



The Effectiveness of Handbooks and Teaching Materials Used for Holistic Nurture of Children Aged 5-13 Years in Nairobi Baptist Church, Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study dealt with contemporary developments in the holistic nurturing of children in Sunday school (SS) teaching in the Nairobi Baptist Church (NBC) which is one of the major support systems for church growth. The researcher was motivated to study Holistic Nurture to Children (HNC) because of the many issues and challenges that hound children like fighting, stealing, unruly behaviour patterns, wrong morals, drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, and evil vices among others affecting the traditional beliefs in children ministry globally. These problems make the approaches adopted for children's ministry a great challenge in Kenya. The empirical basis was defined by 5-13-year-olds in NBC. To understand the complex and dynamic nature of such phenomena, the study endeavoured to unravel and understand the HNC in NBC. The study assumed that there were some subtle underlying factors that (might) hinder the effective holistic nurture of children in NBC. These include history, handbooks and materials. The study was anchored on three key theories: Kelvin E. Lawson (Cognitive Spiritual theory), James Fowler (faith development theory) and Ivan Pavlov (Social learning theory). NBC was the study locale. Handbooks and materials nurtures discovery in the child in all areas, the leaders are facilitators of faith formation and activities help children to construct-knowledge. Purposive sampling was used to select fifty (50) participants. The sample was in proportion to the population size which was 500. This study adopted a descriptive survey on HNC in NBC. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The primary research instrument used were questionnaires, interviews, and Focus Group Discussions. In the analysis of the data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0 was used. The primary and secondary sources were consulted. Holistic approaches included preparing the process for examination of the whole person: physical, mental/emotional, spiritual and social. The findings of the study dispelled obscurity on issues that affect HNC on holistic formation, as well as providing a safe alternative on how children should develop in the four areas to experience balanced growth. Thus, the study proposed useful ways of handling children for their holistic development. They included: first, the support by the whole congregation; secondly, children make early decisions to know God when guided by holistic approaches. The study further suggested the need to incorporate the biblical values which are unified in the integration of a child's learning. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to policy formulation regarding the spiritual nurture of children. The findings may contribute to the existing literature on the holistic nurture of children.

Keywords: *Handbooks; Teaching Materials; Holistic Nurture of Children; Sunday School; Church Growth*

Introduction

This study introduces and examines Holistic Nurture to Children (HNC) aged 5-13 years old. Holistic means the interdependence of parts concerned with wholes rather than analysis or separation into parts. Nurture is to nourish, bring up, train and educate. It also includes the support, and care that is given holistically to children aged 5-13 years old. This research focussed on children aged 5-13 years as primary respondents. As such, they have been involved in answering the questionnaire, interviews, and Children's Discussion Groups (CDGs).

To deal with some of these challenges, Woldorf schools use teaching methods that integrate unique educational strategy which aims to create well-rounded students through a broad Handbook, including academics, art and music education, physical education, and emotional and social education. This approach changed children's education in Germany to the present day. If HNC could focus on the education that helps a child to develop into a well-rounded being who eventually will fit as a responsible citizen in society, it could change the way children are nurtured in NBC. Children could learn to pray and read their Bible. If such knowledge cannot be put into practice in all areas of child upbringing, then the teaching can create a gap in the lives of the children later.

Statement of the Problem

Nurturing children aged 5-13 years in Nairobi Baptist Church has undergone a lot of changes in the past 60 years in that we have more challenging issues that children are facing in Sunday school. Children around the globe are facing many challenges which include: abuse of drugs, early pregnancies, stealing, societal maladjustments, school dropouts, bad morals and fighting. Children's physical, mental, spiritual and social needs if not sufficiently, consistently and competently met could produce children who may not be holistically nurtured. The care of the children which God has entrusted to humankind is, therefore, an important responsibility (Family International, 2012). The nurturing of children in NBC needs to provide a good understanding of the history, handbooks and teaching materials.

Absence of these ingredients for nurturing children occasions a gap whereby children are not holistically nurtured. The question posed then, is what is hindering the holistic nurture of children ministry in NBC to children aged 5-13 years old? This study sought to critically examine nurturing children in NBC and also establish the subtle underlying factors that hinder their development. Could lack of foresight of the problems mentioned above help to change how to nurture children? Are the handbooks sourced/downloaded able to lead them to form their faith or are there other issues that need to be addressed? This study sought to provide answers to these questions.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research was to investigate the holistic nurture of children aged between 5-13 years old and to critically examine the problems that hinder their faith formation.

Research Premise

Will the use of handbooks help to protect the children from the challenges facing 5-13-year-olds, like drugs, pornography, teenage pregnancies and crimes among others? Can these challenges be controlled by Holistic nurture for faith formation when the children are still young?

Justification and Significance of the Study

In dealing with the spiritual needs of a child, this study examined handbooks and materials that aid children to learn. It was very significant to study children aged 5-13 years old in the present generation in Nairobi Baptist Church (NBC) to assess whether the introduction of useful holistic approaches to faith formation reduces the challenges they face in their morals and values in homes, church, and society. This study also hopes to empower those who prepare and procure handbooks and materials for children aged 5-13 years in NBC. The academic contribution of this study is that it will provide an understanding of holistic nurture to children as well as provide literature to NBC and other Sunday Schools in churches. Challenges like teenage pregnancies, bad morals and values, drug abuse, school dropouts, and misfits among others that affect children during this age of development could be elevated through good Handbooks and teaching materials that aid this age group to be nurtured.

Review of Related Literature

A review of the literature was done on the effectiveness of handbooks and teaching materials used in generation in Nairobi Baptist Church (NBC). Children's handbooks and teaching materials themes were deduced to explain their significance in the study. The themes included: Leadership and handbooks effectiveness, Parents on the effectiveness of the handbooks, Child Theology in the handbooks, Making of the handbook and sample materials, Involvement in the making and using of handbooks and the relevance of the learning materials.

Effectiveness of the Handbooks and Teaching Materials for 5-13-year-Olds in NBC

A handbook is a course of action or a program like a race, or something that runs ahead of people. A handbook could also denote a complete course of study offered by a school, institution, or organisation among others. In this study, however, a handbook is a complete course of study offered in NBC for children aged 5-3 years old for holistic nurture every Sunday following the annual theme in NBC. The handbooks and teaching materials that are used to nurture spiritual formation in children in NBC are central to this study. These teaching materials are either sourced from local or international publishers and they are crucial for the development of the child. Overall, the handbooks that have been used in the past have helped children form their faith (Gichinga, 1989). These handbooks, nonetheless, can be improved to aid the spiritual growth of children holistically.

Gaines (1994) argues that handbooks for teachers should not be fully done because it makes some teachers lazy in their preparation. Though Gaine's argument is true, on the flip side it could be that incomplete handbooks can make some teachers just teach that which is available. Though the complete handbooks should be discouraged, there should be a balance in how the handbooks are developed and implemented by NBC SS teachers and the children's ministry leadership.

The SS setting which encourages a teacher to be the source of information limits the children's discovery and adventure. This should be discouraged it makes children robots who simply follow what is told, and later they find it hard to put into practice what they are taught. The traditional way of defining handbooks was usually narrow in their approach. In contemporary times, the usage of the word handbook has been broadened. Clark et al. (1986) comments on the handbook for children says that,

Handbooks for children's ministry may be defined as the total program for children, including integration of content (subject matter) and experiences utilized by Christian leadership, following the biblical principles in the written Word and centered on Jesus Christ, the living Word, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (p. 263)

According to Clark et al. (1986), Christian education handbooks for children have three basic purposes. They include: leading children to Jesus as their Saviour from sin; guiding children in continued

growth toward Christlikeness and equipping children for effective service in the will of God. Such a broad sense of defining

Handbooks show the vital role that they play in the lives of children. HNC to children can be realised because it provides ideas that are broad for the teacher and the children that enable and assist them in the learning and teaching of the lessons.

The preparation of the Handbooks to teach HNC in NBC to 5-13 years old children is an important activity because Spiritual formation begins with good teaching Handbooks. May et al. (2005, p. 191) affirm this when they write that Maria Harris sees Handbook as the “entire course of the church life”. She further notes that Christians are formed through the total life of the church, so a church’s life is its Handbook.

There are many facets and much broader meanings to how Handbooks are used to teach children. Assessing the effectiveness of the Handbooks starts with the composition of the topics which enrich the HNC when administered to children. These should be biblical, unified, aligned, short, fun, and visible, for the teachers, parents, and children to benefit. SS deals with the life, soul, and aspirations of the child, for a lifetime (Share the Faith, 2014).

Parr (2018) argues that there are 10 ways that SS can benefit from well-spelled-out things to include in the Handbooks.

- i. The Handbook should seek to be inclusive in its approach to each topic.
- ii. Preeminent ministry with the Pastor believing in SS and this makes the congregation follow.
- iii. It is a soul-winning ministry using the Great Commission to reach children as well.
- iv. It also helps to organise the church (especially churches that use SS for all the groups in the church).
- v. Preach the message on the importance of SS once per year.
- vi. Mention SS every Sunday in the pulpit (illustrate, emphasise, praise, pray and promote the work of SS).
- vii. Use rewards in class (not to bribe, but to reward children).
- viii. Require teachers to visit children.
- ix. Once per year plan a campaign to reach out.
- x. Recruit teachers constantly and be ready to split the classes into manageable sizes of 12 -15 members in each class.

A good handbook will seek to make this possible by making the handbook inclusive of the parts that may help to make SS grow. Parr (2013) further summarises five ways to keep the handbook that could bring transformation in children.

- i. These include extending the topic to 1 month, not 1 week.
- ii. Repeat the lessons because repetition is a good mode and it is not boring to the mind of a child.
- iii. Be age appropriate when using this mode.
- iv. Focus on God's Word, not social behaviour.
- v. Build expectations through repetition and involve the parents.

The handbook in the lives of children transforms their lives at every stage.

Materials for Singing/Worship

Children's material on singing/worship should be child friendly. Using flashcards, song charts, songs were written on the board, songbooks (older children), guitars, drums shakers, pianos, keyboards, and many other tools so that they can learn to sing and worship God when they are young is crucial. Singing/worship helps children to interact and feel valued in the NBC community of faith. As part of the worshipping community, they should be able to join in the worship of God's people.

May-Sposterski et al. (2005, p. 229) commenting on early childhood identify numerous ways that the congregation can do to encourage children in worship. They include: providing booster seats so that young children can see better, pointing out when a

Bible story corresponds to stained glass and other images in the church and shaking hands with a child during sharing of Peace. There is also a hymnal marker that parents may refer to for reminders on how to help children worship. There are many toddlers' Compact Discs for all age groups. Psalm 8:2 'from the mouths of babies God has ordained praise'; God delights in the praise of these small ones. Thus, it is good to start early as we observed, they start to respond to the different sounds while in the womb.

Materials for Prayer

Materials on prayer are important; prayer is "talking" to God. Children too need to talk to God and learn to listen to God speak to them through His Word. Prayer materials include prayer cards, Bible prayers, flashcards, beads, prayer slides, and prayer videos, among others. The prayers in the Bible are simple, so children can be taught from an early stage. For example, the Lord's Prayer that Jesus taught His disciples is simple and straightforward. Hence, prayer meetings in Churches may be filled if children begin to pray when they are small. Children must be trained on how to pray just like they are trained on the basic building blocks of language. Training is necessary because prayer is not just reciting and memorising but is made from the heart; hence, children should have a bedrock to stand upon (Prayer Relay Movement, 2022).

Materials for Discipleship

Discipleship is concerned with how children are nurtured in their faith in Christ. Oszurko states that:

The Bible contains many precepts that guide and help us become parents who are present with our children as we educate disciples and encourage them to lead purposeful lives. In addition to the amount of time we can be with our children, it's all about the internationality of our time spent with them. (Oszurko, 2018, p. 17)

Through discipleship, children should have simple workbooks, charts for memory verses, pens, rulers, Bible, and notebooks among others to learn the biblical truth. David Cook Handbooks are developed for discipleship for children aged 5-13 years to help them not only to know who Jesus is but also to help them grow in their faith in following Jesus and to walk in his ways. Oszurko further suggests that discipleship for children should be 24/7. That generational Discipleship for children using the 24/7 model is crucial.

Though it may be true that, most of the materials make children the center of everything with little parental involvement, this can be revisited by the parents. However, there is a wide range of biblical material for children that can evoke their religious response (Cully 1979). In both the Old and New Testaments, the community of faith was encouraged to use the Scriptures as the main tool to teach their children (Stonehouse & May 2010). Equally, the home environment provided a haven for children to learn. The Faith Community in both the OT and NT included children in their spiritual learning (Deuteronomy 31:11-13). HNC in NBC could have materials that help children to construct their faith in God.

Through the centuries, various materials have been developed to aid in nurturing children. These include Quintilian (AD 35-96) who wrote, '*De Institutio Oratoria*', *Oratoria*' (On the Education of an

Orator). Quintilian elementary education was in three stages: Early education- this was to be attained at home until the child was 7 years), grammatical and rhetorical education. The three levels seemed to have depicted the 3 areas of nurture in children (Reed & Prevost, 1993, p. 41).

Materials for Physical Nurturing

The materials for physical nurturing includes balls of all sizes, bats, bowls, rackets, darts, trophies, rolling shoes, whistle, and rooms/space for physical exercises among others.

According to (Lee (2020), spirituality and practice should be used to help a child to explore many other approaches, for faith formation to encourage children to experience spiritual growth in all areas. For the spiritual life in children to thrive and mature holistically, it needs physically healthy children.

There is a need to develop good materials which aid the nurturing of HNC physically. Kenyatta (1938, p. 104) affirms this when he expresses that special care is devoted to physical development and many of the Gikuyu dances provided health and bodily exercise. Boys were involved in games like fighting, wrestling, running, jumping, sparring with sticks and shields, lifting weights and stones as well as club-throwing. All these aided children in their physical growth. Also, NBC uses materials for camps, VBS (Vocational Bible School) and HBC (Holiday Bible Club) to mention, but a few, that help children's physical development through nurturing.

Materials for Mental Development

The materials for mental nurturing of children aged 5-13 years old are particularly important in that they act as the main catalyst in developing other areas in the life of the child. These include playing cards on different subjects to cover biblical truths, charts, pictures, puzzles, colours, and general features about animals, trees, and seeds, among others. To neglect this part of a child's development is to stunt the holistic growth of a child. At twenty days in the womb, the signs of the baby's heart muscle start beating.

In the 3rd week, the brain begins to form. The brain is the most fascinating part of the body in a child. Herschkowitz and Herschkowitz (2002, p. 12) state that between the 2nd -7th months, basic building blocks of the nervous cells called neurons are formed. The neurons formed are roughly half the number of stars in the Milky Way. It means at a time, 250,000 neurons are formed per minute. Some continue to be developed up to adulthood. They further state that infants develop the ability to use primitive symbols and form enduring mental representations. This stage is associated primarily with the beginnings of insight, or true creativity. This marks the passage into the preoperational stage.

The mental development of a child is very central. However, Weisberg (1980, p. 49) states that "Brain development is not a uniform process development. There are variations not only in development between the brain regions but also between aspects of neuronal development in a brain region". Yet well-selected materials for this age group may help to lay a good foundation for future growth in the child as the materials are used to teach.

Several ways can be used to develop the mental capacity of children aged 5-13 years old. Equally, there are several ways as earlier mentioned that aid the formation of their faith. Barbarin and Wasik (2003), Hurlock (1978) and Brown (2003) observe that learning can be accomplished in many ways, and it may be intentional or unintentional because each child is an individual. Mental development in children is very crucial. The practical ways to infuse this in the life of children are to affirm, praise, encourage and give extra time to be with children. They also desire to know more, at every different level. Repeating Bible stories that make children not think and be challenged in their minds might make them dislike church education.

Materials that ignore such facts may look at creativity as synonymous with unlimited freedom. Pazmino, (1988) argues that Christian teaching should be clear so that it helps to establish foundations

that teach spiritual nurture as materials are developed and holistic nurturing for children is realized. As the brain develops, the child's social dimension also develops.

Material for Social Nurturing

The teaching materials for the social nurturing of children are important in the HNC program for moral growth. The tools could include books, pens, colouring pencils, desks, mats, and rooms/spaces among others. Strong, positive relationships help children develop trust, empathy, compassion, and a sense of right and wrong in the social sphere. Sifuna (1996) argues that philosophy and communalism bring cohesion between the children and the welfare of the community.

Starting from birth, babies learn who they are by how they are treated. Loving relationships provide young children with a sense of comfort, safety, and confidence. This scenario teaches young children how to form friendships, communicate emotions and deal with challenges. Fennema (1977) argues that biblical teachings on social development are part of God's plan in dealing with mankind. Thus, the Bible speaks to a community and children are part of this community. There is an inherent link between a child's relationships with others, and this might aid their spiritual understanding, and their present and future health as well as their well-being as they are nurtured. When developing materials, social factors should be considered.

Kail (2012, p. 250) argues that a child's personality grows out of all the relationships that touch life, they give the child a sense of direction, a life purpose, and goals because each child differs in the way they develop. Teachers need to know each child individually, to know the child's strengths and weaknesses, rather than the traditional linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. This might be another way to foster HNC. Social development in children helps them to understand the world around them. To relate with others is the most important part of the development of the child.

Graystone (1989, p. 109) states that no matter how often we talk about Joshua, Jacob, or Jesus, it is the relationships we have with those who are listening to that tell the children about Christianity. Children in early childhood, carry over from their social environment love and hatred which they are exposed to whether they are protected, valued, or ignored. This might be an easy way to fuel their desire to leave the church as soon as they feel it does not make sense to them to be part of this unique community. The social environment is key for children to feel they belong.

A handbook cannot be used to capture social nurturing for 5-13 years old children. Nurturing children socially is a two-way learning process between the child and others. Educators are inevitably careful not to impose their personal opinions on the social nurturing of children, as this may go contrary to the importance of a good social environment for the child's growth. Stafford (2005, p. 67) concurs with this thought when he asserts that, the physical health of children is not walled off from their emotions, their abilities, their finances, their social relationship, their sexuality, their skills and talents, or their spiritual being. He further consolidates this fact by stating that treating one while ignoring the other is short-sightedness and often unproductive.

Nurture then, can be defined as the different environmental factors to which a person is subjected from birth to death. Environmental factors involve many dimensions. They include both physical environments such as prenatal nutrition and social environments such as the neighbourhood, media, and peer pressure. Lipton (2012) asserts that those endorsing "control" by nurture argue that the environment is instrumental in "controlling" biological expression. Rather than attributing biological fate to gene control, naturists contend that environmental experiences provide an essential role in shaping the character of an individual's life. Lipton further argues that the polarity between these philosophies simply reflects the fact that those endorsing nature believes in an internal control mechanism (genes) while those supporting nurture mechanisms ascribe to an external control (environment).

Richardson (2005) concurs with Lipton (2012) when he states that the child is now recognized to be an active agent in complex interactions with a multi-layered social and physical environment: transnationalism rules which mean children need to approach views of social exchange as a fundamental

aspect of human existence. No human being lives in a vacuum or on an Island. With the dichotomy of organism/environment, what then are the activities that enrich the child's developmental stages in becoming a useful individual in society? The materials which include good and relevant activities will help children to grow holistically. Age-appropriate activities will also ignite the mental, physical, spiritual, and social development of the children as they develop holistically.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was deduced to effectively explain holistic nurture to children. Three theories were covered in the study: Kelvin Lawson; (Spiritual Cognitive theory) James Fowler; (faith), and Ivan Pavlov; (Social learning theory). The theories were integrated to guide the study on the use of handbooks and materials by NBC on how and when to teach children.

The Spiritual Cognitive Theory in 5 - 13 Years Old Children

Kelvin Lawson's Cognitive Spiritual theory (2019) or Spiritual Cognitive theory was used to understand child development. This theory seeks to explain how children change and grow during their childhood. Jean Piaget (1939) was the founder of the cognitive child development theory, He states that there are four stages of child development. They are sensor motor (birth – 2 years old), preoperational (2-7 years old), concrete preoperational (7-11 years old) and formal operational (12 and up) stages.

The spiritual Cognitive theory has to do with a process that includes thinking, knowing, remembering, judging and problem-solving which are crucial for nurturing children. This theory has a higher-level function of the brain which encompasses language, imagination, opinions, and planning, that without them the nurturing progress could be hindered in the lives of children as they grow. The theory involves all the faculties in the life of the child as early as when a child is born. Children use their brains to learn, think, speak the language, imagine, perceive and plan what to do. The spiritual cognitive theory was very compatible with this research in that child aged 5-13 years use the cognitive theory more in their developmental stages.

The mental development of a child begins incredibly early and HNC involves most of the areas that the theory propagates, which include, thinking, and detecting light from darkness, learning a language, and problem-solving among others. For example, 5-13-year-olds enjoy problem-solving. When they see a car or any other toy, they enjoy breaking the toy into pieces (if not stopped by a parent or teacher) and begin to work out how the pieces can be put back. Some succeed but others do not make it to put the pieces back to their original state. This gradually teaches the child to learn how to maneuver around problems they face each day. Watching some of these children who are now adults in NBC, their character was shaped by the spiritual cognitive theory when they were young. This theory prepares children to fit in the social setting of NBC and society at large.

Social Theory (Pavlov, 1849-1936)

According to Harrington (2005), Social Theory is a term that entails ideas about society's change and development, methods of explaining social behaviour, power and social structure, gender and ethnicity, modality and civilization, and civilization and utopias. Social theory is the main thread that holds together any society's fabric more so Kenya. Though this is heavily loaded on the cultural setting of Kenya communities, the reality on the ground is that this has reached a challenging stage in the cities where the other cultures have come to influence the social fiber of the society. HNC in NBC may need to teach how this can be held together as the word of God is taught to children. The theology of one Body in Christ is very central to spiritual formation. Grobbelaar (2014) observes that African children learn early in life the reality that they "grow up under circumstances of profound material deprivation and acute insecurity" and that they learn early that no single individual can provide for one's needs and that they form strong social bonds and act co-operatively to survive physically, emotionally and socially.

This thinking about the African child paints a sad picture for children in Kenya. NBC has been fortunate in that the children from Kibera and their parents are part of the membership. This helps to remove some of the barriers mentioned by Grobbelaar. Though it is not an easy mix in NBC, it helps members to share with vulnerable children. The children from challenged backgrounds are helped by being sponsored using anonymous gifts through the church for children to attend Camps, and Holiday Bible Club and to join other children for special outings for different age groups. The testimonies from some of these parents have been very encouraging. This is a big plus to the NBC members in helping these children.

The spiritual theory deals with the circular relationship in which beliefs give rise to values that inform the behaviour of children resulting in an experiential living in them. This theory contributed to the teaching that deals with a changed life in Christ. HNC aims to develop children who focus on the consequences of wrong and right living. Pavlov was the first to contribute to the learning theory known as Classical Conditioning. He believed that there must be an unconditioned stimulus that induces behaviour that comes from behavioural patterns engraved in children. For example, the way children act in every given situation, if the action is repeated then the child needs to be checked closely either by the parent or teacher, for example sleeping while doing social studies homework and active while doing maths, physics and chemistry. Then check the pattern and help children follow their line of interest (Fogel & Melson, 1988, p. 44). He was also convinced that behaviour is induced by an unconditioned stimulus which eventually brings forth the behaviour produced in a child.

Faith Development Theory

Gibbs (1992) cited by Foyster and Marten (2014) describes the six developmental stages of Faith in children for spiritual formation. The stages of Faith Infancy are homogenous to the universal stage of the child's developmental levels. They include:

Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith – for example, 5-year-olds have a unique faith in God because they can pray and sing and they can see God closer to them.

Stage 2: Mythic-Literal Faith - for example, they want to do things in their way and they think their way is fair like they want to cross the road by themselves.

Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith, - they are connected/attached to family, church, school, and community for example missing SS will make them very sad though they are sick.

Stage 4: Individualize-Reflective Faith – they start seriously questioning things including the Christian faith and many leave the church when these things are not properly answered.

Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith Stage – they settle with the truth they find in stage four and other previous stages and they are properly known as concrete thinkers.

Stage 6: Universalizing Faith – with their faith now properly defined, it becomes easier for them to join the universal faith (body of Christ) (Gibbs, 1992, p. 413-486).

Each stage is important for the holistic nurture of children because it blends with the developmental stages of the child. The theory underlines the importance of having a good and balanced child when all the areas of physical, mental, spiritual, and social are well included in the life of each child.

The Faith stages by Fowler are supported by many Christian theologians and practitioners around children's ministry. For example, Intuitive-Projective Faith includes children between 3-7 years. Their faith is characterized by the psyche's unprotected exposure to the unconscious; faith that is not well structured. Yet, it is true that they respond to the teachings about God in a very conscious way. Some of the 5 years old children in NBC are clear about their faith in Jesus and why they chose to follow him, with God's discipleship classes at 6 years old they are baptised.

Application of Spiritual Cognitive, Social and Faith Development Theories

The application of these three theories; cognitive spiritual, faith development and social development in HNC expressed the different levels of change in the lives of children, which exhibit good results. Some characteristics lead to evident transformation in children. These areas included physical, mental, spiritual, and social.

The four dimensions play a very vital role in the nurturing of children holistically. The three are the cognitive spiritual theory, which is a process that includes thinking, knowing, remembering, judging and problem-solving. The Faith theory developed by James Fowler (1940 – 2015) describes the 6 developed stages of faith in children for spiritual formation.

Intuitive-Projective faith (5-7 years), is characterized by the psyche's unprotected exposure to the unconscious faith of these children, if not well structured in the teaching could lead to no application of the lessons in their lives later. Five to seven years old behavioural characteristics show that they believe what they are told, and they depend on adults. If the teaching is not structured to meet their felt need in the latter stages, then it makes it difficult for them to appropriate their faith as they grow.

Mythic-Literal faith (mostly in school children) involves a strong belief in the justice and reciprocity of the universe. Mythic-Literal faith, this stage affects this age group of children in appropriating their faith formation. Synthetic-Conventional faith (children attached to institutions like a church to rely on), Individuate faith (they start to seriously question things on their own – many leave the church), Conjunctive faith (they start to realize that there is truth to be found in both the previous) and Universalizing faith (children at this stage have learned the lessons about being part of the Body of Christ and serving one).

Social Development- Ivan Pavlov (1949-1936) has to do with various behaviours manifested in the life of a child. This theory disseminates the consequences of wrong and right living. The circular relationship of beliefs gives rise to values that inform the behaviour of children. This is important in helping to teach children the behavioural patterns that help their faith formation.

Methodology

Research Design

Punch (2005) states that a research design encompasses all issues involved in planning and executing a research project - from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results. The design of a study refers to the way a researcher guards against and tries to rule out alternative interpretations of results. This research employed the descriptive survey design.

Site of the Study

The study was conducted in Nairobi County, Kenya. The total population of Kenya by the 2019 census was 53, 962, 251 million. The County of Nairobi covers an area of 696 km. The population in Nairobi as per the 2019 census was 4,735,000 with a density of 6,247 per square kilometer which accounts for 1.4 million households from the average national household of Kenya at 3.9 (Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics (2019).

Administratively, the county's capital is Nairobi City which has fifteen sub-counties and eight constituencies. The constituencies include Makadara, Kamukunji, Starehe, Langata, Dagoretti – North and South, Westlands, Ruaraka, Kasarani, Kibra, Langata, Mathare and Embakasi. NBC is in the Westlands sub-county, along Ngong Road. The study selected NBC because of its unique status in that it is not affiliated with any church locally or internationally.

The County of Nairobi was unique for this study because NBC stands as an individual church with no affiliation to other Baptist Churches in Kenya. This made the collection of the data to be concentrated in one place. NBC was also conducive because of the diversity in the composition of its members. The members are from Africa and other countries outside Africa, they have a diversity of professions, diversity of ages, diversity of cultures and languages in Kenya. Their educational levels are diverse among others (Celebrating the Unchanging God; The story of Nairobi Baptist Church, 2008). The diverse races entered NBC at its inception in 1958 as shown in Table 3.2 for NBC membership from 1958-1988.

Study Population

This paper is an excerpt from a Ph.D. thesis where the population of the study was 3000 which comprised both females and males. NBC members aged 5-68 years old. Nairobi Baptist Church had a total population of 3000 members at the time of the research. A sample size of 10% which is 300 of the total target population was sampled for the study. This paper sampled 50 Sunday children in the age bracket of 5-13 years. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), ten percent of the accessible population was enough for a descriptive study.

It was easy to work with the three hundred respondents divided into three major groups: fifty (50) children, two hundred nurturers and fifty opinion church leaders/professionals. The 50 5-13 years old children were selected based on the assumption that they had been in the Church long enough to experience its culture and may have benefited either by themselves or through the parents from its interventions and programs for nurturing children holistically and were, therefore, likely to possess the required information needed for the study. The researcher was able to use participants who had been in NBC for over ten years.

This paper targeted fifty (50) children aged 5-13 years to investigate how HNC affects them in NBC because this is the most important age for faith formation in Sunday School. All the six important stages mentioned in the literature review by Fowler take place in this age group. The 5-13 years old children were targeted to establish their views on the issue of HNC which they were directly involved in as beneficiaries.

The Standard Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the three categories of respondents' responses to find results for each question used in the questionnaires and the guided questions for the interview.

Questionnaires were administered, between February-March 2016, after the church services. The respondents were able to answer the questionnaire before or after the Sunday services. The purpose of the study was to examine what hinders vibrant and effective holistic nurture to children aged 5- 13 years old and to establish the effects of current holistic nurture on children and determine how this could be improved. The study population was drawn from Nairobi County, Kenya. The Baptist Church congregation provided diverse HNC experience for this study. NBC is located in the capital city of Kenya-Nairobi; hence, a cosmopolitan city that hosts headquarters of religious bodies which allows for a diversity of membership in NBC

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The research used three (3) major groups, which were selected using purposive sampling that allowed the researcher to use her judgment in the selection of the population. Purposive sampling was used because it allowed for the identification and selection of the area of interest in the research. Further, purposive sampling was selected as a method because it is known to be representative of the total population; of three hundred and it also matched the respondents that were selected for the study which produced well-matched results. The purpose was to use appropriate strategies to implement the development of a qualitative method of research (Palinkas et al., 2016).

Sampling Techniques

The sampling was done by working down from the total population in NBC to the real sample that was used. Chandran (2004) suggests that sampling is the method of selecting a sample from the population. He further argues that using the sampling method helps to get the response of the selected group which represents the opinion of the entire group.

The researcher used multiple regression models to evaluate the significance of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Sample Size

Creswell and Creswell (2013) observe that in descriptive research, 10-20% of the total population is acceptable. A sample size of 10% filled out the questionnaire and FDG for children answered questions on holistic nurture.

Research Instruments

An instrument is a general term used to refer to a measuring device. The research instruments used in this study were questionnaires, interview guides, and a Focus Discussion Group for children (FDG). The data collection used both oral and written interviews as well as questionnaires. The following data collection instruments in form of interviews and questionnaires were developed by the researcher for this study:

Questionnaires

The Sunday school children's interview guides and questionnaires were designed to find out how HNC affected the children in NBC. They were also used to establish the support that the NBC gave to the children to enable them to grow holistically. The questionnaires were administered to the participants using the 3 major divisions of the study respondents. Each category had a set of questions to respond to. The questions were similar but varied in their statements according to the cluster of respondents.

Focus Group Discussion for Children

The Focus Group Discussion for children (FGD) was a guided data collection tool for class 5 children in NBC. This cluster was selected because they form a unique demographic data group comprising 9-11-year-olds. Their faith formation is concrete and definite. They can grasp abstract ideas like love, joy, rich, and poor, they love adventure and discovery which leads to their choices, among others.

Validity and Reliability

For reliability and validity to exist in the data; the data collection techniques must yield information that is not only relevant to the research hypotheses but also correct. To ensure the validity and reliability of data, the researcher pre-evaluated the study instrument testing tools. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the questionnaires should be pre-tested to a selected sample with similar characteristics to the actual sample used in the study.

Validity of the Study

Validity is the ability of the instrument to measure what it is intended to be measured (Todd, 2014). Further, it is the extent to which a certain research aspect is valid; it can also mean testing the situation or conditions leading to acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis or assumption (Chandran, 2004). The validity of this data collection was limited to one Nairobi Baptist Church.

Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which the same results are obtained when assessing a group at two different intervals to compare the two to correlate the co-efficiency between the two groups (Kombo &

Tromp, 2009). Consistency and validity of test results determined through statistical methods after repeated trials helped to bring out the required results for this study. All three major groups of respondents were able to affirm the questions by answering associated questions but tailor-made for each group as shown.

Data Collection

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), data collection is important to the researcher because the information gathered serves or proves facts. The facts, however, may be used to refute or prove the information being aimed at. The data collection used both oral and written interviews as well as questionnaires. Access to the respondents was easy and it was done on Sundays. The very young children, 5-9 years were assisted to fill the questionnaires by their teachers or parents, while 10-13 years were not assisted by the parents or Sunday school teachers. This was to allow children to be independent enough to answer the questions in a manner that did not jeopardize their dignity or intelligence.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves examining the data collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The analysis of quantitative data from the questionnaires was analysed both descriptively and inferentially using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 2016). Qualitative data was analysed through content analysis which is a procedure for the categorization of verbal or behavioural data, for purposes of classification, summarization, and tabulation of the respondents.

Descriptive statistics were used to organize, summarize and interpret numerical data to make them meaningful, understandable and communicative. With the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (2016) SPSS, statistical measures were used to summarize descriptive survey data. Percentages gave a graphic picture of the relationship in the views of respondents in the form of tables, pie charts and bar graphs.

Data Management

The researcher used both structured and unstructured methods of data collection. The unstructured ones were in form of interviews while the structured ones were in form of the questionnaires that were filled out by a chosen sample from the target population. Questionnaires with both quantitative and qualitative data were used on Sunday school children to give the study both interpretations. Questionnaires were preferred because they carried as much detail as possible which enabled the researcher to collect data on a wide range of aspects of the study variables (Orodho, 2017).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were considered during data collection and analysis. This was important because the constitution of Kenya provides for the privacy of every individual which includes their privacy in communication (GOK, 2010a). The researcher, therefore, persuaded respondents to cooperate by assuring them of their privacy and that the data was for academic purposes only (Orodho, 2017).

Data Analysis and Discussion

This heading presents an analysis of data on the effectiveness of Sunday school Handbooks and teaching materials for Holistic Nurture to Children (HNC). Data analysis of the research findings was done thematically. The category of children in 5-13 years old is unique in that they belong to a group that experiences the six stages of faith formation described by James Fowler. The section includes a discussion that analysed the questionnaires, interviews, and Focus Discussion Group-FGD for Children who comprised children aged 9-11 (grade 4 & 5 Kenyan system). The descriptive statistics were used to establish the control variables and the basic characteristics of the Holistic Nurture to Children (HNC) in

Nairobi Baptist Church (NBC). At each level of analysis, the constant comparison was used to filter the data further, until themes emerged from the data. Thematic data presentation and analysis were done in line with the study. The data was collected through a descriptive survey research design and the analysis employed was a thematic exploratory method. Table 4.1 for demographic data for the respondents shows the demographic data of this study.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data for the Respondents

DIVISION	GENDER	AGE	NO.	EDUCATION LEVEL	MARITAL STATUS	TOTAL NO.
CHILDREN	Male –	5-7	3	Pre-school - Grade1-8	N/A	22
		8-10	8			
		11-13	11			
	Female	5-7	6	Pre-school-Grade 1- 8	N/A	Total=50
		8-10	14			
		11-13	28			

The techniques for analysing the data presentation were quantitative and qualitative. The multiple regression models were used to test the significance of the influence of the independent variable on the dependable variable. In the current study, the respondents were children. The total years of these respondents in NBC varied among the children aged 5-13 years old who were sampled. The 5-9 years may not have qualified to have been in NBC for over 10 years, but they qualified as part of the limitation of the age group for this study.

The Handbooks and Teaching Materials for HNC

The respondents answered the following questions on the effectiveness of Handbooks and teaching materials used in NBC.

Children: Do you know if the teaching materials used help you develop holistically?

Youth: Are the Handbooks and teaching materials used to teach in SS in NBC holistic in nature?

The History of Handbooks and Teaching Materials in Nairobi Baptist Church

The development of Handbooks and teaching materials for Sunday school nurturing in NBC was the basic foundation for faith formation for 5-13 years old children. The history of the process of developing these books was crucial for continuity in the faith formation of children. This shows how NBC has been able to use some of these books. NBC has sourced materials from USA and UK. By 1981, the Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar (AEAM) now the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) began to produce Handbooks and teaching materials from Christian Learning Materials Centre (CLMC) in Karen, currently known as Christian Learning Materials for children (CMLC) in Nairobi Kenya which NBC used to teach children. CLMC had handbooks and materials for 4-6 years, 7-9 years, 10-12 years and Young Teens.

Samples of Handbooks Used in NBC to Aid HNC to Children Aged 5-13 Years Old

Two organizations were sampled on the Handbooks and teaching materials got from both local and foreign publishers. These were Christian Learning Materials for Children -CLMC and David Cook. CLMC National Director and David Cook Organisation East Africa Director were interviewed on the materials and handbooks used to teach children aged 5-13 years.

(Mutende Chimwemwe 7.9.2017) The interviewee explained that:

The lessons, in each series, lay a valuable foundation for the spiritual nurturing of children and are age-appropriate for children. The Handbooks and materials are child-based, they offer an inter-denominational Sunday school approach and are used across the continent of Africa. The series of CLMC contains 52 lessons that are divided into five age groups.

Kasongo Matavishi (7.8.2017) The director for East Africa reported that David Cook's Handbooks and materials are holistic in nature; in that they teach children using the four dimensions; physical, mental, spiritual and social development. David Cook's materials seek to involve the church, training the members on how to contextualize the materials so that they could be made relevant for each age group as they are used. The Handbooks and teaching materials are age appropriate and they involve the children in their learning. The interviewee further stated that the lessons included many interactive ways to teach the children aged 5-13 years old. The impact of David Cook handbooks and materials in NBC has been able to support faith formation in the lives of children aged 5-13 years old.

The other samples of the handbooks used from both local and foreign publishers include Uzima Publication-Kenya, Child Evangelism Fellowship-USA, Hope for Kids, Kids Evangelism Explosion (KEE) - USA, and Explorers Club-Mailbox USA, Urban Ministries, Inc. Incorporation UMI – USA, and Scripture Union.

The samples shown on pages 390-395 include both local and foreign publications which were sourced to nurture children aged 5-13 years old in NBC. The impact and evaluation of these handbooks and teaching materials in the lives of children are hereby assessed.

Assessing the Effectiveness of Handbooks and Teaching Materials Used for 5-13-Year-Olds in NBC

The use of Handbooks and teaching materials has existed in NBC for a long period. These materials have been useful in nurturing children aged 5-13 years old during Sunday school in NBC. Gichinga (1989) concurs with this thought on how the handbooks and teaching materials are used to teach children; thus, nurturing them in their faith formation.

The History of Handbooks and Teaching Materials for Sunday School in NBC

The history of NBC started in 1957 when a few missionaries and Kenyans thought of establishing a Baptist church. To date, NBC is a young member of the family of mainline churches in Kenya. They include: The Anglican Church of Kenya which began in 1844, the Presbyterian Church East Africa which was started in, 1891, The Holy Ghost Fathers entered Kenya from a region in Tanganyika in Kenya in 1892 and Africa Inland Church (AIC) which was established in 1895 among others. The first Protestant mission to Kenya was the Church Missionary Society. Its first pioneer missionary arrived in Kenya in 1844. In 1891, the Scottish Presbyterians began work that established the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. In 1957, the Baptist missionaries arrived in Kenya (Gichinga, 1989). According to Gichinga (1989), the first group gathering was in the Gospel Gathering Church in Eastleigh. By 26th October 1958, a group of 20 people constituted the Nairobi Baptist Church.

Nairobi Baptist Church right from its inception emphasised expository preaching. The pioneering group comprised 2 Africans, 5 Asians and 10 Europeans. Its composition was multi-racial at a time when Kenya was riced with racial overtones. The aim was to encourage multi-racial membership where the English language was to be used in the services. This has continued to the present day. NBC has no Swahili service, but the new plants are including Swahili in the service. The African students were from the Royal Technical College -now the University of Nairobi though the majority were Europeans (Gichinga, 1989, p.1-3).

History of Sunday School (SS) in Nairobi Baptist Church

In NBC, SS has been an integral ministry right from the inception of the Church in 1958. Indeed, it serves as an important ministry. The Bible stories are used to help children mature in their faith in God;

by 1988 NBC had 950 children. Gichinga (1989) states that to easily manage the children, they were divided into age groups. Currently, the age groups range from infants to 13-year-olds. While SS leadership was led by the European missionaries, this has changed in that, now it is led by Kenyans.

Sunday School has continued to nurture children using handbooks and teaching materials that help in their faith formation. A handbook is defined as a complete course of study offered in SS and all the teaching materials in the handbooks aid in the conduct of the lessons that are taught to children in a child-friendly manner in NBC.

Among the assumptions on what should be taught to children aged 5-13 years, old are subjects like salvation, baptism, and church sacraments, among others. The question then that should be asked is: Are these meant for adults only or they can be taught to children aged 5-13 years old? The answer is, "No". These concepts may not be needed by children now but they should be taught so that they are not misled later as they mature. However, the Bible expects that the entire Word of God should be taught to the children (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

The materials in these handbooks should aim to teach all the Scriptures to the children in a simplified manner so that they understand these concepts as early as possible. Like Timothy, the Bible will help children to be holistically trained into all righteousness. 2 Tim 3:17 concludes that when a child is trained using the word of God, the child will be thoroughly equipped to do every good work. Further, these teachings help to nurture a child for mental development and in all aspects. The spiritual cognitive theory leads children into an early understanding of who God is, and how they can respond to the love of God.

There is also a need to formulate a policy on how handbooks for children should be sourced or written so that a good and holistic approach is adopted to enable children to comprehend these concepts. It has become customary in the church today to speak of the need for a return to "family values", but it is not clear what this could mean. If it means a mother and a father as well as many children held together by strict discipline, or family standards around the piano, and singing hymns, then it will almost certainly fail - and deservedly so.

The study evaluated the effectiveness of the handbooks to the Sunday school in NBC. The following table shows how various respondents reacted to this question on evaluating 5-13 years old children. The average of all the respondents on the effectiveness of the books was 69.86% for those who affirmed that the handbooks for children in NBC are effective when used to teach faith formation. Others at 22.97% did not concur that there is effectiveness in the use of handbooks. The Mean score was 2.6666 and the Standard Deviation was 1.17505 which indicated varied responses by the respondents. The table below shows the respondents' views on the effectiveness of Handbooks using a Likert scale measure to show the percentages for each cluster, and the mean and standard deviation to show how varied the responses were concerning the effectiveness of these teaching materials. The analysis of the effectiveness of the handbooks using the Likert scale measurement is shown in Table 4.3.

NBC uses themes like "Hands and Feet for Jesus" for all six departments which include: adults, youth, children, outreach, missions and administration. The theme for the year for each department includes a budgetary allocation to facilitate the application of the theme by availing the relevant handbooks. As for the children's department, the process involves searching for Bible passages that are in line with the church theme of the year.

The theme is divided into three parts: Mission, Family and Christmas season lessons (MFC). Before these lessons are used, they are given to the children's department staff and some teachers to check if all the categories of children in NBC have been addressed. The same team forms the "Think Tank" and resource powerhouse for gathering the information required. Passages are distributed and the group begins the task of consolidating the work for a final review by the children's Department. These books are proofread by the team headed by the chief editor. This motivated the researcher to seek to understand more about the handbooks used in nurturing 5-13-year-olds in NBC.

The handbooks are given to the topmost senior management staff for final editing before they are printed and handed over for use by the different levels of teachers. The Handbooks are in line with the theme of the year whether they are sourced or developed by the NBC team. Training is done for the teachers to enhance the effective use of materials. The Children Ministry Team double-checks how the materials will be used. Caution is given to the teachers to make sure that the theme of the year is well spelled out each Sunday and during Holiday Bible Club and Camps.

The handbooks used in NBC revealed a gap between training and implementation. The respondents interviewed on the effectiveness of the handbooks indicated that they were not individually involved in the process. Further, they asserted that they had no details on how they could help since most of them are rarely involved in the direct teaching of the children every Sunday. This revealed that a lack of details on the handbooks and teaching materials could reduce the participation of some of these respondents who indicated that with the provision of information, they could be ready to help. As May et al. (2012) observe, the children's ministry mostly uses volunteers to serve. The impact can be good but at times when the volunteers using the handbooks do not have the true picture of how these materials are processed, they are so disconnected when it comes to effective implementation. This may lead to negative outcomes in the lives of the children. Proper provision of information in handbooks and materials could lead to good outcomes for both the teachers and the children.

Children and the Effectiveness of the Handbooks and Teaching Materials

The respondents aged 5-13 years old on the effectiveness of the handbook and teaching materials were at 70.20%. They responded on the usage, content and quality standards of the handbook for their faith formation. The sample of the handbooks for holistic nurture earlier mentioned could explain the higher percentage of the response by the children. The lessons taught every Sunday are in these handbooks and are well documented. The teaching in the handbooks by the teachers every Sunday about faith formation in NBC was at 70.20% compared to parents at 42%.

However, studies on child development specifically on curricula show that some of the materials that were translated and distributed by different churches and para-church organizations in NBC have lessons whose approach is foreign. This action of having these handbooks seems to have been more to save the challenge of lack of contextualized books for teaching children. Many of the teaching materials by this time were in light of the influx of missionaries coming to Kenya. It may have also introduced laxity on the part of the teachers who did not take up the role of producing books that are contextualized and relevant. Most of them may have thought teaching the word of God does not need the tedious hard work that is involved in writing handbooks to teach children.

The researcher concurs with May, et al. (2005) when she argues that the work of forming faith in children should not be loaded on the church. All these issues revolving around handbooks may not fully impact the lives of children unless parental involvement and implementation in ministry are taken seriously. The challenges in the children's ministry may remain insurmountable in all its facets. The alternative is to involve parents in the children's ministry in a relevant and convincing manner and in doing so the program should be made attractive to them so that they see the need to be part of the handbook's development process which could produce the holistic child /children in NBC.

Lessons in Handbooks for Children HNC in NBC

The third theme on the effectiveness of the Handbooks was on the lessons developed for 5-13 years old children. The topics covered included: sin, salvation, memory verses, and drama, among others. The handbooks comprise these topics to help children as early as possible to understand what God says about these topics.

Memory verses in the handbooks explain the importance of hiding the word of God in our hearts so that we may not sin against God. Psalm 119:12) the Bible says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you". These topics and others help to form faith in children.

The handbooks could be more effective when the foundation is on the biblical teachings about children in all areas of faith formation. The lessons unfold the truth about God to children. Hardwood and Lawson (2017) identify five areas of traditional church teaching on children including infants. The old traditional or classical ecclesiastical teachings have not changed much, in their liturgy and theological doctrines, from their inception both in the early church and later church denominations. These include Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Lutherans, Anglicans, Reformed and Baptist churches Cairns (1967) among others. They demonstrate the lessons on Sin and infants and children, God's treatment of those who die as infants, how children become members of the church and finally how are these children instructed in Christian doctrine.

Although in the history of the church, the questions about children have to some extent made some churches exclude children's life in the church even when the Bible teaches the inclusion of children as part of the body of Christ. It is important to note that the lessons are about faith formation in children when they are young. Have many complex issues like what or when should the child be taught about God. The Bible clearly shows that as early as possible. Timothy learned the Scripture from infancy (2 Timothy 3:15). Biblical lessons in the handbooks cover all these areas which include children as part of the benefit of God's provision of salvation.

Sin taught to children is hard to comprehend to the extent that the Bible speaks about it in children. Psychologists and Christian Educators will agree that the training of a child begins early. This training should not be in some areas living out the others. Rather holistic nurture of children should begin as early as possible.

In the process of developing handbooks by the leadership for children aged 5-13 years, is crucial that the historical beliefs of the mainline churches (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Africa Inland Church among others) are considered in the light of God's word. The theology on how to deal with children should be important in shaping the handbooks for the HNC and this involves the leadership commitment in the development of the handbooks and teaching materials in NBC.

These handbooks and teaching materials for 5-13-year-olds could be the foundation for Christian education which seeks to educate the child holistically following the pattern of Jesus which he used to teach His disciples which is: watch me, learn from me and go and do likewise (John 21:20). The Bible is the major text. Other resource manuals are used as references in making the Bible messages clear to the children. The SS pastors, children workers, and teachers are linked closely to the handbook's development and implementation. They are the ones who take the handbooks in their original form and interpret them to the children by breaking down the thoughts and lessons to make the teachings clear in the mind of the children.

Age of Children for Effective Handbooks in NBC

Nurturers and opinion leaders at 70.4% asserted that the right age for holistic formation is 12 years. This may affect the development of handbooks for children in NBC. What will those aged 5-11 years be doing in SS if they must wait until they are 12 years? Will 5-11-year-olds wait for their faith development? If serious teaching begins at 12 years, what will be taught to those aged 5-11 years in SS? What will be taught for faith formation? Could this not introduce a big gap in holistic nurture and faith formation in every child? The lessons in the handbooks should be well spelled out for children to learn about God when they are young. A child in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for children which was used to collect data for this study stated that "the handbooks and teaching materials help me to know God better" (Malia Natasha 28.3. 2016).

Making the Handbooks Effective in Teaching Different Age Groups NBC

Making the handbooks effective when teaching children is crucial. The Psalmist declares that his frame was not hidden from God when he made him (Psalm 139: 15). Herschkowitz and Herschkowitz (2002) assert that brain formation begins early in the life of a child as mentioned earlier in our study. The synapses which are used become more pronounced, while the unused ones are "pruned off". The ones

used more start 'blooming' and aid the child in their development. Nevertheless, many children at the age of 5 are retarded in most families. They struggle through life because the parents either ignored God's Word (Proverbs 22:6) or the psychologist's findings on the different development characteristics of a child did not note a problem.

Oluoch (1982) argues that at each level, the child acquires knowledge within the age limit. If this stage of knowledge is not allowed to blossom in the life of the child, the art discovery for most children is denied. Take for example a child who picks a toy car, dismantles it up and begins to put the pieces back together. Before he/she completes the discovery, an adult interrupts the child, calls the child names and stops the child from accomplishing the task. Many children close and stop trying anything new. One wonders whether this is what has affected our originality in most adults! This could change by encouraging young minds to discover the world around them.

Conclusion

This paper focused on assessing the effectiveness of the handbooks and teaching materials used for the holistic nurture of children aged 5-13 years in NBC. The findings showed that handbooks and teaching materials are important for faith formation in children. Gichinga (1989) concurs with this thought of how the handbooks and teaching materials used to teach children have nurtured children in their faith formation. The themes considered in this paper were: SS and handbooks development, leaders and handbooks, parents and handbooks, lessons included in the handbook and children, teaching outline and lesson development. The findings generally from all the themes indicated that faith formation in children cannot happen without handbooks and teaching materials.

According to the findings, 69.86% of the respondents affirmed that the handbooks and teaching materials were effective for teaching children to form their faith. They included lessons that help children to reflect on knowing God while they are still young. Stonehouse (2003, p. 21) argues that spirituality involves the whole person. True spirituality has an impact on every part of a person's being. Stonehouse further points out that this includes children as well. Exclusion of children from holistic nurturing may lead to a lack of connection to the whole of their being in their development using the four dimensions.

The findings showed that a lack of appropriate handbooks and teaching materials could jeopardise faith formation in children. When these materials are not well sourced or prepared, the children will risk what they stored up about God when they are young. Proverbs 22:6 the Bible says, "train up a child in the way he should go and when grows up he will not turn away"

The findings illustrated that SS cannot operate in a vacuum. The children need handbooks and teaching materials that are relevant to their settings. Further, in the preparation of handbooks balance should be sought on whether to have fully completed handbooks or incomplete ones so that the SS teacher adds his/her input.

Moreover, the findings highlighted that the absence of handbooks and teaching materials may lead to poorer results in leading children to faith formation when they are young. According to Jeyaraj (2013, p. 48) children should be identified and helped to grow spiritually while they are still young.

The study established that handbooks are the chief cornerstone in faith formation, as they seek to holistically meet the needs of children in the four dimensions. To have a SS without the handbooks and teaching materials is like trying to run a car without an engine. Handbooks and teaching materials provide the power to move children to faith formation. The materials are important in that they raise the bar for children at their different levels of development.

NBC Sunday school handbooks and teaching materials reflect the holistic way children learn and grow; mental, physical, spiritual, and social, dimensions of child development which are integrally interwoven. The handbooks and teaching materials take up a model of learning that weaves together

intricate patterns of linked experience and meaning rather than emphasizing the acquisition of discrete skills. The child's whole context, mental, development, physical surroundings, spiritual relationships with God and the social context of interacting with others help to ensure the child's learning experience contributes to the child's holistic nurture.

On the lessons in the handbooks and materials, the study showed the different segments in the lesson plan which included the lesson, song, activity for the lesson, memory verse and application. All these are interwoven in the lesson for faith formation in the life of a child. The teaching of the Scriptures through the lesson, memory verse, and activity included in the lesson is aimed at making the four dimensions relevant in the faith formation of a child. The integration makes the children use the spiritual, physical and social dimensions to form their faith.

The handbooks and teaching materials have been well used to foster faith formation in children. They have been well-sourced both locally and internationally to ensure that children can form their faith from stories being taught in SS. Some of these handbooks and teaching materials have been used for over 60 years. The content is good, but it was noted by some respondents that there is a need for improvement to align them with the current generation of children. Contextualized content could be generated from teaching methods, understanding children's development in the four dimensions, well-trained personnel and good leadership. Things like chalkboards, old teaching materials, old facilities and outdated ways of teaching could be discarded in favour of present-day teaching methodologies.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the handbooks and teaching materials in Sunday school, in NBC, should include the six stages of faith development in children as well as the four dimension which includes; physical, mental, spiritual, and social development using the example of how Jesus grew (Luke 2:52).

Recommendation for Further Study

To establish the extent to which teaching at NBC has resulted in holistic faith formation in the children. This could be explored to enrich holistic nurture in children in NBC.

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