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## **Effect of Teachers' Involvement in Socio-Economic Activities on Curriculum Implementation in Secondary Schools in Kakamega Sub-County, Western Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper sought to establish the effect of teachers' involvement in various socio-economic activities on curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Kakamega North Sub-County, Western Kenya. This was motivated by the fact that teachers are expected to dedicate most of their time nurturing the students entrusted to them. It has however been observed that many teachers are engaged in other activities outside their profession which could have an impact on their performance as teachers and consequently, affect their implementation of the curriculum. The study population comprised of 12346 students, 360 teachers, and 40 Principals of secondary schools, 3 sponsors and the Sub County Education officer. Using stratified random sampling, purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques, a representative sample of 12 secondary schools, 617 students, 108 teachers, 12 Principals, 3 sponsors and the Sub County Education Officer were used. The study employed a descriptive Survey Study Design. Instruments for data collection included questionnaires, interview schedule, observation and document analysis.. The study found out that teachers' involvement in various socio-economic activities alongside teaching has an impact on curriculum implementation, though there are other contributory factors. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education comes up with clear work policy guidelines in the teaching profession and establish an attractive remuneration package for the teachers for them to handle curriculum implementation process effectively, consequently improving students' performance at secondary school level.*

***Key words: socio-economic activities, curriculum implementation, performance.***

**1.1 Background:** Belket (2010) says that more teachers than ever are disenchanted with their vocation and believe that the grass is greener elsewhere. Research by the association of teachers has found that two-thirds of teachers have considered leaving the profession. Happily, teaching skills are highly transferrable to positions beyond the classroom and prized in sectors outside education.

Teachers are believed to be one of the most talented and respected people in our society. This talent can help them excel in any field, in which they wish to enter. Almost all teachers have qualities like patience, logical thinking, confidence and communication skills which can help them become successful in different fields. Given below are some alternative career options for teachers. Some of these options apply to the Kenyan context while others are not fully applicable to Kenya.

Online jobs can provide an ideal alternative career for teachers as they can earn a good amount of money by working consistently for a few hours every day. The job of online tutor would suit teachers the best. There are many websites which are in search of online tutors. You can approach any legitimate website and earn money by guiding students on that particular website. Teachers are making extra money providing materials to their cash strapped and time limited colleagues on curriculum sharing sites, providing an alternative to more traditional and generally more expensive school supply stores. Many districts, teachers and parents say these sites are saving teachers time and money, and giving educators a quick way to make extra income. Dozens of internet forums have been created to help teachers distribute their material and pick up ideas from other educators. There is a lot of money to potentially be made.

Teachers can use their experience in specialized areas to start business. For instance, those who were teaching finance can think of starting a financial services firm. Becoming a real estate agent by starting your own firm or becoming a real estate developer by starting a construction company would also be a brilliant option for teachers. The restaurant business can also be a fine alternative career for them, if they have the passion for it.

Teachers with vast experience can try entering the competitive and well-paying field of research and development. They can enroll for research programmes in their subject of interest in premier research institutions and work as research associates. This will surely enhance their own knowledge and help students who will study their research reports.

Teachers who are experienced and have a profound knowledge of their subject can become great writers. Writing is actually an opportunity for them to share their knowledge with millions of people who read books. They can also include some of their personal experiences to make the book interactive. Finding a publishing house to bring the book onto stands would not be a difficult task for established academicians.

Teachers can guide students in choosing their career by taking effective guidance and help from career counselors. Teachers who have become career counselors can help them in finding good universities to study and seek guidance as to which courses are in demand in the job market. They can also guide students about getting jobs and suggest ways to climb the corporate ladder faster. Starting your own consulting centre is possible with consistent efforts, dedication and a firm desire to help students.

Teachers who have hobbies like drawing, sketching, painting, sculpture, music, singing and others can try to convert them into fulltime careers. Painters can try to arrange for an

exhibition of some of their beautiful paintings. You can get in touch with art stores and establish yourself as an ace artist. If you are good at sports such as chess, you can join a coaching centre and learn the advanced lessons in this sport. Then participating in competitions and championships would be the next obvious step.

Sales skills came easily when former primary school teacher Paul Guinane set up an ICT services company, softeg. He now employs 19 consultants and earns 15 percent more than his teacher's salary. Film locator: Becoming a film locator is a glamorous choice with the prospect of exotic travel and hobnobbing with film crews and stars.

According to Singh (2013), mass education in India appears to be in a degrading condition. Education imparted by some teachers is far from satisfactory. They are involved in private tuition and coaching centres to get some remuneration. Many parents cannot educate their children in costly public schools. Commitment on the part of the teachers has been reduced to a great extent. Therefore there is a need to make the teachers aware of their accountability to their profession.

**1.2 Reasons why teachers engage in the socio-economic activities:** Need to supplement low pay: McLelland (1985) notes that monetary incentives are actually more effective with people whose achievement drives are relatively weak, because they need some kind of external reward to increase their effort. Dove (1970) asserts that the status of teachers is generally poor as compared to doctors and lawyers. This partly has to do with poor salaries, poor working conditions and terms of service and future prospects. James et al (1988) says that for working an average of 184 days a year and spending about 8 hours each day at school, teachers earn an average of £ 23,325. Most believe that taking into consideration academic preparation, teaching experience and responsibilities, the salary level is not appropriate and that teachers should earn an average of £ 30,000 per year. He says that too much paper work, insufficient time for class preparation, lack of concern support from parents and inadequate salary are their most serious problems. Findings by a report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education calling for educational reform in America says that salaries for the teaching profession should be increased and should be professionally competitive, market sensitive and performance based.

Shiundu and Omulando (1992) indicate that there is pressure by teachers and their unions/associations for better pay, conditions of service, good working environment and promotion prospects. When teachers have no access to these favorable conditions, some decide to engage in certain socio-economic activities which jeopardize their school work.

Sadker and Sadker (2012) imply that teachers are like second class citizens due to the meager wages they get as compared to other professionals. Although teachers' salaries have improved, they still lag behind what most people would call a good income. Anyone trying to support a family on a teacher's salary will tell you that it is a far cry from wealth and prosperity. Many hold down two or more jobs in order to make ends meet. He questions how dedicated and excellent teachers are recognized and rewarded. He says that without formal and meaningful recognition, frustration may well follow. He outlines some of the

reform efforts implemented by the US government to make teachers feel appreciated and recognized i.e. merit pay and career ladders.

Merit pay plans attempt to make teaching more accountable, as well as more financially rewarding, by linking teacher performance and teacher salary. Career ladder programmes is designed to create different levels for teachers by creating “ladder” that one can climb to receive increased pay through increased work responsibility and status. Teachers who deserve it should be able to earn something more – more money, more respect. This view is held by thousands of teachers struggling for professional recognition. Working hard in a demanding profession, teachers often do not feel valued or appreciated and many leave the field each year as a result.

Everand *et al* (2004) argues that despite every effort there will remain individuals who have no wish to be ‘motivated’ and who view with suspicion any attempt to increase their responsibilities, job interest or involvement. Such attitudes may typically be found in caretakers, ancillary staff or teachers who are frustrated. This poses food for thought in that even if teachers’ salaries are increased, it might not necessarily make them add effort in their professional work and reconsider their engagements in other socio-economic activities. Sanders (1908) say that teaching has two sides; there is the schoolroom side and the public or community side. You cannot be a successful teacher without mastering the first. You cannot hold your job long unless you have some skill in the second. Your success in a community is often measured more by the second than the first. In fact the good you do, the influence you exert on the lives of the pupils, the net results of your work, is often a reflex of your skill and ability to get along with the people, to get their respect, good will and hearty cooperation. You must know how to meet and mingle with people. The teacher is often one of the community, and many times of the immediate neighborhood.

To relieve stresses of classroom teaching and pressure: Bio (2009) argues that as with any profession, teaching comes with its share of joys and difficulties. The difficulties of the teaching profession are not always well understood by the public, but those familiar with teaching are well aware of the pressures that teachers face. Some of the pressures that teachers all over face include time management, extra-curricular duties and isolation. He suggests some of the things teachers can do to deal with the pressures of their jobs, such as being balanced by scheduling times to do relaxing and healthy activities; look for support, as isolation is a serious problem in the teaching profession that does not need to exist. Reach out for support, as there are those who are willing to provide it.

As a fall back plan/incase of any emergency: In our world today, teachers need to be on the alert and ready to adjust to anything. You as educators and leaders need to be prepared to open alternative windows when the ‘storms of life’ close the classroom doors. What do you do when the community school levies fail to pass, again and school districts are forced to mandate ‘a hiring freeze’ and/or decrease the number of teachers employed by local districts? What do you do when communities close schools in local districts and drastically cut budgets in others? What can teachers if they cannot find a teaching job?

Wanyeki *et al* (2003) explain that after introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes, the number of private schools increased as parents lost confidence in public education, which was characterized by low morale among the teachers and deteriorating education standards. The welfare of teachers in public schools has been neglected as is expressed by the incessant teachers' strikes. Poverty among public school teachers who cannot cope with increasing inflation in the country is a demoralizing factor which ultimately has negative ramifications on the students. Throughout the country today, teachers have to be paid extra money by parents in order to provide private tuition to the pupils therefore making the heavy burden carried by parents even heavier.

Belket (2010) says that we rarely see doctors, engineers, pharmacists demonstrating and as much as we would like to attribute this to the relatively better salaries awarded to these professions, it has a lot to do with the prestige associated with these professions. These professions have bodies that regulate the entrance of new members, and that is exactly what teachers lack; a professional body to check who qualifies to be a teacher and who does not. Teachers Unions in Kenya seem convinced that fixing the salary will solve all the teachers' problems, but it won't. He says that to him, teachers want a better package but what they need more is some respect for their profession.

**2.1 Methodology:** The study population comprised of 12346 students, 360 teachers, and 40 Principals of secondary schools, 3 sponsors and the Sub County Education Officer. Using stratified random sampling, purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques, a representative sample of subjects was selected; thus 12 secondary schools within the sub-county was used, 617 students, 108 teachers, 12 Principals, 3 sponsors and the Sub County Education Officer. The study employed a Descriptive Survey Study Design. Instruments for data collection included questionnaires, interview schedule, observation and document analysis. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, the mean and mode. Data presentation was done by use of figures, tables graphs and pie charts.

### **3.1 Discussion of findings:**

**3.1.1 Types of Socio-Economic Activities Teachers Engage In:** From the various respondents a variety of socio-economic activities which teachers engage in were identified as summarized in table 1 given below;

**Table 1: Types of Activities Teachers Engage In**

Respo ndent	Type of Activity															
	Business	%	Farming	%	Studies	%	Sports	%	Community Work	%	Comb. of Several	%	None	%	Total	%
Students	240	39.8	162	26.87	81	13.43	15	2.49	4	0.67	2	0.33	0	0.00	504	83.58
Teachers	10	1.66	40	6.63	16	2.65	10	1.66	6	0.99	4	0.66	2	0.33	88	14.59
Principals	3	0.5	1	0.17	1	0.17	1	0.17	1	0.17	2	0.33	2	0.33	11	1.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>41.9</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

Forty one point nine percent of the respondents (students, teachers, principals) cited various forms of businesses as the main activities engaged in. The businesses identified included operating of matatus, motorcycles, posho mills, shops, selling second hand clothes, running saloons, hotels, selling and buying of livestock. 33.6% cited various forms of farming such as crop farming, livestock rearing, fish keeping and poultry. Further, 16.2% cited undertaking of further studies, 4.3% are involved in sporting activities, 1.8% in community work, and 1.3% in others while 0.3% are not involved in any. The Education officer and the sponsors also confirmed that the teachers are indeed involved in some of the mentioned activities.

**3.1.2 Times when the Socio-Economic Activities are Carried Out:** From the various responses, it was noted that teachers carry out these activities during different times. Sixty seven students (11.1%) agreed that the activities are carried out during school days, 272 (45%) said that its mainly over the weekend, 163 (27.0%) said its carried out during the school holidays, 2 (0.3%) indicated that they are being carried out always. From the teachers, 8 (1.3%) said that the activities are carried out during school days, 54 (8.9%) said

that it happens over the weekends, 24 (3.9%) indicated school holidays, and 2 (0.3%) indicated no involvement in activities during any time. According to the principals 1 (0.2%) indicated that the activities are mostly carried out during the school days, 3 (0.5%) indicated weekends, 4 (0.7%) cited school holidays, 1 (0.2%) said the activities are attended to always, while 2 (0.3%) indicated non awareness of such occurrences. The sponsors and the Sub County Education Officer indicated that most teachers carry out these activities over the weekends and school holidays. This information is summarized in Table 2 given.

**Table 2: Time of Carrying Out the Activities**

	School Days	%	Weekends	%	School Holidays	%	Always %	N/A %	Total	%
Students	67	11.1	272	45	163	37.0	2 0.3	-	504	83.6
Teachers	8	1.3	54	8.9	24	23.9	0 0	2 0.3	88	14.6
Principals	1	0.2	3	0.5	4	0.7	1 0.2	2 0.3	11	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>3 0.5</b>	<b>4 0.7</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>100</b>

Source; field data

Generally the activities are carried out mostly during weekends with 54.5%, followed by the activities during school holidays at 31.6%. Therefore most of the activities are done when the schools are not in session raising possibility of a slight impact on curriculum implementation.

**3.1.3 Factors that Caused the Teacher to Engage in the Socio-Economic Activities:**

From the findings of the study, several reasons that prompted the teachers to get involved in various socio-economic activities were identified. Such factors included:

- i) Low pay, thus need to increase income. Most teachers indicated dissatisfaction about their salaries which they said were too low to sustain them comfortably, thus need to supplement as the economic situation demands so.
- ii) Need to increase knowledge, and this earns promotions and salary increment. Since the Teachers' Service Commission in Kenya is very particular on promotions and advancement in education as part of the criteria for the promotions, many teachers have decided to go back to class to advance their education.
- iii) As a hobby; to nurture talent and avoid idleness. A substantial number of teachers said that occasionally they do have some free time which they do make use of constructively.
- iv) Helping other people and as a way of giving back to the community.
- v) Preparation as a fallback plan upon retirement, retrenchment or interdiction.
- vi) To sustain the extended family as the dependency ratio is so high. This data is summarized in Table 4.11 below.

**Table 3.: Teachers and Factors Causing them to Engage in the Socio-Economic Activities**

	Low Pay	%	Increase Knowledge	%	Hobby	%	Others	%	N/A	%	Total	%
Male	24	27.2	10	11.4	9	10.2	2	2.3	2	2.3	47	53.4
Female	23	26.1	8	9.1	9	10.2	0	0	1	1.1	41	46.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53.4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100</b>

A very large number of the teachers 53.4% cited low payments in the profession as the main factor driving them into these activities thus need to supplement, as compared to those who cited other reasons who formed only 43.2% and 3 (3.4%) who said that they are not involved.

**3.1.3 Gender Distribution of Teachers Mostly Involved in the Socio-Economic Activities:** From the study, it was found out that the male teachers were more involved in carrying out the socio-economic activities as compared to their female counterparts. It is however evident that to some extent both male and female teachers are involved in the socio-economic activities as indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4: Teachers mostly involved in the Socio-Economic Activities**

Respondent	M	%	F	%	M/F	%	None	%	Total	%
Students	327	55.2	126	21.2	51	8.6	0	0	504	85.1
Teachers	43	7.3	40	6.8	3	0.5	2	0.3	88	14.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data**

From the above Table, 327 (55.2%) of the students were of the opinion that the male teachers were more involved while 126 (21.2%) suggested that the female teachers were more involved. 51(8.6%) indicated that both male and female teachers are involved. From the teachers perspective 43 (7.3%) indicated that the male teachers are more involved, while 40 (6.8%) indicated prevalence of the female teachers in the activities, 3 (0.5%) indicated both male and female are involved while 2 (0.3%) indicated no knowledge of those involved.

**3.1.5 How the Involvement in Socio-Economic Activities Affects Curriculum Implementation:** Teacher's involvement in various socio-economic activities affects curriculum implementation significantly. It affects the teacher's commitment, concentration on class work as they are eyeing profits: Some teachers come to school late or fail to come to school and they may not make up for the lost lessons: It affects syllabus coverage, as less time is apportioned to teaching, and co-curricular activities are neglected since teachers would wish to attend to their own activities instead of "wasting" time on co-curricular.



**Table 5. How the Involvement in Socio-Economic Activities Affects Curriculum Implementation**

Respondent	Very Significant	%	Significantly	%	Insignificant	%	Nil	%	Total	%
Students	259	42.6	241	39.7	4	0.7	-	-	504	83.0
Teachers	6	0.9	10	1.6	70	11.5	2	0.3	88	14.5
Principals	2	0.3	6	0.9	1	0.2	2	0.3	11	1.8
Sponsor	-	-	3	0.5	-	-	-	-	3	0.5
SCEO	-	-	-	0.2	-	-	-	-	1	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

From the above data, most respondents, 43.9% indicated that the effect on curriculum implementation is very significant, 42.9% indicated that the effect is significant, 12.3% indicated that the effect is insignificant while 0.6% indicated that the effect is nil. This information is summarized in figure 4.5 below.

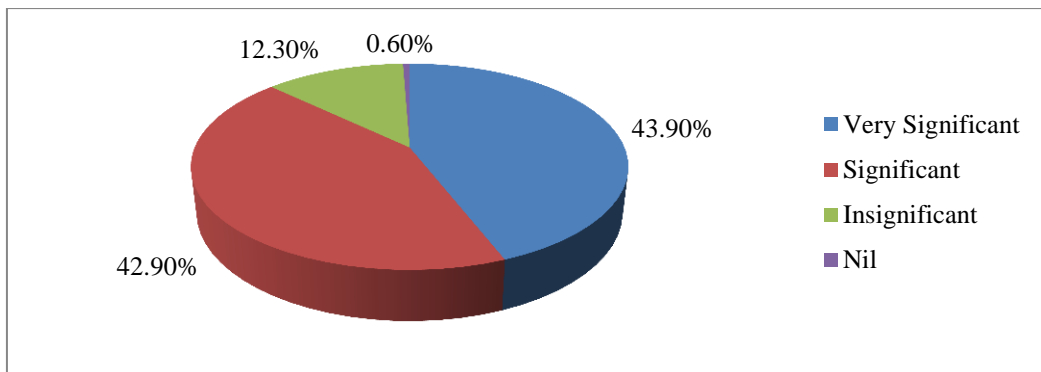


Figure 1: How the involvement affects curriculum implementation

**4.1 Conclusion:** Different teachers had different reasons for their engagement in the socio-economic activities. However, the overriding cause is low pay. Both the male and female teachers are engaged in these activities and at different times of the calendar year. The teachers involvement in the socio-economic activities significantly affects curriculum implementation especially with regard to commitment and concentration. The research found out that there are other factors that could be contributing to poor Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in Kakamega North Sub-County other than the teachers involvement in socio-economic activities which affect curriculum implementation.

However, there is no single strategy that can be employed to enhance the teachers' curriculum delivery, but several strategies have to be employed towards this goal.

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