



ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE REGARDING CURRICULUM OF LIFE SKILLS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY EDUCATION AMONG TEACHERS IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

These papers examine secondary school teachers' knowledge of life skills curriculum for quality education in North-central Nigeria. This study identified area that the secondary schools teacher requires techniques in training for life skills that are in the curriculum. These include brain storming, storytelling, debates, discussion, role playing, buzz group, games and situation analysis. The population of the study consisted of 446 N.C.E and graduate teachers from the six states of North-central Nigeria. A sample size of 223 respondents was drawn from all the secondary school in the North-Central Nigeria, which represented 50% of the population using the proportionate sampling technique. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. A structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of knowledge regarding curriculum of life skills($r=0.89$) was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics was used and Data collected were analyzed with frequency and percentage. Finding from the result shows that Secondary School teachers in the North Central Nigeria are professional and qualified with knowledge regarding curriculum of life skills to develop quality education in secondary schools and NCE teachers are not qualified to teach in senior secondary school. Among the recommendations is that academic qualifications, and the development programme obtained by secondary school teacher should be used to assess knowledge about curriculum of life skills.

Keywords: Curriculum, Knowledge, Life skills, North Central Nigeria, Quality Education.

INTRODUCTION

In every educational process that involves teaching and learning in any environment, there is always a need for change in terms of philosophy of that educational training. There is need to be humanistic when emphasis are given to creative thinking, reasoning and personal growth of the individual, according to Achikasim and Shuaibu (2020) It is assumed that every individual is capable of thought and reason, a free will, and is capable of making choices and taking decisions. This can easily be achieved through assessment of that educational process. Assessment is the process of examining

carefully, thoroughly and as objectively as possible an individual, a group of products or programmes in order to ascertain strength and weakness, Denga, (2003) points out that educational assessment is a process which has to do with the measurement and judgment reached on the performance of individuals on certain activities, tasks or in certain examination which cumulates to the evaluation of course or programme. Ahmadi and Ajibola (2015) described assessment as the systematic collection, review and use of information for estimating worth, quality or effectiveness of a training programme for the purposes of improvement of a programme. Okwelle (2011) stated that educational assessment can serve a variety of purpose and the choice of assessment depends on how the assessment information will be used. The teacher in secondary school assesses the student's total learning experiences in terms of the progress made in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain by way of data collection. The collecting of data for educational assessment of learning objectives can be done through testing or non-testing techniques

In this study, emphasis will be placed on teachers' knowledge of life skills curriculum for quality education in North-Central Nigeria. To measure the strengths and weaknesses of teachers' knowledge of life skills curriculum, these involve the collection of data in order to pass valid judgment. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO (2015) explained that assessment is the systematic process of generating data about traits, performances, projects activities and others for purpose of making evaluative judgments

Curriculum, on general note is the knowledge or the process of planning, developing, building and designing what is to be taught, how is it taught, why it is taught, who is to teach and how to get likely outcomes after teaching. The major concern of this study hinges on who is to teach and how to get likely outcomes after teaching. Agada, Atama and Ali, (2019) described Curriculum as the comprehensive plan for an educational/training programme/course to offer new/improved manpower to fulfil the rising needs of a dynamic society. Yaduma, and Agada (2018) described Curriculum as the process of planning learning experiences intended to bring about certain changes in learners and the assessment of the extent to which these changes have taken place. According to UNESCO (2017) curriculum can be seen in four ways as follows

- i. Curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted,
- ii. Curriculum as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students.
- iii. Curriculum as process.
- iv. Curriculum as practical application.

Therefore, life skills needs assessment of knowledge regarding the Curriculum is to make it achieve its objective for the development of quality education

Life skills are behaviors that enable individuals to adapt and deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life. Subasree, Nair and Ranjan, (2010), described Life skills as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills from this perspective are essentially those activities which help to promote mental well-being and competence among young people as they face the realities of life. Nivedita and

Budh (2016) pointed out that Life skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Life skills education contributes to basic education, gender equality, democracy, good citizenship, child care and protection, quality and efficiency of the education system, the promotion of lifelong learning, quality of life and the promotion of peace. Nivedita and Budh (2016) saw Life skills as facilitators to strengthen the survival capacities of the individual by providing the individual with an orientation to basic education, major health issues, social and basic management skills for active community participation. Life skills essentially provides for:

- i. The promotion of healthy child and adolescent development
- ii. Prevention of key causes of child and adolescent death, disease and disability
- iii. Socialization and preparing young people for changing social situation.

World Health Organisation (WHO) (1993) points out ten core areas of Life Skills in the curriculum to include: self-awareness, empathy, creative thinking, creative thinking decision making, problem solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress, and coping with emotion.

Life skills education is a value added programme for young generation to understand self and be able to assess their abilities and areas of development. The aim is to provide students with various strategies to make healthy choice that contribute to a meaningful life. As a matter of fact life skills are objectives of holistic education. According to UNICEF (2014) Life skills education is a structured program that focuses on the needs and outcome based on participatory learning. This will increase positive and adaptive behavior of assisting individuals to develop and practice psychosocial skills, provides guidance for those who plan, manage, teach or work with this group of students in both formal and informal programs. It could be adapted and employed in different cultural contexts. According to Nivedita and Budh (2016) life skills education can be designed to be spread across the curriculum, be a separate subject or be in integration. They further point at the following teaching techniques to be included in the curriculum to enhance life skills of students: Brain Storming, Story Telling, Debates, Discussion, Role playing, Buzz Group, Games and Situation Analysis.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teachers in the secondary school are managers of classroom and workshop at this stage. This involves handling teaching aids, assessing and evaluating students' performance, applying various teaching methods, recognizing students' learning styles, meeting the needs of students in the classroom/workshop, and more importantly, imparting the necessary life skills. However, education today is unable to prepare the learner to fight frustration, anxiety and depression. Students' are pushed to do much more than customary to get the desired acceptance and acknowledgement from the family and society. There is a lot of stress on achievement and performance from the teachers and parents. Life skills education is essential for all children and especially for adolescents because young individuals

seem to be most vulnerable to behavior related health problems. Life skill education is an emerging area of scientific study. Therefore, using the curriculum which is in line with present knowledge regarding curriculum of life skills among secondary schools teacher, the study set to investigate the knowledge regarding curriculum of life skills among secondary schools teacher in north central states of Nigeria to enable development of quality education that can meet contemporary challenges.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to assess teachers' knowledge of life skills curriculum for quality education in North-Central Nigeria, Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Ascertain the academic qualifications of secondary schools teacher
- ii. Find out the level of experience of secondary schools teacher
- iii. Determine the development programmes for quality education for secondary schools teacher

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- i. What are the academic qualifications of Secondary Schools Teacher?
- ii. What are the levels of secondary schools teacher experience?
- iii. What are the capacity building programmes for secondary schools teachers?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. This is carried out in the North-Central Nigeria, which comprised the following States: Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Plateau, and Nasarawa States. The study was conducted in all the secondary school in the Six States of North-Central Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 446 teachers; A sample size of 109 respondents was drawn from all the secondary school which represent 50% of the population using proportionate sampling technique. Primary method of data collection was used for the study through structured and validated questionnaire. The questionnaire is made of three sections. Section A: has 6 items on the academic qualifications of Secondary Schools Teacher with regards to Life Skills. Section B: 5 items on Secondary Schools Teacher of levels of experience with regards to Life Skills and Section C: has 7 items on development and capacity building programmes for Secondary Schools Teacher with regards to Life Skills. The questionnaire is titled, Assessment of Knowledge Regarding Curriculum of Life Skills (AKRCLS). The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Aplha formula to correlate the response of 35 teachers that was part of the population but not part of the study sample. The reliability analysis yielded a reliability index of 0.89 which was considered sufficient for the study. Copies of the instrument (AKRCLS) were collected, analysed with descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage through the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0

RESULTS

The analysis of data in relation to each of the research questions are presented in Tables 1- 3

Research Question 1: What are the academic qualifications of Secondary Schools Teacher?

Table 1: Percentage and Frequency Scores of Secondary Schools teachers and their Academic Qualifications

S/NO	Academic Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Ph.D.	2	1.05
2.	M. Ed	13	5.07
3.	M.Sc/ M.A	8	2.50
4.	B.Sc./ B.A Ed	58	24.57
5.	N.C.E	119	55.61
6.	HND	23	10.75

Table 1 shows that 1.05% of the SS teachers possess (Ph.D.), 5.07% are those that possess M.Ed, 2.50% are those that possess M.Sc./ M.A, 24.57% are those that possess B.Sc./ B.A 55.61% those that possess Nigerian certificate of education (N.C.E) while 10.75%, are those that possess HND. Therefore NCE teacher that have the highest percentage are not qualified to teach at senior secondary class but constitute the foundation quality learning

Research Question 2: what are the levels of experience of Secondary Schools Teacher?

Table 2: Percentage and Frequency Scores of Secondary Schools Teacher and level of Experience

S/NO	Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
7.	1- 6 years	12	5.61
8.	6 – 12 years	23	10.75
9.	12 – 16 years	41	19.16
10.	16 – 22 years	76	35.51
11.	22 above	62	28.97

Table 2 reveals that 5.61% of SS teachers have 1–6 years' of experience, 6–12 years have experience 10.75%, 12–16 years have experience 19.16% SS teachers with experienced between 16–22 years have 35.51% while 28.97 is for SS teachers with experience between of 20 years and above. The SS teachers with highest experienced are the NCE teacher and are not qualified to teach at senior secondary but constitute the foundation quality learning

Research Question 3: What is the capacity building and development programmes for Secondary Schools Teacher with regards to Life Skills?

Table 3: Percentage and Frequency Scores of Secondary Schools Teacher Capacity building and development programmes

S/NO	Development programmes	Frequency	Percentage
12.	Catch – up programm	42	20.72
13.	Study leave	39	17.15
14.	Journal/Article/Books publication	36	16.15
15.	Industrial Training programme	33	18.07
15	conferences/seminars	32	14.95
16	Workshop/Capacity Building	17	7.95
17.	Online facilities	09	5.01

Table 3 indicated that 20.72% of the secondary school teachers have undergone Catch – up programm17.15% of the secondary school teachers have undergone study leave training 16.15% are involve in Journal/Article/Books publication, 18.02% go for industrial training programme14.95% of the secondary teachers have attended Workshop/Capacity building programme, 7.95% attend conferences/seminars and 5% of teachers have access to Online facilities. The SS teachers are more familiar with Catch – up program with the highest percentage

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1 reveals that only 1.05% of the Secondary Schools teachers possess Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), 5.07% are those that possess M. Ed, 2.50%.are those that possess M.Sc/ M.A, 24.57% are those that possess B.Sc./ B.A Ed,55.61% those that possess Nigerian Certificate of Education (N.C.E) while 10.75%, are those that possess HND. However, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) stated that the minimum qualification for entry into any teaching profession shall be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). This implies that secondary school teachers in secondary school in the North Central Nigeria are professional and qualified teachers to development quality education in Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria.

Table 2: Answered the question on the level of experience of Secondary School teachers, the table showed that over 70% of the Secondary School teachers with 6-20 years of experience have been engaged as teachers in the secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This shows great deal of acquired experience in teaching and application of life skills. This finding supports the advocacy of Akinsolu (2010) that experienced teachers need to be retained in schools if higher productivity is to be achieved, because learners achieve more from these experienced teachers. Teaching experience contribute significantly and positively to trainees performance in a chosen area of vocation or trades.

The findings in Table 3 show secondary school teachers with 20.72% have attended Catch – up program, in various courses. This is justified by the remark of Federal Ministry of Education (2017) in its 2030 vision, when she suggested that, apart from encouraging secondary school teachers to hold a minimum teaching qualification of NCE, a catch–up programme be put in place to support teachers’ on the way forward and towards teaching and learning of life skills. The study also found out that

secondary school teachers also go for workshops, seminars, conferences, courses, industrial training and access to online facility in order to update their knowledge and research into life skills in their respective areas. Consequently, if secondary school teachers are not provided with the intellectual and professional background, the realization of full knowledge regarding curriculum of life skills could be in vain.

CONCLUSION

Assessment of teachers' knowledge of life skills curriculum for quality education in North-Central Nigeria, helps training and learning towards life skills and addressing some aspect of humanity. These include self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking and decision making. Others include; problem solving, effective communication, Interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and coping with emotion so as to have a better life and living of the learners. Life skill education lays the foundation for learning skills which enhance self-direction of the learner practical ways of empowering youth to build their lives and their dreams. It is considered as better direction of holding the individual and learner through the critical stages in their life, also helping learners to tap their potential to the fullest. The present system of education can open up and make life skills education a part of its mainstream curriculum. This would enable the society to build up learner and individuals who would believe in themselves, become efficient leaders and administrators, and able to understand their potentials and achieve them. Life skill education will also provide positive effect on the teaching activity on learner who participates in the training. Again Assessment of teachers' knowledge of life skills curriculum for quality education in North-Central Nigeria in terms of academic qualifications, years of experience, the capacity building and development programme is a function of the quality of training for Teachers and for development of quality education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- I. Secondary school teacher should be selected in terms of knowledge regarding curriculum of life skills for training.
- ii. Academic qualifications, and the development programme obtained by secondary school teacher should be used to assess knowledge about curriculum of life skills.
- iii. Teachers with longer years' of experience should be engaged and retained to train other teachers on knowledge regarding curriculum of life skills

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