



RELEVANCE OF CURRICULUM IN PRIVATE COLLEGES TO THE NATIONAL GOALS OF EDUCATION: THE CASE OF COMMERCIAL COLLEGES IN BARINGO COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study sort to establish the Relevance of the curriculum offered in private Commercial colleges to the national goals of Education. Qualitative approach to study was utilized and descriptive survey design was employed in the study. The main research question that the study was seeking to answer was "how relevant the commercial college curriculum was to the national goals of Education". A sample of 24 respondents was selected from a population of 80 and both simple random and purposive sampling were used to select the respondents. Questionnaire, interview schedule and checklists were used to collect data. The findings will be useful for improving curriculum quality in the commercial colleges.

KEY WORDS: Curriculum, Relevance, Commercial Colleges, Quality, National Goals of Education

INTRODUCTION

The provision of education and training to all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the government's overall development strategy. At independence Kenya recognized that education was the basic tool to human resource development, improving the quality of life and cultivating nationalistic values (Government of Kenya, 2007). Sustainable development is thus seen to be possible only if there is a critical mass of skilled people which is achieved through a relevant and quality education (Government of Kenya, 2006).

The issue of relevance has therefore been dominating the Kenyan education system since independence. This is supported by Eshiwani (1993) that since independence, the Kenya government has been concerned with providing a relevant curriculum in its schools and producing a system that caters for the aspiration of the youth as well as serving the various interests of National development.

According to Tum (1996), Ondiek (1986) and Ssekamwa (2001), the national goals of education include

1. Education must foster a sense of nationhood and promote National unity.
2. Education must meet the economic and social needs of national development
3. Education must promote social equality and remove divisions of race, tribe and religion. It must pay special attention to training in social obligations and responsibility.
4. Education must provide opportunities for fullest development of individual talent and personalities
5. Education must respect, foster and develop Kenya's rich and varied cultures.
6. An outcome to our education provision at all levels must be adaptability to change.
7. Education must be an instrument of secular state in which no religion is privileged, but must respect religious convictions of all people.
8. Education must be regarded ad used as an instrument for the conscious change of attitudes and relationships, preparing children for those changes of outlook required by modern methods



of productive organization at the same time, education must foster respect for human personality.

Ondiek (1986) commended that curriculum should thus be designed specifically to develop these abilities necessary for successful living in this modern world.

There is a need to streamline curriculum in any institution to reflect the national goals of education which is addressed by the study.

The Government of Kenya (2007) asserts that education sector will provide the skills that will be required to steer Kenyans to the economic and social goals of vision 2030. Education and training in Kenya is thus recognized as fundamental to the success of vision 2030 and key to National development. In order to achieve its role, education provided must meet the high quality standards and that its contents must be relevant to the needs of the economy and society (Government of Kenya, 2007).

Education is seen as the driving force towards national development and therefore its quality and relevance are key concerns in education. According to JICA (2008), Education development is central to human resource development and the foundation for any socio-economic development of a country and that lack of education and training reduces people's ability to exploit the opportunities around them making them more vulnerable and is a major cause of poverty yet education is an important factor in poverty reduction (Government of Kenya, 2006).

Education is thus seen as something which civilizes and enlightens, by enlightening awareness, broadening horizons, widening understanding, sharpening perceptions and intensifying sensitivities (Nicholas, 1983). The provision of education and training to all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the Government overall development strategy (Government of Kenya, 2006). The constitution of the various education commissions by the government since independence was a step intended to address relevance in education.

According to Shiundu and Omulando (1992) the desire for change in educational system was necessitated by the restricted and extremely limited facilities for education, the low quality education and largely irrelevant education. Although the government encouraged the establishment of private schools and colleges, it required them to adhere to the laid down regulation and maintenance of acceptable standards and relevant curriculum (Kamunge, 1988).

Koeh commission (1998) notably recommended the liberalization of education to mobilize effective

partnership with the private sectors and other education providers. This paved way for the establishment of private institutions to supplement the public schools and colleges which were experiencing pressure from the ever growing number of students joining the different levels of education.

Government of Kenya (2006) laid emphasis on quality of education at all levels and called for regular reviews of the curriculum to improve its relevance and incorporate emerging issues, among other goals. It therefore implies that a curriculum offered at any educational institution at any level must consider quality and relevance. In fact Goodland (1979) cited in Shiundu & Omulando (1992) recommended that any curriculum specialist must conduct a systematic inquiry into the nature and worth of goals, subject matter and materials found in any curriculum.

James (1949) cited in Shiundu and Omulando (1992) also outlines the basic criteria guiding or regarding what must be or shall be included in curriculum as; that an area of study must contain information essential to the business of living, that contribute to spiritual development of the individual, and an area that will inculcate valuable skills.

It is therefore paramount that any curriculum in any given institution should instill relevance and quality. Kamunge (1988) argued that the future policies in education and training should lay emphasis on and give priority to the quality and relevance of education and training, management and entrepreneurship training and also education and training should develop skills which promote self reliance and employment. Kamunge (1988) therefore focused on quality and relevance of education.

Shiundu and Omulando (1992) concur that the scope of the total curriculum must be designed to attain stated goals of education. With the liberalization and privatization of education, the elements of quality and relevance must be closely monitored to ensure that it is properly catered for in the curriculum if maintenance of acceptable standards and relevance of education is to be attained. At the current trend of numerous growths of private institutions, quality and relevance may be jeopardized if not closely monitored.

Government of Kenya (2007) agrees with the fact that education sector has faced serious challenges over the years particularly those relating to access, equity, quality and relevance. This is a pointer to the extent to which acceptable standards and relevance of education may have been affected. This research study therefore seeks to establish the relevance of the curriculum offered in private institutions to the National goals of education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Simple random and purposive sampling was used to select 24 respondents from a target population of 80 people consisting of staff and students of selected commercial colleges. Simple random sampling was used to select students and staff of the selected colleges while college principals were purposively selected. Questionnaire, interview schedules and documentary analysis was used to obtain data.

Table 1: courses enrolled by students in commercial colleges

Course Enrolled	Frequency	Percentage
Community development and social work	9	64.29
Information/computer technology	2	14.29
Accounts(CPA)	2	14.29
Secretariat Studies	1	7.14
Total	14	100

Results in the table indicate that 9(64.29%) were enrolled in the community development and social work. Those enrolled in information technology and accounts courses were each 2(14.29%) while 1(7.14%) enrolled in secretariat studies. It appears that most students enrol in market driven courses that are likely to earn them employment after completing the course. The courses offered in the various colleges were in line with the national goals of education as it employed a diversified curriculum to provide opportunities for fullest development of individual talents among learners hence the curriculum was relevant to the national goals of education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**Courses enrolled by students in commercial colleges:-**

Table 1 summarizes enrolment in various courses in commercial colleges in Baringo county

Reasons for the choice of a course:-

Students were required to indicate the reasons why they enrol in a particular course. Among the reasons stated include:

- ✘ To secure a job
- ✘ Chosen as a life career
- ✘ To acquire knowledge and skills for solving community problems
- ✘ Because it is a marketable course
- ✘ Because of the passion to work with communities to improve their livelihoods and also the courses deal with human relations

Career choice:-

When further probed on the type of career that one intended to pursue in life, the following results were obtained. The results are presented in table 2

Table 2: Career type

Type of career	Frequency	Percentages
Social and community work	9	64.29
ICT Specialist	2	14.29
Accountancy	2	14.29
secretariat	1	7.14
Total	14	100

Majority (64.29 %) of the respondents were engaged in career in social and community work perhaps because of the growing concern in the community development in the present time. This is in line with the national goal of education that education should meet the societal needs.

Relevance of the courses offered in the colleges to the societal needs:-

Students were asked to state whether the courses that they were enrolled in addressed their needs. Majority 12(85.71%) of the respondents agreed that indeed

the courses were relevant to their needs while 2(14.29%) were of the contrary opinion. Therefore it appears that the courses were fulfilling the needs of the students which is in line with the national goals of education on meeting the societal needs.

Students were further asked whether the courses were relevant to the societal needs. The students agreed that indeed the courses were relevant saying the courses solved community problems and needs 9(64.29%), skills can be applied for employment 5(35.71%). From the results in the table 2, it appears that the courses offered

in the colleges were actually relevant to the societal needs and the students appreciate the courses offered.

Tutors:-

A total of 8 tutors participated in the study out of which 4(50%) were male while 4(50%) were female. The age bracket of all the tutors was below 35 years with 6(75%) of them having between 26-35 years while 2(25%) of them belonging to the age bracket of below 25 years. On education level, 2(25%) were diploma holders, 5(62.5%) were degree holders while 1(12.5%) had masters degree. The information on the college tutors showed relevance to national goals of education since it was catering for social equality regardless of gender and age.

Entry grades to the colleges:-

Admission to the college courses required D+ and above grades for a certificate/technician course while a diploma course requires a C (Plain) and above grades. This implies that all categories of KCSE grades are taken care of hence equality aspect of national goals of education.

Programmes offered in the colleges:-

Both diploma and certificate courses were offered in the various commercial colleges. The courses offered include; Engineering courses, accounts, business, social work, information technology and human resource management. The students do their industrial attachment outside the institution/college. The industrial attachment programmes outside their colleges was interpreted to mean that social needs of interaction with others is catered for.

Availability and use of teaching and learning resources:-

Respondents were asked to respond to a five point likert scale questions regarding the availability of teaching and learning resources. The statements were stated in a positive way as if to imply that resources were available. Respondents were to choose from five alternative choices. Strongly agree (SA) earned 5points, Agree (A) earned 4 points, Undecided earned 3, Disagree (D) earned 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) earned 1 point. The results are summarized in table 3

Table 3: Availability and use of teaching resources in colleges

S/NO	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
9	0	8	0	0	0	8
10	3	5	0	0	0	8
11	6	0	2	0	0	8
12	1	5	0	2	0	8
13	3	5	0	0	0	8
14	7	1	0	0	0	8
TOTAL	20	24	2	2	0	48

It appeared that all the respondents were agreeing to the statements the way they were stated positively implying that the teaching resources were adequate /sufficient in all the colleges. This is supported by the fact that 20(41.70%) of the respondents choose the strongly Agreed (SA) statement while 24(50%) chose Agree (A) Statement in all the six statements. Therefore, all the colleges are sufficient in terms of the teaching and learning resources.

College Principals:-

Three principals participated in the study, two male and one female. The qualifications of the principals were diploma, degree and masters' degree. All the principals had five years and below experience as principals. All the colleges thus started in the recent time. The courses offered were both technical and commercial courses.

Aims of the organisation:-

Respondents were asked to state the aims for the establishment of the colleges. Among the aims stated include:

- To offer quality education
- To empower the community with knowledge and skills to enhance their economic growth and development.
- To prepare students for formal employment / self-reliance.

Further, the respondents were asked to state how often the college curriculum is evaluated in relation to the aims. All the respondents stated that they review / evaluate the curriculum annually.

Relationship between the curriculum and the national goals of education:-

When asked to state whether there is a relationship between the curriculums offered in the colleges to the national goals of education, the respondents unanimously stated that their curriculum draws its objectives from the national goals of education.

Sources of curriculum in commercial colleges:-

Respondents mentioned three sources of their curriculum namely; Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), Kenya Accountancy and Secretarial National Examination Board (KASNEB) and finally, it was stated that the National Goals of Education also provided a source of the college curriculum.

Curriculum design/organisation:-

The curriculum in the colleges are organised in modular form and in stages. It was also stated that the curriculum is organised to suit the National goals of education to fit the labour market.

Relevance of the curriculum offered to the needs of the learners:-

Respondents were in agreement that situational or need assessment was carried out prior to the establishment of the various colleges. To further support this, respondents indicated that the curriculum was relevant in the sense that the colleges were sponsoring needy students based on situational analysis that showed that most students were failing to join the colleges due to financial constraints and that the colleges intervened by sponsoring the needy students. In addition, it was stated that the curriculum was very relevant in that it addresses the community development and employment needs.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECKLIST A checklist was used as a guide by the researcher to establish facts in the colleges.

a) Mission of the Institutions:-

Two sets of responses were generated when the respondents were asked to state the mission of the colleges. One mission was to provide market driven training and academic programs in accounting, management and information technology. The second response was that the college exists to develop leaders by imparting knowledge, skills and values through creative methods of education, research and information technology. In both cases, the national goals of education were taken into consideration when establishing the commercial college

b) Vision of the colleges:-

The colleges existed to be a leading centre of training and academic excellence in market driven courses in the region. Secondly, the college vision is to be an institution of excellence based on the NGO principles, producing graduates of various fields for global service. The college

visions were therefore in consistent with the national goals of education.

c) Organisation of the curriculum design:-

The curriculum in the colleges was said to be organised in modular forms. The design was particularly in line with national goals of education especially one stating that education should respect religious convictions of all people hence enabling people to acquire education through flexible modular programmes.

d) Aims/ Objectives of the colleges:-

Commitment to total quality management, for quality service and high academic standards was highlighted as a vision for the colleges. Also, it was cited that the vision was to promote discipline, academic excellence, hard work and self-reliance. This in the view of this study was consistent with the national goals of education.

e) Availability of resources:-

The respondents indicated that books were 90% adequate and that relevant books were available on good ratios. On teachers, the results indicated that teachers were adequate too. Computers were equally said to be sufficient. Based on the findings from the study, it was established that the colleges had sufficient resources necessary for the effective implementation of the curriculum. This complies well with the national goals of education

Objective 1: To establish the basis for starting commercial colleges:-

The aims for the establishment of the commercial colleges were stated as; to offer quality education, to empower the community with knowledge and skill to enhance their economic growth and development and finally to prepare students for formal employment / self-reliance. It was further revealed that the college existed to promote discipline, academic excellence, hard work and self-reliance. In addition, the mission of the colleges was cited as; to promote market driven training and academic programs in accounting, management and information technology.

The study findings clearly point to the fact that colleges were established after a need assessment was carried out in order to provide a relevant curriculum that both individual students and the society needed. This is demonstrated by the fact that, the colleges' aims were to prepare students for both formal and informal employment by empowering community with knowledge

and skills for economic growth and development and a commitment to total quality education. In addition, the colleges courses include engineering, accounts, business, social work, information communication technology and Human resource management courses all of which and market driven courses for both formal and informal employment as the skills imparted through such courses are the most relevant to the societal needs at the moment.

The aims outlined in each of the commercial colleges seem to be in agreement with what Mugondo (1998) that education is regarded as critical factor in every economic development. This is in agreement with the national goals of education which states that education must meet economic and social needs of national development. Government of Kenya (2007) further suggests that education provided must meet the high quality standard and that its contents must be relevant to the needs of the economy and the society. Moreover, the college curriculum was drawn from the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), the Kenya Accountancy and Secretarial National Examination Board (KASNEB) as well as the national goals of education. This is a clear demonstration that the colleges' curriculum was relevant to the national goals of education since its objectives are drawn from the national goals of education.

Objective 2: To establish the nature of curriculum offered in commercial colleges:-

The main courses offered in the colleges are both technical and commercial. The courses range from engineering, accounts, business management, social work, Human resources and computer courses. The courses are tailored towards the market. The skills are useful especially for self-reliance as well as for formal employment. The programmes are designed in modular form to enable students to cover the courses in stages so as to apply the skills in the job market at any stage of the course. Koros (2008) asserts that education sector must provide all the skills that will be required to steer Kenyans to the economic and social goals of vision 2030, a goal already fulfilled by the nature of the curriculum offered in the commercial colleges.

The nature of curriculum offered in any institution is important as it determines the nature and quality of graduates released into the job market. This is because Government of Kenya (2006) pointed out that sustainable development is seen to be possible only if there is a critical mass of skilled people which is achieved through a relevant and quality education. This will ensure that the graduates will have vital skills that Koros (2008)

said they are fundamental to the world of work. Republic of Kenya (1994) commented that technical and vocational education ensured that students graduating at every level have some scientific and practical knowledge that can be utilized for self employment, salaried employment or further training.

The nature of curriculum offered in any educational institution must therefore be of quality since Republic of Kenya (2005) recommended that education is necessary for transmission of vital skills necessary for job market seen to be quality education and training. The fundamental reason for quality is that education development is central to human resource development and foundation for any socio- economic development of a country; hence lack of education and training reduces peoples' ability to exploit opportunities around them making them more vulnerable and is a major cause of poverty (JICA, 2008).

Streamlining curriculum in education institutions to meet both food production and employment needs is also critical in transforming Kenya into a newly industrialising country as outlined in vision 2030 (Government of Kenya, 2007). This can only be attained through provision of all the skills that will be required to steer Kenyans to the economic and social goals necessary for achieving national development.

In this regard, education is seen as the driving force towards national development and thus its quality and relevance are key concerns in education (Government of Kenya, 2007). To achieve this target, Shiundu and Omulando (2007) suggested that the scope of the total curriculum must be designed to attain the stated goals of education. The findings of this study therefore indicated a total commitment to the quality nature of its curriculum in the selected colleges under study, since the various courses offered covers various areas of the job market creating a diversified nature of curriculum necessary for a dynamic society like Kenya. This in agreement with the recommendation by Government of Kenya (2007) that education provided must meet the high standards and that its contents must be relevant to the needs of the economy and society.

Objective 3: To establish the availability of the teaching and learning resources in the colleges:-

The findings indicated that the teaching and learning resources were adequate and sufficient enough for effective curriculum implementation. Books was reported to be available in good student ratio implying that the colleges were prepared enough for the

implementation of the curriculum since resources are the pre-requisite for the curriculum implementation. A five point likert type of scale was used to obtain information on the availability of resources. The respondents agreed that textbooks are 90% adequate. Teachers, chalks, writing materials and computers were reported to be sufficient.

The study findings indicate that the colleges were meeting the requirements that Gross et al (1971) suggested that any successful implementation of innovation demands that resources are available both human and material. In addition, Arora (1986) named several elements such as physical facilities, qualified and competent lecturers, curriculum and instructional materials and equipments, teaching and learning strategies, comprehensive and continuous evaluation and effective management as the main determinants of quality success. The importance of resource availability in determining the successful implementation of a curriculum is also expressed by Koros (2008) that lack of human and material resources poses great challenges in implementation of curriculum programmes.

In addition to the availability of resources for curriculum implementation is the diversity of programmes in the colleges including Information Communication and Technology (ICT) which demonstrates adaptability to change as spelled out in the national goals of education.

Objective 4: To determine the qualifications of the teachers/tutors in commercial colleges:-

Tutors in the colleges were found to be qualified with the least qualification being diploma holders. According to the findings, most of the tutors were degree holders with some of them holding master degree hence curriculum implementers (tutors) were adequately trained. The teachers were thus qualified to teach in the colleges. In view of the teacher qualification, the commercial colleges seem to be fulfilling the requirements for ensuring quality curriculum through the use of highly qualified tutors. This is because Sifuna (1984) warned that untrained teachers are a great set back to the curriculum implementation, meaning that qualification of teachers is pre-requisite for effective implementation of any curriculum.

The question of teachers' quality comes during implementation of curriculum (Tum, 1996). Quality teachers are expected to offer quality training to the learner which is one of the national goals of education. The teacher qualification is therefore of paramount importance in any curriculum implementation. Rotumoi (2005) while stressing the importance of teacher

qualification pointed that teachers' qualification plays an important role in teaching because they influence instructional competence and may also determine existence of instructional problems in specific subject. Indoshi (1992) also suggested that the effectiveness and efficiency in teaching and learning are determined by teacher academic and professional characteristics as well as experience of a teacher.

Objective 5: To establish relationship between the curriculum of commercial colleges and the national goals of education:-

Respondents were asked to state in what ways the college curriculum was related to the national goals of education. It was established that the objectives in the college curriculum were drawn from the national goals of education. To further validate this, respondents stated that the source of the curriculum offered in the colleges was from both the KASNEB and KNEC. One of the national goals of education is to foster a sense of nationhood and promote national unity. This is clearly addressed in the colleges through the harmonisation of the curriculum and national examinations as seen in the common Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) and Kenya Accountancy and Secretarial National Examination Board (KASNEB). This is aimed at bringing about national unity and nationhood and to ensure quality through a common exam regulation body.

The colleges admit students from all the religious backgrounds without discrimination which is in line with the national goal of education which states that education must respect religious convictions of all the people. In addition, the variety of courses offered in the colleges clearly demonstrates how the colleges address the national goal of providing the opportunities for the fullest development of individual talent and personalities. The students are free to apply for a course and career that will suit their ability and a career of their choice.

Other national goals of education include the need for education to meet the socio-economic needs of national development as well as to promote social equality and remove divisions of race, tribe and religion. These goals are also addressed by the colleges in a variety of ways. First, the colleges admit all students irrespective of their race tribe and religion as it is open to everyone based on qualification and admission requirements. Secondly, the aims for establishing the colleges were stated as to empower community with knowledge and skills to enhance their economic growth and development which is also a national goal of education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings in this study indicate that the curricula in all the commercial colleges in Baringo county are relevant to the national goals of education as evidenced by the various programmes offered that are diversified.

Selection criteria to the various colleges adhere to the national goals of education particularly with respect to gender, race and tribe since no restrictions to admission is based on the criteria stated.

Adaptability to change as provided in the national goals of education is taken into consideration in college curriculum since ICT which is a new innovation is offered in all the colleges that the study covered. In addition, various other new programmes are offered implying change acceptance and adoption.

It is recommended on the basis of these findings that commercial colleges could be used by the government to supplement education through provision of educations to various categories of school leavers.

Quality control should be the objective of the government to ensure that regular monitoring is done by the government in order to ensure quality education is offered by the various colleges.

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