interwoven with every day's social life in the society and they can be material, spiritual, moral aesthetic, individualistic or communal (Igboin, 2011). Africa, societal norms include conventions or customs which imply standard of behavior, mores, taboos and laws that are not written down but are expected to be exhibited by every member of the society who is properly socialized. According to Onuoha (2015) indigenous Africans embraced honesty and faithfulness in their communal living and every member of the community was encouraged to exercise high level of integrity. The norm of brotherhood, selflessness, kindness and hospitality was highly appreciated. Individualistic tendencies such as greed, corruption and individualism were discouraged.

Afrocentric perspective is an African philosophical perspective which originated in the United States. It refers to an ideology which advocates for a curriculum that is based on African perspective but aiming at global understanding (Asante, 2001). Afrocentricity advocates for promotion of learning approaches and strategies that take into consideration the African way of knowing and learning. A research study by Wilmot (2009) on African life and customs asserts that if Afrocentric perspective as an ideology is embraced in African schools, it can improve the contemporary Eurocentric education in Africa for the good of African children and their societies. According to Olaniyen (2006) Afrocentric perspective can thus assist schools to produce graduates who are assertive, conscious of their history and focused toward a better future.

A research study by Mkabela (2005) on using the Afrocentric method in researching indigenous African cultures, each people's cultural uniqueness should act as a platform of comparing and borrowing from other cultures for the purpose of improvement. According to Mkabela (2005) Afrocentric perspective is supported by Sankofa leadership techniques practiced in Ghana where the primary focus is to live in the present world while learning and borrowing valuable ideas from the past. A research study by Omolewa (2007) on the traditional African modes of education and their relevance in modern world, asserts that Afrocentric perspective advocates for a holistic school system in which children's home experiences such as storytelling, proverbs and myths play an important role in the learners schooling by providing a linkage.

Statement of the Problem

Kenyan society has entrusted the school system with the key role of socialization. The schooling process is expected to inculcate desirable societal norms among learners. However, cases of undesirable behaviors that do not conform to acceptable societal norms have been on the increase despite interventions put in place by the government and the individual educational institutions to make the learning environment in schools learner friendly. There has been growing advocacy for promotion of African values among stakeholders and educators.

This study sought to examine application of Afrocentric education perspective in school system to enhance inculcation of desirable societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County, Kenya.

Objective

This study sought to examine the influence of Afrocentric curricular activities on societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County, Kenya.

Hypothesis

The study was guided by the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant influence of Afrocentric curricular activities on societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County Kenya.

Methodology

The study used descriptive research design and correlational research design. Descriptive research design helped in conclusively describing the characteristics of the population as it was whereas correlation research design was relevant in establishing the relationship between Afrocentric curricular activities and societal norms. The target population was 86,700 subjects and the sample size was 384. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect data. The researcher ensured content, construct and face validity of the instruments through the help of university supervisors. The reliability of the research instruments was ascertained through a pilot study and the correlation coefficient that was established was 0.749.

Results and Discussions

The information got from the study showed that 44.3% 0f the respondents were male whereas 55.7% were female. The study also established that 21% of the respondents were from sub-County schools, 32.1% were from County schools, 30% were from extra-County schools and 17% were from national schools. Information was sought on Afrocentric curricular activities. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with statements on Afrocentric curricular activities. The variables were measured by a Likert-type skill with values as strongly disagree (1); disagree (2); no opinion (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). The results of frequencies and percentages of the responses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequencies of Afrocentric Curricular Activities

Afrocentric Curricular Activities	SD	D	U	A	SA
Traditional rites of passage provide forums for learners to embrace respect for authority.	13 (3.4%)	18 (4.8%)	65 (17.2%)	165 (43.8%)	116 (30.8%)
Music and dance that emphasize on good morals promote acceptable values.	4 (1.1%)	13 (3.4%)	46 (12.2%)	197 (52.3%)	117 (31%)
Sex education promotes respect for the sacredness of family unit.	1 (0.3%)	7 (1.9%)	49 (13%)	172 (45.6%)	148 (39.3%)
Sex education promotes faithfulness among learners.	7 (1.9%)	19 (5%)	41 (10.9%)	170 (45.1%)	140 (37.1%)
Traditional moral education promotes honesty among young people.	0%	7 (1.9%)	38 (10.1%)	179 (47.5%)	152 (40.3%)
African indigenous languages promote cultural diversity.	6 (1.6%)	10 (2.7%)	46 (12.2%)	174 (46.2%)	141 (37.4%)
Social education promotes cohesiveness among learners.	4 (1.1%)	14 (3.7%)	25 (6.6%)	163 (43.2%)	171 (45.4%)

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, U = Undecided, A = Agree, SA = Strongly agree

Table 1 shows that the highest percentage (45.4%) of respondents who strongly agreed with the statements indicated that social education promotes cohesiveness among learners. This implies that the respondents strongly agreed that social education in the traditional African set up promoted people's unity in the society. These results agree with a study by Emeakaroha (2002) on African world and ideology which asserts that African curriculum was anchored on social activities through which various desirable norms and values were caught by the young people. The results also indicate that the highest percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed with the statements that traditional rites of passage provide forums for learners to embrace respect for authority was 3.4%. Table 1 further indicates that the highest percentage (52.3%) of respondents who agreed with statements indicated that music and dance that emphasize on good morals promote acceptable values while the highest percentage that disagreed that sex education promotes faithfulness among learners was 5%. The results in Table 1 also reveal that all the statements on Afrocentric curricular activities had high percentage responses of above 40%. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements and further implies that Afrocentric curricular activities had the potential of promoting societal norms. These findings agree with the findings of a study by Debbie (2015) on value of hidden curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago which established that traditional curricular activities promoted desirable norms in the traditional societies.

The information on frequencies and percentages was further analyzed and mean and standard deviation of the responses were computed. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Afrocentric Curricular Activities

Afrocentric Curricular Activities	N	Mean	SD	CV
Traditional rites of passage provided forums for learners to embrace respect for authority.	377	3.94	0.990	25.149
Music and dance that emphasize on good morals promotes acceptable values.	377	4.09	0.812	19.873
Sex education promotes respect for the sacredness of family unit.	377	4.22	0.758	17.978
Sex education promotes faithfulness amongst the learners.	377	4.11	0.916	22.318
Traditional moral education promotes honesty among young people.	376	4.27	0.714	16.747
African indigenous languages promote cultural diversity	377	4.15	0.851	20.503
Social education promotes cohesiveness among the learners.	377	4.28	0.829	19.356
Overall Mean Score	377	4.15	0.839	20.275

The research findings in Table 2 indicate that social education promoting cohesiveness among the learners had the highest mean score of 4.28 while traditional rites of passage providing forum for learners to embrace respect for authority had the least mean score of 3.94. This implies that most of the respondents were of the opinion that social education promotes cohesiveness among learners. The results in Table 2 also reveal that all measures had a mean score of above 4.00, ranging from 4.09 to 4.28 except on traditional rites of passage providing forums for learners to embrace respect for authority which had the least mean score of 3.94. Therefore all the measures had high agreement response with an overall mean score of 4.15. This overall mean score is between agreeing and strongly agree. The high rating mean score of the variable parameters imply that the respondents were in agreement that Afrocentric curricular activities enhance societal norms among learners.

These research results agree with results of studies by Naem (2014) in Karachi on hidden curriculum and education which established that norms and values are effectively inculcated on learners through social activities that are well thought of and deliberately designed to achieve the desired objectives.

Correlation of Afrocentric Curricular Activities and Societal Norms

The current study sought to examine the application of Afrocentric education perspective into school system on societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County, Kenya. A correlation analysis was conducted in order to assess the relationships between Afrocentric curricular and societal norms. The correlation results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Afrocentric Curricular Activities and Societal Norms

		Societal Norms	Integrated Afrocentric Curricular Activities
Societal Norms	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	377	
	N	377	
Afrocentric Curricular Activities	Pearson Correlation	.456**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	377	377

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results presented in Table 3 show notable degree of relationship between societal norms and Afrocentric curricular activities. The results indicate that Afrocentric curricular activities have a positive fair correlation with societal norms ($r = 0.456$, $p > 0.01$; sig. 2-tailed = $0.000 < 0.05$). This correlation suggests that societal norms may be inculcated through integration of Afrocentric curricular activities but there are other factors which influence inculcation of societal norms in secondary schools besides curricular activities. These results agree with the findings of a similar study by Sena (2006) on core curriculum guide for strengthening morals and values education in educational institutions in Trinidad and Tobago which found out that a country's education system can benefit most from embracing an integrated curriculum which involves connections across disciplines or real life social activities.

Regression of Afrocentric Curricular Activities and Societal Norms

The objective of the current study was to establish the influence of integration of Afrocentric curricular activities on societal norms among secondary school learners. To assess Afrocentric curricular activities and societal norms' relationship, the following hypothesis was tested:

H_0**:** *There is no statistically significant influence of Afrocentric curricular activities on societal norms among secondary school learners in Meru County, Kenya.*

In order to test this hypothesis, a linear regression analysis was conducted at 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$). The Afrocentric curricular activities were regressed against societal norms in order to establish the goodness of fit, the overall significance of the Model and the individual significance of the Model. The results are shown in Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6.

The researcher regressed the integration of Afrocentric curricular activities against societal norms to establish the percentage of variation that was explained by independent variable in the Model. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: The Goodness of Fit of Model

Model		R	R Square	ARS	SEE
Afrocentric Curricular activities		.456	0.208	0.206	0.52795

The results of the regression analysis indicate that 20.8% of the variation in societal norms is explained by the integration of Afrocentric curricular activities. The coefficient of determination is 0.208. On the basis of these results, the study revealed that integrating Afrocentric curricular activities into the contemporary curricular activities contribute significantly towards societal norms. These results agree with Ubrurhe (2000) on Nigerian people and culture who argue that Traditional African curricular design took care of everyone in the society without discriminating or favoring others. The researcher did an analysis of variance to assess the robustness and overall significance of the model. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: The Overall Significance of the Model

Model		SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
	Regression	27.423	1	27.423	98.385	.000
Afrocentric Curricular Activities	Residual	104.523	375	0.279		
	Total	131.946	376			

The results presented in Table 5 show that integration of Afrocentric curricular activities significantly influence societal norms with F statistics = 98.385 and a p-value 0.000 < 0.05. This implies that the regression Model is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The researcher sought to establish the significance of individual variables in the Model. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: The Individual Significance of the Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	S E	Beta	T	Sig.
Afrocentric Curricular Activities	(Constant)	1.377	0.253		5.443	0.000
	Integrated Curricular Activities	0.675	0.068	0.456	9.919	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Societal Norms

The results in Table 6 show that there exists a significant relationship between integrated Afrocentric curricular activities and societal norms at 5% level of significance (p-value = 0.000 < 0.05). This implies that for one unit change in integrated Afrocentric curricular activities, societal norms increase by a factor of 0.675. The predictive Model for societal norms in respect to integrated Afrocentric curricular activities can be stated as follows:

Y = 1.377 + 0.675 X$_1$

Where Y = Societal norms

X$_1$ = integrated Afrocentric curricular activities

1.377 is the constant

0.675 is the regression coefficient that shows the expected increase in societal norms when there is a unit increase in integrated Afrocentric curricular activities.

Conclusively, the study revealed that integration of Afrocentric curricular activities influence societal norms at 5% level of significance. The null Hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between Afrocentric curricular activities and societal norms is not supported in the current study.

The study found that integrating Afrocentric curricular activities into contemporary curricular contribute to enhancement of societal norms. This study is in line with a study carried out in Karachi on hidden curriculum and education by Naem (2014) which established that school educational activities inside and outside the school classroom provides rich forums through which desirable societal norms can be inculcated. The result of this study further agrees with similar studies by Skorupski (2010) which found that participation in sports has a significant positive impact on the social life of students because they help to establish social interactions between students from different schools. This interaction eventually forms a sphere of motivated, responsible peers. These studies also agree with the current study as they established that through students' participation in sports and many other extra-curricular activities, their communication skills are enhanced which enables students to cope with their feelings of social anxiety.

The findings of the current study however disagree with a study by Stone (2003) on extra-curricular activities and adolescent development which observed that certain curricular activities especially sports which create a specific area of activity, place adolescents in a group of risk. The findings of the current study further disagree with a similar study by Metzger (2009) who established that participation especially in co-curricular activities has the potential negative impact on students' discipline and therefore may not enhance societal norms. Metzger (2009) established that co-curricular activities can consume too much of students' time thus making them to lose focus.

Conclusions

Based on the objective of the current study, the following conclusion was made:

The researcher concludes that Afrocentric curricular activities have influence on societal norms among secondary school learners. This is explained by integration of Afrocentric curricular activities into the contemporary school system which had a high coefficient of determination. A unit change in integration of Afrocentric curricular activities registered the highest increase in societal norms. It can therefore be concluded that proper integration of Afrocentric curricular activities into the contemporary curricular activities will significantly enhance societal norms among secondary school students.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that there is need to integrate Afrocentric curricular activities such as African traditional dances and music, social and moral education into the contemporary school system to enhance societal norms among secondary school students.

Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher suggests that an investigation on Afrocentric family socialization should be carried out to establish the foundation laid by family upbringing and its influence on societal norms among school learners.

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