

Life Skills Education; Investigating its Relationship with Teenage Pregnancy in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy remains a persistent global crisis that profoundly affects the socio-economic wellbeing of nations, citizens and families. It contributes to school dropout rates, lower academic achievements, early marriages, and decreased school attendance for female learners. The aim of the research was to investigate the relationship between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County. This article is an extract of a study done in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The reviewed Literature was based on the research aims whereas the research was anchored on social learning theory postulated by Albert Bandura. The research utilized a descriptive survey research design. The research target population was 360 principals and 360 Heads of Department (HoDs) Guidance and Counseling (G&C). The study gathered data from a sample of 189 schools comprising Boys only, Girls only and mixed schools. The participants of the study, who were proportionately sampled, included; principals and HODs G&C. Data were collected using questionnaires and document analysis. The Collected data was analyzed using SPSS software version 25. Descriptive analysis was done using frequencies, measures of central tendency and dispersion particularly the mean and standard deviation. Hypotheses were tested using Pearson's' correlation coefficient at the .05 level of significance. The study results revealed that teenage pregnancy was prevalent in Machakos County with an average of 173 cases recorded annually. Each school in the county also recorded at least 2 cases of teenage pregnancy yearly. The research findings revealed that there was also a positive and significant relationship between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County ($r_p = .575$ & $r_h = 0.414$; $p \leq .01$). The study suggests that KICD should review the Life Skill Education syllabus to include content on sex education. In addition, the MOE should include LSE in teacher education as a learning area or infuse LSE in a specific subject combination so that the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) posts teachers to teach LSE specifically and make it compulsory and examinable.

Key Words: Life Skills Education, teenage pregnancy, public secondary schools

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Globally, education has been considered as a human right and plays a pivotal role in fostering economic growth and development across nations. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically goal 4 requires nations of the world to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong opportunities for all (United Nations Development Programmes(UNDP), 2015). However, this has not been

the case because of issues like adolescent pregnancy that precisely contribute to girls' failure to complete schooling (Muganda-Onyando & Omondi, 2008) even though the main aims of most school system is to ensure that students successfully complete their education within the designated timeline (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2008). It's estimated that about 16 million young girls give birth yearly, which accounts to 11% of all births globally where average teen birth rate in middle income countries is two times higher than high-income countries and five times higher in low income countries (World Health Organization(WHO) (2018). In relation to these statistics, it is apparent that teenage pregnancy is an area of concern in high, middle and low-income countries, Kenya included, and this therefore creates the need for urgent action to come up with appropriate measures to curb the problem, which formed the basis for this study.

Teenage pregnancy remains a persistent global crisis that profoundly impacts the socio-economic wellbeing of nations, citizens and families since it contributes to high dropout rates, lower academic achievements, early marriages and decreased school attendance for female learners (Molisiwa & Moswela, 2012). Additionally, teenage pregnancy among schooling girls may lead to sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, increased mortality rates as well as effecting the school enrollment (Amadi, 2019). These undesirable impacts have forced nations of the world to adopt different policy initiatives and intervention measures to curb the vice and the prevailing consequences.

Curbing of teenage pregnancy amongst schooling teenagers requires a holistic approach. Therefore, stakeholders in secondary schools can curb the vice through parental socio-economic support, school guidance and counseling programs, principals' involvement of parents in students discipline and teenage pregnancy and Life Skill Education (LSE). However, this study has focused on the relationship between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy.

Life Skills Education (LSE) aims at providing people with proper information on risk taking behaviors and developing skills such as effective decision-making, assertiveness, self-esteem, negotiation skills, self-awareness as well as problem solving skills (UNICEF, 2015). In South Africa, Adewumi and Adendorff (2014), asserts that, sexuality education provided in the Life Orientation (LO) programmes helps in reducing incidents of sexual abuse. This is in line with Opio-Ikuya (2013) whose findings show that LO helps learners to resist peer pressure or negative risk behaviors. In Kenya, a study by Kiragu (2016) shows that LSE curriculum has not been implemented uniformly in secondary schools because teachers are insufficiently trained while a substantial number of them have undesirable attitude towards the subject. This finding could explain the reason why there are high numbers of teenage pregnancy in Kenyan secondary schools, high school dropout rates and poor academic performance among girls. This study aimed at investigating relationship between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy crisis in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

A. Statement of the Problem.

The government contemplates that once learners join school; they study the whole course and complete the level. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2014) show that 47% of teenage girls in Kenya are already sexually active before the age of 18 years, and that about 13000 teen girls drop out from school annually due to pregnancies. Statistics at Machakos County Education Office indicate that teenage pregnancy has taken an upward trend where 44 secondary school teenage girls became pregnant with 21 of them taking national examinations when pregnant while 4 girls delivered while writing their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) and 19 girls dropped from school in 2016 (Machakos County Education office, 2020). Further, the statistics indicate that, in 2017, 113 secondary school girls became pregnant while in 2018, 147 girls in secondary schools in the county became pregnant. On the same note in 2019, the number of secondary school girls who became pregnant was 151. The reasons for the upward trend over the years are unknown. Therefore, the study was conceived on this premise with a view of investigating the teenage

pregnancy crisis, which if not checked, will compromise the strides made in achieving gender equity and equality in education in Kenya.

Kenya has adopted several policy intervention procedures to curb teenage pregnancy like; the Return to School policy (1994) which states that expectant girls should be accepted to be in school and be permitted to resume schooling after delivery. Similarly, the Adolescent Reproductive Health policy (2003) enacted to improve the reproductive health, safety and quality of life of Kenyan adolescents and youth. Other initiatives include; stringent measures against those found guilty of defiling minors leading to unwanted pregnancies (Sexual Offence Act, 2006). Despite these measures, teen pregnancies are still rampant in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya hence, the need for this research.

B. Study Objective

The study objective was to investigate the relationship between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

C. Study Null Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant relationship between Life Skills Education and Teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Life Skills Education and Teenage Pregnancy

Kenya Institute of Education (2008) describes Life Skills Education (LSE) as the skills for adaptive and constructive conduct, which empowers persons to work meritoriously on the desires and encounters of daily life. On the same note, Langi (2013) defines LSE programme as a sequence of self-enhancement periods, entailing of basic abilities for individual and communal growth which will support teenagers in handling the trials they encounter. Life skills are also defined as experiences that can empower the adolescent to deal with problems and manage their life in an healthy and fruitful way (Nasheeda, 2008).

Botvin, Griffin, Paul, and Macaulay (2003), did a study in the United States of America to examine the usefulness of Life Skills prevention program in inhibiting tobacco and alcohol use among elementary school students in grades three through six. The study targeted elementary school students in grades 3-6 and a sample of 664 respondents. The research found that life skills based programmes reduce alcohol and tobacco use as well as drug and substance abuse. This therefore implies that, LSE aids in addressing teenage pregnancy in schools. The current study targeted principals, HoDs G&C, PA chairpersons and students, and used a sample size of 378 respondents to explore how LSE is an intervention measure in curbing teenage pregnancy in Machakos County, Kenya public secondary schools.

Bardhan (2016) conducted a study in India to examine LSE as a strategy for managing adolescent risk behavior and found that, constant Life Skill teaching alongside with organized counseling assisted in nurturing helpful changes among the teenagers with risky behaviors. The study used a case study design. A study by Prajapati, Sharma, and Sharma (2017), on significance of LSE found that imparting LSE to students can be useful as it deals with the desires of teenagers, assists in inspiring, offering useful cognitive, emotional, social and self-management abilities. This research used a descriptive survey design to explore the insights on the relationship between LSE and curbing of teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. .

Kalanda (2010) did a research in Malawi on Life Skills (LS) and Reproductive Health Education (SRH) in

changing behavior in students and teachers and found that LS and SRH skills had helped in changing behavior in pupils and students and there was reduced withdrawal from school on grounds of pregnancy. Further, the study found out that LS and SRH had improved decision-making and problem solving among pupils and students and addressed immoral behaviors. A sample of 285 respondents participated in the study. The sample for this study was 378 participants. The study aimed at establishing how LSE can be used as an intervention measure in curbing teenage pregnancy among school going girls in schools in Machakos County.

Otieno and Role (2015) did a study to explore the implication of LSE on character development amongst primary school children in Kenya. The study used a descriptive survey design. Questionnaires, interviews and focused group discussions were used as information gathering tools. The results of the research show that, life skills assists pupils to cultivate various abilities that help them to cope with challenges of contemporary living. Further, the research discovered that there was a major relationship between teaching of life skills and character improvement. The study did not provide literature on how LSE can be an intervention measure for curbing teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools thus a research gap, which the current study purposed to address.

In Kenya, Ndonga (2010), researched on the restraints facing acquisition of life skills to curb risk behavior among public secondary school learners in Thika Municipality and revealed that students were involved in risk behaviors comprising of drug abuse, early sex, bullying, among others regardless of the efforts to impart life skills to students in schools. The study further revealed that learners, instructors and head masters affirmed that schools did not have the right instructional and learning resources and that, teachers did not have adequate training in life skills. A study by Mune (2017), on implications of LSE curriculum on peer influences related behavior in Kirinyaga County found that students were engaged in peer related behavior in spite of the efforts to offer LSE to students in schools. As a result, teachers held that, there was need for a review of the content to make LSE more effective. The sample for the study was 151 participants and was anchored on Bandura social learning theory. The sample for this research was 378 respondents and it was anchored on the social learning theory to establish whether LSE content is adequate to help in curbing teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

B. Study Theory

The social learning theory promulgated by Albert Bandura in 1966 guided the study. The theory postulates that children learn and behave through the influence of both formal instructions that is in what manner parents, teachers and other authorities and role models behave and observation of how their peers and grown-ups behave. Further, the theory posit that, reinforcement from others influences behavior. By being reinforced for some behavior and, or perhaps even punished by other people, a child or students learns socially approved behaviors (Bandura, 1977). According to the theory, learners learn to conduct themselves, through social interaction and observation rather than verbal instruction. Consequently, peer counselors, parents, and teacher counselors are able to encourage good behavior while discouraging undesirable habits among students. Whether it is the parent, the counselor and the teacher counselor, one has to behave like a role model to the student in each setting.

Similarly, Bandura social learning theory emphasizes that students learn life skills through means of instruction, practice and response rather than just observation. In a school situation, social learning theory contends that teachers teaching life skills need to create a proper atmosphere by which students learn positive manners through role modeling, mentoring, observation and social interaction. Therefore, teachers' reinforcement is therefore important in G&C as well as learning or teaching Life Skills and shaping of student's behavior.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive correlation research design, to examine the relationship between Life Skills Education and the curbing of teenage pregnancies in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The target population comprised of 360 Principals, 360 Guidance and Counselling (G&C) Heads of Department (HODs. Machakos County has 360 public secondary schools. The sample size was 189 schools drawn from the respective schools which were sampled using the (Yamane, 1967) formula.

From each school sampled, the sampling procedure involved a survey of 189 principals and 189 Heads of guidance and counselling in each school. Thereafter proportional stratification was used to group the respondents according to strata consisting of boys only, girls only and mixed/coeducational schools. The total sample was subsequently 378: 189 principals and 189 Heads of G&C. Both qualitative data and quantitative data was collected. Qualitative data was structured into themes and reported in stories. Quantitative data in the instruments was examined using percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation.

STUDY RESULTS

In this study, the researcher distributed a total of 189 questionnaires to principals and 189 questionnaires to HODs in charge of Guidance and Counselling according to the proportional representation of schools in the three categories that is, Boys, Girls and Mixed schools. In the final analysis however, 142 and 143 questionnaires were returned from both the principals and HoDs Guidance and Counselling respectively. This represented respective response rates of 75.13% and 75.66% from the principals and HODS.

A. The Teenage Pregnancy Crisis in Machakos County

One of the variables of this research was about the teenage pregnancy crisis in Machakos County. Before delving deeper into the analysis of responses from the respondents to determine the relationship between the two variables of the study, this study sought to ascertain on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the schools in the study area. In this respect, the research desired to ascertain if there were any cases of teenage pregnancy in the schools and the respective trends within a period of five years from 2018 to 2022. Analysis of this variable based on responses from the respondents are presented in section A level-1

A level -1. Cases of Teenage Pregnancy

The question on the occurrence of teen pregnancy cases in schools was posed to all the participants who were asked to indicate if there were any cases of teenage pregnancy reported in their schools. Table I displays the replies in view of the question in which the principals and HoDs were to answer either by a YES or NO type of response.

TABLE I: Existence of teenage pregnancy in schools

Variable	Value	PRINCIPALS		HODS	
		Frequency	percent	Frequency	Percent
Are there cases of teenage pregnancy in your school?	YES	133	93.7	133	93.0
	NO	9	6.3	10	7.0
	Total	142	100.0	143	100.0

As can be observed from Table I over 94 percent of the school managers and about 93 percent of the HoDs affirmed that there were cases of teenage pregnancy reported in their schools. It is worth noting however, that these cases were not reported in boys’ schools. The cases were reported largely from the girls and mixed schools with an exception of one girls’ school which the HoDs reported none.

Having established that there were instances of teenage pregnancy reported in the area of research, further, the research delved to determine by way of trends, the average number of teenage pregnancies recorded. Table II shows the trend analysis results of teenage pregnancies reported by principals and HoDs over a 5-year period

TABLE II: Trend analysis of the cases of teenage pregnancies for the period 2018-2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Average per year
Principals (N= 133)	2.98	2.27	2.90	1.81	1.71	2.39
HODS (N= 134)	2.91	2.76	2.50	1.96	1.81	2.35

It is observable from Table II, that the average number of cases reported in 2018 were 2.98 followed by 2.90 in 2020 and the lowest reported cases were in 2022 with an average of 1.71 as per the principals. Conversely, the uppermost number of teenage pregnancies reported according to HoDs was in 2018 with an average of 2.91 followed by an average of 2.76 recorded in 2019 and lastly an average of 1.81 recorded in 2022

B. Relationship Between Life Skill Education Curriculum and Teenage Pregnancy

The objective of the research desired to establish the relationship between Life Skills Education (LSE) and the curbing of teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County. First, the study sought to find out whether the schools were offering LSE and if so the number of lessons offered per week. The outcomes in consideration of these findings are displayed in Table III.

TABLE III: life skill education curriculum

		PRINCIPALS		HODS	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Does your school offer Life Skills Education?	YES	142	100.0	142	99.3
	NO			1	.7
	Total	142	100.0	143	100.0
If Yes how many lessons per week		1.0		1.0	

As can be seen from Table III, all the principals confirmed that their schools do offer Life Skill Education in their schools and they were offering a minimum of one lesson per week on Life Skills Education. On the other hand, the 99 percent of the HODs said that they offer Life Skill Education curriculum in their schools with an exception of one who said that LSE is not offered in their school. According to the HODs, LSE is allocated a minimum of 1 lesson per week.

C. Principals’ Views of Life Skills Education and Teenage Pregnancy

Analysis of the responses in relation to the views of principals regarding the relationship of Life Skill Education and teenage pregnancy is presented in Table IV.

TABLE IV: principals view of life skills education and teenage pregnancy

	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
LSE curriculum has sufficient content to equip learners with knowledge on early pregnancies	9.9	66.9	6.3	11.3	5.6	2.36	.999
LSE offers effective decision-making skills that helps in curbing teenage pregnancy among schooling teenagers	.7	2.8	4.2	53.5	38.7	4.27	.733
Through LSE, Learners learn assertive skills which help in curbing teenage pregnancy	.7	2.8	2.1	80.3	14.1	4.04	.582
LSE equips girls with Self-esteem skills thus helping in curbing teenage pregnancy in teen girls		.7	3.5	47.9	47.9	4.43	.601
LSE equips girls with Negotiation skills that enables them negotiate on safer sex compared to those lacking the skills thus reducing teenage pregnancies	.7	4.2	2.1	62.0	31.0	4.18	.730
Through LSE, Girls are equipped with Self-awareness skills and less likely to be lured to early sexual activities thus reducing teenage pregnancy		2.8	2.8	43.0	51.4	4.45	.659
Overall						3.95	.468

As it is noticeable from Table IV, a greater part (77%) of the principals disagreed (DA) that LSE curriculum has sufficient content to equip learners with knowledge on early pregnancies (mean = 2.36). However about 92 percent of them agreed (A) that LSE offers effective decision-making skills that helps in curbing teenage pregnancy among schooling teenagers (mean = 4.27). In addition, most (94%) of the principals agreed (A) that through LSE, learners learn assertive skills which help in curbing teenage pregnancy (mean =4.04). also, nearly 96 percent of the principals agreed that LSE equips girls with Self-esteem skills thus helping in curbing teenage pregnancy in teen girls (mean = 4.43). Moreover, 93 percent of the respondents agreed that LSE equips girls with Negotiation skills that enables them negotiate on safer sex compared to those lacking the skills thus reducing teenage pregnancies (mean = 4.18). Lastly, almost 94 percent of the principals concur that through LSE, girls are equipped with Self-awareness skills and less likely to be lured to early sexual activities thus reducing teenage pregnancy (mean =4.45). In summary, most principals agreed that Life Skills Education can be used to curb teenage pregnancies in schools within the study area (mean = 3.95; sd = .468).

Regarding how life skills can be used to adequately equip learners with information on teenage pregnancies, majority of them held that there is need to have regular and more classes on LSE. They also felt the need of making LSE compulsory and examinable as well as reviewing the LSE syllabus by integrating ICT to make it more realistic in addition to including sex education in the curriculum. Furthermore, the principals also felt the need of training new teachers to teach specifically LSE and in servicing the existing ones. Additionally, the respondents held that there was need to provide course books on LSE curriculum since it emerged that some principals have never seen the LSE syllabus.

D. HODs' G&C Views of Life Skill Education and Teenage Pregnancy

Just like the principals, HODs were asked an array of questions regarding the relationship of various aspects of life skills education and teenage pregnancy. Analysis of the responses in view of this parameter is demonstrated in Table V

TABLE V: HODs view regarding LSE and teenage pregnancy

	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
LSE curriculum has sufficient content to equip learners with knowledge on early pregnancies	18.2	51.7	10.5	12.6	7	2.38	1.132
LSE offers effective decision-making skills that helps in curbing teenage pregnancy among schooling teenagers		3.5	8.4	46.2	42	4.27	.759
Through LSE, Learners learn assertive skills which help in curbing teenage pregnancy			8.4	61.5	30.1	4.22	.583
LSE equips girls with Self-esteem skills thus helping in curbing teenage pregnancy in teen girls			8.4	30.1	61.5	4.53	.648
LSE equips girls with Negotiation skills that enables them negotiate on safer sex compared to those lacking the skills thus reducing teenage pregnancies			7.7	58	34.3	4.27	.593
Through LSE, Girls are equipped with Self-awareness skills and less likely to be lured to early sexual activities thus reducing teenage pregnancy			4.2	30.8	65	4.61	.570
Overall						4.05	.409

It can be observed from Table V that almost 70 percent of the HODs G&C disagreed that LSE curriculum has sufficient content to equip learners with knowledge on early pregnancies (mean = 2.38). About 88 percent agreed however that LSE offers effective decision-making skills that helps in curbing teenage pregnancy among schooling teenagers (mean = 4.27). Majority of the respondents constituting about 92 percent agreed that through LSE, Learners learn assertive skills which help in curbing teenage pregnancy (mean = 4.22). Further, about 92 of the HODs agreed that LSE equips girls with Self-esteem skills thus helping in curbing teenage pregnancy in teen girls (mean = 4.53). Furthermore around 92 percent of the HODs G&C accede that LSE equips girls with Negotiation skills that enables them negotiate on safer sex compared to those lacking the skills thus reducing teenage pregnancies (mean = 4.27). Lastly, about 96 percent of the HODs G&C agreed that through LSE, girls are equipped with Self-awareness skills and less likely to be lured to early sexual activities thus reducing teenage pregnancy (mean = 4.61). Overall, HODs agreed that Life Skills Education curriculum aspects under consideration had a relationship in curbing teenage pregnancy (mean = 4.05; sd = .409).

Regarding their suggestion as to how life skills syllabus can be used to adequately equip learners with information on teenage pregnancies, most HODs G&C held the view that LSE needed to be allocated more lessons. In addition, they held that the LSE syllabus needs to be reviewed to include sex education. In addition, the subject should be made examinable and compulsory. Further, they held that teachers need to be retooled and more to be employed. They also suggested that LSE implementation should be supervised by the quality assurance officers to ensure it is taught, principals should also monitor its implementation on a weekly basis. Moreover, the HODs held the need to use more innovative teaching approaches in handling the subject for example through the use of realia and using more relevant statistics especially from the National Commission on Population and Development in addition to integrating the teaching with ICT to make it more effective.

The results of documentary analysis with regard to Life Skills Education (LSE) showed that in all the

schools sampled, there was neither any LSE syllabus nor schemes of work nor records of workbooks. Further, the schools have neither any LSE Learners course books nor the teacher’s guidebook. This depicts the casual nature in which the subject of Life Skill Education is given. No wonder some schools teach other examinable subjects during LSE lessons.

E. Testing of study Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for this study stated thus: There is no statistically significant relationship between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County. Being a relational study, the level of association among the variables subsumed in the study was determined using Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient in order to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. Further, considering that information for this research was gathered using two main instruments from two sets of respondents (Principals and HODs G&C), it was considered prudent to present the test of hypothesis in two parts for purposes of triangulation of the results as presented in Table VI and Table VII.

TABLE VI: Principals correlation statistics on life skills education and teenage pregnancy

		TENPREG	SOCIECON	SCHOLGC	PARENTINVOL	LSE
LSE	Pearson Correlation	.575**	.166*	.219**	.221**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.048	.009	.008	
	N	133	142	142	142	142
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Table VI, reveals that the coefficient of correlation between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy with regard to principals was positive and significant ($r = .575$; $p \leq .01$). This infers that the relationship between Life Skills Education and curbing of teenage pregnancy was positive and significant. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .331$), infers that the teaching of Life Skills Education in schools can account to curbing of 33.1 percent of teenage pregnancies in schools. The connotation of this finding is that the execution of Life Skills Education has a positive effect in helping curb the teenage pregnancy crisis. This therefore means that the more Life Skills Education gets taught in schools, the more enlightened students become and this leads to reduction of teenage pregnancy cases. Subsequently, the null hypothesis that expressed thus: There is no statistically significant relationship between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County was dismissed.

On the other hand, the coefficient of correlation between Life Skills Education and curbing of teenage pregnancy according to the HODs G&C was positive ($r = .414$; $p \leq .01$) as shown in Table VII below.

TABLE VII: HODS G&C correlation statistics on life skills education and teenage pregnancy

		TENPREG	Parentsoc	guid_cous	parentinvol	Lscurr
LEScurr	Pearson Correlation	.414**	.062	.205*	.224**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.459	.014	.007	
	N	134	143	143	143	143
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

This shows that the relationship between Life Skills Education and curbing of teenage pregnancy was positive and significant according to the HODs. G&C. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .1714$), infers

that the teaching of Life Skills Education in schools can account to curbing of 17.14 percent of teenage pregnancies in schools. Therefore, the indication of this finding is that Life Skills Education execution has a positive effect in helping curb the teenage pregnancy crisis. This therefore means that the more Life Skill Education gets taught in schools, the more enlightened students become and this leads to reduction of teenage pregnancy cases. Consequently, there was dismissal of the null hypothesis, which stated thus: There is no statistically significant relationship between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

A. The Teenage Pregnancy Crisis in Machakos County

Data collected from all the respondents including documentary analysis depicts that teenage pregnancy is a prevalent occurrence in the county. In particular, it was established from the principals and HODs G&C that each school in the county records an average of two (2) cases of teenage pregnancy every year. Indeed, data from the County Education Office (CEO) showed that there was an average of 173 teenage pregnancies reported per year based on cases reported during KCSE examinations period. Teenage pregnancy cases affect girls' education as obtained from the students. According to the students, the educational dreams of girls who fall pregnant are shuttered and they discontinue with their academic pursuits.

B. Relationship between Life Skills Education and Teenage Pregnancy in Public Secondary Schools.

Regarding Life Skills Education (LSE), this study established that LSE was being taught in sampled schools as evidenced from the principals and HODs G&C. In addition, the study revealed that LSE was scheduled to be taught at least once a week. However, documentary records show that sampled schools still needed a LSE syllabus, schemes of work and records of workbooks. Further, the schools did not have any LSE Learners course book or the teacher's guidebook. This means that teachers lack essential instructional materials to teach LSE, which may be the reason why LSE is not executed in schools. This finding concurs with Ndonga (2010), who conducted a study on the constraints facing acquisition of Life Skills to curb risk behavior among public secondary school students in Thika Municipality and found that schools lacked suitable teaching and learning resources and that, teachers did not have sufficient training in Life Skills Education (LSE). Both the principals and HODs G&C held a view, that LSE curriculum does not have sufficient content to equip learners with knowledge on early pregnancies, with a mean of 2.36 and 2.38, as reported in Tables IV and V respectively. In support of this claim, is a study by Mune (2017) in Kirinyaga County, in Kenya, whose study was on the implications of LSE curriculum on peer influences that recommended a review of LSE content to make it more effective and relevant.

Nevertheless, the research results indicate a positive and significant relationship between Life Skills Education and teenage pregnancy, as reported in Table VI ($r = .575$; $p \leq .01$) based on the principal responses. Similarly, there was a positive and significant relationship between Life Skills Education and the curbing of teenage pregnancy based on responses by HODs G&C, as shown in Table VII ($r = .414$; $p \leq .01$). These findings are further in agreement with those of Botvin, Griffin, Paul, and Macaulay (2003) who did research in the United States of America to examine the effectiveness of Life Skills prevention program in preventing tobacco and alcohol use among elementary school students in grades three through six. The study found that Life Skills based Programmes reduce alcohol and tobacco use as well as drug and substance abuse. By extension, therefore, LSE can be used to curb teenage pregnancy if the content is made adequate as proposed by the principals and the HODs G&C.

Bardhan (2016) studied in India to examine LSE as a strategy for handling adolescent risk behaviors and found that continuous life skill training and organized counselling assisted in enhancing positive changes

among children with risky behaviors. This implies that the findings disagree with the outcomes of this research, which revealed that LSE does not provide adequate content to curb teenage pregnancy. Further, the study findings disagree with Kalanda (2010), who did a study in Malawi on how Life Skills (LS) and Reproductive Health Education changes behavior in students and found that LS and Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) skills had helped in changing behavior in pupils and students. There was reduced withdrawal from school on the grounds of pregnancy. Moreover, a study by Otieno and Role (2015) on the implication of LSE on character development amongst primary school children in Kenya established that life skill assists pupils to develop various competencies and skills that help them to handling the encounters of modern living. This agrees with the study findings that LSE equips learners with practical decision- making skills; assertive skills, self- awareness skills as well as negotiation skills, which help them, curb teenage pregnancy and negotiate safer sex. Further, the research outcomes revealed that there was a significant relationship between teaching life skills and character development. The outcomes disagree with the results of this research, which show that the content of LSE is insufficient to influence behavior change.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that if Life Skill Education curriculum has adequate content, it will help equip the learners with skills and knowledge that will help curb teenage pregnancy in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that:

1. The MOE should review Life Skill Education syllabus and include content on sex education.
2. The MOE should include LSE in teacher education as a learning area, or infuse LSE in a specific subject combination so that the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) posts teachers to teach LSE specifically.
3. MOE should make LSE compulsory and examinable.
4. Principals should ensure effective implementation of LSE in their schools.
5. Through the KICD, the MOE should increase LSE lessons from one to at least two per week.

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