

**TEACHERS' PREPARATION AND UTILIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTS
FOR LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN WARENG SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Life Skills Education is being adopted in many countries around the world as a means to empower the youth through challenging situations. The study examined the role of teachers' pedagogical competences in the implementation of Life Skills Education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Informed by the study, this paper discusses the preparation and utilization of professional documents necessary for implementation of life skills curriculum. The study was guided by Overcoming Resistance to Change (ORC) theory. It used a descriptive survey research design. The study employed stratified sampling and purposive techniques to select 80 head teachers and 290 teacher representatives. Purposive sampling technique was used to select one County Education Officer and 5 QUASO Officers. The research used questionnaires and analysed the collected data using both descriptive and inferential statistics. As a non-examinable subject most teachers ignore the preparation for teaching and learning of life skills education and instead use the time allocated for teaching of life skills education to teach other subjects which are examinable. Based on the research findings and conclusion, it is recommended that school administrators should motivate teachers to abide by the required professionalism in the implementation of LSE curriculum in school. The administrators can achieve this by use of incentives in the form of rewards. They

should also provide all the necessary material support to ensure teachers prepare and use the requisite professional documents in LSE curriculum implementation.

Keywords: Teachers, Preparation, Utilization, Professional Documents, Life Skills Education, Curriculum Implementation, Public Primary Schools, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Life skills education was introduced into school curriculum to foster the development of all-rounded individuals. Life skills education (LSE) aims to promote behaviour change by developing the attitudes, knowledge and skills that enable learners to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Curriculum development is an amalgamation of various processes employed in the pursuit of certain set goals in a school system. It covers the entire spectrum of curriculum construction. This ranges from initial conceptualization and planning to design and implementation to evaluation and revision. This is because the curriculum is a social construct and diverse societies which do not hold universal views (Barnett & Coate, 2005).

It is, therefore, important to consider context when developing a curriculum. Much of the literature on curriculum context deals with context relevance. Context relevance is concerned with the fidelity of the curriculum to its stated goals. The premise here is that the stated goals are a true reflection of what society expects from the school system. Context here is concerned with the environment in which the curriculum is developed. In other words, context is the summation of the factors that influence the curriculum development process. The contextual focus for this paper was the implementation of life skills education in public primary school curriculum of Kenya.

Following many different life skill programs, the World Health Organization (WHO) department of mental health identified five basic life skills that are relevant across cultures. These include decision-making and problem solving; creative thinking and critical thinking; communication and interpersonal skills; self-awareness and empathy, lastly coping with emotions and coping with stress (WHO/Western Pacific Regional Office, 2003). Initiatives to develop and implement LSE in schools have been undertaken in many countries around the world.

The need for life skills education (LSE) is highlighted directly and indirectly in the Convention of the Rights of the Child and a number of International instruments such as the Universal Declaration

on Human Rights of 1948 by the United Nation Organization. The Convention embraces education as a basic human right. Similarly, the International Protocol that established Education for All (EFA) agenda in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The same argument is echoed in the World Education Forum (WEF) which was held in Dakar Senegal, in the year 2000, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) among others.

Pedagogical competency refers to the skills and personality of a teacher in handling the instructional process with the help of instructional methods, teaching aids and resources. Hence teachers' pedagogical competence in this study refers to teaching method, use of instructional resources in the implementation of life skills education. Every individual in society has to face some sort of conflict or competition or stress on a daily basis. Children go through stages of dynamic physiological, emotional and social changes as they transit from childhood to adulthood (Gachuhi, 1999). The stages are characterized by new feelings, emotions, excitement and a general desire to explore and make choices and decisions.

The challenges children and young people face are many, and require more than even the best numeracy and literary skills. School children, especially, are under undue pressure to perform well in their examinations especially the national examination. This can affect the child's mind resulting into number of problems such as fear of failure, suicides, aggressiveness, inferiority or superiority complexes, loneliness, criminal mentality, anxiety, drug abuse, indiscipline and school strikes, and such like. To avoid the consequences of these factors, it is important to impart life skills education at an early stage of life.

It is believed that if young people are empowered with life skills, they were able to make the right choices through situational analysis, critical thinking and relying on tested knowledge to make decisions. In this way, they will avoid risky behaviours. LSE is aimed at facilitating the development of psychosocial skills that are required to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It includes the application of life skills in the context of specific risk situations where children and adolescents need to be empowered to promote and protect their rights (UNICEF, 2012).

At the world conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand, the international community raised concerns about the relevance of education particularly for the need to focus on

appropriate life skills for all learners from all parts of the world. The international society underscored the importance of teaching skills that are relevant to life (UNESCO, 2004). The Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum gave new impetus to the promotion of quality education recognizing that education for all can only be achieved if the education provided is improved in ways that ensures the learning needs of the youth and adults are met. Many countries are now considering the development of life skills education in response to the need to reform traditional education systems, which appear to be out of step with the realities of modern social and economic life. Problems such as violence in schools and student drop-out are crippling the ability of school systems to achieve their academic goals. Furthermore, in addition to its wide ranging application in primary prevention and the advantages it can bring for education systems, life skills education lays the foundation for learning skills that are in great demand in today's job market (Gachuhi, 1999).

Professional Documents for Life Skills Education

Professional documents are documents which are used by the teachers in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of teaching and learning process. They include; scheme of work, lesson plan, records of work covered and progress records, these are meant to make teaching and learning more effective. In many countries, teachers do not prepare professional documents for the teaching of life skills across the board. These problems of inadequacy of preparation of professional documents have affected the teaching of life skills. Given this background, there is need for the teachers to prepare this documents. Planning is very important in implementation of life skill. Planning enables the teacher subdivide the content to be taught into manageable units (Otunga, Odero & Barasa, 2011). The internal curriculum supervisors are served with the responsibilities of availing the syllabus to the respective teacher so that they use in the implementation of the curriculum.

A scheme of work is a plan or document which enables a teacher to organise teaching activities ahead of time. It is a summarized forecast of work which considers adequate and appropriate for the class to cover within a given period of time from those topics which are already set in the syllabus (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2008) Scheme of work make teaching systematic and orderly for it ensures that topics in the syllabus are taught. Therefore, head teachers should ensure that scheme of work are being prepared by teachers in primary schools.

Good lesson planning is essential to the process of teaching and planning. A teacher who is prepared is well on his or her way to successful instructional experience (Otunga *et al.*, 2011); teachers are required to prepare lesson plan for effective teaching and learning. A lesson plan is to be certified by the head teacher. This enables teachers to be familiar with the teaching content to visualize the best way of covering it.

Record of work covered is a document where all details of the work covered or taught by teachers is entered on a daily basis. The entries are made by individual teacher after every lesson. The record of work ensures that accountability and transparency of work covered by the teacher, the continuity of teaching of a particular class, that the new teacher traces where to start teaching and also helps in evaluating the scheme of work after a period of time. Record of work covered ensures uniformity in content coverage in case of several streams.

The Government of Kenya seems to be getting increasingly concerned about the implementation of life skills education. In response, the government has made efforts to have it as a subject of its own in the school curriculum. Boyd (2011) and WHO (1997) suggest that skill-based programmes require sufficient time allocated on weekly basis. In Armenia, for example, teachers feel that one hour of life skills session per week is adequate. According to the MoE (2008), life skills education is supposed to be allocated one lesson per week in the school timetables both at the primary and secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Life skills are psychological competences which enable an individual to develop adaptive and positive behaviour so as to deal effectively with the challenges and demands of everyday life. The youth face many challenges in this fast-changing world. These challenges may be psychological, social and economic among others, which are compounded by various factors such as complex developmental changes during adolescence, lack of positive role models, negative mass media influence and inadequate, inaccurate and unreliable sources of information. Life skills education should, therefore, equip the learners with psychosocial, competencies, the ability to make informed decision, solve problems, think creatively and critically, communicate effectively, build healthy interpersonal relationships which is lacking among the youths (Abobo, 2012).

Therefore, there is need for research to be conducted to ascertain the influence of teachers' pedagogical competencies on the implementation of LSE. Since these factors mentioned are

hindering the policy of the Ministry of Education to provide Education for All (EFA), there is urgent need to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of LSE in schools. It is against this background that the study looked into the role of teachers' pedagogical competences on implementation of life skills education curriculum in Wareng Sub-County Uasin Gishu County.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed descriptive survey research design. This design provides access to available source of information for gaining knowledge and insight into a given phenomenon under investigation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). It was, therefore, found useful in trying to understand and describe the role of teachers' pedagogical competences on the implementation of life skills education curriculum in public primary school in Wareng Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County. The design helped in formulating important principles of knowledge and propose solution to prevailing challenges in the LSE curriculum implementation.

The study was carried out in Wareng Sub-County in Uasin Gishu County. The research targeted 376 respondents, namely 1 County Education officer, 5 QUASO Officers, 80 head teachers and 290 teacher representatives. The study employed stratified sampling and purposive techniques. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the head teachers, teacher representatives and purposive sampling technique was used to select the County Education Officer and the QUASO Officers. Yamane's (1967) formula was used to provide a simplified way for calculating the research sample size. A 95% confidence level and $\alpha = 0.05$ was assumed during the study. Upon getting the desired number of teachers and head teachers, the researcher used simple random sampling method to select 42 head teachers from 80 and 150 teachers from the 290. The same procedure was to select teachers. Therefore, from the 270 respondents, 192 were selected as well as the 5 QUASO officers and the County Education officer. The sample size therefore came to 198 respondents.

The main instruments used to collect data in the study were questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis entailed categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research questions. The purpose of analysis was to reduce data to intelligible and interpretable form so that the relations of research problems can be studied and tested (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The primary data collected were systematically organized and then analysed using descriptive statistics.

This involved the use of frequency distribution tables, measures of central tendency and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The second objective of this study was to ascertain the preparation and utilization of professional documents necessary for implementation of life skills education curriculum in public primary schools in Wareng Sub-County. To achieve, this objective, the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five point Likert scale items in the questionnaires on the preparation and utilization of professional documents necessary for implementation of life skills education curriculum. Their responses were tabulated and results are presented as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Preparation and Utilization of Professional Documents for LSE Curriculum Implementation

Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)
The teachers prepare scheme of work for Life Skills education in primary curriculum	63(34.2)	42(22.8)	9(4.9)	29(15.8)	41(22.3)
Teachers prepare lesson plan adequately on the teaching of LSE	49(26.6)	68(37.0)	17(9.2)	23(12.5)	27(14.7)
There is consistence of the preparation of records of work covered in the teaching of Life Skills education in primary curriculum	84(45.7)	45(24.5)	25(13.6)	19(10.3)	11(6.0)
The level of preparation of the teacher of Life Skills education is adequate	71(38.6)	59(32.1)	21(11.4)	19(10.3)	14(7.6)

Source: Field Data (2016)

Table 1 shows that 63(34.2%) of the teachers strongly disagreed with the statement that primary school teachers prepared teachers schemes of work for life skills education in primary curriculum, 42(22.8%) teachers disagreed with the statement, 41(22.3%) teachers strongly agreed with the

statement and 29(15.8%) teachers agreed with the statement while 9(4.9%) teachers were undecided on the statement. The study findings showed that a majority (57.0%) of the teachers in public primary schools in Wareng Sub-County reported that they (teachers) did not prepare schemes of work for life skills education in primary curriculum. As a non-examinable subject most teachers ignore the preparation for teaching and learning of life skills education and instead use the time allocated for teaching of life skills education to teach other subjects which are examinable. This implies that the implementation of for Life Skills Education may not be effective since it is faced with several challenges including inadequate preparation of schemes of work for Life Skills Education. According to Otunga *et al.* (2011), teachers do not prepare professional documents for the teaching of life skills across the board in many countries. The inadequacy of preparation of professional documents has affected the teaching of life skills.

In addition, 68(37.0%) teachers disagreed with the statement that teachers prepare lesson plan adequately on the teaching of LSE, 49(26.6%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement, 23(12.5%) teachers agreed with the statement and 27(14.7%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement while 17(9.2%) teachers were undecided on the statement. From the teachers' responses, it can be shown that majority (63.6%) of them noted that teachers did not prepare lesson plans for LSE adequately and this negatively affected the implementation of LSE in public primary schools. According to Otunga *et al.* (2011) good lesson planning is essential to the process of teaching and planning and teachers who adequately prepare lesson plans and effective in their teaching. This enables teachers to be familiar with the teaching content to visualize the best way of covering it. In this study, since teachers did not prepare lesson plans they were not effective and efficient in the teaching of life skills education.

Similarly, 84(45.7%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement that there was consistence in the preparation of records of work covered in the teaching of life skills education in primary curriculum, 45(24.5%) teachers disagreed with the statement, 25(13.6%) teachers were undecided on the statement, 19(10.3%) teachers agreed with the statement while 11(6.0%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement. From the responses, it emerged that a majority (70.2%) of the teachers in public primary schools in Wareng Sub-County believed that there were inconsistencies in the preparation of records of work covered in the teaching of life skills education in primary curriculum. This could be attributed to lack of adequate training amongst teachers on the teaching of life skills education in primary schools. Rembe (2006) posit that the cascade model of teacher

training was one of the challenges in the implementation of the programme. He notes that the cascade training strategy of teachers was disappointing because few teachers were chosen and received training and they in turn, trained other teachers in schools. This shows that all teachers in public primary schools need to be trained on the teaching of life skills education as this will ensure consistency in preparation of records of work thus allowing for effective implementation of life skills education in primary schools.

Moreover, 71(38.6%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement that the level of preparation of the teacher of Life Skills education was adequate, 59(32.1%) teachers disagreed with the statement, 21(11.4%) teachers were undecided on the statement, 19(10.3%) teachers agreed with the statement while 14(7.6%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement. The study findings suggested that majority (70.7%) of the teachers in public primary schools in Wareng Sub-County believed that the level of preparation of the teacher of Life Skills education was inadequate. This could be attributed to the fact that teachers never prepared any schemes of work and lesson plans which are key in the implementation of any curriculum. As shown by Otunga *et al.* (2011) inadequacy in preparation of professional documents has affected the teaching of life skills.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a non-examinable subject most teachers ignore the preparation for teaching and learning of life skills education and instead use the time allocated for teaching of life skills education to teach other subjects which are examinable. It emerged that there was lack of lesson plans, inadequate preparation of schemes of work and inconsistencies in the preparation of records of work covered in the teaching of life skills education in primary curriculum. This hindered the implementation of LSE Curriculum.

Based on the research findings and conclusion, it is recommended that school administrators should motivate teachers to abide by the required professionalism in the implementation of LSE curriculum in school. The administrators can achieve this by use of incentives in the form of rewards. They should also provide all the necessary material support to ensure teachers prepare and use the requisite professional documents in LSE curriculum implementation. There is also a greater need for proper monitoring and evaluation of LSE curriculum implementation in schools in the study area.

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