



Developing Competencies Among Learners; Teachers Perception of Music and Drama

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Abstract

The study investigated Teachers Perception of the Use of Music and Drama in Developing Competencies among learners in secondary schools. The research questions were: To what extent does participation in music develop competencies among learners in secondary schools? and to what extent does participation in drama develop competencies among learners in secondary schools. The study used a descriptive research design in describing teacher's perception of the use of Music and Drama in developing competencies among learners. Eighty teachers who were in charge of Music and Drama were selected to form the target population. The sampling technique used was census hence all the eighty teachers formed the study sample. Data was generated using Questionnaires. Validity of the instruments was done using research experts. A pilot study of the questionnaires to test their reliability was conducted by the researcher. Data was analyzed and interpreted according to the research questions. It was presented using frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed that learners who participated in music and drama developed various competencies such as: *communication skills, creativity skills, critical thinking, problem solving, leadership skills and social skills*. The study concluded that learners should be encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities such as Music and Drama to facilitate acquisition of diverse competencies. There is need for supportive policies to be developed and implemented.

Keywords: Competencies; Co-curricular activities; Drama; Learners; Music.

1. Introduction

Educationists recognize the value of both curricular and co-curricular activities in enabling learners acquire diverse competencies. [Ongong'a et al. \(2010\)](#), observes that schools in Kenya focus so much on academic activities at the expense of participation in co-curricular activities. Some School Managers view learners participation in music and drama as a hindrance to academic success. The same has been supported by a number of parents especially in academic systems that are examination oriented, success is measured through passing examinations. Teachers are evaluated in terms of the value they add on the learner. Value addition is calculated using learners' scores, the higher the score, the more the value added. Emphasis on the scores lead to many teachers discouraging learners from getting involved in co-curricular activities which they consider a waste of time for academic activities. Research shows that there is a strong positive link between development of competencies and involvement in music. According to [Eady \(2004\)](#), participation in music should be considered as fundamental to the curriculum as mathematics and reading. He reports that music performs an essential function in developing competencies among the learners.

A study conducted by [Humpal and Wolf \(2003\)](#), revealed that music provided effective experiences to learners which helped them to develop the skills of listening. When the learners listen to music or speech, they are able to process immense information rapidly without conscious awareness ([Blakemore and Frith, 2000](#)). Participation in music therefore enhance perception of language which in turn impacts on reading. The same view is supported by [Koutsoupidou and Hargreaves \(2009\)](#) in their study on creativity development in relation to participation in music and [Ongong'a et al. \(2010\)](#) who reported that participation in music enhance knowledge in geography, mathematics, science, history, foreign language and physical education. [Broh \(2002\)](#) reveals that learners who participate in music are fluent in speaking skills. He concluded that the social benefits acquired by the learners were likely to lead to an improved level of self-esteem which in turn leads to higher motivation and self-efficacy. [Tallal and Gaab \(2006\)](#) in their study established that musical trainings sharpen the brain's early encoding of sound which lead to learners' improved performance. It also helps the learners to improve their ability to differentiate between rapidly changing sounds and enhanced auditory discrimination besides increasing verbal memory of the learners ([Ho et al., 2003](#)). Such learners improve their verbal and retention abilities, hence; music facilitate the skills of language which lead to the development of reading skills.

[Schiller \(2008\)](#), says that drama improves self-concept by providing opportunities to gain personal confidence through working in an uncritical atmosphere. Participation in drama contribute to development of empathetic and

self – esteem, hence; learners are motivated to bring out their personal views in public events that are uncensored. According to Jensen (2001) application of dramatic art is a mechanism that promotes classroom learning and kinesthetic movement. Sun (2003), discovered that mental requirements for understanding drama are similar to those for reading, that learners use similar cognitive processes for reading comprehension and dramatic activity. Elizabethan and Jacobean (2008), found out that learners who participate in drama are able to stimulate their creativity in solving problems and in communication. They also have an opportunity to express their emotions, thoughts and dreams that they might have not otherwise have means to express. They engage in role play to solve problems from their own life or problems confronted by characters in literature or historical figures. This happens in a safe environment, where actions and consequences are examined, discussed and in a very real sense experienced without the dangers and pitfalls that such experience would lead to in the real world (Albert and Foil, 2003). Crumple and Scheider (2002), revealed that learners who participate in drama are able to speak in public without difficulty. They communicate persuasively in both oral and written language. The research also reported such learners are confident and have a positive image of themselves. Elizabethan and Jacobean (2008), discovered that participation in drama helps in preparing the learners to live and work in a world that is increasingly team-oriented. It is appropriate for providing opportunities for the learners to effectively acquire communication skills, values and positive attitude. Although educationists and researchers recognize the value of learners participating in music and drama, they need the support and guidance of teachers hence teachers perception of the same is key.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The Purpose of the study was to investigate teachers’ perception on the use of music and drama in developing competencies among learners. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- To what extent does participation in music develop competencies among learners in secondary schools?
- To what extent does participation in drama develop competencies among learners in secondary schools?

1.2. Methodology

The study was done in Kisii County in Kenya. The county had different school categories for the researcher to sample teachers from. A descriptive research design which was appropriate in investigating teacher’s perception of Music and Drama in developing competencies among learners was used (Orodho, 2005). Eighty teachers who were in charge of music and drama formed the target population. They were all selected to form the study sample using Census sampling technique. The research instruments used to generate data were questionnaires. They aided data collection from sampled teachers. Validity evaluates whether investigation measures accurately the required issues or truthfulness of results (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Experts in the area reviewed instruments to ensure validity. A pilot study was conducted to test reliability of the research instruments. It was used to establish appropriateness, clearness, and truthfulness of questions on the questionnaires. Data was analyzed qualitatively as per emerging themes relevant to the research questions and quantitatively using frequencies and percentages.

2. Findings and Discussions

2.1. Teachers’ Perception on Participation in Music in Developing Competencies Among Learners

The researcher sought to assess the perception of the teachers on participation in music in developing competencies among learners in secondary schools. The findings were analyzed as summarized in Table 1.

Table-1. Teachers’ Perception on Participation in Music in Developing Competencies among Learners

Competencies Developed	SA	A	M	D	SD
Participation in music helps learners develop language and reasoning	6(30%)	11(55%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)
Participation in music helps learners develop skill memorization	7(35%)	8(40%)	2(10%)	2(10%)	1(5%)
Learners who participate in music improve their academic work through craftsmanship and this can be applied to all subjects of study	3(15%)	14(70%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)
Learners who participate in music have improved coordination	2(10%)	12(60%)	2(10%)	3(15%)	1(5%)
Learners who participate in music are involved in tonal variation which leads to competency in oral skills	6(30%)	10(50%)	1(5%)	2(10%)	1(5%)
Learners who participate in music develop positive attitude towards the value of society hence good citizenship	3(15%)	14(70%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)

Key
 SA Strongly Agree
 A Agree
 M Moderate
 D Disagree
 SD Strongly Disagree

In Table 1, the study found out that 85% of the respondents reported that learners who participated in music developed good communication skills. This implied that learners who participated in music recited words several times so as to increase retention ability which formed part of language development. Learners also had an ability to distinguish sounds which helped them to develop language. This was in line with the research conducted by Humpal and Wolf (2003) who found out that those learners who participated in music developed the skill of listening. Blakemore and Frith (2000), also through their study found out that learners’ participation in music improved their reading skills.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the respondents reported that learners who participated in music were more creative. The findings were in line with that of Koutsoupidou and Hargreaves (2009), learners who participated in music developed creative thinking and improved verbal learning and retention abilities. A high percentage of respondents (85%) said that learners who participated in music were able to develop good critical thinking skills and problem solving skills. In this case, it implied that learners, who participated in music, for instance singing, were able to engage their minds well for proper memory retention hence improved academic skills. The researcher’s findings conformed with the study of Tallal and Gaab (2006), Patel and Iversen (2007) who through their study found out that participation in music helped in sharpening the brain’s early encoding of sound which led to improved performance of the learners. This was also in line with a research which was carried out by Ho et al. (2003), who reported that learners who participated in music improved their verbal learning and retention abilities and the ones who took more time in training in music were able to have a better memory. Ongong’a et al. (2010), supports the findings, he reported that participation in music enhanced knowledge in geography, history, science, mathematics, physical education and foreign language.

Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents reported that participation in music helped the learners to acquire communication skills. Such learners have the ability to distinguish sounds hence they develop good listening and speaking skills. A study by Tallal and Gaab (2006), Patel and Iversen (2007) support the findings, that musical trainings sharpen the brain’s early encoding of sound which lead to improved performance. The learners acquire an enhanced auditory discrimination. A study by Piro and Ortiz (2009), found out that learners who participate in music improve vocabulary and verbal sequencing significantly hence supports the study findings.

A significant number (85%) of the respondents reported that learners who participated in music developed social competency skills and good citizenship. It implied that they acquired teamwork skills and developed a sense of empathy with others; they were able to tune into other people’s emotions. This study was in line with the research of Broh (2002), who discovered that participation in music enabled learners to improve their self-esteem.

2.2. Teachers’ Perception on Participation in Drama in Developing Competencies Among Learners

Findings about teachers’ perception on participation in drama in developing competencies among learners was as summarized in Table 2.

Table-2. Teachers’ Perception on Participation in Drama in Developing Competencies among Learners

Competencies Developed	SA	A	M	D	SD
Participation in drama increases learners motivation and confidence	8(40%)	8(40%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)
Participation in drama helps to develop creativity among the learners thus enabling innovation of new academic ideas	4(20%)	11(55%)	1(5%)	3(15%)	1(5%)
Participation in drama fosters verbal and non-verbal communication among learners	7(35%)	10(50%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)
Learners who participate in drama have improved fluency in spoken English	9(45%)	7(35%)	2(10%)	1(5%)	1(5%)
Learners who participate in drama master their scripts hence develop reading skills	10(50%)	7(35%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)
Participation in drama involves a lot of stress and intonation	10(50%)	6(30%)	1(5%)	2(10%)	1(5%)
Different roles learners take up during participation in drama enable them to develop emotional intelligence.	8(40%)	9(45%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)

Key
 SA-Strongly agree
 A-Agree
 M-Moderate
 D-Disagree
 SD-Strongly disagree

From the research findings, 80% of the respondents were of the view that learners who participated in drama developed good leadership skills. They build their confidence which is a good leadership skill. A study by Schiller (2008), supports the findings by reporting that learners who participated in drama had an improved self-concept which provided opportunities to gain self-confidence.

Many respondents (75%) were of the opinion that participation in drama helped to develop learners' creative skills. They were allowed to approach situations in different ways which helped them to develop creative thinking and new techniques of study. Elizabethan and Jacobean (2008) supports the findings.

Most respondents (85%), revealed that learners who participated in drama developed fluent communication skills. The experience also provided an opportunity for them to display their leadership skills. Crumple and Scheider (2002) supports the findings. They reported that learners who participate in drama can: speak in public well without any difficulty, communicate persuasively in both oral and written language and are confident besides acquiring values.

Many respondents (80%) stated that participation in drama developed learners' communication skills. They were able to communicate with one another hence sharpening their language skills. This is in line with the study conducted by Crumple and Scheider (2002), who reported that learners who participated in drama were able to communicate persuasively. A study by Sun (2003) reports that participation in drama require mental understanding which is similar to that of reading hence learners use similar cognitive process for reading comprehension and other drama activities.

A significant number (85%) of the respondents were of the opinion that learners who participated in drama acquired social skills. Participation in drama involves them taking different roles which enabled them to develop emotional intelligence. They were given an opportunity to explore a wide range of feelings so that they develop a sense of independence and interdependence. Elizabethan and Jacobean (2008), supports the study findings, that such learners had an opportunity to express their emotions, thoughts and dreams.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that learners should be encouraged to participate in Music and Drama to facilitate acquisition of diverse competencies such as: *communication skills, creativity skills, critical thinking, problem solving skills, leadership skills, emotional intelligence and social skills*. Adequate time should be allocated to such activities to enable learners to effectively discover their talents and enhance physical, psychological, emotional and cognitive development. There is need for supportive policies to be developed and implemented.

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