
Secondary School Principals' Leadership Roles and the Development of Students' Participation in non-Academic Talents in Kenya: A case of Nyandarua County.

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Abstract

Secondary Schools' leadership roles in the development of students' non academic talents can not be ignored in Kenya. Secondary schools have an immense contribution in Kenya's sporting activities for a long time. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of secondary school principals' leadership roles in development of students' non-academic talents in Nyandarua County Kenya. The study was guided by the following speculations: There is no relationship between secondary school principals' leadership role in utilizing allocated resources and the promotion of students' participation in non academic talents in Nyandarua County; There is no relationship between secondary school principals' leadership and the promotion of students' participation in sports among students in Nyandarua County; and there is no relationship between secondary school principals' leadership role in supervising and motivating teachers and students students' participation in creative arts in Nyandarua County.

Cross-sectional research design was used while quantitative research strategy was used in this study. The target population comprised of 185 principals from all the 185 secondary schools in the County. Stratified random sampling technique was used to arrive at a sample of 56 principals who were given questionnaires to react to items on the three major variables of this study. Data collected through interviews was analysed using focus by question analysis strategy. Results were presented in Figures. The study revealed that development of learners' non-academic talents was being affected by inadequate allocation of resource to non-academic activities, supervision and motivation in co-curricular activities encourages a student to improve in academic competence and that secondary school students in Nyandarua County rarely develop non-academic talents to their fullest. The study recommended that secondary school education policy makers, Ministry of Education officials, principals and teachers give development of learners' non-academic talents as much emphasis as the academic talents development.

Key Words: Leadership, Resources, Non-academic Talents, Co-curricular, Activities

1. Introduction

School leadership and management of resources has become a priority in education policy agenda across the global (Gray, 2000). Many countries from many parts of the world have realized the importance of co- curriculum, and this has enhanced review of their education system to ensure early identification of their students' talents. It is also interesting to realize how global governments have reacted towards developments of students' non-academic talents in their education departments (Lipsitiz, 1991). Non-academic talents are now recognized world over as relevant

ingredients of quality education which goes a long way in nurturing a healthy and an economic viable society (Digolo, 2006).

The principal is one of the key stakeholder of secondary education who has the responsibility of setting the direction of his/her school in anticipation of development of learners' academic and non-academic talents (Okumbe, 1999). Okumbe's argument seemed to illuminate an earlier assertion by Eshiwani (1993) on principals' role of developing students' talents, where he had pointed out that success of secondary schools would be realized if school principals played a number of leadership roles in the course of their work. Sushila (2004), Ojiambo (2009), and Republic of Kenya, (1988) all talk about various principals' leadership roles but it is Okumbe (1999), who summarizes six major principals' leadership roles as follows: Formulation of sound policies, goals and objectives in the school; procurement of resources necessary for the achievement of school objectives; organizing and coordinating activities of the school; influencing and stimulating the human resource available; integrating the school and its activities in to the set- up of the society and to evaluate the school activities in accordance with the school's blueprint.

McPartland, Letgers, Jordan and McDill (1996), observe that talents such as creative arts, athletics, ball games and leadership among students can be developed through secondary schools principals' leadership in co-curricular activities. They further argue that through participation in co-curricular activities, majority of secondary school students may develop talents that would make them self-employed or self-reliant even if they do not proceed with post-secondary education. In its annual report, UNESCO (2008) gave an account that development of non-academic talents would be comprehensively met, if key stakeholders of secondary education provide the right atmosphere, environment and support for the learner to pursue his/her potential.

Non-academic talents which include natural abilities and lifelong skills that one acquires outside the regular academic lessons are inclined towards cultivating the mind so that the individual can accomplish all his/her educational goals in life. They also enable the individual to use full potential of the body; mind and spirit, develop ability to make the best use of his personality, surroundings and circumstances in order to accomplish maximum positive outcomes in life for him and for others (Fordham, 1993).

2. Background to the Study

The identification and development of non-academic talents is as old mankind. It also dates back to the time of the existence of Greek city States where the first Olympics games were held in 776 AD that saw many display their non-academic talents (Nigel, 2005). For several years however, it is noted that a good environment for tapping, nurturing and developing the talents from a tender ages is necessary. Such a realization has helped some countries nurture non academic talents for example in southern America, Brazil has produced many renowned professional footballers, playing their trade across elite European clubs. This in turn earns their country foreign exchange in form of monies repatriated back to their county.

Although Ancient Greece pioneered in the tapping of talents of non-academics, it is the USA, Jamaica, Germany, England, France and China that came out clear as the most important countries for the development of students' non-academic talents. Several countries have developed systems and methodologies that enhance the development of non academic talents. In Nepal non academic talent programs activities include activities such as physical, literary, aesthetic, cultural, hobbies, craft activities, excursions, and social welfare among others. National education system plan in

Nepal has made extra-curricular compulsory and had given directives to carry-on such activities. Some of these activities are given as follows - gardening competition, quiz, folk-song and dance, debate, arts, games, etc. Most of these activities are suitable for high school children. Africa is not left behind either in this endeavor. For instance, in Nigeria and Zaire, non academic talent programs activities have been developed in areas such drama and music.

Since 1963, Kenya has provided education to all its citizens. The Government recognizes the need for all children and youth to have access to both academic and non-academic education (Republic of Kenya, 1999). According to the National Curriculum and Research Centre (NCRC) in Kenya under Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), in their strategic plan 2006 – 2010, they stated that non-academic talents helps the youth to achieve their psychological and social needs without which they become maladjusted and begin to indulge in drug abuse hence becoming unemployable. Several schools running alternative curriculum in Kenya seem to do better on the co-curricular scope and achievement. A good example is St. Andrews Turi that has for over 80 years, had a stand-alone departments such as Drama and Theatre Studies with specific attention to instrumental Music, Drums and Tennis (Republic of Kenya, 2000).

The Ministry of Education in Kenya has given the responsibility of supervising development of both academic and non-academic talents at school level to the principals. However, secondary school principals' have not done much in promoting realization of non-academic talents among students (Republic of Kenya, 2000). Even those schools that do well in non-academic talents like athletics and games in general are not associated with principals of schools but through clubs and individual initiatives. Republic of Kenya 1981 and 1988 and the Head's Manual (1979), outlines how principals' roles of checking schemes of work and lesson preparation, making of school time table, accounting of school finances, staff development, admission of students, guiding and cancelling and public relation determine the academic results of a school. These talents are largely enforced through co-curricular activities such as creative arts, athletics, ball games among students (Urevbu, 1985).

3. Research Questions

This research was guided by the following research questions.

1. Is there a relationship between secondary school principals' leadership role in utilizing allocated resources and the promotion of students' participation in non academic talents in Nyandarua County?
2. What is the relationship between secondary school principals' leadership and the promotion of students' participation in sports among students in Nyandarua County?
3. What is the relationship between secondary school principals' leadership role in supervising and motivating teachers and students' participation in creative arts in Nyandarua County?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out whether there exists a relationship between the secondary school principals' leadership roles and the promotion of the development of learners' non-academic talents in Nyandarua County, Kenya.

5. Statement of the Problem

Education sector has not fully prepared school principals especially in leadership towards development of students' non-academic talents in secondary schools in Kenya. These activities that form part of non-academic programmes are not emphasized since most principals put ore emphasis on academic programmes. There is lack of proper supervision and motivation from principals in regard to their roles as supervisors and motivators of teachers and students with the aim of to take

part in participation in non-academic talents. Resources allocated to non-academic programmes are of a lower ratio compared to what goes to academic programmes. Students from Nyandarua though involved in sporting activities, do not do well in school competitions at national level partly because of inadequate preparations and lack of facilities that result from poor resource allocation at school level.

6. Significance of the Study

This study will draw the attention of many stakeholders. At school level, it will be an eye opener to the principals in regard to equitable resource allocation. It will make a valuable contribution to the policy and management as it provides an understanding of influence of secondary school principals on development of learners' non-academic talents. It will provide educators, curriculum planners and government functionaries with information about the influence that secondary school principals' leadership roles may have on non-academic talents development practices in Kenyan secondary schools.

7. Literature Review

School leadership is about setting goals for the institution and leading for performance in the various areas. As Gori (2014) notes, "management is about setting direction and organizing available resources so that the school set objectives can be achieved in a planned manner; and setting and improving organizational standards"(p.188). Above all, the manager must additionally "direct" the work of others for the maximum achievement of schools' set goals and objectives. It is this reason that the school principal is highly placed as a major player in influencing the development of non-academic talents among students. Non academic programmes are mainly outside the classroom and their impact on students' learning is largely mediated through other people, events and organizational factors such as teachers, and school climate (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). On the other hand, Gori (2015) argues, resources for use in schools are decentralized and that their use depends on how best the principals utilize them. Resources and materials are critical ingredients in learning, and the intended programme cannot be easily implemented without them. No meaningful teaching and learning, which is a component of curriculum implementation, takes place without adequate resource materials (Bush, 2003).

In any public secondary school in Kenya, co-curricular activities are usually featured in every annual budget done by the school management (BOM). There is a standard vote head allocation followed by all schools as per the guideline given by the Ministry of Education called activity vote head. Purchasing of equipment needed for co-curricular activities is done under Boarding Equipment and Stores vote head (B.E.S.) while their maintenance is done under Repair, Maintenance and Improvement vote head (RRI). Every year as the B.O.M. allocates funds for each vote head as per the plan for the year, co-curricular activities vote head is not given its allocation of funds during budgeting by the B.O.M. and one would wonder why yet the principal who bears the burden of leadership role of learners' non-academic talent development is also the chief executive in the B.O.M.

The school principals plays a key role here as they are able to control and monitor both students' and teachers' participation. In Republic of Kenya (1967), it is stated that "in addition to attendance at school during normal working hours, a teacher is required to set aside time for preparation of lessons, marking of students assignment and carrying out any other duties assigned to him/her as part of the normal school routine, including participation in the school co-curricular activities. It means therefore that the school principal is given authority by the law to enable him/her provide leadership for talent development. This study attempted to find out if such powers are used for the

purpose of development of learners' non-academic talents. The result indicated that secondary school principals played their role of responsibility of duty allocation to teachers but they have a challenge of understaffing and that the few teachers available lack the pre-requisite skills to identify and develop non-academic talents among the learners.

In many secondary schools in Kenya, shortage of resources and materials is a major constraint. For example, a study carried out by the GoK and UNICEF (1995), revealed that the secondary schools had inadequate resources and facilities which negatively affected curriculum implementation. Principals in effective schools therefore involve themselves in improving academic and non-academic talents and are responsible for day-to-day assignment of duties and supervision of the teachers, a role which is neither clearly defined in the education Act nor emphasized (Republic of Kenya, 1988). According to Ouma (1987), resources encourage learners to participate in the learning process, motivates them, cater for individual differences and enable learners to gain experience by using their senses.

As Whitaker (1979) asserts in the University of Zimbabwe, the teachers view their role in co-curricular activities implementation as an autonomous one. In a non-formal setup, they select and decide what to teach from the prescribed syllabus or curriculum since they may not have been trained in what is prescribed in the plan. Since implementation takes place through the interaction of the learner and the planned learning opportunities, the role and influence of the teacher in the process is indisputable (University of Zimbabwe, 1995). If the teacher is to be able to translate co-curricular intentions into reality, it is imperative that the teacher understand the co-curricular activity well in order to implement it effectively (Whitaker, 1995). If the co-curricular activity is what teachers and students create together, as Wolfson (1997) states, the teacher must play a more significant role in designing it. Teachers must be involved in co-curricular planning and development so that they can implement and modify the co-curricular for the benefit of their learners. Practically, co-curricular activities teachers developed from within the school are more likely to have a higher level of commitment since they have already adapted to the school environment (MoE, 2000).

Marsh (1992) added that participation in co-curricular activities was positively correlated with global self-concept, academic self-concept and taking advanced aspirations. He also explained that participation in athletics showed generally positive effects on academic achievement. Anxiety is one of the problems that affect students learning. A study by Bawa and Debnath (1993) has shown that students suffering from high anxiety got relieved of it through a regular participation in co-curricular activities. This Participation improves self-esteem, self-satisfaction, personal worth and emotional adjustment. Similarly, Booth (2008), Ikagami (2000), Johnson and Coffey (2004), reported that participation in co-curricular activities especially in sports, yoga, field visit, social service, drama, helped in reducing the anxiety level of the participants.

8. Methodology

Cross-sectional research design was used in this study. The target population for the study comprised of all the 185 secondary schools in Nyandarua County. Stratified random sampling was used in this study. This strategy was used to ensuring that all parts of the population are represented in the sample (Bryman, 2012; Orodho, 2005). It also catered for obtaining of estimates of known precision for certain subdivisions of the education stakeholders in Nyandarua County (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Data was analysed using focus by question strategy and results were presented in Figures.

9. Instrumentation, Validity and Reliability

Interviews were used to collect data from the principals, teachers and students. Validity of the instruments was ascertained by sharing and scrutinizing the items by the three researchers who happen to be specialists in the area under study. This aspect of face validity was found helpful since the three researchers were experts in the subject. Estimation of the tool's reliability was essential for reliable results (Bryman, 2012; Gay, et al, 2006). Questionnaire items' reliability for data was done by highly restructuring the questions.

10. Data analysis and Research Findings

10.1 Influence of Resources in Promoting Development of Non-Academic Talents

Principals, teachers and students were asked to tell whether resources were allocated effectively for athletics and other sporting activities. Respondents gave the information as shown in Figure 1. From the data shown in Figure 1, a great consistency was observed from the responses of the three categories of respondents i.e principals, teachers and students. About a third of the principals as indicated by 11(31%) agreed that in their school, participation in athletics was effective in terms of resource allocation e.g. rooms, fields, equipment and physical participation both at school level and externally. However, majority of principals as represented by 22 (63%) on the other hand were of a contrary opinion while 2 (6%) were undecided. The study also showed only small percentages of teachers and students as indicated by 69 (34%) and 254 (37%) respectively agreed that resources were effectively allocated to promote athletics. Similarly, majority of teachers and students as indicated by 123 (61%) and 433 (63%) in that order felt that participation in athletics was not effective due to resources allocation.

The study further revealed that participation in most schools was not effective because either schools didn't prepare their budget well every year or the budget was hardly executed the way it was supposed to. The results therefore implies that athletics in secondary schools does not get enough resources to buy equipments and materials and also for providing other services such as transport.

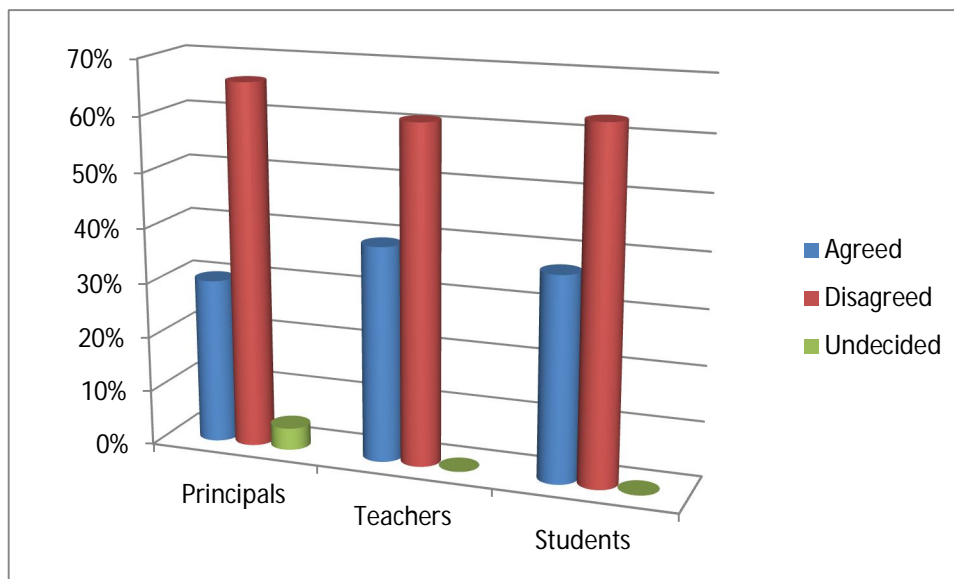


Figure 1. Responses on Influence of Resources in Promoting Development of Athletics

10.2 Students Participation in Athletics as a non-Academic Activity

Parents were asked to rate students’ level of participation in athletics in their schools. Responses on the rating are presented in Figure 2.

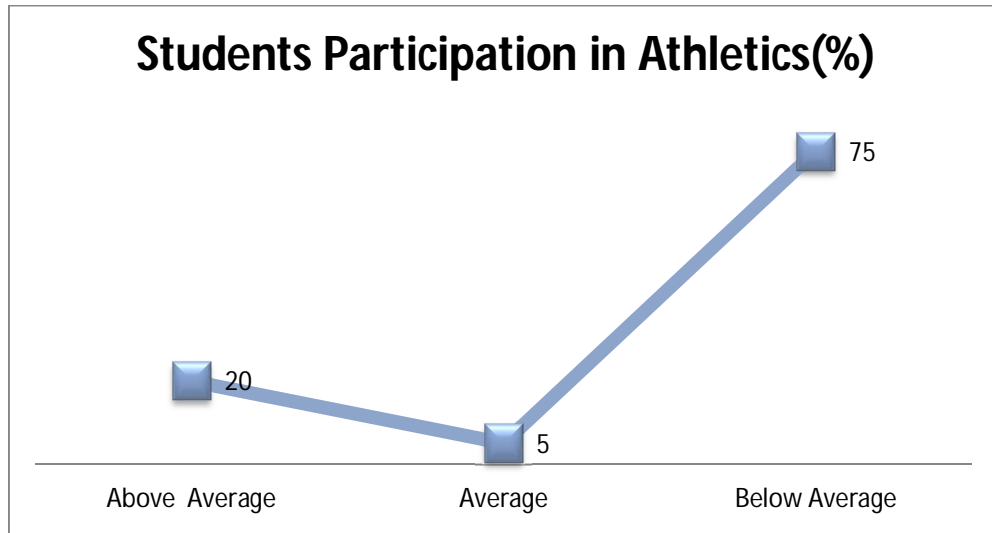


Figure 2. Views of on the level of students’ participation in athletics

From Figure 2, it is evident that majority of parents viewed students’ participation in athletics at the County as below average as indicated by 19 (76%). Only a small number of parents as indicated by 6 (24%) agreed that students were actively involved in athletics. This meant that despite many athletes making millions of shillings in and out of Kenya because of this sport, Nyandarua County schools are not developing their students to exploit that talent.

10.3 Principals and Teachers Willingness to Promote Participation in Ball Games

Parents were asked to comment on principals and teachers willingness to promote learners participation in ball games in their schools. The outcome of their comments are summarized in Figure 4.

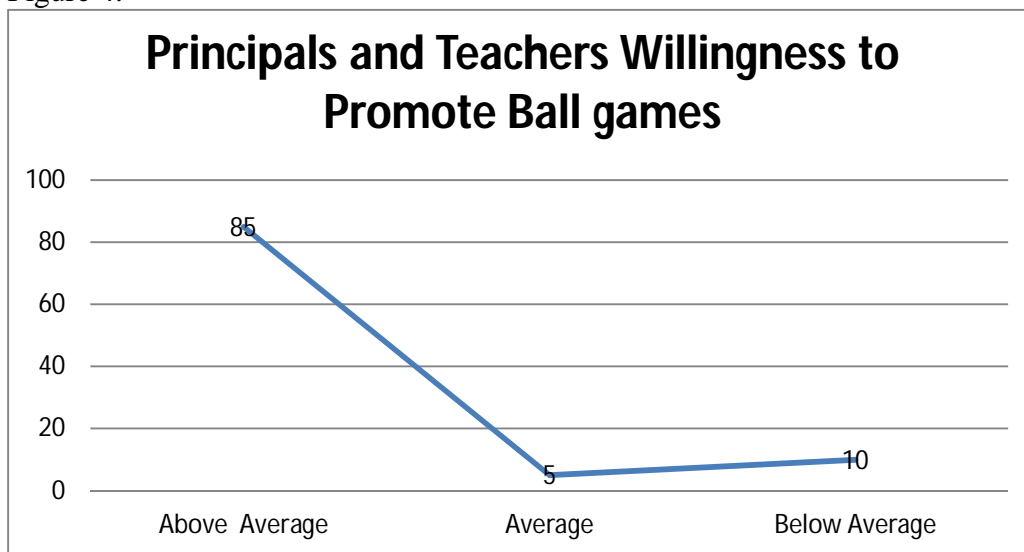


Figure 4. Principals’ and Teachers’ Willingness to Promote Participation in Ball Games

The data shown on the Figure 4 shows that the principals and teachers in Nyandarua County were willing to support and promote participation of ball games in the schools as indicated by the majority (22 (90%)) of them were rated to be either at above average or at average level. The rest as indicated by 3 (10%) were at below average level. Looking at the result of the study in entirety, it shows a lot of willingness and appreciations of developing non-academic talents among the key players. However, this did not translate in to meaningful success in improving co-curricular activities which implies that other than will power to develop non-academic talents, one would require professional training and incentives.

10.4 Influence of Supervision and Motivation of Teachers and Students on students'

Achievement in Academic Talents

Students were asked whether active supervision and motivation in co-curricular activities encourages a student to improve in academic competence. Their views are shown in Figure 5.

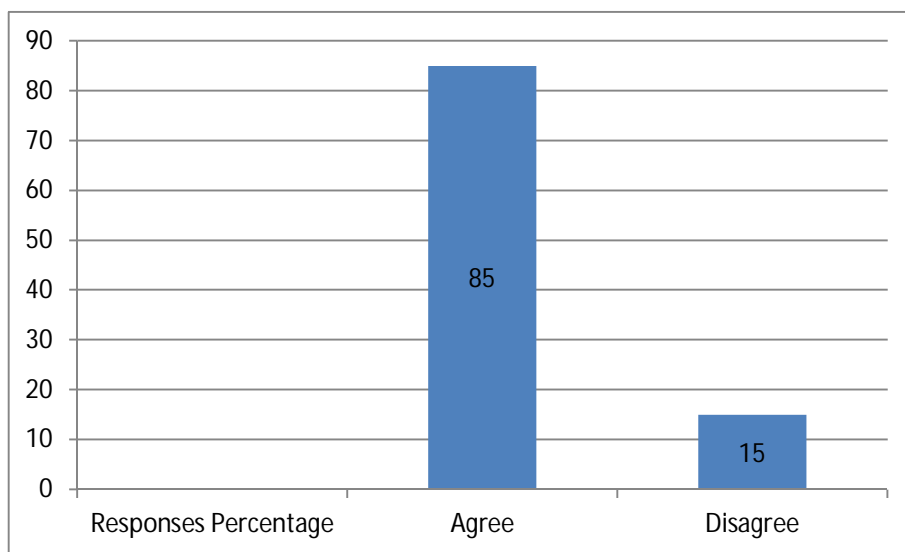


Figure 5. Students' response on effects of supervision and motivation on academic achievement

Figure 5 indicates that 585 (85%) students agreed that supervision and motivation in co-curricular activities encourages a student to improve in academic competence. The rest (103 (15%)) disagreed with that view.

10.5 Influence of Supervision and Motivation on Staff Development

Focusing on the issue of whether the schools were having working staff development policies to ensure availability of creative activities teachers at all times, the responses given by the principals and teachers were valid. The data presented in Figure 6 has information on this phenomenon.

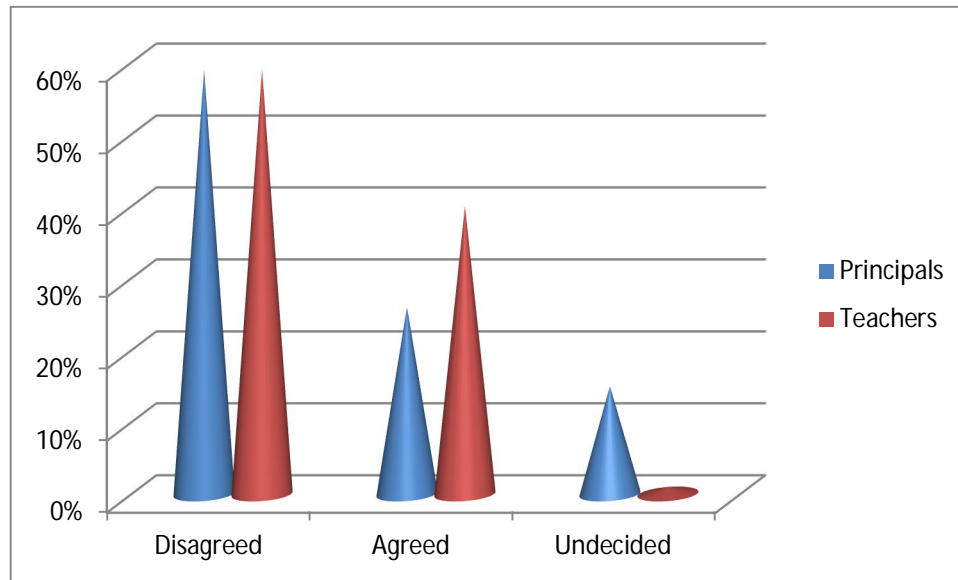


Figure 6. Principals and teachers' views on staff development policies

Figure 6 shows that 21 (60%) of the principals disagreed that the schools had such policies, 9 (26%) replied to the affirmative while 5(14%) were undecided. When the same question was posed to the teachers, almost similar response were obtained, where 119 (59%) disagreed with the proposal that the schools where they taught had staff development policy.

11. Discussions

Utilization of resources is an important aspect that is related to performance and development of non academic talents in schools. As Levacic (2000) argue, there is a strong link between utilization of available resources and performance of schools. In this study, resources allocation for all activities in Nyandarua County secondary schools was found to have a major contributor to the performance in co-curricular activities. The findings from the information given by principals indicate that almost all the students in the schools in Nyandarua county, participated in co-curricular activities. A small number of students do not participate. The study findings revealed that secondary school principals are aware of the importance of encouraging students' participation in co-curricular activities.

The results of the findings in Figure 5 show that students' involvement in co-curricular activities enhances their competencies in communication, cognitive, self-managing and academic. This is in line with a study done by Sitra and Sasidhar (2005) in Malasia on the same phenomenon. From the finding it is true there is negligence of learners. The results shown by Figure 6 is in line with Ross (1993) who stated that lack of supervision and motivation on staff development leads to many highly capable, talented students being quietly neglected. Hence, it can rightly be observed that secondary school students in Nyandarua County rarely develop non-academic talents probably as a result of inadequate teachers and also lack of staff development policies.

12. Summary and Conclusions

The study found out that participation in ball games provides opportunity for enhancing special skills and abilities and can lead to personal economic gains. The study found out that development of learners' non-academic talents was being affected by inadequate allocation of resources to non-academic activities, supervision and motivation in co-curricular activities encourages students to improve in academic competences and that secondary school students in Nyandarua County rarely develop non-academic talents to their fullest.

It was concluded that secondary school principals' leadership role of supervision and motivation has great influence on development students' non-academic talents. The findings indicated that through supervision and motivation of students and teachers by the principals, students are encouraged to participate in creativity arts subject of their choice upon admission in secondary school. The study also revealed that preparation of calendar of activities in schools was essential and this could be used to enhance the identification of students for non-academic activities development. However, the study also established that due to lack of working staff development policies to ensure availability of skilled teachers in various fields at all times, most schools did not have creative arts teachers.

13. Recommendations and Further Research

Out of this study, the following recommendations were made with further research given as shown.

- The study recommended that secondary school education policy makers, Ministry of Education officials, principals and teachers give development of learners' non-academic talents as much emphasis as the academic talents development.
- Allocation of resources should be done by bodies outside the schools and funds sent directly to the various departments including that of games.
- The Ministry of Education should create a curriculum for co-curricular activities that should be examined like other subjects in secondary schools.
- Similar studies should be conducted by youth ministry to find out what other factors affect the development of non-academic talents among the secondary school youths in Nyandarua County.

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