

Research Article

Selection and Use of Community Learning Resources and Its Impact on Academic Achievement in History and Government in Secondary Schools in Busia County, Kenya

Gama Aywa Ondere¹, Stanley N. Mutsotso² and Edwin N. Masibo³

Email: gamaondere@gmail.com, smutsotso@kibu.ac.ke, emasibo@kibu.ac.ke

Received: Sep 28, 2019

Accepted: Oct 6, 2019

Published: Oct 13, 2019

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate selection and use of community learning resources and its impact on academic achievement in History and Government in secondary schools in Busia County, Kenya. The objective of the study was to establish the community learning resources that exist for the learning of History and Government. The study was guided by Vygotsky's Social Cultural Theory that stresses on the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition.

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to cover sampled respondents in the study area and obtain in-depth information on the topic under study. The population of the study was 162 secondary school principals, 451 teachers of History and Government, 19480 students and 7 Sub County Quality and Assurance officers. Data was drawn from teachers of History and Government, principals, Quality and Assurance officers and students of Busia County. The vast nature of Busia County could not allow the study to be conducted in all secondary schools. Therefore a representative sample was picked from seven Sub-Counties. The schools were stratified into public and private schools.

One hundred and fifty five (155) schools being public and six (7) being private. Proportionate sampling was used to select schools from each strata. Simple random sampling method was used to select 20% (3896) of students, 50% (227) of teachers of history and government, 20% (34) of Principals and 57% (4) QASOs from each Sub County. Purposive sampling was used to focus on teachers of History and Government. The total sample was determined using Fisher formula. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. The instruments were piloted for purposes of determining their reliability. Reliability was established using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Data was coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data was then reported in line with the objectives to keep trace not only of the research but also to reuse them in different ways. At first, the researcher administered questionnaires to 3896 students and 227 teachers of History and Government.

After three weeks, the researcher conducted interview to 34 Principals of Secondary Schools and 4 QASOS of Busia County. The findings were presented using descriptive statistics. The findings of this study indicate that selection and use of community learning resources play a very important role in the academic achievement of History and Government and therefore all stakeholders must endeavor to use the locally available material before thinking or planning to use the ones from other areas outside the students' catchment area.

The study therefore recommends synergy between the county governments and education stakeholders and further comparative research in other subjects at both primary and secondary level.

Keywords: Community Learning, Resource, Selection and use, academic achievement.

Introduction

Coombs (1970) posits that education consists of two components namely; inputs and outputs. Inputs include but are not limited to human and material resources and outputs are the goals or outcomes of the educational process. The two form a compact dynamic organic whole and therefore, for one to have a distinct investigation and assessment of the educational system, the effects of one component on the other must be well analyzed. Student performance is articulated with the available resources. Effective learning is achieved when the student can learn both in class and outside the class (Danielson, 2013). Resources are important factors to consider if good performance is to be realized. The need to enhance academic performance can be catapulted by continuously coming up with innovative ways to enhance teaching and learning in schools such as the selection and use of community learning resources and this includes the selection and use of the same by the required authorities. Students' performance is measured mainly through academic grades but holistic learning requires student performance be measured as an aggregate of experiences acquired within the school environment that makes the student more knowledgeable and better prepared for the outside world.

To achieve this, the syllabus should be taught not just in class but also using community resources that will help the student grasp the concepts better (Berkes and Ross, 2013). Community learning resources are anything that has a potential to improve learning when utilized in institutions. Community resources such as topography, hills and mountains, museums and game reserves among others can be used to make the theoretical concept into practical and better understanding and concept retention by the students. On many occasions community resources are considered as obsolete in learning but these resources form an important practical part (Gori, 2014). When community learning resources are selected and used in the teaching and learning process, students are able to retain the concepts that are taught in class and relate to the resources they see outside. With examples, students are able to perform better in class. Utilization of the resources can be considered in learning to enable the student to bring the relationship between the class work and what is in the surrounding. Community learning resources form a practical part of the learning process as they equip the students with skills in comparison with the theory they learn in class. Community resources allow the students interact with the resources first hand and the learning becomes interesting to the students (Mapfumo *et al.*, 2013). Likoko, Mutsotso and Nasongo (2013) in their study on the adequacy of instructional materials and physical facilities and their adverse effect on quality of teacher preparation in colleges in Bungoma County, posits that teaching learning resources are higher in higher performing schools than in low performing schools and that there therefore exists a significant difference in availability of resources in the higher performing schools and low performing schools.

Knapp (2016) posits that taking learners on field excursions or using community learning resources is not a new idea in teaching. Nevertheless, these experiences are often understood to be frills or rewards that contest with instructional time in class. Curriculum reform in science and mathematics calls for a new approach at using community resources in the education sector. The national standards in science and mathematics propose that good programs need access to the world outside the classroom so that students will be able to see the relevance and usefulness of science and mathematics both in and out of school.

According to Beeby (2013), changing the educational experiences of children by moving beyond the walls and confines of a classroom can diversify the array of learning opportunities and connect school lessons with daily life and real problems. Away from the structure of the

classroom, many characteristics of constructivism, a key idea in the current reforms, clearly emerge (Coulby, Cowen, & Jones, (2014).

For example, imagine the interactions that occur as a small group of students experiments with an interactive museum exhibit. They talk about what they see and what they know, relating what they are doing in the museum to what they have learned in and out of class. They experience, create and solve problems together. Social discourse and direct experience help them construct an understanding of the phenomenon. The exhibit puts constructivism in action. Teachers always face the task of pulling together the diverse understandings their students bring to the classroom (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2017).

Selection and use of community resources provides a shared memory for the class, since going on a History and Government field trip is only but part of the total experience. As students and teachers talk about the trip and think about it after it is over, they are building shared understanding and knowledge. The event therefore becomes part of the common knowledge of the class and can be referred to in subsequent lessons. What was learned is reinforced and extended in later discussions as the teacher refers to field observations.

Teachers can effectively and easily develop interdisciplinary units with their students outside the classroom. Students working on a city street, for example, could be doing social studies (e.g., making a general survey of how a building is used today and how it has been used over the years), language arts (writing a short story about the building), mathematics (coming up with ways to measure the height of the building), and science (observing the materials used in the building for signs of weathering). Subject matter barriers dissolve as children learn and interact with their environment.

Dorrell (2013), noted that community learning resources that can enhance mathematics and science learning include science centers to visit (museums, nature centers, interactive science centers, aquaria, gardens and zoos), places to explore that are unique to the local school (anearby creek, pond, city street or business), people in the community, or materials that can be borrowed or purchased (National Research Council, 2016).

Just as it is mandatory for every learning activity to have a purpose and so, field trips should be thought of as part of the curriculum and they too should provide something to think about as well as some place to go. If possible, the teacher will want to do a pre - visit before the field trip to help create a balance between the needs of the teaching unit with the resources of the site. The focus should be on those exhibits that demonstrate the concepts being taught and match the students' cognitive levels. Learning activities are prepared for use before, during, and after the field trip and include student orientation material, such as a map, a list of exhibits to be visited (although they could visit others), and the educational objectives of the trip (Dunne, 2015).

This focused approach will advance student learning more effectively than an unfocused hunt or a generic worksheet written without the benefit of the teacher's preparatory visit. Children generally find interactive exhibits engaging. These exhibits can be appealing and effective tools for teaching science and mathematics and for generating a positive attitude toward learning these subjects (Hannafin, & Hill, 2016). At the Harmon Science Center (Tulsa, Oklahoma), students walk, climb and slide through the Underground Tulsa exhibit. At the Santa Fe Children's Museum (New Mexico), children use homing pigeons to send messages from an outside site to the museum.

Community learning resources act as outreach to students (Rennie, & McClafferty, 2015). Community resources include unconventional sites, such as the tile factory or a hardware store, fabric store, farm, or ranch.

While extended field trips can be rewarding, short school yard trips can be very valuable. These allow children to discover answers for themselves in a familiar environment. Whether your school is located in urban, suburban, or rural, it reflects the habitat of its neighborhood the hard- topped surfaces, the soils, grasses, and trees, the weather, and so on. The young student can easily return to the school yard for further data gathering if a question is left unanswered or new questions arise. A class studying the sun and its shadows in a particular location, for example, can gather information at intervals throughout the day.

Merril, & Drob (2014), noted that most learning activities occur in the classroom by necessity. Organizations listed in the Directory can provide materials that enrich the curriculum and provide unique experiences for children. These inexpensive or free materials may be overlooked since they are not produced by educational publishing companies. According to Miarso (2015), techniques, technology, and trade, a curriculum available from the Arkansas Ag in the Classroom State Leader, integrates science and economics. Numerous national organizations have also developed curriculum materials; guidance materials from professional organizations are useful ties to the workplace (Oyston, 2013). Guest speakers from the community can provide new dimension of information and experiences to students and link the school to the world outside. The teacher should therefore spend time with the guest before the visit for them to discuss the age level of students and kinds of activities and information appropriate for this age group; the needs of the guest during the visit and his or her general comfort level with children; the topic of the presentation and the students' general knowledge about this topic; and what the teacher can do before in order to make the visit a success.

Staff of state agencies can serve as classroom partners or as knowledgeable resource people (Rahadi, 2015). According to Reigeluth, & Garfinkle, (2017), staff from a conservation agency might aid schools in setting up an outdoor classroom or civil engineers from the highway department may be able to show plans for a bridge project. Many potential speakers are overlooked because they work in less technical fields. Valuable links to the community as well as connections between school subjects and the workplace may be created by inviting a cafeteria worker who could talk about using proportions in increasing the size of recipes. A mechanic or the owner of a feed store is other possibilities. Guests who can come back to the classroom numerous times may enhance the learning experience for the students (Reksten, 2016). The richness of the region's resources is apparent from the number and diversity of entries found in the Directory of Science-Rich Resources (Seels, and Richey, 2014). Imagination and creativity in using community resources helps students connect school science and mathematics with applications in the community, as well better learn basic concepts.

Children learn science and mathematics from many sources, in a range of different ways, and for a variety of purposes. Sitepu (2016), affirms that taking students to a science museum or out onto the school grounds, exposes them to innovative materials and inviting guests who can give unique insights are a few ways to increase their learning experiences.

The UNICEF Report of 1994 strongly asserts that there is a healthy composition among communities where the standing of their schools and performance of their children at both

KCPE and KCSE are among the major factors which a community uses to define its status in relation and comparison to other communities.

It is therefore prudent to state that selection and use of community learning resources will directly impact the academic achievement in History and Government.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Secondary schools in Busia County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design to cover sampled respondents in the study area and obtain in-depth information. The target population for the study was one hundred and sixty two (162) secondary school principals, nineteen thousand four hundred and eighty (19480) students of History and Government, seven (7) Quality and Assurance Officer and four hundred and fifty one (451) teachers of History and Government subjects.

The schools were stratified into public and private schools. One hundred and fifty five (155) schools being public and six (7) being private. Proportionate sampling was used to select schools from each stratum. Simple random sampling method was used to select 20% of students, 50% of teachers of history and government, 20% of Principals and 57% QASOs from each Sub County.

Purposive sampling was used to focus on teachers of History and Government. The total sample was determined using Fisher formula. The study was based on primary data obtained from the respondents and secondary data from document analysis.

Results and Discussion

Selection and use of Community Learning Resources on Students' Performance

The purpose of the study was "to determine the influence of selection and use of community learning resources on students' performance in History and Government in secondary schools in Busia County". The information was collected by use of questionnaires issued to teachers.

The information was collected from principals and quality and assurance officers using interview schedules to paint the general picture in regards to influence of selection and use of community learning resources on the student's performance in history and government.

The collected information was analyzed and results presented using the frequency table 1 and 2 on pages 65 and 67 respectively.

Table 1. Teacher's Selection and use of Community Resource

Teachers' selection and use of community resources	SA	A	U	D	SD
We teachers decide and select where we visit	24.0	40.3	13.7	15.5	6.5
Teachers are able to cover more in the syllabus with the use of community learning resources.	17.9	45.3	12.1	18.7	6.0
Selection and use of community learning resources enables students to take a break from the monotony of classroom learning	44.5	21.4	17.2	7.9	9.0
Teachers teach effectively without selecting and using the community	6.9	18.3	39.8	13.4	21.6

learning resources					
The community participates in teaching students	18.2	21.9	13.3	30.7	15.9
The school is able to position itself as part of the community	11.0	43.8	16.9	13.3	15.0
Selection and use of community learning resources have an impact on student performance in classroom assignments.	22.0	25.6	13.4	18.3	20.7
Selection and use of community learning resources has no impact on student academic performance in classroom assignments	13.9	16.9	19.2	15.0	35.0

Table 1 above shows the findings of the teacher's response on selection and use of community resources. The results indicated that 107 out of 265 representing (40.3%) of teachers agreed that they decide and select where to visit. 120 out of 265 representing (45.3%) of the teachers also agreed that they are able to cover more in the syllabus with the use of community resources. 117 out of 265 representing (44.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed that selection and use of community resources enables students to take a break from the monotony of class room learning.

On the other hand, 105 out of 265 representing (39.8%) of the teachers were undecided whether or not they teach effectively without selecting and using the community learning resources. 58 out of 265 representing (21.9%) of the teachers also agreed that the community participates in teaching students. 58 out of 265 representing (22.0%) of the teachers further agreed that selection and use of community resources have an impact on students' performance in classroom assignments. Regarding whether selection and use of community resources has no impact on academic performance in classroom assignments, 93 representing (35.0%) of teachers strongly disagreed and stated that it has an impact on academic performance. The information collected using the interview schedule for principals and quality and assurance officer was also analyzed to point out the general information regarding the selection and use of community resources in learning within the school and respective sub county at large. The two categories mainly pointed out that selection and use of community resources is important in helping students take a break from classroom boredom hence helps them to refresh their learning ideas and thus improving on their performance in the History and Government subject.

Table 2. Student's Selection and use of Community Resources

Students' Selection and use of Community Resources	SA	A	U	D	SD
We decide and select where we visit within the county	13.6	17.3	27.7	18.2	23.2
Teachers are able to cover more in the syllabus when they incorporate selection and use of community resources	14.8	29.3	13.8	24.7	17.4
Selection and use of community learning resources enables students to take a break from the monotony of classroom learning	46.3	18.1	15.6	7.7	12.3

We are able to effectively learn without selecting and using the community learning resources	12.0	17.6	33.9	20.3	16.2
The community participates in teaching us	7.9	11.8	30.2	24.5	25.6
The school is part of the community	12.9	47.7	12.8	11.1	15.5
Have an impact on student performance in classroom assignments.	17.0	29.9	20.3	18.8	14.0
Has no impact on our academic performance in assignments	16.0	13.2	19.9	27.6	23.3

Table 2 above indicates the students' response regarding the selection and use of community resources. The results pointed out 1079 out of 3896 representing (27.7%) of the students were undecided as to whether or not they decide and select where to visit within their county. The results also showed that 1142 out of 3896 representing (29.3%) of student respondents agreed that teachers are able to cover more in the syllabus of history and government. 1804 out of 3896 representing (46.3%) of the students strongly agreed that selection and use of community resources enables students to take a break from the monotony of classroom learning. 1320 out of 3896 representing (33.9%) of the student respondents were however undecided on whether or not they are able to effectively learn without selecting and using the community learning resources.

However, 1176 out of 3896 representing (30.2%) of the student respondents were undecided as to whether or not the community participates in teaching them. 1858 out of 3896 representing (47.7%) of them agreed that the school is part of the community. 1165 out of 3896 representing (29.9%) of the students which was majority percentage agreed that selection and use of community resources have an impact on the academic achievement of the students in classroom assignments. On the other hand, 1075 out of 3896 representing (27.6%) of the students disagreed that selection and use of community resources have no impact on the student's academic performance in assignments.

Conclusion

The study concluded that community learning resources such as caves, old speakers, and protected zoos are essential in teaching history and government and helps students get to break the classroom monotony. They also influence the achievement of the students since they are able to integrate what they observe at the field with what is taught in class.

Recommendation

Selection and use of community learning resources is important for the academic achievement and has an impact in History and Government in Busia County, Kenya. To realize the full potential of the impact on academic achievement of selection and use of community learning resources in History and Government, the following recommendations were made by the study: The county and education sector need to partner in order to ensure that the community learning resources are maximally used.

Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest of any kind.

References

1. Beeby, C.E. 2013. The quality of Education in Developing Countries. Harvard University Press.

2. Berkes, F. and Ross, H. 2013. Community resilience: toward an integrated approach. *Society & Natural Resources*, 26(1): 5-20.
3. Coulby, D., Cowen, R. and Jones, C. (Eds.). 2014. *Education in times of transitions*. London: Kogan.
4. Danielson, C. 2013. *The framework for teaching: Evaluation instrument*. Princeton, NJ: Danielson Group.
5. Dorrell, J. 2013. *Resource-based learning: Using open and flexible learning resources for continuous development*. London: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
6. Dunne, E. 2015. *The learning society: International perspectives on core skills in higher education*. London: Kogan
7. Gori, J.M. 2014. An Evaluation of the impacts of decentralized resources allocation by the community on the performance of secondary schools in Gucha district, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(6): 103-112.
8. Likoko, S., Mutsotso, S. and Nasongo, J. 2013. The Adequacy of Instructional Materials and Physical Facilities and their Effects on Quality of Teacher Preparation in Emerging Private Primary Teacher Training Colleges in Bungoma County, Kenya. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 2(1): 403-408.
9. Mapfumo, P., Adjei-Nsiah, S., Mtambanengwe, F., Chikowo, R. and Giller, K.E. 2013. Participatory action research (PAR) as an entry point for supporting climate change adaptation by smallholder farmers in Africa. *Environmental Development*, 5: 6-22.
10. Merrill, I.R. and Drob, H.A. 2014. *Criteria for planning the college and university learning resources center*. Oxford University Press
11. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2017. *Curriculum and evaluation standards for school mathematics*. Reston, VA: Author.
12. National Research Council, 2016. *National Science Education Standards*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
13. Oyston, E. (Ed.), 2013. *Centred on learning: Academic case studies on learning centre development*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
14. Rahadi, A. 2015. *Learning Resources Center*. In Jakarta: Department
15. Reigeluth, C.M. and Garfinkle, R.J. (Eds.). 2017. *Systemic change in education*. Englewood Cliffs: Educational Technology Publications
16. Reksten, L. 2016. *Using technology to increase student learning*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc.
17. Rennie, L.J. and McClafferty, T. 2015. Using visits to interactive science and technology centers, museums, aquaria, and zoos to promote learning in science. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 6: 175-185.
18. Seels, B.B. and Richey, R.C. 2014. *Instructional technology: The definition and domains of the field*. Washington, DC: AECT.
19. Sitepu, I.R. 2016. Biodiversity Surveys in Indonesia and Discovery of Health and Energy Solutions. *A Journal of Science*, 4(2): 12.

Citation: Gama Aywa Ondere, Stanley N. Mutsotso and Edwin N. Masibo. 2019. Selection and Use of Community Learning Resources and Its Impact on Academic Achievement in History and Government in Secondary Schools in Busia County, Kenya. International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research, 3(10): 31-39.

Copyright: ©2019 Gama Aywa Ondere, et al. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.