

Principals' Facilitation Of Teacher Professional Development Programmes For Life Skills Education In Public Secondary Schools In Nairobi County, Kenya

Florence Munanie Makindi

Sr, Dr Jacinta Adhiambo

Dr Margaret Gikuhi

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract: *This study investigated principals' facilitation of teacher development programmes for effective implementation of life skills education. The study adopted convergent mixed research methods in which cross sectional survey design and phenomenological designs were used. The target population comprised of 77 Principals, 2,451 Teachers and 37,258 Students from 77 secondary schools in Nairobi County. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select, 101 life skills education teachers, 311 students; and 27 principals were selected purposively from the 27 participating schools, making a total of 439 participants. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires, interview guide and document analysis guide. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and means. Qualitative data were summarized in themes and presented in narrative form. The findings of the study indicate that; Principals did not effectively facilitate teachers with teacher development programmes to upgrade their skills in teaching Life Skills Education. Teachers and principals were in dire needs for in-service training. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should organize pre-training Life Skills programmes for teachers; Kenya Institute of Education should arrange for in-service training for teachers in the field; Principals should facilitate teachers with professional development programmes and monitor teaching of Life Skills and teachers should teach Life Skills as an obligation to safe the future of the youth.*

Keywords: *Life Skills Education, Roles of Principals in facilitation of teacher development programs, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) former Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), Transformative leadership characteristics and Teacher development programmes*

I. INTRODUCTION

To combat challenges facing youth in Nairobi public secondary schools, this study sought to establish Principals' facilitation of teacher professional development programmes for effective implementation of Life Skills Education. Moreover, Life Skills Education (LSE) is intended to teach thirteen core living values such as love, unity, responsibility, and integrity among others which are addressed through use of interactive and participatory teaching and learning methods, experiential and activity-centered pedagogy (KIE, 2010).

Examples of interactive learning activities include: class discussion, brainstorming, role play etc. These ranges of activities help learners to develop life skills to explore content-related knowledge, attitudes and skills. Using these methods, teachers are facilitators of learning and important actors in the environments for young learners, acting as role models and encouraging and empowering the students. The implication is that teachers of Life Skills Education must be equipped with and transfer and demonstrate the same range of effective life skills as their students are intended to learn (UNESCO, 2012). This can only be achieved through facilitation of teacher

development programs to enhance their teaching competencies. The key facilitators of these professional development programs are none other than the principals who are mandated to carry out the supervision of teaching and learning in schools.

However, given the traditional, didactic approach to teaching and learning in many developing countries, the pedagogy required for effective Life Skills Education implementation has been difficult for individual teachers to develop and apply. It has been challenged and undermined by prevailing and entrenched teacher centered approaches (Lyer & Aggleton, 2014) In the same vein, it is evident in Kenya that because of rote learning and examination oriented curriculum, many teachers have resorted to using lecture method frequently which is teacher-centered as supported by (KIE, 2010). This study therefore sought to determine the facilitation of teacher professional development programs to enhance teacher competencies during Life Skills classroom instruction. Supervision of Life Skills Education classroom teaching and learning also enables the principal to carry out a needs assessment to establish if teachers require enhancing their Life Skills Education professional competencies. This was echoed by UNICEF (2012) who noted that innovation in the curriculum like Life Skills Education must be clear to teachers through the change agents who are the principals.

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is first-hand evidence from learners, teachers, and parents, that Life Skills Education develops relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes resulting to positive impact on learners in both thematic risk areas and general psychosocial skills (UNESCO, 2012). However, teachers from Armenia, Jordan, Kenya, and Malawi reported challenges of implementing LSE which included and not limited to professional development structures for teachers (UNICEF, 2012). The need to focus on principals' facilitation for teacher development programmes was due to psychosocial challenges facing the youth in Nairobi, Kenya. For example; researchers found out that Nairobi the capital city of Kenya was labeled as one of the most crime-ridden capital cities in the world and also leading in drug and substance abuse among the youth (Pokhariyal & Muthuri; Njeru & Ngesu, 2014). Nairobi is also a cosmopolitan and the capital city of Kenya with diverse ethnicity and with the highest population compared to other cities in Kenya (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

The Ministry of Education, Kenya, adopted Life Skills Education as a remedy to the aforementioned psychosocial challenges and put in place different strategies to ensure effective implementation. Among these is teacher development programmes for effective implementation of curriculum (MOE, 2014). Despite these efforts, Life Skills Education has not been reflected in learners' desired behavioral change in public secondary schools in Nairobi County. This inspired the Researcher to carry out this study to establish the principals' facilitation of teachers' development programmes as key in effective implementation of Life Skills Education to enable students achieve their full potential for personal, economic and social development.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

This study sought to answer the following research question: How do principals facilitate teacher development programs to Life Skills Education teachers in public secondary schools in Nairobi County?

II. RELATED LITERATURE

At the global context, Guskey (2000) groups various professional development models into seven which include training, observation/assessment, and involvement in a development project, study groups, inquiry, individually guided activities and mentoring. Ubben et al (2001) argue that "it is important for principals to understand these models and their applications to professional development of teachers and be able to appropriately apply the models to match individual teacher needs" (p. 192). Most importantly, this study investigated teacher professional development programmes facilitated by the Principals for effective implementation of Life Skills Education lesson. Professional development models discussed herein entail but not limited to in-service, workshops, induction, orientation and seminars.

To determine the extent to which sustained teacher professional development in science education affects the classroom instruction, Nancy (2012) carried out a study in America revealed that overall science instruction significantly improved only after 3 years of professional development. A study by Rahman, Shokshok and Wahab (2011) in Islamabad concluded that teacher training was positively related to effective teaching; there was a significant correlation between teachers training and student test result. A case study by Sakunthala, Ekanayake and Wishart (2015) in Sri Lanka revealed that workshops supported teachers in using mobile phones and changed their attitudes and shared knowledge towards teaching and learning of science. In Netherlands, Kessels (2010) study revealed induction programme as truly essential for their first year of teaching. However, these studies did not address principals' facilitation of teacher development programmes for effective implementation of curriculum creating a knowledge gap addressed by the current study.

Teacher professional development has also received attention of researchers in Kenya. A study by Awour and Chemutai (2015) revealed that teachers were not fully prepared to teach Life Skills Education and were in dire need of in-service courses for effective teaching. Another study by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) carried-out in 2010 on summative evaluation of secondary school education curriculum revealed that only 47% of the teachers had received orientation or in-service training to implement the Life Skills Education curriculum. Majority of teachers had the required academic and professional qualifications, however, the continuous capacity development of teachers was found to be either haphazard or lacking. Most importantly the study determined that after the life skills syllabuses were issued in 2008, orientation was not carried out as required. However, these studies carried out in Kenya did not address how principals could facilitate teacher development programmes

for effective implementation of Life Skills Education creating a knowledge gap addressed by the current study.

III. DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods design which entailed the use of multiple worldviews by combining inductive and deductive thinking to answer research questions and provided more comprehensive evidence in numbers and words. In line with (Creswell and Clark, 2014) the researcher preferred convergent parallel mixed methods since it converges the results of quantitative and qualitative data for the purpose of triangulation, aids complementarily and expand the breadth and scope of the study. Specifically cross sectional survey and phenomenology designs were used. Numerical data was used to perform statistical analysis as supported by (Clark & Creswell, 2014) and consequently the results used to make generalization to the entire population. Numerical data was used to perform statistical analysis as supported by (Creswell & Clark, 2007) and consequently the results used to make generalization to the entire population. The central characteristic of phenomenology is an emphasis on participants, experiences, and interpretations (Gay, 2009). Thus, the two research designs were chosen because they complemented each other, such that the limitation of one made up for the other.

A. TARGET POPULATION

The target population of the study consisted of 77 principals, 101 life skills teachers and 311 students from 77 public secondary schools in Nairobi County. Principals were included in the study as supervisors in direct control of teaching and learning of Life Skills Education. The researcher also assumed that the principals possess relevant information about their classroom instructional supervision for effective implementation of LSE in secondary schools of Nairobi County. Teachers were included in this study as implementers of Life Skills Education in direct contact with the students whereas, students were included as beneficiaries of LSE in direct contact with the content taught by teachers.

B. SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select respondents preferably schools, teachers who taught Life Skills lesson and students whereas Purposive sampling was used to select principals. The researcher selected 27 principals, 101 teachers and 311 students from 77 secondary schools resulting to a sample size of 438 participants. According to (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012) a sample size of 10% for large population and 30% for small population is representative enough. Therefore a sample of 10% for students and teachers and 30% of principals was representative enough for the study.

C. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The study made use of questionnaires and interview guide to collect data from the participants

D. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Quantitative data analysis procedures entailed data editing, coding, and entering in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24. Data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics: means, percentages, and frequencies then presented in frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts.

The qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions, interview guide, were summarized in themes based on research questions. Following the steps proposed by Creswell (2014), the researcher organized and prepared data from the transcripts and field notes for analysis. Having read through the data, the researcher coded the data to generate themes and thick descriptions in form of power quotes. Thus classifying major issues or topics and, identifying major themes and the association between them were done to enable the researcher to interpret the meanings as supported by (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The researcher then used narratives form and direct quotes to present the findings.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FACILITATION OF LIFE SKILLS TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The research question sought to establish how the principals facilitated professional development programmes for Life Skills Education (LSE) teachers in public secondary schools in Nairobi County. In view of this, Life Skills Education teachers were asked to indicate the professional development programme facilitated by their principals to upgrade their skills in teaching LSE. The findings are shown in figure 1

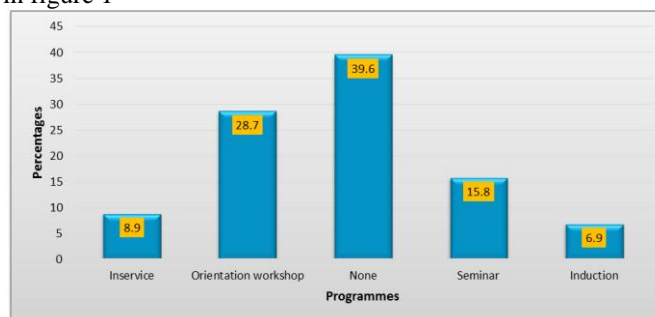


Figure 1: Professional Development Programmes

The findings on Figure 1 show that 39.6% of teachers indicated that they have not attended any professional development programme. On the other hand 28.7% indicated that they attended orientation with induction being the least at 6.9%. This implies that majority of teachers have not attended any Life Skills Education (LSE) professional development programmes.

The findings of this study are in agreement with summative evaluation by Kenya Institute of Education (2010)

which revealed that majority of teachers had not received orientation or in-service training to implement the LSE curriculum. From the interview majority of principals agreed that they had not facilitated LSE teachers with professional development programs. Since the lesson was developed by KIE, majority of principals believed that KIE should have availed the services after the introduction of LSE. One principal expressed the following about LSE teacher professional development:

Only one workshop was attended by LSE teachers and the deputy head teacher at Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in the last five (5) years. The teachers trained were supposed to train others but how it was to be done was not clear. There has also been no follow-up from KICD [P 15: 21/2/2017].

Another principal indicated:

No training for LSE has been done at all. I would rather concentrate on examinable subjects because they are the measure of my performance. Failure to perform in examinable subjects may affect my career leading to transfer or demotion as compared to LSE [P 10: 13/3/2017].

The findings from this study are in contrast with a study by Kessels (2010) in Netherlands which investigated how beginning teachers were supported with an induction programme. Most teachers in the study considered the support of an induction program truly essential for their first year of teaching. They referred most strongly to the influence they felt on their emotional well-being. Kenya being a different context from Netherlands could explain the disparity. The idea of induction is good wish for Kenya, far from being implemented.

The Netherland study revealed various ways in which support from an induction program contributed to teachers' emotional well-being. Also, the support of a mentor made teachers feel supported and not alone. The researcher applauds the professional development programmes for the teachers especially the aspect of induction and mentoring as good foundation for beginning teachers and more so for Life Skill teachers.

Principals responses revealed that only 8 out of 27 principals facilitated LSE teachers with workshops and seminars in their schools while the majority did not. One of the principals from a boys' school explained as follows:

Teachers have not been trained on LSE. So I don't see the need to burden the teachers by imposing LSE on them. LSE is on the timetable as required. I occasionally invite students from Nairobi University once a term as peer counselors to come and sensitize students on evils like masturbation and gay practice. This is referred to as a man to man talk to manage missing space [P15: 3/3/2017].

The findings of this study concur with a study conducted by KIE (2010) which revealed that in Kenya, KIE trained LSE master trainers to train teachers at the provincial level. The cascade training is a common way of ensuring wide teacher training coverage for a lower cost. The report further revealed that cascade method had been ineffective in majority of countries. In Kenya, the teacher in-service training was less frequent and too short to respond to various needs of the teachers. Hence, it was characterized by low and selective

attendance where only a few teachers benefited through cascade training.

Having the professional development programme is one and its effective is another altogether. This necessitated the study to determine further the effectiveness of professional development program teachers had attended. Teachers agreed that professional development program should facilitate them with skills upgrading and give them the confidence to teach LSE. Majority of teachers reiterated that the cascade method used to train teachers was haphazard and not effective as it did not address teachers' needs and was selective. In agreement to this during the interview a principal reported:

I attended orientation training on Life Skills arranged by KIE. However, the training was carried out by Teachers trained to train others using cascade method. The training was selectively done for few teachers and principals and education field officers who were to train others. The training did not give enough time for teachers to master the subject. Unfortunately, I was trained but I never managed to train others because it added no value thus no extra pay or promotion [P 8: 7/2/ 2017]

The findings of this study agrees with a study conducted by Tiamaro (2009) in Madagascar which argued that Life Skills teacher in-service training was ineffective since it was less frequent and too short to respond to various needs of the teachers. Hence, it was characterized by low and selective attendance where only a few teachers benefited through cascade training. This would mean that in-service training for the few teachers trained on LSE was not effectively carried out.

In Zimbabwe a study by Chirwa (2014) showed that the cascade training strategy of teachers was disappointing because few teachers were chosen to receive training to train the others which was said not to have been transmitted properly. The poor preparation of teachers under the cascade approach was also undermined by the short duration of the courses. This explains why life skills education is poorly implemented in the sampled areas.

The current study further concurs with that of Komba and Nkumbi (2008) in Tanzania which indicated that teacher professional development was inadequately supported by the principals. At all levels (national, district, ward and school levels), teacher professional development was poorly coordinated and rarely budgeted for.

From the analysis, the results indicate that the professional development courses offered to the LSE teachers were not effective because cascade method used was selective, gave very short time and therefore did not address teachers training needs.

This is in contrast to transformative theory grounded in this study which requires principals to go an extra mile to develop and equip, empower and mentor their teachers through professional development. Moreover, application of intellectual stimulation as one of the transformative theory characteristics requires principals to harness a climate which encourages creativity and innovation in teaching of Life Skills Education. This may be achieved through continuous teacher professional development programmes facilitated by the principals.

A. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

Application of transformative leadership characteristics if applied appropriately contributes to effective implementation of Life Skills Education. Principals applying intellectual stimulation characteristics of transformative leadership inspire teachers be innovative and creative through facilitation of teacher development programmes. Consequently, this enables teachers to use participatory methodology during classroom instruction of Life Skills Education which help learners to acquire life skills. If the teachers are not adequately trained they may not assist learners and eventually this would imply that learners are inadequately prepared to deal with demands of every day's psychosocial challenges. This explains why some public secondary school students in Nairobi County have resorted to risky behaviors such as drug abuse, riots, violence, and school drop-out among others.

Furthermore, Life Skills Education was not part of the initial training during teacher training programmes. Therefore majority of teachers were not conversant with life skills teaching methodology which required a participatory approach. Principals and teachers were in dire needs for in-service training. The cascade method applied to in-service teachers was inefficient and therefore the need to expose teachers to different professional development programmes related to Life Skills Education. If these bottlenecks are not taken care of, the teaching of Life Skills wonderful objectives will not be realized and as such students graduating from secondary schools will not have acquired competencies required for quality living in the society resulting possibly to social misfits.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions made in the previous sections, the researchers make the following recommendations to different stakeholders.

- ✓ The Ministry of Education should: Come up with a policy to have a pre-service training on Life Skills Education
- ✓ Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development should: Plan for in-service training and sensitization workshops for all Principals and Teachers already in the field.
- ✓ Principals should: Ensure they carry out their mandate of ensuring facilitation of professional development programs to teachers and Monitor the appropriate use of time allocated to teach Life Skills lesson.
- ✓ Teachers should: Teach Life Skills as an obligation utilizing the time allocated accordingly.

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