

Tutors' Perceptions on the Efficacy of Teacher-Trainees in Using Learning Resources in Social Studies Instruction

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Abstract

Instructional materials enhance the teaching and learning process by exhibiting information necessary to acquire knowledge and skills. The purpose of this study was to establish tutors' perceptions on the efficacy of teacher-trainees in using learning resources in Social Studies instruction. This was achieved through the study objective which was to establish how training in the use of teaching and learning resources influence the delivery of Social Studies among teacher trainees. Data was obtained from a sample of 100 respondents comprising of 8 tutors and 92 teacher trainees in 5 private primary teacher training colleges in Nakuru County. This study employed a descriptive survey research design. Data was collected by use of structured questionnaires, classroom observation schedules and interviews with selected tutors. The study established that teacher trainees were adequately exposed and trained in the use of teaching and learning resources used in social studies instruction. Generally, the results reveal that the attitude of majority of respondents towards selection and use of teaching learning resources in teaching social studies was positive.

Keywords: Attitude, Efficacy, Social Studies Education

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I. Introduction

Learning is a complex process. It can be defined as a change in disposition; a relatively permanent change in behavior over time and this is brought about partly by experience. Learning can occur as a result of newly acquired skills, knowledge, perception, facts, principles, and new information at hand (Adeyanju, 1997). Learning can be reinforced with different teaching/learning resources because they stimulate, motivate as well as focus learners' attention for a while during the instructional process. Teaching/ learning resources are instructional materials and devices through which teaching and learning are facilitated in schools (Agun & Okunrotifa 1989). Examples of teaching/ learning resources include visual aids, audio aids, real objects and many others. Visual aids are designated materials that may be locally made or commercially produced. Teaching and learning resources are prerequisite in any educational setting. Teaching at any level requires that the students be exposed to some form of simulation. Okoiba (2011) defines teaching resources as anything that can assist the teacher in promoting teaching and learning. When the students are given the chance to learn through more senses than one, they tend to learn faster and easier. The use of instructional materials provides the teacher with interesting and compelling platforms for conveying information since the use of instructional materials motivate learners to learn more. Furthermore, the teacher is assisted in overcoming physical difficulties that could have hindered his effective presentation of a given topic.

Broadly, teaching learning resources refers to a spectrum of educational materials that teachers use in the classroom to support specific learning objectives as set out in the lesson plans. Klaus (2010) noted that teaching learning resources are tools that classroom teachers use to help their students learn quickly and thoroughly. A teaching aid can be as simple as a chalkboard or as complex as a computer program. They are the tools used to convey information in the classroom. Tamakloe, Amedahe and Atta (2005) also defined teaching learning resources as a material which the teacher uses to facilitate the learning, understanding and acquisition of knowledge, concept, principles or skills by his students. The centrality of the teacher in the teaching and learning process is widely acknowledged and the link between low pupil achievement and the skills and competence of teachers is consistently made (UNESCO, 2005). Research examining teacher quality confirms the logical conclusion that poor quality of students' learning correlates strongly with poor quality of teachers' teaching and it is widely assumed that initial teacher education and training (ITET) and continuing professional development (CPD) make a difference in teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skill which in turn is reflected in enhanced student learning outcomes (Dembélé & Lefoka, 2007).

Social studies in its most interdisciplinary form combine the integrated study of humanities and the social sciences. An outstanding problem militating against effective teaching of social studies in schools is lack

of expert teachers in the field. In recognition of this fact, Akinlaja (1978) asserts that teachers currently handling social studies in schools are non-specialist because they were not trained as such. In-adequate supply and utilization of instructional materials including textbooks which can increase teachers/students' awareness and reinforce learning is an obstacle to the teaching of social studies. Obiadi (1980) holds that there are trained teachers for social studies but most of them handling the subjects at present still have little knowledge about the new integrated social studies methodology. Extant studies have shown that utilization of instructional media in teaching is not adequately done in most public learning institutions. According to study done by Ayoti, Simiyu, Ongeti, & Poipoi, (2013) instructional media were not utilized in teaching because teachers rarely prepared any. In this study therefore, we seek to explore and establish tutors' perceptions on the efficacy of teacher-trainees in using learning resources in Social Studies instruction.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Systems Theory propounded by Bertalanffy (1968) which states that separate elements coordinate into meaningful manageable, systematic whole, called "systems". The whole is dynamic and open thus it consists of parts but is more than the sum of its parts. The parts that make up the system are closely interrelated. All the elements of a system work towards achieving a common goal, thus creating harmony. Systems consist of components and sub-components. The output of one component becomes the input for another. Outputs of components magnify, influence or cancel out one another. Interactions and mutual interdependencies among components can produce unique intended and unintended consequences. Feedback and evaluation procedures provide relevant, objective, useful information on how the system is behaving and what results are actually occurring.

The classroom teaching and learning process is systems-based. A teacher, in developing any learning experience, first plans, then implements those plans and finally evaluates the success of the activity. This gives a feedback used in correcting or improving the process. System approach can effectively improve the instructional system. In instructional system, certain interactive and interrelated elements are operating in a systematic way to achieve stipulated instructional objectives. According to Ayot and Patel (1992), a system has inputs which are subjected to a process before passing out as outputs. Teachers while teaching, set out to attain specific objectives to achieve at the end of the lesson. For this to happen, a combination of inputs such as a variety of teaching and learning resources are used by teachers who take learners through an instructional process, the outcome of which is the attainment of the objectives set. The teacher has to select those teaching and learning resources that will accomplish the task of meeting the learning needs (Wanjiru, 2009).

According to Infante, et. al. (1997), the fundamental systems-interactive paradigm of organizational analysis features the continual stages of input, throughput (processing), and output. Several system characteristics are: wholeness and interdependence (the whole is more than the sum of all parts), correlations, perceiving causes, chain of influence, hierarchy, supra-systems and subsystems, self-regulation and control, goal-oriented, interchange with the environment, inputs/outputs, the need for balance/homeostasis, change and adaptability (morphogenesis) and equifinality. Realistically, any school has objectives to achieve and achieving them requires it to treat all the elements involved in the process (inputs like students, teachers and resources; through input like teaching methods and outputs like graduates with different skills and attitudes) as interdependent.

This study was guided by the System Theory because Teacher training institutions like all other educational institutions are systems where the teaching/learning process is observed as a throughput (process) used to transform inputs students and resources into outputs (graduates with different skills and attitudes). In schools we also observe an interrelation between teachers, resources and students which constitute a sine quonon condition for the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process. The teacher-trainee comes in as an input that goes through a process in order to attain training and skills which make him or her graduate with a P1 Certificate as a successful output. To enhance his or her success, there is need for the tutors and the teacher trainees' field of experience to overlap due to use of teaching and learning resources. Unless, therefore, teaching and learning resources are made available, lecturers and the student-teachers may not use them, thus reducing their field of experience. Effective use may depend on lecturers' skills as well as student-teachers' participation. The resources should be accessible to both lecturers and student-teachers who may in turn use the variety available. Teachers who use teaching and learning resources manage to use them to assist in manipulating difficult concepts and ideas so that they are easily understood by the learner. Use of a variety of teaching and learning resources provides stimulus variation, enhancing and maintaining motivation in class. The use of teaching and learning resources increases active participation of the learner. Participation of the learner provides opportunity for the teacher to reinforce positive responses, which in turn leads to greater learner motivation. Use of resources also makes learning much more concrete as it is likened to real-life experiences. Teachers should, therefore, make use of a variety of teaching and learning resources to be effective in teaching.

II. Literature Review

... Arising from the foregoing review, we conceptualize this study as shown in fig. I.

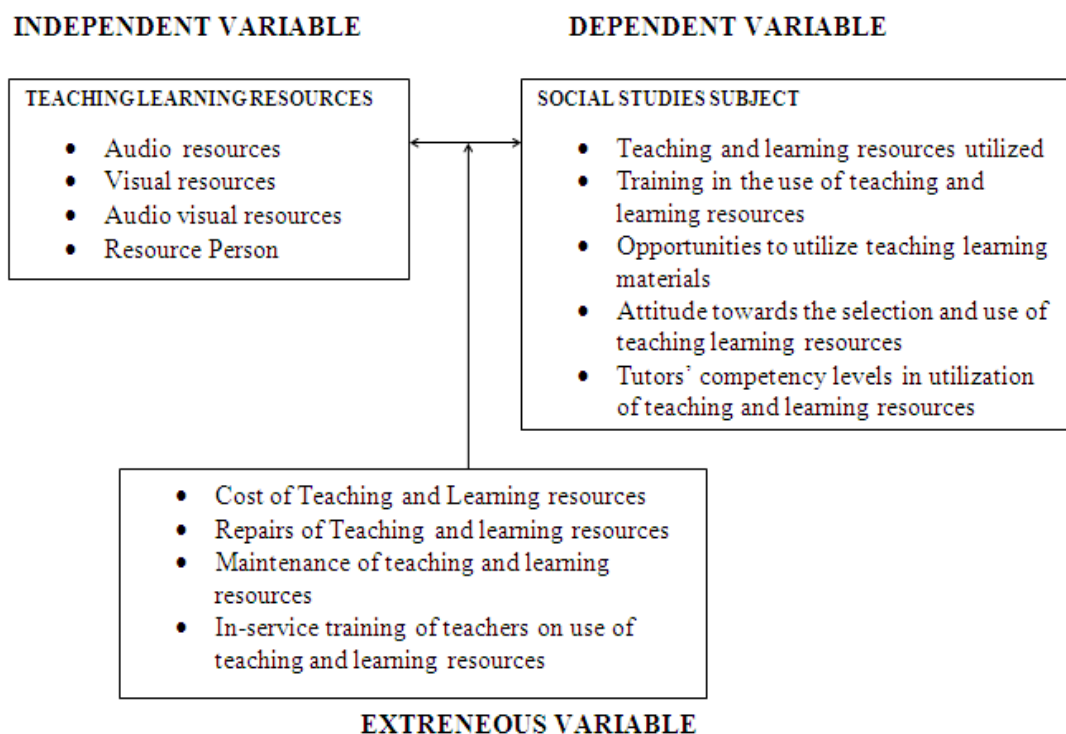


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

III. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design to explore and establish tutors' perceptions on the efficacy of teacher-trainees in using learning resources in Social Studies instruction. To achieve this, data was collected from a sample of 100 respondents comprising of 92 teacher trainees and 8 tutors in 5 private primary teacher training colleges in Nakuru County as shown in table I. Random sampling was used in selecting the teacher trainees based on the year of study. In this case, the second-year students were selected. The second years were selected for this study because it is in second year of study that the student-teachers choose their area of specialization and have been adequately exposed to the use of teaching and learning resources. As for the tutors, purposive sampling was used to select the sample of this study to select the tutors. In purposive sampling the sample is selected on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the elements of the population (Babbie 1990). Social Studies tutors were purposively selected for the study since they provided key information relevant to this study. Data was collected by use of structured questionnaires, classroom observation schedules and interviews with selected tutors. The instruments' reliability was computed using the Cronbach alpha method. A reliability coefficient of 0.861 was produce implying that the instruments were reliable since it was above the recommended threshold of 0.7. Quantitative data was analyzed and presented using frequency distribution, means and percentages whereas qualitative data was presented thematically to establish meaningful patterns in relation to the views of the respondents.

Table I: Sample Size of Respondents

Institution	Sample Population	
	Tutors	Student-Teachers
TTC 1	3	30
TTC 2	1	20
TTC 3	1	14
TTC 4	2	17
TTC 5	1	11
TOTAL	8	92

(Source: Field Data)

IV. Results and Discussions

Table II presents the descriptive statistics summary of the study variables. The descriptive statistics summary showed that mean was ...

Conclusion

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