

Investigation of Schools' Strategies to Enhance Implementation of Life Skills Curriculum in Public Early Childhood Development Centers in Igembe North, Meru County

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Abstract

Life Skills Education was introduced in the Kenyan School Curriculum to foster the development of all round individuals upon graduating from school. All public Early Childhood development centres in Kenya including those in Igembe North Sub-County are mandated to teach lifeskills. However, its implementation still in the Sub-County remains low. This study therefore intended to focus on investigating the schools' strategies used to enhance the implementation of life skills curriculum in public ECD centers in Igembe North Sub-County in Meru County. The objectives of this study were to establish the influence of training, provision of instructional resources, supervision and timetabling of LS lessons on implementation of LS in public ECD centres in Igembe North Sub-County. This study used a mixed method approach and a concurrent triangulation design. The target population for this study was 592 respondents comprising of 84 head teachers, 504 ECD teachers, 3 TAC tutors or curriculum support officers and 1 QASO in Igembe North Sub-County, Meru County. The sample size was 120 respondents which represented 20% of the target population. It comprised of 100 ECD teachers, 16 head teachers, 1 QASO and 3 TAC tutors. Random sampling chose the schools to participate in the study. The study used a questionnaire for ECD teachers, an interview schedule for head teachers, QASO and TAC tutors to collect data. Piloting of instruments was conducted in Igembe South sub-county with 12 respondents representing 10% of the sample size to ascertain the applicability of the instruments. Purposive sampling was used to select the CSOs and census for QASO. That is, 2 head teachers, 8 ECD teachers, 1 QASO and 1 CSOs. Reliability was ascertained using the test-retest method. Reliability coefficient was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. If the coefficient value was .7, the instruments' reliability was accepted and if less, it was revised.

Keywords: Life Skills Curriculum in Public, Early Childhood Development Centers

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Essentially life skills curriculum has got a direct bearing on the academic qualification of educators' level of training, availability of instructional resources such as T/L Aids, textbooks and other relevant materials. Moreover, adequate supervision and substantial amount of time allocation can facilitate life skills implementation to the learners. Life skills refers to psychosocial competencies consisting of a set of human skills obtained through instruction or direct experience that are used to handle tribulations and questions frequently encountered in everyday life (UNICEF,2012).

The genesis of life skills can be traced right from 1986 Ottawa charter of health that stated under the rubric of individual skills it should promote and support personal and social development by disseminating information which is advantageous to health and promotion of life skills (Global Evaluation, 2012). Government policies are vital in curriculum implementation as educators embark on fulfilling the policy to the letter. According to WHO (1997), the implementation of life skills curriculum requires the input from the school, education authority for teachers, training and development of T/L materials.

In United States of America, Sharon and Susanne (2008) stated that teachers are supposed to be given in-service training before embarking in the implementation of LS. In Nepal in-service and pre-service training are included in teacher instructional institutions. In-service to help teachers to prepare for promotion and qualification oriented in-service to provide teachers with further qualification. In Cambodia teachers undergo pre-service training on life skills curriculum before the implementation which is done through the Ministry of Education. Moreover, according to Chirwa (2009) states that in South Africa teachers are provided with school based in service training done through pyramid method. The program me is divided into four learning areas: in service for school-based to help teachers in improving the value of education, job related in- service to help teachers prepare for promotion and qualification oriented in- service to provide teachers with further qualifications.

B. Objective of the study

- To establish the influence of training of ECD teachers on implementation of LS in public ECD centres in Igembe North Sub-County.
- To find out the influence of supervision on implementation of LS curriculum in public ECD centres Igembe North Sub-County.
- To examine the influence of provision of instructional resources on implementation of LS curriculum in public ECD centers in Igembe North Sub-County.
- To assess the influence of timetabling of LS lessons on implementation of LS curriculum in public ECD centres in Igembe North Sub-County.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Empirical Literature

This part comprised literature review of preceding studies interconnected to this research. Review of Literature in this study was based on the research objectives.

Training Strategy and Implementation of Life Skills Curriculum.

According to the global monitoring report (EFA, 2012), education is not only about ensuring that all children attend school but it is about setting young people for life and ensuring that all young people have opportunity to acquire skills. According to life skills- based education in South Asia (Education Forum, 2005), assessment carried out portrayed that programme advancement and implementation of LS to helpless children and adolescent is less complex than in school program owing to the constant failure by ruling administration to support resulting to lack of ownership, sustainability and reproduction.

The content of LSE is not always pertinent and methods used are not effective especially among different types of learners, notably also was inadequate training of trainers and provision of in-service training to support instructors with unsatisfactory concentration paid to building self-confidence with content and teaching methods and monitoring in class delivery. The assessment then, recommended that in-service in school program requirements to be incorporated into the official curriculum to make sure that there is sustainability and effectiveness. World Health Organization (WHO, 1998) and PAHO (1999) states that through life skills interactive training, learners lead a life full of boldness, decision making, critical thinking and problem solving among other positive adaptive abilities ,attitudes and skills.

According to Ashton (2007) leaders in Armenia felt deeply that in –service training ought to be provided at the Pedagogical colleges and universities. In Nepal pre-service and in-service trainings are included in teacher training institutions. Similarly, global and evaluation (2012) reports about after hours peer education and in Myanmar was set to increase the effectiveness in training of life skills.

In Cambodia teachers undergo pre-service training on life skills curriculum before the implementation which was done through the Ministry of Education. Mihalic, Fagan and Argamaso (2008) purported that teachers are supposed to be given in-service training before embarking on the implementation of life skills in United States of America. Also, Global and Evaluation (2012) indicates that head teachers have not been equipped with adequate guidance and training based on internal supervision in schools where life skills curriculum is being implemented. According to Chirwa (2009) curriculum implementation must be supervised and monitored for its effective delivery and outcomes.

Moreover, Chirwa (2009) purports that in South Africa teachers are provided with school based in service training done through pyramid method. The programmers is divided into four learning areas: school-based in -service to aid teachers in improving the value of education, job related in-service to help educators prepare for qualification and upgrading, in-service oriented to equip educators with further qualification. In this regard they attend a three-day workshop for life skills curriculum and the trainer visits the schools to provide support.

B. Correlation Analysis on schools' strategies to enhance implementation of LSC

To further establish the relationship linking the independent with dependent variable, the study employed correlation analysis. According to Kothari (2014), the correlation coefficient can range from -1 to +1, with - 1 signifying a perfect negative correlation,+1 indicating a perfect affirmative correlation, and 0 demonstrating no correlation at all. A linearity test was conducted as evidenced by the Pearson correlation coefficient.

C. Training and Enhancement of Implementation of LS Curriculum

The study used correlation analysis to test the association between training and Enhancement of Implementation of LS Curriculum in public ECD centres in Igembe North Sub-County. The outcomes are presented in Table 1.

Table - 1
Correlation Results on Training and Implementation of FLS

		Training	Implementation of Life skills Curriculum
Training	Pearson Correlation	1	0.505**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	95	95

Implementation of Life skills Curriculum	Pearson Correlation	0.505**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	95	95

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table shows that training of ECD teachers had a statistically strong affirmative association linking training of teachers and implementation of LS Curriculum in public ECD centres, $r(95) = .505$, $p = .001$, $\alpha = .05$. The outcome implies that an increase in training of ECD teachers would enhance Implementation of LS Curriculum in public ECD centres. Similarly, Mihalic, Fagan and Argamaso (2008) purported that teachers are supposed to be given in-service training before embarking on the implementation of life skills.

D. Instructional Resources and Enhancement of Implementation of LS Curriculum

The study also used correlation analysis to determine the association linking instructional resources and Enhancement of Implementation of LS Curriculum. The outcomes are offered in Table 2.

Table - 2
Correlation Results on Instructional Resources and Implementation of LS

		Instructional Resources	Implementation of Life skills Curriculum
Resources	Pearson Correlation	1	0.155
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.035
	N	95	95
Implementation of Life skills Curriculum Instructional	Pearson Correlation	0.155	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.035	
	N	95	95

Table 2 shows that there is a statistically weak positive relationship between instructional resources and implementation of LS Curriculum in public ECD centres, $r(95) = .155$, $p = .035$, $\alpha = .05$. The outcome implies that there was an affirmative association among instructional Resources with implementation of LS Curriculum in public ECD centers. According to Global Evaluation (2012) the ratio of text book sharing is 1:2 in the Kenyan schools making learners rely on teachers' notes. Teaching/ learning resources are vital in the implementation of LS since it makes LS real, interesting, enjoyable, motivating and enhances learners retention of knowledge gained or acquired in the process of learning and teaching. The effectiveness of any curriculum like life skills education depend on the quality of the teachers that are there to translate the syllabus into practical instructional material in the class (Mosesti, 2007). Adequate instructional resources, enhances the implementation of like skills curriculum in schools.

E. Supervision and Implementation of Life skills Curriculum

The research also employed the use of the correlation analysis to test the relationship between supervision and Implementation of Life skills Curriculum public ECD centres in Igembe North Sub-County. The results are as shown in Table 11.

Table - 3
Correlation Results on Supervision and Implementation of LS

		Supervision	Implementation of Life skills Curriculum
Supervision	Pearson Correlation	1	0.261*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.010
	N	95	95
Implementation of Life skills Curriculum	Pearson Correlation	0.261*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.010	
	N	95	95

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows that there is a statistically weak positive relationship between supervision and implementation of Life skills Curriculum in public ECD in Igembe North Sub-County ($r(95) = 0.261$, $p = .01$, $\alpha = .05$). The outcome implies that there was affirmative association involving instructional Resources and implementation of LSC in public ECD centres. Owino (2013) argued that supervision done in form of examination for assessment makes both teachers and learners alert in preparation for the end of course examination for the desire of the certification.

F. Timetabling and Implementation of Life Skills Curriculum

The study further employed the use of the correlation analysis to test the relationship between timetabling and Implementation of LSC in public ECD centres in Igembe North Sub-County. The outcomes are offered in Table .

Table - 4
Correlation Results on Timetabling and Implementation of LS

		Implementation of Life skills Curriculum	Timetabling
Timetabling	Pearson Correlation	0.225*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.028	
	N	95	95
Implementation of Life skills Curriculum	Pearson Correlation	1	0.225*

	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0.028
	<i>N</i>	95	95

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 12 shows that there is a statistically weak positive relationship between timetabling and implementation of Life skills Curriculum in public ECD in Igembe North Sub-County, $r(95) = 0.225$, $\rho = .010$, $\alpha = .05$. Similarly, Fishman, Fishman, Yamaguchi and Gallagher (2007) suggested that extending the day to contain the life skills curriculum was a means of adding to the amount of teaching time for the subject, or to add to the number of subjects on offer.

G. Multivariate Regression Analysis

Regression was further employed to test the nature of relationship connecting independent variables and dependent variables. According to Kothari (2014), regression is the determination of a statistical association linking two or more variables. In simple, regression has two variables, one variable (defined as independent) is the cause of the behavior of another one (defined as dependent variable). When there are two or more than two independent variables, the analysis concerning relationship is known as multivariate regression and the equation describing such association as the multiple regression equation.

A multivariate regression replica was conducted to test the joint relationship of all the independent variable and dependent variable. The outcomes are shown in Tables 13, 14 and

Table - 5
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.653 ^a	0.427	0.401	0.36871

a. Predictors: (Constant), Timetabling, Training, Instructional resources, supervision

Table 1 shows that training of ECD teachers, instructional resources, supervision and timetabling jointly accounted for 42.7% of the variation in enhancement of implementation of life skills curriculum in public ECD centres. The results implied that other factors other than the one mentioned in this study accounted for a large percentage of the variation in implementation of life skills curriculum in public ECD centres.

Table - 6
ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	9.114	4	2.278	16.760	0.000 ^b
	Residual	12.235	90	0.136		
	Total	21.349	94			

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Life skills Curriculum

b. Predictors: (Constant), Timetabling, Training, Instructional, supervision

Table indicate that training of ECD teachers, instructional resources, supervision and timetabling were significant predictor variables of implementation of life skills curriculum in public ECD centres, $F(4, 94) = 16.760$, $\rho < 0.001$, $\alpha = .05$. This indicated that the model used to link the independent variables plus dependent variable was statistically significant.

Table - 7
Regression Coefficient Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.629	0.429		6.123	0.000*
Training	0.410	0.060	0.566	6.882	0.000*
Instructional resources	0.314	0.091	0.294	3.440	0.001*
Supervision	0.201	0.070	0.294	2.866	0.005*
Timetabling	0.067	0.087	0.083	0.768	0.445

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Life skills Curriculum

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In the multivariate regression model, training of ECD teachers ($\beta_1 = 0.410$, $p = 0.000$) was established to have affirmative and significant relationship with implementation of LSC in public ECD centres. Similarly, instructional resources ($\beta_2 = 0.314$, $p = 0.001$), supervision ($\beta_3 = 0.201$, $p = 0.005$) were also established to contain a significant and affirmative relationship with implementation of LSC in public ECD centres. Only timetabling was established to have insignificant relationship with enhancement of implementation of life skills curriculum in public ECD centres.

Similarly, Mihalic, Fagan and Argamaso (2008) purported that teachers are supposed to be given in-service training before embarking on the implementation of life skills.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that life skills education is pertinent and methods used in curriculum implementation are not effective especially among public ECD centers' in Igembe North Sub-County. Notably is inadequate training of trainers and provision of

in-service training to support instructors with unsatisfactory concentration paid to building self-confidence with content and teaching methods and monitoring in class delivery on life skills curriculum implementation.

This study also concluded that the negative attitude among some of the teachers and head teachers undermined implementation of life skills education in school curriculum. The researcher found that majority of educators used LSC subject to teach other summative evaluated subject which means that no attention was indeed paid to LSC. Essentially ECDE instructors and institutional heads felt that the subject ought to be integrated in the rest of the subject rather than having it as a standalone subject. Therefore, continuous supervision of life skills curriculum is necessary to ensure its adequate enhancement of its implementation.

Life skills curriculum implementation requires adequate amount of instruction resources. Availing the required instruction resources in the public ECD centres in Kenya will go a long way in ensuring effective implementation of the life skills curriculum. The effectiveness of any curriculum like life skills education depends on the quality of the teachers as well as practical instructional resources in the class.

The study established that the time allocated for life skills lessons in most of the public ECD centres was very limited and occasionally teachers used life skills lessons to teach other examinable subjects. This study concludes that life skills lessons should be mandatory and adequate time must be allocated for life skills lessons. Close supervision must be effected to make sure teachers adhere to it.

A. Recommendations

The study recommended that policy makers and relevant authorities mandated with the responsibilities of implementing life skills in schools should come up with policies on regular supervision and resources allocation for implementation of life skills curriculum. Resources should be availed to schools to procure instructional materials required for life skills curriculum implementation. Formulation of policies aimed at ensuring regular and continuous supervision should be prioritized to enhance implementation of life skills curriculum in schools.

The study further recommended that teachers mandated with the responsibilities of implementation of life skills curriculum should take teaching of life skills seriously. Teachers should be trained in life skills; there should also be frequent supervision to ensure that life skills is taught in public ECD centres in the region and finally life skills lessons should be allocated enough time in the timetable to enhance its implementation.

Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development and county governments should ensure supervision of life skills curriculum implementation in schools is conducted to ensure full compliance.

This study focused on schools, strategies put in place to enhance the implementation of life skills curriculum in public ECD centres in Igembe North Sub-County in Meru County. Future studies should focus on influence of life skills curriculum on moral behaviour of learners in primary and secondary schools in Kenya.

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