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INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS' MOTIVATION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Life skills education pertain abilities to exhibit positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with challenges and demands of everyday life. The need for life skills education in secondary schools in Kenya had become pertinent due to challenges and changes brought about by fast change in social and technological systems. The purpose of this study was to establish influence of teachers' motivation on the implementation of life skills education in secondary schools. The Study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population was 1524 form four students and 20 Principals in 20 secondary schools. The sample size was 272 participants, which included six principals and 266 students. The participants were sampled using both purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Questionnaires were used to collect data from students and principals. From the study, it was established that teachers' motivation had positive influence on implementation of life skills education in secondary schools. Thus the study recommends that since teacher motivation influenced implementation of life skills education, principals of schools should sponsor their teachers to attend in-service courses in the field which is necessary for them in teaching and students' guidance and counselling role.

Keywords: Implementation, Life skills education, Motivation

Introduction

Life skills education is expected to make a significant influence on how people relate with others and make informed decision about their life. UNESCO (2003) defines life skills are abilities which enable an individual develop adaptive and positive behaviour to deal effectively with challenges and demands of everyday life. Similarly Gichaga (2009) defines life skills as abilities to adapt positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with life issues. It means that life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Described in this way, skills that can be said to be life skills are innumerable, and the nature and definition of life skills are likely to differ across cultures and settings. However, analysis of the life skills field suggests that there is a core set of skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the healthpsychological competences and well-being of young people. These competences include: decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions and stress (Eshiwani, 1993).

According to Pham (2002) the most direct interventions for the promotion of psychosocial competence are those which enhance the person's coping resources, and personal and social competencies. In school-based programmes for children and adolescents, this can be done by the teaching of life skills in a supportive learning environment. In the 2002 Kenya's education curriculum infused life skills education in both primary and secondary schools in subjects like Christian Religious Education, social studies and History and Government (KIE, 2003). In 2009 Life skills education was introduced as a standalone subject in secondary schools that covers: skills of knowing and living with oneself, skills of knowing and living with others and skills of making decisions (KIE, 2008). This was to enable the youths to understand themselves better, make informed choices, make rational decisions, and relate with others effectively and meaningfully.

The government's approval to use education strategies such as life skills as a stop gap measure in response to psycho-social challenges facing youth in a fast changing world is well meaning. Teachers need to be sufficiently trained on educational methodology to attain required competence in life skills. Increased level of teachers' awareness of the objective of life skills curriculum and positive attitudes towards life skills must be inculcated among them. This will not only ensure transmission of knowledge but also help the youth to explore their attitude, feelings, opinions and values hence improvement of psycho-social competence to face life's challenges effectively (KIE, 2008).

Kiiru (2010) suggested that we should teach our children basic survival skills such as cleaning, cooking, managing time, money and relationships; and they will most likely cope with life when they live on their own. She notes further that 'parents should realize that children equipped with basic life skills are more likely to settle down quickly into college routine without additional stress of learning how to cook, clean up, manage time and money as well as develop and manage healthy relationships'. The main goal of life skills approach was to enhance learners' ability to take responsibility for making choices, resisting negative pressure and avoiding risky behaviour. With implementation of life skills education, learners were expected to develop skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making, interpersonal relationships and stress would be important to ensure that the teaching methods utilized are learner centred, youth-friendly, gender sensitive, interactive and participatory so as to ensure implementation of life skills education among learners (KIE, 2008).

According to ROK (2009), the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on policy framework for educational training and research articulated that life skills had challenges in its implementation. As noted in the sessional paper No. 6 of 1988, secondary schools encountered difficulties in implementing some subjects as a result of inadequate training, focus on the examinable subjects and in-facilitation by the Ministry of Education science and technology. Life skills education was essential since it complemented cognitive knowledge with the following: Good interpersonal skills, a strong value base, reflective skills and positive but accurate view of self.

According to the studies to investigate challenges facing implementation of life skills in Trans-Nzoia West Sub- county by Abobo (2012) the grounds of these problems are considered to be related to inadequate knowledge on life skills which would equip the learners with psychological competencies, the ability to make informed decisions, solve problems, think creatively and critically, communicate effectively, similarly building healthy interpersonal relationships is lacking among the youth. According to taskforce on students discipline and unrest in secondary schools, lack of life skills education in secondary schools contributed greatly to mayhem, rampage and massive destruction of property worth millions of money and loss of innocent lives (Wangai, 2001). Other studies carried out by Ithagi(2007) and Kaimuri(2008) on integration and infusion of life skills education in primary schools in Kamukunji and Lang'ata divisions respectively revealed challenges such as: inadequate resource materials, lack of teacher training on life skills, an overcrowded curriculum and mixed perceptions, among others. It is from these revelations that this study sought to establish the influence of selected factors on implementation of life skills education in secondary schools in Kakamega County.

Research Methodology

This study adopted cross-sectional survey research method with a descriptive research design. The design was preferred since it uses preliminary and exploratory studies to allow investigators to gather, interpret and present information in a clearer manner (Orodho, 2002). The intention of a survey research was to gather information at a particular point and use it to describe the nature of the existing conditions (Cohen, 1980). This study fitted within the provision of descriptive survey research design because data was collected and reported the way things were without manipulating any variables. The population of the study included all form four students and principals of schools. The form four students were most likely to give a true representation on implementation of life skills education and principals were the implementers of government policies. They are also presumed to have more knowledge and information on whether life skills education had actually taken place and they also gave the challenges they faced during its implementation. The study applied codes for individual's schools in order to comply with ethical principles of research. This conforms to principles of confidentiality.

Six secondary Schools were randomly selected from a total of 20 secondary schools in Kakamega County; this was based on 30% of the total number of secondary schools, as recommended by Kerlinger, (1986) for small populations. All the principals of the sampled schools were used in the study. The student's sample size was arrived at by applying the formula provided by Reid (1991). In this formula;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where:

n = required sample Size

N= the given population size 797 (In this case – Form four Students in six sampled schools)

e^2 = error of margin (Assumed to be 0.05)

Substituting these values in the equation, estimated sample size (n) is

$$n = \frac{797}{1+797(0.05)^2} n = 266$$

The study selected a sample size of 266 students drawn from the six secondary schools. Six principals were purposively sampled from the selected secondary schools. The total number of participants was 272 people. Simple random sampling technique was employed to obtain the participants from schools.

A structured questionnaire was developed for data collection. The structured questionnaires were preferred because the questions, their wording and sequence are fixed, predetermined and identical for all respondents. This had an advantage of eliciting standard answers to questions, making it possible for comparison to be made between set of data. The questionnaire had various items seeking different information on various aspects of teachers' motivation.

Prior to data analysis, the process of systematically searching, arranging, organizing, and breaking the data into manageable units, synthesizing and searching for patterns were done. The data collected was then coded, processed and analyzed to facilitate answering questions achievement of the research objectives. Descriptive statistics which included mean, percentages, cross-tabulation and frequency was used to analyze the data. The generated data was analyzed with the aid of the statistical packages for Social sciences (SPSS) version 19 for windows computer programme.

Results and Discussion

The influence of teachers' motivation on the implementation of the life skills education in secondary schools was assessed from a series of seven statements. The statements sought to establish the respondents' rating on the extent to which teachers' motivation influenced the implementation of life skills education in secondary schools. Responses to these statements were measured on a five-Likert scale ranging from 1-5 (where 1=strongly disagree (SD), 2=disagree (D), 3=neutral (N), 4=agree (A), 5=strongly agree (SA)). The higher the score the higher the extent to which the influence of teacher motivation on implementation of life skills in secondary schools and vice versa. The findings were as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Influence of teacher motivation on implementation of life skills education

Item	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean SD
Teachers who were highly motivated helped to implement life skills education in school.	85.9	6.5	7.6	4.3
Academic trips by both students and teachers helped to implement life skills education in school.	70.7	14.7	14.7	3.9
Benchmarking helped to implement life skills education in school.	58.2	20.2	21.7	3.7
Early syllabus coverage helped to implement life skills education in school.	72.7	8.7	18.6	4.0
Importance of life skills education helped in implementing life skills education in school	73	17.9	9.1	4.0
Availability of resource to teach life skills education helped to implement life skills in	75.4	10.6	14	4.1

school.

Time allocated for life skills education lessons helped in implementing life skills in school.	74	11.1	14.9	3.9
N=266	Mean=4.0			

Table 1 indicates that majority of the students (85.9%) agreed that teachers who were highly motivated helped to implement life skills education in school. When asked if academic trips by both students and teachers helped to implement life skills education in school, (70.7%) of respondents agreed. Similarly, when asked if early syllabus coverage helped to implement life skills education in school, (72.7%) of respondents agreed. A percentage of (75.4%) agreed with the statement that: Importance of life skills education helped in implementing life skills education in school. Lastly (74%) of respondents agreed that time allocated for life skills education lessons helped in implementing life skills education in school. On average, they agreed that the following helped in implementing life skills education in school: Teachers who were highly motivated, academic trips by students and teachers, early syllabus coverage, importance placed on life skills education and time allocated for life skills education lessons. The findings are agreement with those of Kieffand Casbergue (2000) who argue that a class is equipped with materials that suggest activities and provide the materials needed for activities invented or initiated by students. In his findings Kieffand Casbergue (2000) said that even though the resources for teaching life skills education were available in most of the schools studied, they were not adequate and a fact that demotivated teachers. From the findings of the study, it can be said that even though the resources were available in most schools studied, some schools had none of the resources. This disproportional distribution of resources was also established by Orodho (2014) study on public secondary schools in Mandera County, Kenya. The disproportion was also acted as a demotivating factor.

On the whole the school principals were requested to state the extent their respective schools were prepared to teach life skills education. Majority reached a common verdict that resources for teaching life skills education were inadequate in their secondary schools. This implied that most school principals were of the opinion that the level of preparedness to teach life skills education was too low in most schools. The opinions of the head teachers were cross-examined using an observation checklist. The observation of the status of resources confirmed that although resources such as charts and pictures, magazines, newsletters, pamphlets and video tapes were available in some secondary schools these resources were grossly inadequate to facilitate effective teaching of life skills education. This was an indication that most secondary schools did not have enough resources for the teaching and learning of life skills education. In establishing the training of teachers on life skills education as a source of motivation Orodho (2014), in the study found that most of the teachers (80%) had not been trained on life skills education. This was further confirmed with the findings from an interview with the principals where over half of the principals indicated that teachers in their schools had not attended such trainings. Those who had attended the trainings on life skills education were trained on life skills education, were not trained on methodologies for teaching life skills education.

The Influence of teacher motivation on implementation of life skills education was also rated on seven items; where Item 1: teachers who are highly motivated help to implement life skills education in school; Item 2 - academic trips by both students and teachers help to implement life skills education in school; Item 3 - benchmarking help to implement life skills education in school; Item 4 - early syllabus coverage

helps to implement life skills education in school; Item 5 - importance of life skills education help in implementing life skills education in school; Item 6 - availability of resource to teach life skills education help to implement life skills education in school; Item 7 - time allocated for life skills education lessons help in implementing life skills education in school. The results are as shown on figure 1.

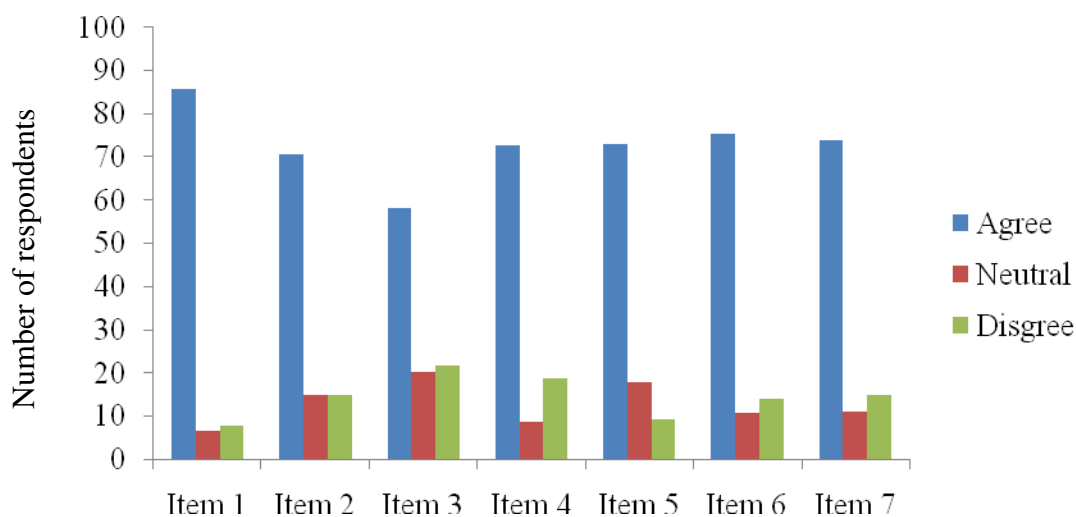


Figure 1: Influence of teacher motivation on implementation of life skills education

Figure 1 indicates that almost in all items majority of respondents were of the opinion that teacher motivation influenced implementation of life skills education. On the other hand the least respondents indicated that teacher motivation has less influence on implementation of life skills education. In general, the finding agreed that teachers' motivation has an influence on implementation of life skills education in school with a mean score of 4.0 on the seven items identified. This result can be best presented in Bar graph as shown in figure 7. This finding agrees with KIE (2003) argument that teachers were key players in the implementation of the Ministry of Education new policies that were geared to promotion of life skills education among students. As noted by KIE, (2002) the life skills education enhances the development of pro-social behaviour in the lives of the student. This also agrees with Oketch, (2011) who argues that life skills as abilities for positive behaviour that enabled individuals to deal effectively with challenges and demands of every day's life are learned from adults especially teachers. Similarly the findings agree with Melgosa, (2002) who argued that teachers contributed immensely in implementing life skills education in school. As such teachers were entrusted by empowering students with essential life skills which included responsiveness, self-awareness, self-protection, emotional control, decision making, problem solving, support seeking and environmental protection. According to UNESCO (2009) most teachers who are energized and highly motivated gain a mastery of subject's content and expertise and therefore help implement life skills education in schools. Pham (2002) holds that life skills education in secondary schools was necessary and had to be practical.

However, the finding disagrees with KIE (2010) observation that teachers were reluctant in implementing the life skills education in secondary schools. KIE (2010) argued that effective life skills education was dependent on the teachers experience and a sense of competency. Teachers were required to teach life skills in a systematic manner because these skills related to the knowledge and attitude of individuals

which most of them do not. Similarly UNICEF, (2001) demonstrated that teachers needed clear understanding of life skills education and work closely with students to help them discover their abilities, make wise choices and decisions and after gradual and consistent inspiration for achieving the desired life goals. Shikuku (2005) on the other hand contended that most secondary school teachers feel demotivated in teaching this life skills education programme. This was attributed by teachers feeling inadequate due to lack of training in life skills, lack of experience and lack of confidence. Another disagreement was with Anderson (2002) who outlined some reasons that made teachers feel incompetent and thus avoided teaching some topics in life skills education. On the other hand, the finding presents similar argument to those of Republic of Kenya (2004). According to Republic of Kenya (2004), majority of secondary school teachers are trained at public universities and diploma colleges and are required to specialize in two teaching subjects upon graduation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In fulfilling the objectives of the research it was revealed that the teaching and learning life skills education in secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya was not adequate as teachers lack motivation to take up life skills education classes. Additionally, the majority of school managements (Head teacher) indicated that the textbooks used in teaching life skills education was not suitable. This meant that in both cases the influence observed was negative. In addition, implementation of life skills education revealed as ineffective due to inadequate time allocation, lack of teaching materials and trained teachers on life skills education which could facilitate the learning/teaching process. Ineffective implementation of life skills education was influenced by inadequate qualified teachers trained in the field of life skills education, inadequate time allocation and materials for teaching and learning in secondary schools. Teachers' motivation has positive influence on the implementation of life skills education in secondary schools;

Thus the study recommends that since teacher motivation influenced implementation of life skills education, Principals should sponsor teachers in the field to attend in-service knowledge and skills which is necessary for them in teaching and guidance roles to their students. In-service workshops are likely to help teachers develop the essential life skills education both in content and methodologies. The school administration should also provide teaching/learning resources on the subject.

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