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THE ROLE OF TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS AND MANAGERIAL SUPPORT IN IMPLEMENTATION OF HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT CURRICULUM IN WARENG DISTRICT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes an assessment of the extent of professional support that the teachers of History and Government subject are accorded by the schools' management. The study investigated the challenges of teaching History and Government in Kenyan secondary schools as experienced by teachers in Wareng District, located in the North Rift region of Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select a sample of 120 respondents from the History and Government teachers of the secondary schools in the study area. Questionnaires, interview and observation schedules were used to collect data. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. These comprised frequencies and percentages. Data collected was presented using tables. The study revealed that there was inadequate support in the acquisition and purchasing of instructional materials for teaching the subject, teacher recruitment issues, provision of funds for seminars and workshops, and rewarding of high performing teachers. Most teachers also reported underestimation of the importance of History and Government subject by the head teachers of their school. The study recommends the need for professional managerial support to the teaching of history and government in secondary schools. The findings of this study are intended to benefit the school management, teaching staff, educational planners and other stakeholders in identifying the challenges faced by teachers and adopting concerted efforts to overcome them.

Keywords: Managerial support, History, Government, Wareng district

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the efforts by schools to improve on the performance of students in History and Government subject in Kenya's secondary schools, there have been a number of challenges which affect History and Government teachers in performing their duties and thus adversely affecting students' learning. This paper seeks to ascertain the challenges relating to the provision of

managerial support in schools for the teaching and learning of History and Government as perceived by teachers in secondary schools.

The teaching of History and Government has been faced with problems related to managerial support. Studies have identified and attempted to suggest solutions to this problem. As reported by [Kabau \(1983\)](#), problems to the teaching of social studies include the lack of variety in instruction, the theoretical nature of the social studies curricula, lack of interaction between the various participants, the culture of the school which gave priority to matters of management and control rather than teaching and learning.

It is important to note that teaching is in essence the implementation of the set curriculum in schools. As such, the challenges that impede teachers' effectiveness in teaching are in fact hindering the successful implementation of the curriculum. Successful implementation of a new curriculum is directly related to immediate administrator support. [McNeil \(1985\)](#) suggests that for successful implementation, intensive staff development where the principal serves as the instructional leader by encouraging teachers to take responsibility for their professional growth is a prerequisite. McNeil (*ibid.*) argues that in order for success to be derived from staff training, support activities need to be present through classroom assistance by resource personnel, outside consultants and project meetings whereby teachers learn to adapt to the new curriculum.

According to [Ndaloh \(1999\)](#), in a study on constraints on effective social studies' instruction, for an innovation to succeed the teacher must be trained in the area, instructional materials must be available, the innovation must be made clear to the implementers and that there should be proper management support. The greater responsibility of these activities lies with the schools' managements. There has been a shortage of text books and other teaching and learning materials in most of the schools where studies have been done. Management support to the teaching and learning of social studies has been found to be lacklustre. Most Ministry of Education officials and even head teachers have been impaired in one way or the other in enhancing social studies instruction in their areas of jurisdiction ([Shiundu, 1988; Ondimu, 1995; Ndaloh, 1999](#)).

[Wainaina \(1984\)](#), in a study of problems facing the teaching of Christian Religious Education in secondary schools, points out that inadequacy of in-service training kills the morale of teachers. The long-served teachers stand a better chance of being in-serviced as compared to those who are new in the service. Wainaina (*ibid.*) also notes that teachers complain about the wide syllabus which is not covered in the stipulated time hence inadequate coverage of a programme. For an innovation to succeed there ought to be enough professional management support. As [Gross *et al.* \(1971\)](#) assert, the management should be committed to an innovation it expects the teachers to implement and to provide effective mechanisms and decision-making procedures to cope with anticipated and unanticipated problems that may arise. Similar sentiments have been echoed by

Fullan (1992) that the principal's role was crucial in taking action and helping to create the conditions for others to take action for an innovation to succeed.

Browne (as cited in Ondimu, 1995) points out that the educational managers should ensure that any information about new programmes reaches the teacher at the right time. Managers can ensure proper communication with the teachers by organizing in-service courses, workshops and seminars. The school management can also motivate teachers by giving them incentives, to enable them partake of instructional duties with vigour. In a study carried out by Lijembe (1983), it was found that the Heads of Schools are not conversant with the goals and objectives of teaching social studies. The school administration was found to be uncooperative in organizing trips, in getting resource materials and in establishing cordial relations with the neighbouring communities. In the study by Ondimu (1995), management support by the Ministry of Education towards helping teachers teach the social studies course as recommended as well as solving the problems affecting the teaching and learning of social studies was found to be insufficient.

What emerges from these studies is that there is inadequate management support in the areas of provision of teaching and learning materials, time allocation to the teaching and learning of the subject, lack of seminars and in-service courses to equip the teachers with new knowledge and skills in the subject. These studies were based mainly on primary schools and therefore the findings might not be true of secondary schools. This paper examines the management support that is accorded to the teaching of History and Government in secondary schools.

From the studies above, it has been shown that there exists a challenge on effective teaching and learning of History and Government subject. The main areas that have been examined are: attitudes of teachers towards History and Government, availability and use of instructional materials, methods of instruction and management support. It clearly emerges that there is very little knowledge on the problems facing the teaching and learning of History and Government subject in secondary schools in Kenya.

The Role of Managerial Support in Curriculum Implementation

This study was guided by the underpinnings of the theory of implementation of curriculum innovations advanced by Gross *et al.* (1971). They argue that the degree to which a curriculum is implemented is a function of the extent to which five conditions are present during the process of implementation. These conditions are: the attitude of the implementers, recipients as well as other stakeholders of the new curriculum; the support provided by the management staff; the availability of facilities and equipment; the degree to which members of the school organization are clear and aware about the scope and content of the curriculum; the extent to which members of the school organization possess the capabilities and competencies needed to carry out the process of curriculum implementation; existing organizational arrangement and the willingness to expend the time and effort for the implementation of the curriculum.

According to [Gross et al. \(1971\)](#), for implementation to take place, there are certain conditions which should be fulfilled namely:

1. The degree to which the members of an organization develop a clear understanding of the innovation; hence the need to sensitize people to accept the innovation. Do the teachers and learners appreciate the significance of History and Government subject?
2. The extent to which the members of an organization possess the capability needed to carry out innovation. Consequently, teachers ought to effectively teach History and Government to create relevance among the learners.
3. The need for training of teachers, the availability of materials and other resources required and sufficient management support. The teaching of History and Government in schools need adequate resources in terms of manpower, facilities and appropriate methodologies for delivery.

Similarly, [Fullan \(1992\)](#) suggests some indicators that can be seen as important determinants of effective implementation of a curriculum. These include: the clarity of the school policy with respect to the objectives of the curriculum taught; the organization of the staff development activities; the establishment of procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and the supply of technical support to the teachers in need of help. It is clear that the management carries the greatest responsibility in ensuring these determinants are in place. Other curriculum theorists, [Oluoch \(1982\)](#), and [Shiundu and Omulando \(1992\)](#), agree with [Gross et al. \(1971\)](#) and [Fullan \(1992\)](#) that the right conditions necessary for implementation are changing attitudes of people involved in the implementation process, providing adequate facilities and equipment, providing sufficient and continuous administrative support to teachers and persuading a variety of people about the need for the innovation and its acceptance. The schools' managements are therefore tasked with ensuring the following conditions for implementation are in place:

1. Positive attitude of teachers, administrators, policy makers and other stakeholders in education
2. Providing sufficient and continuous administrative or management support
3. Providing adequate teaching and learning materials and other resources
4. Training teachers' educators and supervisors

This paper, therefore, utilizes the ideas of these scholars to investigate the managerial support accorded to teachers for the teaching of History and Government in secondary schools in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

The History and Government teachers in Kenya's secondary schools face a number of challenges. These challenges range from the teaching methods, the teaching resources, their availability and the managerial support ([Eshiwani, 1992](#); [Tonne et al., 1998](#)). In most cases, students regard the subject as a subsidiary compared with other subjects like Mathematics, English, Kiswahili and the sciences. This creates a situation in which the History and Government lessons are never taken

seriously by students who believe that the subject is not essential to the current job market. The History and Government teacher, therefore, faces a difficult task in convincing the students that the subject is essential to their future professional development (Kochhar, 1984). To do this, teachers need support from the school management, among other stakeholders.

Lack of direct relevance to the job market is compounded by the fact that the History and Government teachers rarely impart practical skills to the learner. This makes the teacher to rely on theoretical skills. The greatest challenge in this case lies in how practical skills can be incorporated in the teaching of the subject and their unwillingness to invest in the teaching and learning materials. Funds from the government are allocated more on technical and science subjects compared to humanities on the pretext that humanities are subsidiary.

There has been a shortage of text books and other teaching and learning materials in most of the schools where studies have been done. Management support to the teaching and learning of History and Government has also been found to be lacklustre with the support given to History and Government teachers wanting. These coupled with the negative attitudes of teachers towards the subject have affected the teaching and learning of History and Government. It was against this background that this study was undertaken.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to understanding the challenges facing the teaching and learning of History and Government in Wareng District in Kenya only. With respect to this paper, the management support accorded to teachers towards the improvement of teaching and learning of the subject may be informed by many other factors which can only be limited to their respective institutions and regions. As such, the findings discussed in this paper may not be generalized to all schools. Nevertheless, the study provides a framework based on which similar studies could be replicated in other schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Kesses and Kapseret Divisions of Wareng District in Uasin Gishu County. Wareng District is a cosmopolitan region in which almost all Kenyan ethnic groups are represented. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which investigated and made a detailed examination of selected phenomena. The design allows for the use of descriptive statistics as a method of data analysis. The research design was adopted as it permits research to go beyond the statistical data gathered. The target population for the study was the teachers of History and Government in Forms Three and Four in the 33 schools in the District, an average of 3 to 4 per school since other schools have double streams. The teachers were earmarked for the study since they are the ones who teach History and Government and are aware of the challenges they face. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select schools and subjects

that participated in the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 33 out of 42 schools which were categorized into public and private. Non-probability sampling technique was used to select 120 respondents.

For data collection, questionnaires, interview schedules and observation guides were used to collect data for the study. Interviews were conducted with the teachers and heads of departments. The designed questionnaire was divided in two parts: part one consisted of statements seeking information on respondent's background. This was necessary in describing the nature of respondents who participated in this study ([Mwaniki, 1984](#)). Part two consisted of statements soliciting information regarding teachers' preparation, instructional approaches, development and administration of instructional media, attitudes and managerial support to teachers. The author also made observations of lessons in randomly selected History and Government classes in the sampled schools. This enabled the author to cross check the information given through the questionnaire and interviews on the availability and use of instructional materials, instructional products, procedure of teaching content and the methods and approaches used.

To facilitate the analysis, the raw data from the tests were summarized in tables and coded before they were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were then used to describe and present the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The History and Government Teachers' Characteristics

The researcher sought to determine the demographic characteristics of the teacher respondents and in order to understand the teachers' capacity to implement the History and Government curriculum.

Teachers' Gender

The distribution of the History teachers by gender is presented in Table 1. The study involved 120 History and Government teachers and from the study, there were 52(43%) female teachers and 68(57%) male teachers. From the study findings, there are more male teachers as compared to females which can be attributed to the staffing issues. The teachers were drawn from the schools that participated in the study.

Respondent's Age

The study sought to determine the age distribution of the respondents. The study findings as presented in Table 2 indicate that majority of teachers who participated in the study are above 50 years 44 (37%); 32(27%) were between 44-49 years, 28(23%) were between 34-43 years while only 16(13%) were between 24-33 years old. This can be attributed to the fact that most teachers begin teaching after training at diploma, degree or post graduate levels. About half of the teachers are

above 50 years and this indicated that most of the respondents have good experience in handling the subject. The proportion of teachers could also be attributed to prevalent transfers and promotions.

Teacher's Professional Qualifications

The study sought to find out the professional qualifications of the history teachers and the findings are presented in Table 3. The study findings indicate that most of the teachers are graduates as shown by a higher percentage 76(63%) with degrees and 20(17%), with masters degrees. As shown in the table, only 24 (20%) are diploma holders. The findings can be attributed to recruitment procedures by the TSC (Teacher's Service Commission) which requires those employed to be graduates. The degree holders have more marks when it comes to rating the candidates hence a majority secure the teaching positions. This shows that all the teachers who participated in the study have the necessary teacher qualifications to handle the teaching of History and Government subject.

Respondents' Teaching Experience

The study sought to find out the teaching experience of the history teachers and the findings are presented in Table 4. From the study findings, most teachers have worked for more than 10 years and this shows that a majority of the respondents have mastered the skills in teaching the subject. As indicated in the table, 12(10%) and 8(7%) of the respondents had taught for between 4-6 and 7-9 years respectively. Thirty-six (30%) of the respondents had taught for between 1 and 3 years. The findings show that all the teachers who participated in the study had the necessary knowledge, skills and exposure needed for the study.

As revealed in the analysis, all the respondents who participated in the study had the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching History and Government subject at the secondary school level. The information reveals that gender and educational levels of the respondents were related to the challenges facing the teaching and learning of the subject. More so, the teaching experience and age of the respondents was also related to the challenges facing the teaching and learning of History and Government subject in the schools that participated in the study. As indicated in the findings, the more the number of years in service, the higher the teaching experience.

Challenges Associated with the Managerial Support in the Teaching of History and Government

The study sought to establish the challenges associated with the managerial support to the teaching and learning of History and Government in secondary schools. Opinions were sought from the History and Government teachers on the availability of the various instructional materials in their schools. These ranged from text books, manila papers, felt pens and funds. The study sought to establish the levels of managerial support towards the success of History and Government subject. As shown in Table 5, schools were able to provide some materials like

textbooks, manila papers, funds among other materials. Managerial support entails the acquisition of the materials and equipments through, donations, improvisation and purchase. More so, there was provision of funds for research, seminars and workshops and incentives for teachers.

The teachers were asked whether or not they receive support from school management to improve on their teaching. As shown in the Table 5 97% of the respondents indicated to have received support in terms of textbooks, manila papers and felt pens for use in instruction. On acquisition of funds, 52(43%) of the teachers indicated to have received funds while a majority 68(57%) did not receive funds. This shows that there are limited funds available for use in the teaching and learning of the subject. This means that most teachers of the subject do not receive financial support from their schools and that is why there is minimal teacher involvement in research activities that could enhance the teaching and learning of the subject.

The study also found out that most teachers are not supported by their schools to attend refresher courses on enhancement of teaching of the subject. This was shown by a majority of the respondents 92(77%) who did not receive any managerial support in their teaching of History and Government. This shows that there is little emphasis by most schools on refresher courses for History and Government teachers and the schools do not organize such for them. Most teachers also indicated that they are not rewarded for their performance and this contributes to the negative image of the subject in the school curriculum. There is therefore need for the managerial support to boost the morale of teachers by giving them incentives like tokens, presents and other materials; providing funds for field trips, and organizing for role play. These could motivate the teachers and hence boost their morale.

Table 5 shows a majority of the respondents acknowledged the support they receive from the managers of their schools. Schools acquired text books, charts, maps among other instructional materials used in teaching and learning process. However, 37% of the teachers did not receive some of the instructional materials. The most commonly availed teaching materials included text books and maps, which as indicated by a majority of the respondents were inadequate for their entire needs. The findings show that the use of instructional materials and appropriate instructional methods for teaching the subject depended largely on the material and financial support given to the teachers. As noted in the study, there is need to boost the morale of teachers by giving them incentives through field trips, organizing for role play and to be motivated. The motivation of teachers could ensure that the objectives of teaching the subject are attained. There is therefore need for adequate support for the teachers both materially and financially if the managers are to expect good results in the subject.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Management support is crucial in making an innovation to succeed. The results of the study confirm the relationship between managerial support accorded to teachers and their commitment to work. Most teachers indicated agreement to the assertion of some influence from the management on their commitment to work. Therefore, it can be concluded that level of teacher's commitment to their work is dictated by the way they are governed by the head teachers. This is usually through financial and material support for the necessary resources for teaching the subject, sponsorship to attend seminars and workshops for the better performing teachers. The results indicated lack of managerial support and this was noted as the contributory factor to the negative perception of the subject.

There is inadequate managerial support to teachers in the acquisition and purchasing of instructional materials for teaching the subject, teacher recruitment issues, provision of funds for seminars and workshops, and rewarding of high performing teachers. Most teachers also reported underestimation of the importance of History and Government subject by the head teachers of their schools. There was limited or lack of incentives for the teachers and this was noted as one of the factors that kill their morale in teaching the subject.

It is most likely that the inadequacy of management support is brought by the lack of finance, priority which is given to other subjects like languages, mathematics and sciences at the expense of History and Government and probably the management's inadequate awareness of the need for History and Government. Therefore, there is need for the managers of schools to change their perception of the subject in order to reduce the impact of the challenges related to managerial support in the teaching and learning of History and Government subject. The managerial support should also go beyond provision of funds, motivating teachers, recruitment of more teachers and purchasing of teaching and learning resources.

Table-1. Respondent's Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	52	43%
Male	68	57%
Total	120	100

Table-2. Respondent's Age

Age in Years	Frequency	Percentage
24- 33	16	13%
34-43	28	23%
44-49	32	27%
50 and above	44	37%
Total	120	100

Table-3. Teacher's Professional Qualifications

	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	24	20%
Degree	76	63%
Masters	20	17%
Total	120	100%

Table-4. Respondents' Teaching Experience

Experience in Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-3	36	30%
4-6	12	10%
7-9	8	7%
Over 10	64	53%
Total	120	100

Table-5. Managerial Support in History and Government Subject

Provide Funds	materials &	Receive		Does not Receive		Totals
		F	%	F	%	
Text books		116	97	4	3	120
Manila papers/Felt pens		104	87	16	13	120
Funds		52	43	68	57	120
Others		28	23	92	77	120
Totals		300	63%	180	37%	100%

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