

Responsiveness of Primary Teacher Education in Kenya to Challenges of the 21st Century

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Abstract

The concern about responsiveness of education to contemporary issues is global. The literature reviewed indicated that countries have endeavoured to make their educational systems more responsive to emerging needs. In Kenya, the achievement of the national goals of education has been elusive despite various educational reforms. This arguably raises questions regarding the responsiveness of the education system in Kenya to contemporary challenges. This study focused on responsiveness of Primary Teacher Education (PTE) due to its central place in providing the foundation for acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes. The general purpose of this study was to assess the responsiveness of PTE in Kenya to contemporary challenges. The specific objectives of this study were to: analyse the contemporary issues to which PTE should be responsive; develop a criterion for assessing responsiveness of PTE; assess the extent to which PTE is responsive to contemporary issues; evaluate the effectiveness of PTE in equipping teachers to prepare pupils for the demands of the 21st century; identify obstacles that limit PTE's responsiveness to contemporary challenges and suggest how PTE can be made more responsive to contemporary challenges. There were five research questions which guided the study. The Critical Theory of Knowledge, Learning and Literacy as propounded by Paul and Elder (2001) provided the theoretical framework. The research involved a field survey as well as library research. The design of this study was exploratory in nature. The target population included PTTC heads of departments, PTTC lecturers, teacher trainees, QASOs, KIE curriculum developers and practising teachers. Random sampling, stratified sampling and purposive sampling were used to identify the samples. A total of 258 respondents were involved in the study. Data collection instruments used were questionnaires, interview schedules, focus group discussion guides and observation checklists. The data obtained was analysed using descriptive methods and was organized in themes according to the research objectives. By use of descriptions, interpretations, comparisons, percentages and frequency tables, the data was collated, discussed and presented in chapter four. Analysis of statistical data was done using measures of central tendency and measures of association. Based on literature review and analysis of field data, the study found out that PTE in Kenya faces cognitive, cultural, political, social, economic, technological, environmental and religious challenges. The study found PTE to be insufficiently effective in empowering learners to learn, think critically and innovatively, develop financial, entrepreneurial and business literacy and use ICT skills. The study identified obstacles that limit PTE from being responsive in the light of which relevant suggestions and recommendations were made.

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