



LEARNER FACTORS INFLUENCING IMPLEMENTATION OF NON-FORMAL BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM AT THE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION CENTRES IN NAIROBI, MOMBASA AND KISUMU CITIES, KENYA

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Abstract

The drive to access basic education to out-of-school (OOS) children has preoccupied successive governments in independent Kenya. Despite the efforts, attaining Education for All (EFA) has remained elusive. The reality of out-of-school children prompted individuals or organisations to initiate non formal education (NFE). Upon recognition of NFE as a viable means of providing education to the OOS children, then Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) (now Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development [KICD]) developed the Non-formal Basic Education Curriculum (NFBE) to be used by the NFECs in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of learner factors on the implementation of the Non Formal Basic Education Curriculum (NFBE) in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu urban centres. The study employed cross sectional survey design. The target population consisted of 750 learners. The sample comprised on 420 learners pupils drawn across the three cities. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview. The analysis was done by use of STATA 11 Special Edition (SE) statistical application, Epi info and Predictive Analytics SoftWare (PASW). The study further revealed that learner characteristics such as their attitude negatively influenced curriculum implementation. The study recommended that the government should finance NFE centres. The Ministry of Gender and Social Services and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under which these centres are registered should provide teaching and learning facilities to motivate learners join the NFE centres. The study also recommended that Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should provide in-service training for teachers so that they are able to translate and use the NFBE curriculum.

Key Words: *Non-Formal Education, learner factors Curriculum Implementation, Completion Rates, Teacher Characteristics, Non-Formal Basic Education Curriculum*

1.1 Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right. It is critical to the attainment of the broader Millennium Development Goals and the fulfilment of every child's potential (UNESCO, 2014). Article 28 (1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989, declares that all children have a right to education. The right to education requires that young people be given the opportunity necessary for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them lead happy and productive lives as individuals and discharge their social duties for the betterment of life in the society (UNESCO, 2006).

In the Kenya Vision 2030 (GoK, 2007), Kenya recognises that education and training of all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the Vision. The Vision by which the country hopes to become a middle income country by the year 2030 recognises that education equips citizens with understanding and knowledge that enables them to make informed choices about their lives and about the society. The education sector is, therefore, challenged to provide skills necessary to steer Kenyans to the economic, political and social goals of Vision 2030.

However, despite education being the cornerstone for economic and social development and an indispensable key to personal and social improvement, the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (2012) acknowledges that globally, more than 61 million children fail to complete basic education programmes of whom 42% translating to 26,230 live in The Sub-Saharan Africa (Global Partnership for Education: Quality Education for all children (2013). However, continued inability of many children to access the formal school system could be interpreted as a testimony, not only of the failure of the formal school system, but also of the need for non-traditional education approaches that would address the needs of the out-of-school children (GoK, 2005). It is against this backdrop that The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) advocated for the "third channel" approaches, that is non-formal education (NFE) delivery mode. The shortcomings in the provision of formal education, therefore, call for non-formal education as a complementary approach to enable the adult and out-of-school youth to access education.

It was upon recognition of NFE as a viable means of providing education at basic level that the KIE in 2006 began preparation of Non-Formal Basic Education Curriculum (NFBE) to be used by the NFECs in Kenya. The NFBE curriculum is broad in nature and provides the learners with the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for



individual and national development. The target group for this curriculum is out-of-school children and youth aged 6-17 years (GoK, 2006). The Non-Formal Basic Education Curriculum (NFBEC) was launched in 2000 targeting out-of-school children and youth aged 6-17 years (GoK, 2006).

1.2 Learner Characteristics and Curriculum Implementation

It is important to note that curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner. The learner is therefore the central figure in the curriculum implementation process. Implementation takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society (University of Zimbabwe, 1995). Curriculum activities in any educational jurisdiction must involve learners. Therefore, the final evaluation of any new curriculum implementation will depend on whether the new curriculum promotes students' learning or not. As indicators of any curriculum outcomes, the learner's perceptions of curriculum implementation may eventually determine the extent to which the intended curriculum is successfully implemented and further sustained.

Learners hold the key to what is actually transmitted and adopted from the curriculum. The learner factor influences teachers in their selection of learning experiences, hence the need to consider the diverse characteristics of learners in curriculum implementation (Whitaker, 1995). However, it is still not clear how learners should be involved in the curriculum implementation phase even though they are the main recipients of the programme. Learners may be so entrenched in their thinking and behaviour that changes proposed in the curriculum may not be enthusiastically received. For example, learners may be used to being given notes by their teachers and the new programme requires them to make their own notes. Some learners may not know how to make notes and have to be taught how to go about it. Even getting learners to participate in discussions may not be well received if they have been accustomed to being passive recipients of information (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). In a study by GoK and UNICEF (1995), data on the attitude of pupils towards NFE indicated that their attitude towards NFE was positive. The pupils in the study reported that they desired education and wished to continue with education so as to have a better future.

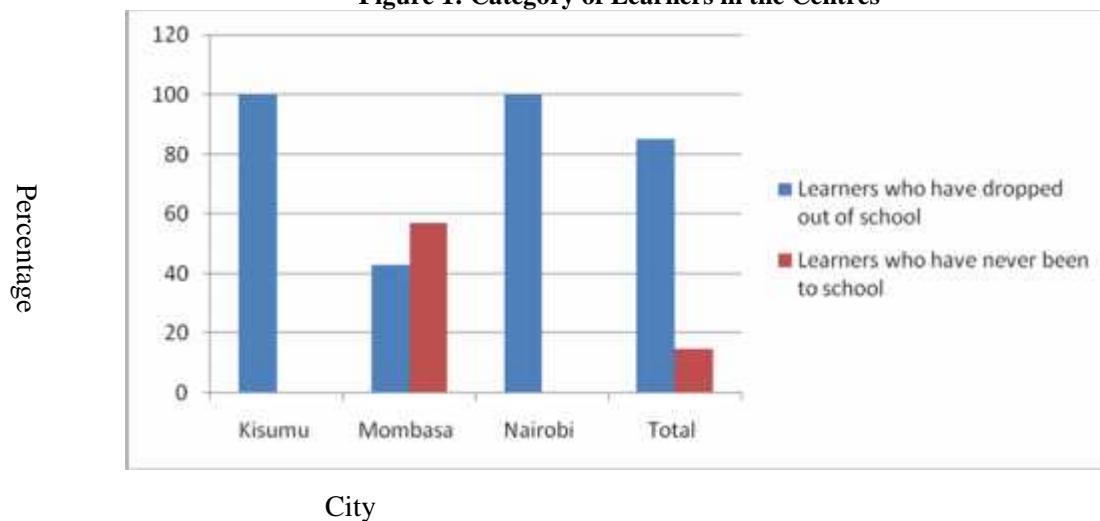
1.3 Research Methodology

The study employed cross sectional survey design. The target population consisted of 750 learners and the sample was 420 pupils. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interviews. The analysis was carried out by use of STATA 11 Special Edition (SE) statistical application, Epi info and Predictive Analytics SoftWare (PASW). The number of learners who had completed the NFE programme was taken as the measure for the criterion variable.

2.1 Result and Discussions

The study therefore sought to determine how learner characteristics influenced curriculum implementation of the non-formal basic education curriculum at the non-formal education (NFE) centres. The directors were therefore expected to indicate the category of learners that they had in the centres. The data is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Category of Learners in the Centres

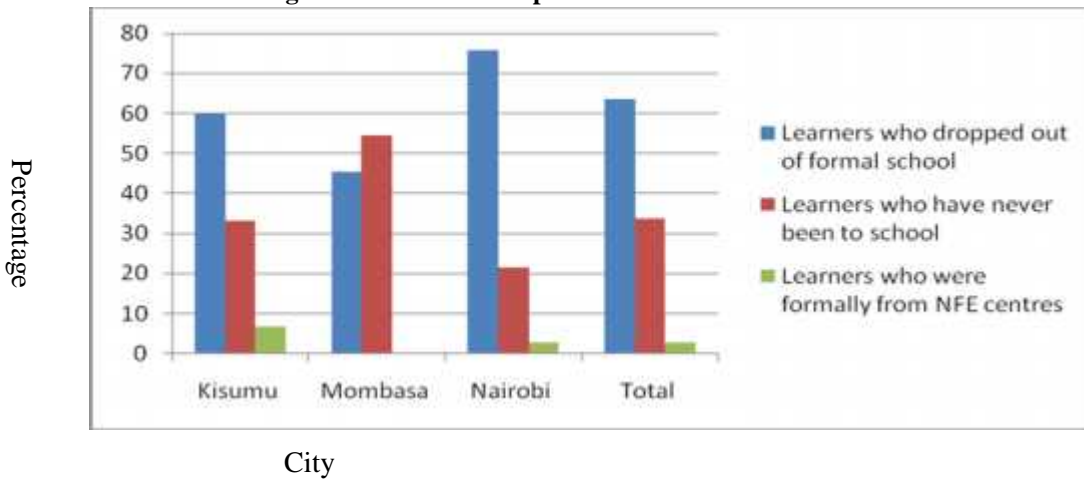


Data indicated that most of the learners in the centres were those that had dropped out of school as shown by in Figure 31. Apart from Mombasa where majority 4 (57.1%) of the directors indicating that pupils had never been to school, in Kisumu



and Nairobi all the learners were those that had dropped out of school. The teachers were also asked to indicate the category of learners that they handled. Their responses are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Teachers' Responses on Learner Characteristics



Data shows that majority of the learners were those that had dropped out of school as indicated by 47 teachers (63.5%), followed by learners who had never been to school and those that had dropped from NFE centres. Regionally, Nairobi recorded the highest of learners who had dropped out of formal schools as reported by 75.7% teachers, while Mombasa recorded the highest number of learners that had never been to school (54.6%). This finding affirms the characteristics of the NFE that takes on board the learners who have either dropped out of school or have, due to various reasons, never been to school.

These findings were confirmed by the focus group discussions with the learners who were asked what they had been doing before they joined the NFE. They gave many reasons such as being at home, and having dropped out of the formal schools after their parents were not in a position to pay school fees. Others had been working as house helps, herding animals, while others had never been to schools and were too old to join formal schools while others were on the streets. One learner in Mombasa commented during a focus group discussion:

“I was born near the beach and at an early age, I used to accompany my uncle who was a fisherman. I learnt the skill too and so never had time to go to school. I realized later that I needed education when one Mzungu (a European lady) wanted to take me away to Europe and assist me but indicated that I needed to have the basic education. I went to formal school but felt out of place due to my age so I joined this NFE centre since there were my age mates with whom we can share experiences and learn together”.

Another shared his experience:

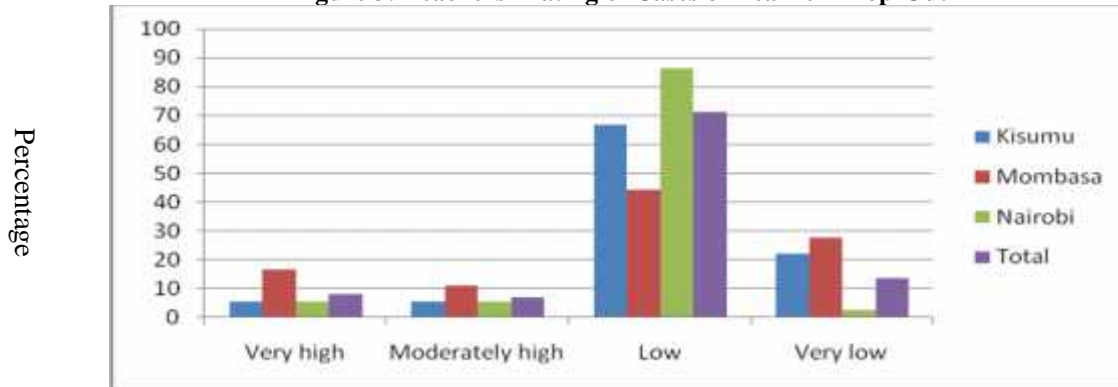
“I grew up in Kwale and did not go to school, but rather used to dance ‘mchechemeko’ (A Giriama traditional dance) where we used to be paid some money by those we entertained. I was approached by one of the centre directors who asked me to join school since he used to teach girls how to dance and learn. At the centre, we used to dance and learn. I gained lots of skills and I enjoy being at this centre. When I complete my training, I want to go back to the village and start my own centre so that I can help other needy children who have had no chance of schooling.”

The learners in the focus group discussions were asked whether they liked the education that was offered at the centres. They unanimously indicated that they liked since the NFE was flexible and accommodated learners who would otherwise not be accommodated in the formal schools. In further discussion with the older learners, some indicated that they had dropped out of school and later joined while others had never been to school.

The teachers were also asked to indicate the rate of absenteeism among learners. The data indicated that cases of absenteeism existed as indicated by 65 teachers (87%). Asked to rate the drop out, they reported as presented in Figure 3



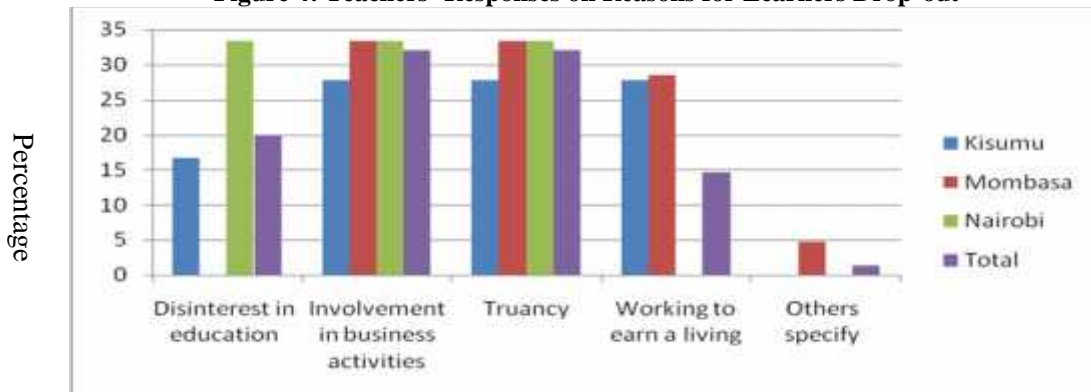
Figure 3: Teachers' Rating of Cases of Learner Drop-Out



Rate of drop out

Data indicated that cases of learner-drop out from the NFE centres were high as shown by 52 teachers (71.2%). Nairobi recorded the highest rate at 32 (86.5%) while Kisumu followed at 66.9%. Asked to indicate the reasons for dropping out, teachers responded as presented in Figure 4.

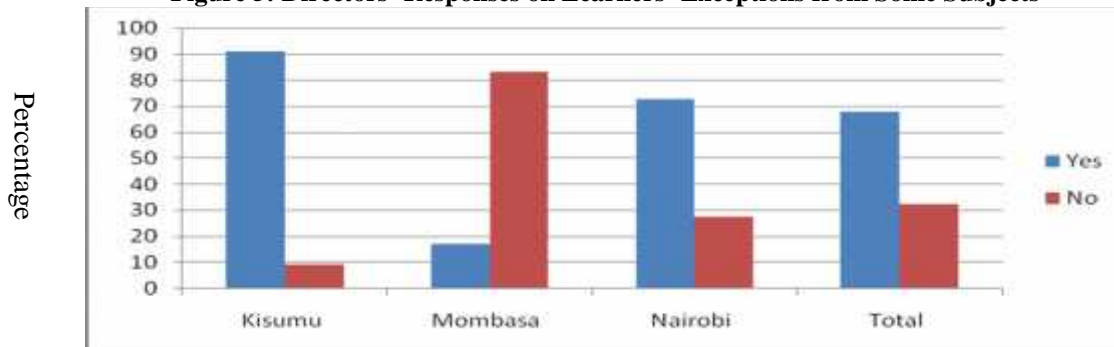
Figure 4: Teachers' Responses on Reasons for Learners Drop-out



Reasons for learner drop out

Data on reasons for learner drop-out indicated that involvement in business activities, and truancy were the major cause of learners drop-out. The reasons were evenly distributed over the three regions. The directors were also requested to indicate whether there were exceptions for some learners to take some subjects. The data is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Directors' Responses on Learners' Exceptions from Some Subjects



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Data showed that there were exceptions for some learners to take some subjects and not others as recorded by 19 or 67.9%. Kisumu had the highest number of learner exceptions at 90.9% followed by Nairobi at 72.3% while Mombasa had least at



16.7%. This implies the nature of NFE where learners may be exempted from some subjects. Teachers were asked to indicate their learners' attitude towards the NFE centre. The data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers' Responses on Learners' Attitude towards the NFE Centre

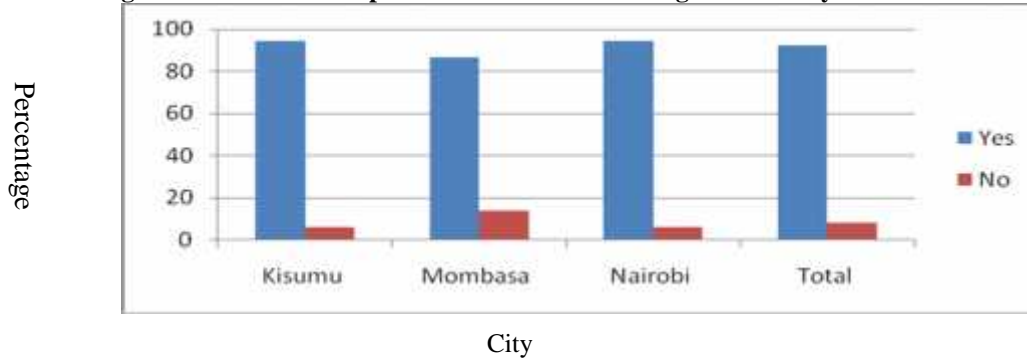
Learners' attitude	Region						Total	
	Kisumu		Nairobi		Mombasa		f	%
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Positive	16	88.9	33	89.2	10	45.5	59	76.6
Negative	0	00.0	1	2.7	3	13.6	4	5.2
Neutral	2	11.1	3	8.1	9	40.9	14	18.2
Total	18	100	37	100	22	100	77	100

Data on the teachers responses on learner attitude towards NFE centres indicated that majority of them felt that learners were positive about the NFE as indicated by 59 of teachers (76.6%). Apart from Mombasa which recorded the lowest rate of students having positive attitude (45.5%), Kisumu and Nairobi recorded very high percentage of learners' positivity towards the centre at 16.8% and 33.8% respectively.

These findings were corroborated by the focus group discussions with the learners who indicated that they enjoyed being at the centres. They liked it since they were taught well, they had been given a chance to get education and that they could learn at their own pace. They also indicated that they were taught technical subjects at the centre, which were not offered at the formal schools. These they believed would enable them acquire a skill to become productive members of the society. Further probed on whether they liked their teachers, they indicated that they liked them since they were kind and understanding. They also respected their teachers though some students were older than the teachers.

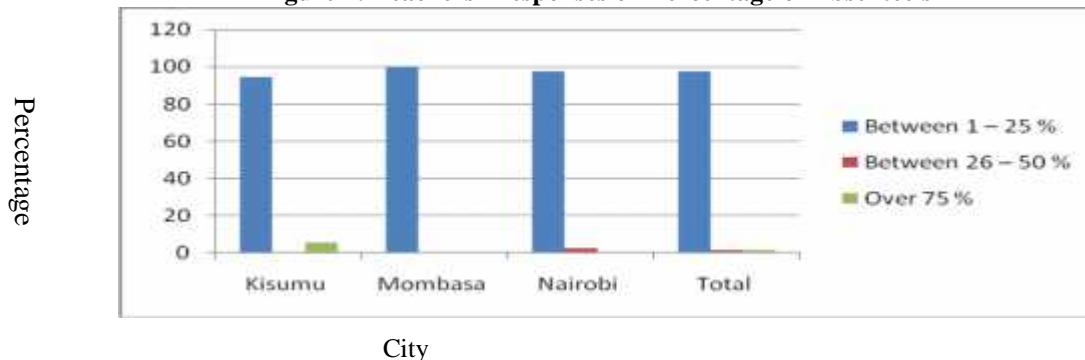
Asked whether the learners were willing to learn at the centre, majority 69 (92%) of the teachers indicated that they were willing. This was shown by Kisumu having 17 teachers (94.4%), Nairobi with 33 (94.3%) and Mombasa with 19 (86.4%). This data is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Teachers' Responses on Learners' Willingness to study at the NFE Centres



Teachers were also asked to indicate the extent of absenteeism in the NFE centres in a day. The data is presented in Figure 7.

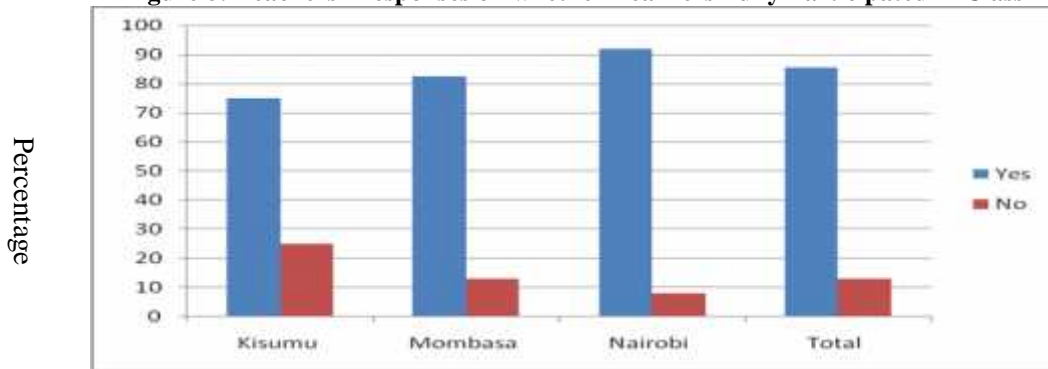
Figure 7: Teachers' Responses on Percentage of Absenteeism





Findings on the rate of absenteeism among learners at the NFE centres indicated absenteeism was rated at between 1 – 25% as indicated by 75 (97.4%) teachers. These findings indicate that the learners had a positive attitude towards the centre. The teachers were further asked whether learners fully participated in the classroom. The findings are presented in Figure 8

Figure 8: Teachers’ Responses on whether Learners Fully Participated in Class



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Findings on teachers’ responses on learners’ participation in class revealed that majority 65 (85.5%) of the teachers indicated that learners fully participated during class. Nairobi recorded the highest percentage participation recorded by teachers at 91.9%, Mombasa at 82.6% while Kisumu recorded a participation recorded by teachers at 75%. These findings could be corroborated with the researchers’ observation during lesson observation where learners actively participated during learning. These findings further indicated that the teachers were of the opinion that learners had a positive attitude towards the centres due to their high levels participation. Asked to rate learners’ involvement during teaching, teachers responded as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers Rating on Level of Involvement in Classroom

Class participation	Region						Total	
	Kisumu		Nairobi		Mombasa			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Very actively involved	14	82.4	31	86.1	22	95.7	67	88.2
Less involved	3	17.6	5	13.9	1	4.3	9	11.8
Total	17	100	36	100	23	100	76	100

Findings on the level of involvement of learners indicated that learners were very actively involved during the learning process as rated by majority 67 of the teachers (88.2%). This was confirmed by observation that learners were involvement during the lesson. Unlike the formal school, learners at the NFE centres participated during the teaching and learning process. This shows that they knew what they want to achieve.

To establish how learner characteristic influenced curriculum implementation, selected variables from the teacher characteristics were selected and regressed with completion rates. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3, Regression Analysis of Selected Teacher Variables

Ordered probit regression						
Number of obs = 706						
LR chi2(7) = 48.43						
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000						
Log likelihood = -2357.3954						
Pseudo R2 = 0.0102						
Complete all	Coef.	Std.	Err.	z	P>z	[95% Confidence Interval]
Teachers’ rating of learners’ attitude towards NFE	-0.18748	0.050153	-3.74	0	-0.28578	-0.08918
Teachers’ response to pupils	0.132175	0.174102	0.76	0.448	-0.20906	0.473409



willingness to learn						
Teachers' response to learner absenteeism	0.1867	0.261748	0.71	0.476	-0.32632	0.699717
Teachers' response to percentage of pupils absent	0.033626	0.095268	0.35	0.724	-0.1531	0.220348
Teachers' response to reasons for absenteeism	-0.19988	0.055542	-3.6	0	-0.30873	-0.09102
Teachers' response to learner participation in class	-0.37974	0.128586	-2.95	0.003	-0.63176	-0.12771
Teachers' rating of learner involvement in learning	0.364778	0.124515	2.93	0.003	0.120733	0.608823

Data shows that all the variables were categorical. The table shows that learner characteristics except "Teachers' rating of learner involvement in learning" were all statistically significant since they are all below 0.05. This implied the regression model definitively determined a relationship between the completion rate and the said variables except "Teachers' rating of learner involvement in learning"

2.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study therefore concluded that learners had a positive attitude towards the NFBEC. The model summary showed that learners positive attitude towards the NFE had a linear relationship with completion rates at the NFE. It was therefore concluded that learner attitude should be enhanced for effective curriculum implementation. The study recommends that the government and other stakeholders such as the community, NGOs and well wishers should come up with ways of providing such facilities which would motivate learners to join the centres. The government should have a clear policy on financing NFE centres for example, payment of teachers so as to minimise teacher turnover which affected learners participation in the centres. The recommended that the community and centre organizers provide a conducive learning atmosphere that will deter absenteeism and truancy. The centre could, for example, be organized in such a way that those who have to work as they learn have a flexible time schedule as that is one of the characteristics of NFE. There should also be provision for learners of different ages.

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