

## **Appropriateness of Teaching and Learning Strategies Adopted By Teachers in the Implementation of Life Skills Curriculum in Public Secondary Schools in Baringo Central Sub-County, Kenya**

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**Abstract:** *Although the inclusion of Life Skills Curriculum (LSC) in the school curriculum has globally received acceptance, effective implementation of this curriculum is still faced with challenges. The objective that guided the study was to determine the appropriateness of the teaching and learning strategies adopted by teachers in the implementation of Life Skills curriculum in public secondary schools in Baringo Central sub-county, Kenya. Descriptive survey research design was used in the study. The study targeted 37 public secondary schools. The target population of the study was 296 teachers and 1480 students, while the sample size was 148 students and 30 teachers. Stratified sampling was used to sample four schools while students were sampled using simple random sampling. Teachers were picked by census method. Findings from the study revealed that teachers lacked awareness of the appropriate or recommended teaching strategies in LSC. The study recommends that teachers should be inducted on the appropriate teaching and learning strategies in Life Skills for effective implementation of Life Skills Curriculum. In addition, the Ministry of Education should come up with a comprehensive and continuous in-service training programme for all teachers of Life Skills and principals to build their capacity to effectively implement it.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects (Badugela, 2012). Countries in many parts of the world have had different reasons for introducing Life Skills curriculum in their education system. The United Kingdom set up an important Life Skills initiative to contribute to child abuse prevention. In United States of America, numerous Life Skills programmes were began for the prevention of substance abuse and violence (UNICEF, 2006). Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) was introduced in Pakistan in 2004 to provide young people with knowledge related to sexual and reproductive health issues (Svanemyr, Baig, & Chandra-Mouli, 2015). On the other hand, the Ministry of Education in Malawi introduced a life skills education programme with the intention to empower children with appropriate information and skills to deal with social and health problems affecting the nation, including the fight against HIV infections (Chirwa & Naidoo, 2014). It can be observed that life skills issues have become an initiative in many parts of the world and that LSC has been viewed as a means of empowering the youth to deal with social challenges facing them in society. There are several views regarding the introduction of Life skills curriculum (LSC) in schools. Life skills enable the individual to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life, develop cognitive skills like problem solving, decision making, creative and critical thinking, and finally attain behavior modification (Suresh & Subramoniam, 2015).

Although the inclusion of LSC in the school curriculum has globally received acceptance, effective implementation of this curriculum is still faced with challenges. This is summed up by Global Evaluation Report (2012), which established that implementation of LSC is not uniform and that evidence from schools suggests that LSC has a tendency to be squeezed out of the curriculum (Global Evaluation Report, 2012). Recent studies conducted in Kenya have highlighted the fact that the implementation of LSC is facing some impediments. Among the impediments cited by some of these recent studies are institutionally based. The major impediment is the inadequate time allocated to the teaching of LSC which has compromised on the content coverage (Kawira, 2012).

Despite the fact that LSC has been rolled out in the secondary school curriculum in Kenya since 2003, it appears like it has had impediments in its implementation and hence has failed to some extent to meet the intended objective of imparting life skills on the youth. In 2016 in Baringo Central sub –county, there were increased cases of student unrests which even involved arson in some schools. This is an indication that LSC is

not being implemented effectively. It is against this backdrop that this study was conducted to determine the appropriateness of the teaching and learning strategies adopted by teachers in the implementation of Life Skills curriculum in public secondary schools in Baringo Central sub-county, Kenya.

**Objective of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objective:

1. To determine the appropriateness of the teaching and learning strategies adopted by teachers in the implementation of Life Skills curriculum in public secondary schools in Baringo Central sub-county, Kenya.

**II. Material And Methods**

In this study, descriptive survey research design was employed. Survey is a method that describes or explains an event in its natural status that is, real situation on the ground. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston (2013) opined that by using the descriptive method the researcher will be able to observe a large mass of target population and make required conclusions about the variables. The study was conducted in Baringo Central sub-county. It is one of the sub- counties of Baringo County, which is located in the former Rift Valley province. The research was conducted in public secondary schools targeting 296 teachers and 1480 students within Baringo Central sub-county. Additionally, Kabarnet and Salawa divisions were purposively sampled. Stratified sampling was used to sample four schools according to their various categories. Students were sampled using simple random sampling. Moreover, teachers were picked by census method. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a sample size of between 10% and 30 % is a good representation of the population. In this study, 10% of the population was used providing a sample size of 148 students and 30 teachers. This study employed two different questionnaires to collect primary data. One questionnaire was designed to be used to gather information from the teachers while the second one was prepared for the students. The questionnaires were designed based on five point Likert scale which were: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D); Neutral (N); Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA),

The Research instruments were validated by experts in the department of curriculum studies of Kabarak University, Kenya. Equally Split-Half reliability method was used to test reliability of research instruments. The overall Guttman Split-Half Coefficient for teachers’ questionnaire was 0.86 while that of students was 0.98.This indicated that the instruments had internal consistency hence reliable. During data collection procedure, the researcher obtained a letter from the Institute of Post Graduate Studies of Kabarak University which was used to seek permission from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to conduct the research. A similar permit was sought from Baringo Central Sub-county education office to be able to visit the schools. Upon visiting the schools, the researcher asked for permission from the respective principals to administer the questionnaires to the teachers and students. A total of 178 questionnaires were issued to the respondents after which data was collected. The collected data was then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 and presented in form of tables.

**III. Result**

**Teachers’ perspective of Teaching and Learning Strategies**

Analysis was conducted to determine teaching and learning strategies adopted by teachers of life skills curriculum. Results are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Teaching and learning strategies adopted by teachers**

Statement	SD (%)	D(%)	N(%)	A(%)	SA(%)	Total(%)
Teachers use Life Skills lessons to address student(s) misconduct in the school.	13.3	23.3	10.0	30.1	23.3	100
Resource persons are sometimes invited to facilitate Life Skills lessons	20.0	23.3	16.7	33.3	6.7	100
Group activities are often used in the teaching of Life Skills	13.3	6.7	13.3	60.0	6.7	100
Life Skills lessons are very lively and enjoyable.	10.1	43.3	20.0	3.3	23.3	100
Students are actively involved in various learning activities during life Skills lessons	16.7	53.3	13.3	16.7	0.0	100
Most teachers find it difficult to implement the recommended teaching and learning strategies for life Skills	0.0	16.7	16.7	56.6	10.0	100
Life Skills teachers are familiar with the recommended teaching and learning strategies for the subject.	26.7	33.3	13.3	6.7	20.0	100
Life Skills require teaching methods which are mainly learner centered.	13.3	60.1	13.3	13.3	0.0	100
The learning of life Skills has improved the way students interact with each other	16.6	6.7	10.0	60.0	6.7	100
Life Skills lessons have encouraged students to think critically about life issues	16.7	19.9	30.0	16.7	16.7	100

It was evident from the findings that 60 % of the teacher respondents, disagreed that Life skills teachers are familiar with the recommended teaching and learning strategies for life skills subject. Although 66.7% of the respondents agreed that group activities are often used in the teaching of life skills, 53.4 % of the teachers disagreed that Life Skills lessons are very lively and enjoyable. In addition, 70% of the teachers disagreed that Students are actively involved in various learning activities during life skills lessons. These findings imply that although the teachers acknowledge that group activities are often used to teach Life Skills, the subsequent findings casts doubt on how effective these group activities are. Findings further reveal that 53.4% of the teacher respondents affirmed that teachers use Life Skills lessons to address student(s) misconduct in the school. In addition, 66.6% of the respondents agreed that it is difficult to implement the recommended teaching and learning strategies for life Skills in class. A further 40% of teacher respondents agreed that they sometimes engage the assistance of resource persons to facilitate Life Skills lessons. It was evident from the findings that 66.7% of the teachers, reported that learning of Life Skills has improved the way students interact with each other. However, only 33.4% of the respondents asserted that Life Skills lessons have encouraged students to think critically about life issues.

**Teaching Strategies from Students’ Perspective**

Descriptive analysis was conducted to determine teaching strategies, instructional resources including supervision practices of life skills curriculum among student respondents. Table 2 represents the study findings

**Table 2: Teaching Strategies, Instructional Resources and Supervision of Life Skills Curriculum**

Statement	N	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Total (%)
I enjoy Life Skills lessons because we all interact and participate in different activities	142	38	13.4	12.7	13.4	22.5	100
The school provides us with enough text books for learning Life Skills.	142	43.7	9.2	16.8	15.5	14.8	100
Teachers use various learning resources to teach Life Skills in our school.	142	64.1	11.3	6.2	9.2	9.2	100
Our Life Skills teacher gives us various tasks on life skills	142	59.2	18.3	6.3	6.3	9.9	100
Our principal sometimes checks our note books for Life Skills subject.	142	72.5	14.9	4.2	4.2	4.2	100
Teachers teach a subject called Life Skills in our school	142	38	13.4	12.7	13.4	22.5	100
Time for Life Skills lesson is indicated in our class time table.	142	43.7	9.2	16.8	15.5	14.8	100
Life Skills lessons are often used by teachers for other purposes.	142	9.2	11.3	6.2	54.1	19.2	100
Lessons in Life Skills have helped me cope with challenges in life.	142	59.2	18.3	6.3	6.3	9.9	100

The findings in Table 2 indicate that only 35.9% of the students agreed that they enjoyed Life Skills lessons because they interacted and participated in different activities. This depicts that the teaching strategies adopted by the teachers are neither interactive nor participatory as recommended for LSC. A majority (75.4%) of the student respondents maintained that teachers did not use a variety of resources to teach life Skills in their schools. On the other hand, only 30.3% of the students agreed that the school provided them with enough text books for learning Life Skills which was disagreed by 52.9% of them. This implies that shortage of textbooks and use of a limited variety of resources for Life Skills are aspects bound to impede implementation of Life Skills Curriculum. It was realized from the findings that 77.5% of the student respondents disagreed that their Life Skills teachers gave them various tasks during life skills. This finding suggests that LSC may not be effectively implemented when teachers fail to actively involve learners. The findings further showed that 87.4% of the students disagreed that their principal sometimes checks their note books in Life Skills subject. In addition, it was observed that 51.4% of the students confirmed that they have never been taught Life Skills subject in their schools. This implied that this fraction of students has not had any lessons in Life Skills and it is possible that LSC has not been implemented in their school(s). This possibility is reinforced further by an additional 52.9% of the students who disagreed that time for Life Skills lesson is indicated in their class time table.

On the one hand, 73.3% of the students agreed that Life Skills lessons are often used by teachers for other purposes, implying that Life Skills lessons were not being used to teach Life Skills thus not attaining its intended purpose. In addition, 77.5% of the student respondents, disagreed that lessons in Life Skills have helped them cope with challenges in life, depicting that they hardly learnt much from those Life Skills lessons hence the little impact. Only 16.2% of the students indicated that they have benefited from LSC. This was a clear indication that LSC has not achieved its intended objective of equipping the youth with life skills to cope with daily living.

#### **IV. Discussion**

It was evident from the findings that 60 % of the teacher respondents, disagreed that Life skills teachers are familiar with the recommended teaching and learning strategies for life skills subject. This finding indicates that teachers lack exposure to the appropriate teaching strategies in LSC. This lack of exposure is further evidenced by over 73.4% of the respondents who disagreed that Life skills require teaching methods different from those used in other subjects. It can be deduced from the findings that teachers of Life Skills are not using the recommended teaching and learning strategies for the subject since they are not even aware about them, thus impeding the implementation of LSC. Although 66.7% of the respondents agreed that group activities are often used in the teaching of life skills, 53.4 % of the teachers disagreed that Life Skills lessons are very lively and enjoyable. In addition, 70% of the teachers disagreed that Students are actively involved in various learning activities during life skills lessons. These findings imply that although the teachers acknowledge that group activities are often used to teach Life Skills, the subsequent findings casts doubt on how effective these group activities are.

Parry and Nomikou (2014) assert that the most effective form of learning in Life Skills comprises six components which are; active, interactive, relevant, critical, collaborative and participative learning. United Nations Children's Fund (2010) emphasizes that LSC involves the use of interactive and participatory teaching and learning methods, experiential and activity-centered pedagogy. It cites class discussion, brainstorming, role play, games and simulations, case studies, debate and storytelling as some examples of these interactive learning activities. The scenario depicted of Life Skills lessons by the teachers, portrays use of inappropriate teaching and learning approaches in Life Skills thus impeding its implementation.

Findings further reveal that 53.4% of the teacher respondents affirmed that teachers use Life Skills lessons to address student(s) misconduct in the school. In addition, 66.6% of the respondents agreed that it is difficult to implement the recommended teaching and learning strategies for life Skills in class. A further 40% of teacher respondents agreed that they sometimes engage the assistance of resource persons to facilitate Life Skills lessons. These findings agree with a comparative analysis conducted on Life Skills education in Kenya which revealed that, the kind of teaching methods recommended for giving instruction in life skills is still foreign to many teachers in Kenya (USAID, 2010). As a result, teachers find it difficult to initiate participatory approach to life skills lessons as recommended by Kenya Institute of Education handbook.

It was evident from the findings that 66.7% of the teachers, reported that learning of Life Skills has improved the way students interact with each other. However, only 33.4% of the respondents asserted that Life Skills lessons have encouraged students to think critically about life issues. This second opinion may imply that the positive impact of LSC on student behavior could still be minimal. It is envisaged that an effectively implemented LSC should equip an individual with life skills required to cope with challenges of everyday living. On the contrary, when LSC implementation is impeded, this goal becomes difficult to attain.

The findings in Table 2 indicate that only 35.9% of the students agreed that they enjoyed Life Skills lessons because they interacted and participated in different activities. This depicts that the teaching strategies adopted by the teachers are neither interactive nor participatory as recommended for LSC. United Nations Children's Fund (2010) emphasizes that LSC involves the use of interactive and participatory teaching and learning methods, experiential and activity-centered pedagogy. A majority (75.4%) of the student respondents maintained that teachers did not use a variety of resources to teach life Skills in their schools. This could be because these resources are not available or that the teachers have not been inducted on how to use them in LSC. Kieff and Renee (2000) underscores the value of using of wide variety of instructional resources and notes that in order to promote effective teaching of any subject, these materials must be suitable, relevant, interesting and durable to benefit the learning process.

On the other hand, only 30.3% of the students agreed that the school provided them with enough text books for learning Life Skills which was disagreed by 52.9% of them. This implies that shortage of textbooks and use of a limited variety of resources for Life Skills are aspects bound to impede implementation of Life Skills Curriculum. In another study, Aboob (2015) expounds that instructional resources are important because they make the learning of life skills interesting, real, and enjoyable and create ease in understanding of abstract ideas.

It was realized from the findings that 77.5% of the student respondents disagreed that their Life Skills teachers gave them various tasks during life skills. This finding suggests that LSC may not be effectively implemented when teachers fail to actively involve learners. The findings further showed that 87.4% of the students disagreed that their principal sometimes checks their note books in Life Skills subject. This revelation suggests limited or no supervision of the LSC, an institutional shortcoming that may not guarantee effective implementation of LSC. This together with the above findings depict that LSC still faces impediments in its implementation. Nakpodia (2011) views supervision of instruction as directed towards maintaining and improving the teaching-learning process of the school and the instructional supervisor's role is that of supporting, assisting and sharing.

In addition, it was observed that 51.4% of the students confirmed that they have never been taught Life Skills subject in their schools. This implied that this fraction of students has not had any lessons in Life Skills and it is possible that LSC has not been implemented in their school(s). This possibility is reinforced further by an additional 52.9% of the students who disagreed that time for Life Skills lesson is indicated in their class time table. This is consistent with findings by Omiya (2015) who maintains that some schools did not teach Life Skills since most teachers only emphasized on examinable subjects and had no time for LSC.

On the one hand, 73.3% of the students agreed that Life Skills lessons are often used by teachers for other purposes, implying that Life Skills lessons were not being used to teach Life Skills thus not attaining its intended purpose. According to Kenya Institute of Education (2011), the purpose of LSC was to act as an intervention measure in responding to socio-cultural problems such as HIV and AIDS, drugs and substance abuse, school unrests among others. In addition, 77.5% of the student respondents, disagreed that lessons in Life Skills have helped them cope with challenges in life, depicting that they hardly learnt much from those Life Skills lessons hence the little impact. Only 16.2% of the students indicated that they have benefited from LSC. This was a clear indication that LSC has not achieved its intended objective of equipping the youth with life skills to cope with daily living. According to Suresh and Subramoniam (2015) life skills enable the individual to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life, develop cognitive skills like problem solving, decision making, creative and critical thinking, and finally attain behavior modification. Moreover, there is scarcity of instructional resources utilized as well as use of inappropriate teaching and learning strategies in the teaching of Life Skills.

## V. Conclusion

It can be concluded that teachers lack awareness of the appropriate or recommended teaching strategies in LSC hence are using inappropriate strategies to teach LSC. Teachers should be inducted on the appropriate teaching and learning strategies in Life Skills for effective implementation of Life Skills Curriculum.

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