

ABSTRACT

Christian Religious Education (CRE) is a carrier subject of Life Skills (LS) content in Kenyan secondary schools. The teaching of CRE is to enable the learner to acquire and develop a sense of self-respect and respect for others. Despite the exposure of students' to CRE curriculum, the general behavior and conduct of students in Ndihiwa Sub-County is still rated at only 40%. Concept Mapping Teaching Strategy (CMS) creates a learning environment which inspires students to think deeply about how they might apply what they have learnt to their daily lives. This study investigated the influence of Concept Mapping Strategy (CMS) on Secondary School Students' acquisition of life skills through CRE Curriculum in Ndihiwa Sub-County, Kenya. A diagrammatical conceptual framework indicating the relationship between independent and dependent variables was used. The study objectives were to: establish secondary school CRE syllabus level of life skills content coverage acquired through CMS, determine the difference in life skills acquisition between students taught CRE through CMS and those taught using traditional methods and establish the difference in life skills acquisition between students exposed to CMS when they are categorized by gender. The study adopted a Quasi Experimental Research Design involving Solomon Four Non-Equivalent Group Design. Population of the study was all 1850 Form Four CRE students in public co-educational day secondary schools. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 169 students and simple random sampling was used to determine four schools with similar characteristics to participate in the study. Two instruments namely; Curriculum Content Analysis Matrix (CCAM) and CRE Students Life Skills Test (CRESLST) were used to gather data. CRE teachers were provided with CMS guide for the purpose of teaching the experimental group. The teachers were inducted on the use of the guide and the researcher observed the implementation of the guide. The selected topic within the CRE syllabus was taught for two weeks. The face and content validity of the two instruments were examined by two CRE teachers and a team of experts at Maseno University in the Department of Education Communication, Technology and Curriculum Studies. CCAM and CRESLST were piloted for reliability and their coefficients estimated using Krippendorff's Alpha and Kuder Richardson's formula respectively. The reliability coefficient of CRESLST was .78 and that of CCAM was .73. Data was analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Qualitative data was summarized and described using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. The second and third research questions were tested at $\alpha = .05$ using the t-test. Data collected through CCAM and CRESLST were analyzed using SPSS and Excel. The study results indicated that the level of LS content coverage of the CRE syllabus for the 4 years course was average at 34.56%. The results also indicated that CMS positively affects secondary school students' life skills acquisition. Finally the study revealed that students gender and their life skills acquisition is not statistically significant. The study results may be used by Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to interrogate teachers' pedagogical practices and life skills content coverage of the secondary CRE curriculum. The findings may be used to inform teachers to enhance on their life skills teaching approaches so as to attain the intended objectives of teaching CRE. Finally, the results can be used by educators to inform the students on the effects of their gender difference on life skills acquisition