

Thematic curriculum and quality of basic education in Uganda: A case of selected primary schools in Acholi Sub-Region

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Introduction

The study was about thematic curriculum and quality of basic education in Uganda: A case of selected primary schools in Acholi sub-region, Northern Uganda. The study contained ten chapters where chapter one is on introduction, chapter two reviewed the literature, chapter three is on methodology, four is on historical and philosophical aspects of study variables, meanwhile, chapters five, six, seven and eight focused on the analysis, interpretation and discussions of findings on curriculum interpretation, instructional delivery, monitoring of teaching/learning, and the influence of other factors towards learners attainment of basic reading, writing, numeracy and life skills respectively. While chapter nine focus on contribution to knowledge and chapter ten draws conclusion and recommendation towards the study.

Study Objectives

The study was based on the following objective; to assess the influence of interpretation of curriculum on the learners' ability to master the basic reading skills; to establish the influence of

instructional delivery on the learners' ability to master the basic writing skills; to analyze the influence of monitoring of teaching/learning on the learners' level of attainment of numeracy skills and to present the influence of other factors on learners' level of understanding of life skills.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design; with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The target population was 60,000 with a sample size of 397 respondents. Data was collected using Self-Administered Questionnaires, an Interview Guide and a pupils' Test Guide. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in quantitative analysis, while thematic analysis was employed for qualitative findings.

Findings

The study findings of curriculum interpretation on the learners' ability to master the basic reading skills indicated a significant regression ($F: 58.504 = 39.259, p < .005$), with R^2 of 0.416 implying that interpretation of curriculum accounts for 41.6% of learners' attainment of basic reading skills in P2. The results imply that learners' ability to attain basic reading skills is moderately affected by each unit measure of curriculum interpretation in the primary schools. The sig value at $p=0.05$ was found to be 0.000 implying that interpretation had a significant influence on learners' ability to attain basic reading skills in primary schools in the Acholi sub-region in Northern Uganda.

For instructional delivery on learners' ability to master the basic writing skills findings indicated a significant regression ($F: 16.370 = 23.678, p < .005$), with R^2 of 0.166. The results imply

that learners' ability to master basic writing skills is slightly influenced by each unit measure of instructional delivery in primary schools. The sig value at $p=0.05$ was found to be 0.000 implying that instructional delivery also had a significant influence on learners' ability to master basic writing skills in primary schools in the Acholi sub-region in northern Uganda.

Meanwhile for monitoring of teaching/learning on the learners' level of attainment of numeracy skills also revealed a significant regression ($F: 23.429$) = 14.571, $p<.005$), with R^2 of 0.222. This means that according to the teachers' responses, monitoring of teaching/learning has a low contribution towards learners' mastering of basic numeracy skills in lower primary classes. The significance value at $p=0.05$ was found to be 0.000 implying that monitoring of teaching/learning also had a strong significant influence on learners' ability to master basic numeracy skills in primary schools in the Acholi sub-region in northern Uganda.

Considering all the other factors that were examined by the study, it was revealed that they accounted for a substantial proportion of the influence on the learners' understanding of life skills. Linear regression was run in order to predict whether learners' understanding of life skills is accounted for by the other factors in thematic curriculum implementation at lower primary in the Acholi sub-region. From the findings, a significant regression equation was found ($F: 79.477$) = 35.437, $p<.005$), with R^2 of 0.537. The results imply that the learners' understanding of life skills in the lower primary in the Acholi sub-region is greatly influenced by other factors in the implementation of the thematic curriculum. The sig value at $p=0.05$ was found to be 0.000 implying that other factors had a strong significant influence on the learners' attainment of life skills in primary schools in the Acholi sub-region in northern Uganda.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and Sports through DEOs, Inspectors of schools and headteachers should encourage curriculum interpretation which has a strong significant effect on learners' ability to attain basic reading skills in primary schools. The study also recommends that teachers should be trained in capabilities to carry out interpretation and use of instructional materials to enable learners to attain basic reading skills. The District Education Officers should arrange training workshops to empower the teachers in lower primary schools in the Acholi sub-region.

Monitoring of teaching/learning in the lower primary was found to have a strong significant effect on learners' ability to master basic numeracy skills in primary schools. Therefore, the study recommends that headteachers in the primary schools in the Acholi sub-region should ensure that teachers conduct internal monitoring as they teach as well as conducts routine monitoring to enable teachers in lower primary build capacity to help learners attain sufficient ability to master basic numeracy skills.

The study recommends the adoption of strategies for improving the primary education curriculum to attain quality basic education. These should include but are not limited to: development of the fundamental skills of literacy, numeracy and oral communication; providing rich and varied contexts for developing skills such as observing, organizing, recording, interpreting and predicting; promoting positive attitudes to school and learning; and providing opportunities to learn practically.

The headteachers and deputy headteachers as curriculum supervisors and school supervisors need orientation as well so that the necessary resources and ongoing support can be pro-

vided to the teachers for appropriate instruction of the learners.

The research recommended that the Ministry of Education and Sports should encourage headteachers and teachers in the lower primary schools to use the BES Model to appropriately implement thematic curriculum to enable the learners' attainment of quality basic education in the primary schools.

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