

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION AND PERCEPTIONS ON ITS EFFECT ON DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KANGEMA DISTRICT, MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA.

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ABSTRACT

The study explored Life Skills Education and perceptions on its effect on discipline in Kangema sub-county, Murang'a County in Kenya. Descriptive survey design was used and a sample of 10 principals, 51 teachers and 101 form 1-4 students participated in this study. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected using two structured questionnaires and an interview. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. The study established that LSE curriculum was taught but its implementation was hindered by lack of teacher training, inadequate and unavailability of teaching and learning materials and use of inappropriate teaching methods by teachers. Teachers and principals perceived that LSE has effects on students' discipline. The study recommended that Curriculum supervision should be intensified to ensure effective LSE implementation.

Key words: Education, Life skills, Discipline, Perceptions, Implementation, survey, Muranga, Kenya

1. Introduction

Being a product of United Nations inter- agencies meeting held at WHO headquarters in Geneva in 6th and 7th April 1998, Life Skills Education was introduced with the intention to empower students with psychosocial competencies that would help them make informed decision, solve problems, think creatively and critically, communicate effectively build health relationships, empathize with those in need and manage their life in a healthy and productive manner including the fight against HIV and AIDs infections. It was a comprehensive behavior change approach that concentrated on the development of psychosocial skills needed for life. The course goes beyond providing information to the development of the whole individual.

Although extensive academic studies has explored factors that influence the introduction and implementation of life skills education (Abobo 2010, Adhiambo 2012, Mugambi 2011, Chamba, 2009). Much less research has investigated perceptions on effect life skills education implementation has on students' discipline. A close look in Kenya's secondary schools paints a gloomy picture. Six years after introduction of LSE component in our schools, the scenario is still the same. In most cases and in some cases it is worse than it was before the introduction of LSE (Ndonga, 2010). Difficulties in enforcing discipline has increased as students' progress up the learning ladder, with form four students reporting major problems related to drug, alcohol abuse and bullying.

Concerns over the runaway indiscipline and to a large extent due to students lacking of life skills to help them withstand peer pressure school children as young as 11 years are falling prey to drug abuse. In addition over 300 secondary schools went on strike in a span of three weeks in third term in 2012 in Kenya (Daily nation 14 2008, Star magazine 7 November, 2012).

2. Problem of Statement

Implementation of LSE strengthens teacher pupil relationship, leads to desirable behavior change and helps learners to develop values, attitudes, social skills and self-esteem. The learners appreciate the need for a peaceful co-existence and develop skills to deal with stress, negative emotions and every day's emerging issues and challenges. All these enhance students' academic performance and discipline. Despite the benefits derived from effective implementation of LSE, many schools are not implementing LSE as stipulated by the Ministry of Education. In addition; there seem to be challenges militating against its introduction and implementation in secondary schools. These challenges may hamper life skills education achieving the intended objectives, for example, students may not acquire skills required to maneuver the murky waters of teenage and adult life.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the study on life skills education implementation and perceptions on its effect on discipline in secondary schools in kangema district, Muranga county Kenya.

1. To establish how life skills education is taught in secondary schools.
2. To determine teachers' competencies in teaching LSE in secondary schools.
3. To find out the availability and adequacy of LSE teaching and learning resources in schools.
4. To determine perceptions on the effect of life skills education implementation on students' discipline.
5. To determine possible teaching strategies that can be put in place to enhance LSE

4. Methodology

Descriptive survey was used in conducting the study. The survey design was suitable because it seeks explanation for current phenomena through the use of systematic and controlled methods in data collection. The participants were 10 head teachers, 51 teachers of Life Skills and 101 form 1-4 students. Interview guide for the principals, questionnaires for teachers and students were used to provide the needed data. Data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

5. Results

The following results were obtained from the study;

5.1 Teaching of life skills education

The respondents were asked to state which forms were taught LSE in their schools. The responses varied as indicated in the table 1;

Table 1: Teaching Life Skills Education

Forms	Principals		Teachers		Students	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Form one	0	0	0	0	0	0
Form1-2	0	0	5	9.8	2	2
Form1-3	4	36.4	16	31.4	39	38.6
Form1-4	6	54.5	27	52.9	51	50.5
Not taught	2	18.2	6	11.8	9	8.9
Total	11	100	51	100	101	100

From the finding, over (50%) of the principals, teachers and students indicated that LSE was taught in form1-4 while over (30%) of the respondents indicated that LSE was taught from form one to form three. Although many of schools indicated that they were offering Life Skills subject, not all were offering it in all classes. Some of the schools were offering it in all the classes except form 4s who were expecting to write national examinations in that particular year. LSE being non examinable and not in the curriculum was probably perceived not important. These findings concurred with Chamba (2009) who observed that majority of the schools in Malawi were teaching LSE in form one to four. Most schools didn't teach form fours LSE since LSE was probably not examinable and the form fours needed more time to concentrate on 'important' subjects that were examinable.

5.1.1 Designs of Teaching Life Skills Education

The standalone is the recommended design to teach LSE, respondents were asked to indicate the design they used to teach LSE in their school. The following responses were given.

Table 2: Designs of teaching Life Skills Education

Designs	Principals	Teachers		Students			
		f	%	f	%	f	%
Separate		4	36.4	15	29.4	43	42.5
Integrated		-	-	5	9.8	2	2
Both separate integrated		6	54.5	26	50.9	51	50.5
Not taught		2	18.2	6	11.8	5	5
Total		11	100	51	100	101	100

From the findings, over (50%) of the principal, teachers and students indicated that LSE was taught both as integrated and separate subject. This was probably because some of the LSE topics cut across other subjects like biology and CRE. It was clear from the findings that most of the schools were implementing LSE in the wrong way therefore the LSE curriculum and its objectives were probably not delivered and achieved as intended. Chamba (2009) established that teaching Life Skills as a separate subject gave learners an opportunity to practice the intended curriculum and inculcated the skills in the right way. Table 3 presents Teachers' reasons why LSE is not taught in their schools.

5.1.2 Rationale for not Teaching Life Skills Education

Teachers were asked why some schools were not teaching LSE. They gave the reasons as follows.

Table 3: Rationale for not teaching Life Skills Education

Reasons	f	%
Heavy workloads	26	51.6
Lack of trained manpower	11	21.3
LSE not examinable	10	19.6
Teachers negative attitude	4	7.5
Total	51	100

From table 3, majority (51.6%) of the teachers indicated that LSE was not taught because teachers in those schools had heavy workloads while (21.7%) indicated that LSE was not taught because schools lacked trained teachers. This implies that there were many reasons and factors militating

against LSE implementation in secondary schools some of which were school, student and teacher based. These findings were in line with Njuguna (2013) who found that heavy workload and lack of in-service training for teachers among others were hindrances to LSE implementation in secondary schools in Kigumo district.

5.1.3 Preparation of Professional Documents

The researcher wished to find out whether the teachers prepared professional documents before teaching LSE. Professional documents are important as they indicate teachers' preparedness and planning.

Table 4: Preparation of Professional Documents

Documents	Prepared		Not Prepared	
	f	%	f	%
Lesson notes	23	45.1	28	54.9
Schemes of work	10	19.6	41	80.4
Lesson Plans	5	9.8	46	90.2
Records of work	13	25.5	38	74.5

The researcher was interested in finding out whether teachers prepared professional documents. Teachers were asked to provide information on the professional documents they prepared and those they didn't prepare. From the findings, above (70%) of the teachers never prepared schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work. For effective curriculum implementation, teachers should ensure that curriculum content is well planned in a scheme of work which should tally well with the lesson plans, record of works and the lesson notes. These findings agrees with Mugambi et al (2013) who established that majority of teachers in Kajiado county did not prepare schemes of work and Heads of departments had not checked on the schemes that had been prepared.

5.1.4 Departments LSE teachers belonged

Respondents were required to indicate which departments teachers who taught LSE belonged. Table 5 represents their responses.

Table 5: Departments where Life Skills Education Teachers Belonged

Departments	f	%
Arts	34	66.1
Technical	11	22
Sciences	6	11.9
Total	51	100

From table 5, many (66.1%) of the teachers who taught LSE were from departments that taught art subjects, (22%) were from technical department while(11.9%) were from the science department. Lack of competent teachers hindered implementation of LSE in secondary schools. The allocation to teach LSE in secondary school was done on the basis on the teacher's workload. Those with lighter workloads were given the role to teach LSE and PE irrespective whether they were competent or not. Teachers who taught humanities had the lightest workload and hence given the role to teach LSE. Findings from a study carried out by Adhiambo (2012) established that most teachers felt that LSE should be taught by the class teacher as they were in charge of all the matters affecting the class while others felt that the CRE teachers should be in charge of LSE as the philosophies of the two subjects were the same. Table 4.11 presents principals and teachers responses on their initial teachers training on LSE content and LSE methodology.

5.2 Teachers' Competence on Life Skills Education

The principals and the teachers were asked if the teachers were taught LSE content and methodology in their initial teacher training. The responses were as in table 6;

Table 6: Initial Training on Life Skills Education Content and Methodology

Areas of training	Principals				Teachers			
	Yes		NO		Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
LSE content	3	27.3	8	72.7	15	29.4	36	70.6
LSE methodology	2	18.2	9	81.8	16	31.4	35	68.6

From the Findings, majority (72.7%) and (70.6%) of the principals and of the teachers respectively indicated that teachers had never been trained on LSE content in their initial teachers' education training. Regarding LSE methodology (81.8%) and (68.6%) of principals and teachers respectively indicated that teachers were never trained on LSE methodology during their initial teachers' education. This could probably mean that student teachers were ill equipped to implement LSE curriculum in the schools they were to teach after college. The teacher education probably would need to be relooked at and LSE be made compulsory to all students taking education course. Woelk

et al (2010) established that Life Skills education can only succeed if teachers were exposed to pre- and in-service training on the use of modern participatory methods and experiential learning techniques. He also established that due to lack of training, most teachers’ teaching techniques, predominantly involved textbooks and a didactic approach and that, in most sub-Sahara countries, teachers had not received adequate training in participatory methods and were not familiar with LSE content.

5.2.1 Pre-Service LSE Topics

Teachers were asked to indicate the topics that they were taught in initial teachers’ education in college. Figure 1 shows their responses.

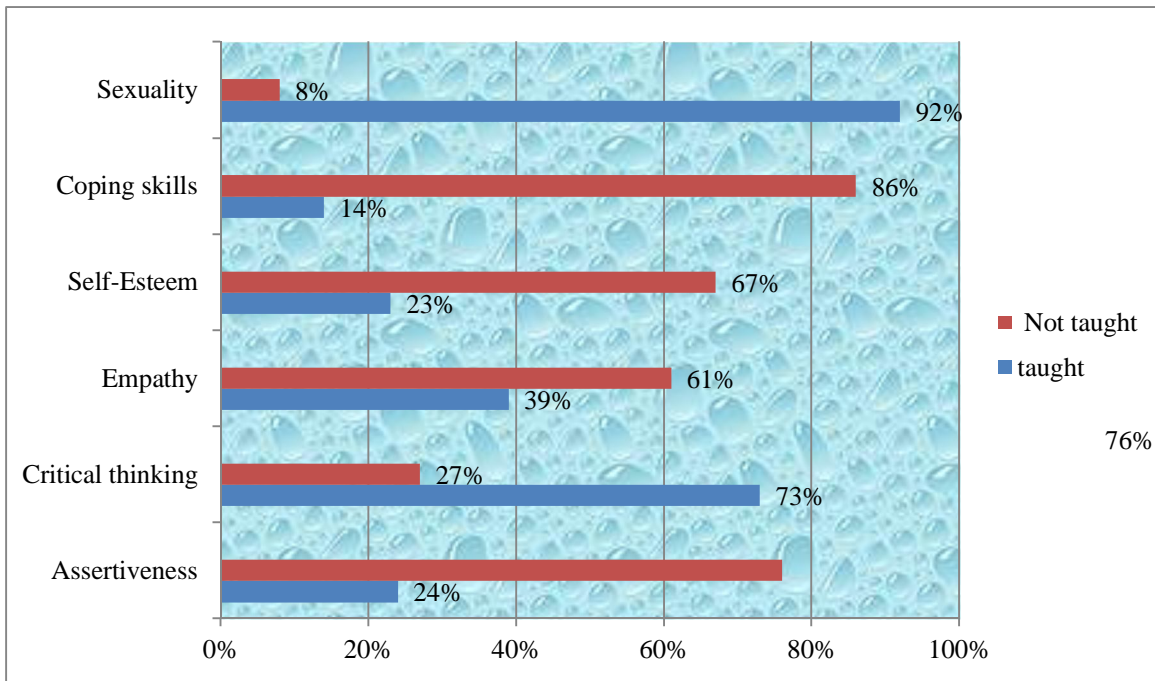


Figure 1: Topics on Initial Teachers’ Education to Enhance Teachers’ Competence

In order to establish the LSE topics that teachers covered when they were students in college, the researcher asked the teachers to indicate the LSE topics they were taught and the ones they were not taught. From (figure 4.3), majority (92%) and (73%) of teachers were taught sexuality and critical thinking respectively while in college, However, the least covered topics were coping skills (86%) and assertiveness (76%). Probably the reason why most teachers had no clue on LSE was because they have never interacted with any knowledge about LSE during their pre-service training. This jeopardized the implementation of LSE in secondary schools. The findings are in agreement with Adhiambo (2012) who observed that interpersonal relationship and empathy were rarely taught in secondary school as teachers knew little about these topics due to lack of training.

5.2.2 LSE in-Service Training for Teachers.

The researcher was interested in finding out whether teachers in charge of teaching LSE had received any in-service training. Teachers responded as indicated in figure 2;

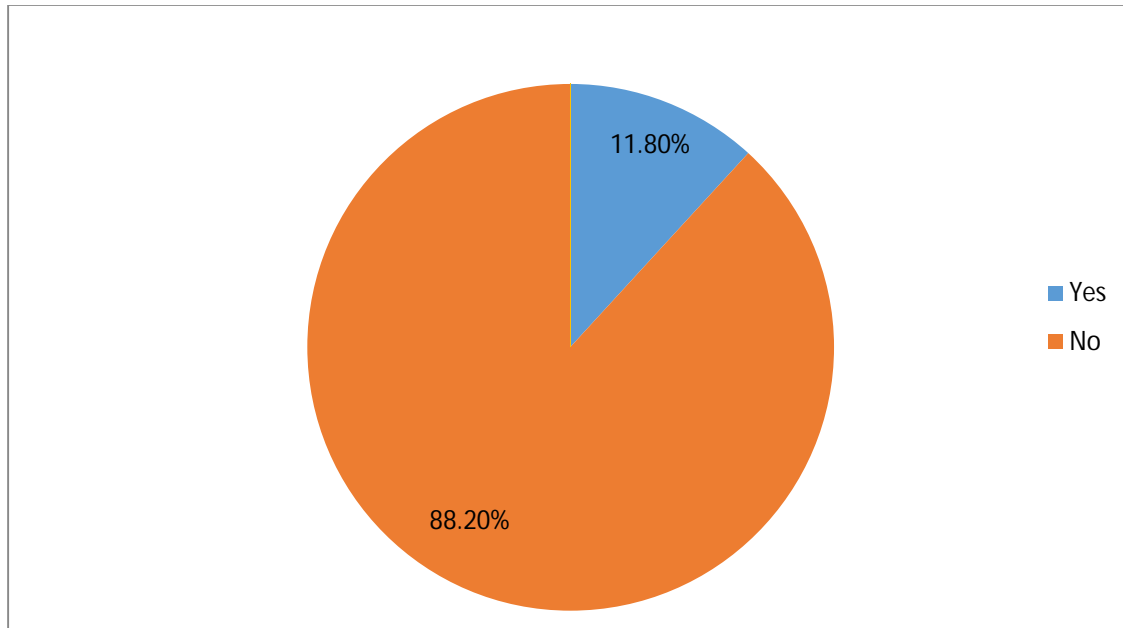


Figure 2: In-service Training in Life Skills Education for Teachers

From figure 2, majority (88.2%) of the teachers had never received any in-service training in life skills education while (11.8%) had attended an in-service training. The teachers having not received any in-service training shied off from teaching many LSE topics especially the sensitive ones such as ‘condom use’ and ‘menstrual cycle’ they were also unfamiliar with experimental learning and participatory teaching methods making implementation of LSE ineffective in secondary schools. Findings from Chendi (2010) established that head teachers had not received training on Life Skills, and many teachers lacked the confidence to handle sensitive topics and use of new participatory teaching approaches. Findings from UNESCO (2010) Evaluative report on LSE implementation in sub-Saharan countries concur with these findings as they established that most countries had adopted a two-pronged strategy involving in-service courses for teachers already in schools and pre-service training for trainee teachers. However, the teacher training process was seen as too slow in some countries hence making the implementation of LSE ineffective.

5.2.3 In-service Training Details

It was important for the researcher to find out the details of the LSE in-service training in terms of duration and providers as the information would be used later to make such training better. Table 7 presents the responses.

Table 7: In-service Training Details

Teaching LSE did the training help								
Yes		NO				Period attended	Duration	Providers
f	%	f	%	f	%			
6	11.8	6	100	0	0	April 2014	1 day	DEO kangema
3	5.9	3	100	0	0	August 2013	2 days	LSE promoters
42	82.3	-	never attended	never attended	never attended	never attended	never attended	- - -

Teachers were asked to provide information on training that they had attended. They were to state when, how long and who organized the in-service training that they had attended. From the findings, majority (82.3%) have never attended any LSE in-service training while (11.8%)had attended an in-service training conducted by the Kangema DEOs office and (5.9%) had attended a training conducted by LSE promoters. The two training took one day and two days respectively. All (100%) of the teachers who attended the trainings indicated that the trainings helped them to improve their competence in LSE. Chendi (2010) findings concur with these findings as he established that In-service training helps teachers to improve their competence and increases their confidence in handling LSE content.

5.3 Availability and Adequacy of LSE Teaching and Learning Materials

The principals were asked if Life Skills Education teaching and learning materials were available in their schools. The responses were as presented in the table 8.

Table 8: Availability of Life Skills Education Teaching& Learning Materials

Materials	Available		Not Available	
	F	%	F	%
Syllabus	21	41.2	30	58.8
Teachers guide	15	29.4	36	70.6
Text bks	9	17.6	42	82.4
Charts	11	21.6	40	78.4
DVD& video	16	31.4	35	68.6
R. persons	38	74.5	13	25.5
Church leaders	40	78.4	11	21.6

From the findings, Over(55%) of the principals indicated that LSE syllabus ,teachers guides, students’ textbooks, charts and DVDS & videos were not available in schools. This implies that most of the schools were not adequately equipped with teaching and learning materials hence undermining implementation of life skill education in school curriculum. The study findings agree

with Njuguna (2013) in a study on factors influencing implementation of LSE in Kigumo District which established that teachers' guide and audio/visual tapes were inadequate in schools. The students also reported that they were not provided with life skill textbooks. Abobo (2012) also found that most schools of the sampled schools in his study in Tran-Nzoia lacked adequate teaching and learning materials which included textbooks, teacher's guides, reference materials, charts and videos. This influenced LSE implementation negatively.

5.3.1 LSE Text Books to Students' Ratio

The researcher was interested to find out the LSE text book ratio to students, students were therefore asked to indicate the ratio. The responses were as indicated in figure 3

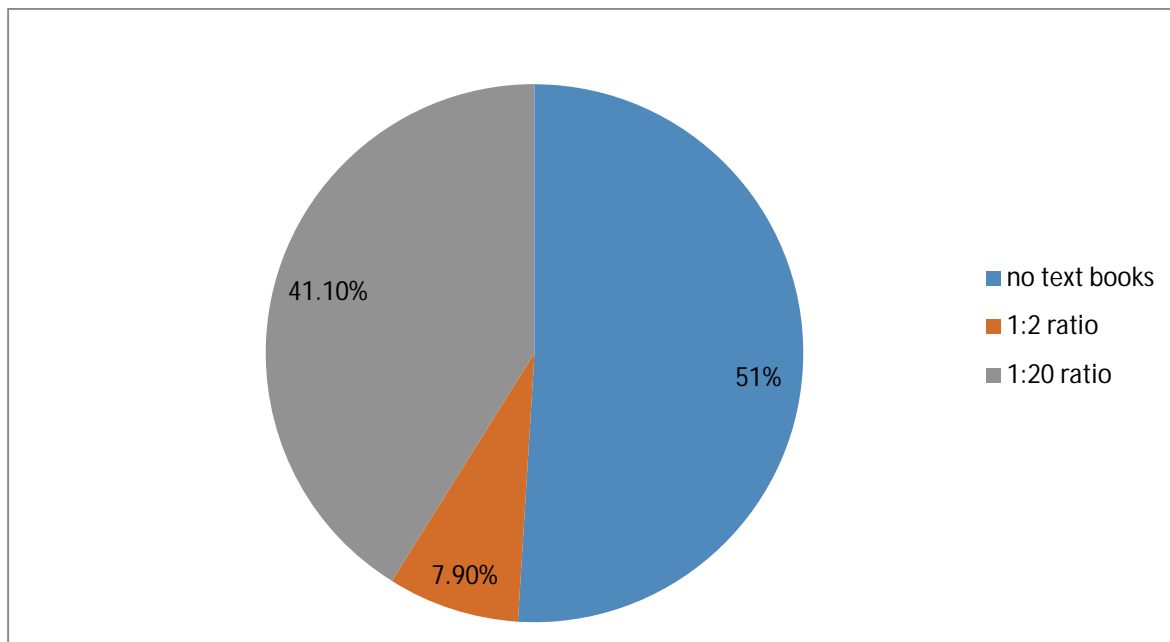


Figure 3 Life Skills Education text books students' ratio

From figure 3 shows that majority (51%) of the students had no single LSE text book while those that had (41.1%), the ratio was 1book shared among twenty students. In that case, it can be argued that the principals didn't consider LSE an important subject to spend money on due to its non-eliminability and that many schools faced budget constrains due to delayed funding from FSE kitty from the government. The findings concurred with those of Adhiambo (2012) in a study on implementation of LSE in Owendo Uriri Districts that found that majority of the principals indicated that textbooks used in teaching Life Skills Education were inadequate. She, however, found that majority of teachers used text books (which were very few) as their main teaching/learning materials in LSE.

5.4 Perceptions of Stakeholders on Effect of LSE Implementation on Students' Discipline

5.4 Indiscipline Challenges in Secondary Schools

Life skills education is intended to mitigate indiscipline in schools. The principals were asked to indicate the indiscipline challenges in their schools. The responses were presented in table 9

Table 9: Indiscipline Challenges in Secondary Schools

Category of schools	Boys		Girls		Mixed	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Drug abuse	28	27.7	5	4.9	68	67.4
Teenage pregnancy	0	0	19	18.8	82	81.1
Coupling	0	0	0	0	100	100
Lateness	17	16.8	15	14.8	69	68.2
Fighting	32	31.8	9	8.9	60	59.4
Insubordination	19	18.8	18	17.8	63	62
Dropping out	10	9.9	36	35.6	54	53.3
Sneaking	56	55.4	16	15.8	29	28.8
Bullying	55	56.4	17	16.8	29	28.7
Stealing	61	60.2	25	24.7	34	33.6
Homosexuality	50	55.4	0	0	45	44.6
Truancy	20	19.8	64	63.3	18	17.8
Lesbianism	0	0	62	61.2	49	48.5
Devil worship	10	9.9	60	60.1	31	30.0

The study sought to establish the common indiscipline challenges found in secondary schools. From the findings, over (50%) of the respondents indicated that drug abuse, coupling, teenage pregnancies, lateness, fighting, insubordination and dropping out of school were some of the indiscipline cases that were common in mixed secondary schools. From these findings, it can be argued that students in day schools were getting access to drugs as they had free time after school and during the weekend. Observably, the coupling witnessed in schools could have culminated to teenage pregnancies. The findings also revealed that above (55%) of the respondents indicated that stealing, sneaking, bullying and homosexuality were common indiscipline cases found in boys schools while above (60%) of the respondents indicated that Truancy, lesbianism and devil worship were commonly practiced in girl schools. These indiscipline cases could have been fuelled by parents who abduct their parental duties of guiding and counseling their children while the media

could have aggravated this moral decadence in schools as most of the youth had access to all types of media. The runaway indiscipline in the schools could also be attributed to ineffective and inefficient guidance and counseling in schools.

The findings of this study concurred with those of Wamue et al (2013) in a study on gender factors in implementation of LSE in secondary schools in Nairobi who found that gender relations at this stage of development often posed serious challenges to both boys and girls. This is a crucial stage where each child is trying to discover themselves as they transit to adult life. Such relational problems often develop during teenage and consequently, some students, in particular girls, become victims of teenage pregnancies. Boys on the other hand, often fall victims of drug and alcohol abuse. These observations concurs with Marloo (2010) who found that about ten thousand young women in Kenya give birth before the age of 20 hence teachers should be sensitized on how to implement LSE; this would help to in-put adaptive skills to the youth and prevent problems associated with teenage crisis.

5.3.1 Teachers Perceptions on Effects of Life Skills Education on Discipline

After establishing the discipline challenges in schools and how teachers try to resolve them, the researcher further sought to find out the perception of teachers on effects of LSE on students' discipline as showed in table 10.

Table 10: Teachers Perceptions on Effects of Life Skills Education on discipline

Effects of LSE on discipline	f	%
Reduced	42	82.4%
Eliminated	7	13.7
Remain the same	2	3.9
Total	51	100

In response to whether teaching LSE would reduce, be eliminated or had no effect on indiscipline, majority (83.3%) of the teachers were of the opinion that it would reduce indiscipline in schools. Life Skills Education equips learners with practical skills like coping skills, decision making skills and social skills among others that come in handy if confronted with adolescence experiences. These skills help them wade through the murky waters of teenage crisis and life difficulties. These findings concurred with Wamue et al (2013) who established that teaching of life skills education to young people leads to prevention of maladjustment and enhances the development of human potential.

5.3.2 Principals Perceptions on Effect of Life Skills Education Implementation on Students' discipline

Perception refers to the way one sees or thinks about something and ones idea of what something is like. Principals' perceptions on effects of LSE implementation on students' discipline was sought by the researcher. Table 4.19 presents the responses the principals gave.

Table 11: Principals' Perceptions on Effect of Life Skills Education Implementation on Students' discipline

Effect of LSE Implementation on discipline	F	%
Yes	7	63.6
No	4	36.4
Total	11	100

From table 11 Principals majority of the principals (63.4%) perceived that effective implementation of LSE had positive effect on students' discipline. While 36.4% were of a divergent opinion that implementation had no effect on students' discipline. This was probably because majority of the principals felt that LSE equips the learner with abilities which enables her/him develop adaptive and positive behavior to deal effectively with challenges and demand of everyday life. It also possibly means that schools that implemented LSE had less indiscipline issues. Findings from Wamue et al (2011) concurred with the above findings as they indicated that majority of girls and boys appeared to have gained and derived certain benefits from life skills education lessons. Among those benefits included: enhanced responsibility, relations with members of the opposite sex, fate of bad company, drugs and substance abuse and how to avoid them, and focus on the future. Those who had been imparted with LSE appeared more disciplined and more responsible.

5.4 Strategies to Enhance Life Skill Education Teaching

A strategy is a planned series of actions for achieving something; teachers were asked to indicate which other strategies could be employed to enhance effective teaching of LSE.

Table 12 Strategies to Enhance Life Skill Education Teaching

Other possible strategies	f	%
Sharing experiences	29	56.8
Simulations	7	13.2
Demonstration	5	10
Brain storming	3	6.5
News telling	2	4.5
Journaling	3	6.5
Concept mapping	2	4.5
Total	51	100

From the findings, majority (56.8%) felt that sharing of experiences as method of teaching could effectively enhance the teaching of LSE while (13.2%) thought that simulations could enhance implementation of LSE. For effective delivery of LSE content, teachers should vary and adopt various teaching methods and activities as these would stimulate learning and make teaching effective. Sharing of students' experiences, simulations and demonstration were some of the teaching methods used by teachers in Kangema District. Through lesson observation Mugambi et al (2013) established that brainstorming was very popular while stimulation and journaling were commonly used by teachers in Kajiado County. They further established that teachers were using the methods they were used to in their teaching subjects. Romizowaski (2009) also found that teachers based their selection of teaching methods on their personal experience due to lack of adequate teacher training on teaching strategies or lack of adequate knowledge on theories of learning as expounded in psychology of learning.

6 Conclusion and recommendation

6.1 Conclusion

Majority of the principals and teachers in this study perceived that life skills education has effect on discipline of secondary school students. However, implementation of life skills education was seriously hampered by teachers incompetence, unavailability and inadequacy of LSE learning and teaching materials and wrong use of teaching methods by teachers hence escalating indiscipline in secondary schools in kangema.

6.2 Recommendations

- i. At the policy level, Higher education institutions should consider incorporating LSE content and participatory teaching methods as part of pre-service teacher education.
- ii. MOEST and other education stakeholders should intensify in-service teachers training on life skills education. The training should include LSE content and participatory teaching methods and it should take a longer duration.
- iii. LSE teaching and learning materials were reported to be unavailable and inadequate in many schools; it is therefore recommended that schools administrations e.g. BOMs and school heads should allocate more monetary resources to procure LSE teaching and learning materials as most schools were ill-equipped.
- iv. Teachers' preparation and delivery of LSE curriculum was reported ineffective; it is therefore recommended that both external and internal curriculum supervision be intensified both by Qassos and the heads of institutions to ensure effective LSE implementation in all schools.
- v. Teachers who teach LSE should be allocated less workload to enable them prepare and deliver LSE curriculum effectively.

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