

## ASSESSMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN KENYA: TRANSFORMING FOR THE FUTURE

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The role of a curriculum in university education cannot be overestimated; an appropriate curriculum begets rounded graduates that can suit very well in the national and international society. This means that a curriculum should be characterized by holistic education. This study focused on the PhD (Curriculum and Teaching) curriculum at one university in Kenya using document based design where documents, particularly the bulletin, lecturer's notes and lesson plan templates were analyzed based on the Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains. Findings showed that the university programme affirms a holistic approach to the development of the student by cultivating the intellectual, the physical and the spiritual-social abilities. However, it has been observed that the curriculum inclines more toward the cognitive and psychomotor domains although the Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL) is emphasized. Although there are clearly defined courses, few of them deal directly with the affective domain. It was also observed that the university described religion as Christianity ignoring all other religions despite the fact that the trained teachers will live in a multi-religious society. The study recommended mainstream the affective domain in the curriculum rather than assuming that the student will "catch" the affective from the hidden curriculum. There is also need to include other religions to equip the students for a multi-religious society of work.

**Keywords:** Kenya, teacher education curriculum, Bachelor of Education degree

### Introduction

The world is changing with its all aspects of life including the education system. Teacher-student relationships are now more complex than they were in the past. This means that the curriculum needs to go abreast with these changes so as to have rounded products that meaningfully contribute to their societies and the world at large. Teacher education needs to be carefully crafted in such a manner that it satisfies this goal.

Teacher education has been defined by Honey (2017) as the process by which a person attains training in an institution of learning in order to become a teacher. Teacher education, thus, equips both pre-service and in-service teachers with the necessary professional knowledge and skills necessary for classroom instruction.

Teacher education includes four main elements to work on in order to produce qualified teachers; these are: improving the general educational background of the trainee teachers; increasing the trainees' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach; focus on pedagogy and understanding of children and learning; and the developing of the train-

ees' practical skills and competences (Perraton, 2010).

Teacher quality therefore plays a vital role in the education system of any country. Ministry of Education National Implementation Framework III: 2011-2015, quoted in Mtetesha (2017) has this to say,

The quality and effectiveness of the education system depend heavily on the quality of its teachers. They are the key persons in determining success in meeting the system's goals. In view of this, the caliber of teachers and the status of the teaching profession are of paramount importance. The educational and personal well-being of learners in schools, thus, hinge crucially on teachers' competence, commitment and resourcefulness.

Karajagi (2012) added to teacher quality saying that student teachers should be taught educational ethics and professionalism so that they become dedicated to effective service considering new technologies and policies.

In Kenya, teacher education programmes are taken seriously and are even heavily supported by the state. Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988, quoted in Mosiori (2013) revealed that the government of Kenya echoed: *"There is urgent need to develop and promote teacher*



education programme if the administration of education in the Kenya as a country is to succeed and therefore national development accelerated". With government and other stakeholders support, teacher education programmes are likely to be up to standard.

However, Kafwa, Gaudiencia and Kisaka (2015) propounded that documents have sufficiently interrogated the current practices in teacher education in Kenya to demand for refocus. This is because, according to them, the current practices in training teachers reveal dominance in the use of the conventional teaching approaches rather than the modern ones. This study wanted to find out the position of the university in question in teacher education.

### Review of Literature

For this study, literature has been reviewed mainly on teacher education in other countries as well as implementation and assessment of learning domains of the students in higher education. Related studies have also been reviewed.

### Uganda's Education System

Uganda's education system is molded on a 7-4-2-3 model, putting into account that the pre-school exposure (nursery/early childhood education) is not compulsory. Usually, children go to school at the age

of five. The model below was modified from Ugandan Government.

From the model, there are three clear areas of teacher preparation, that is, teachers for primary schools being trained in Primary teachers' colleges, secondary school teachers being trained in National Teachers' Colleges (NTCs) and also at university level. There are no specific training institutions for training teachers for higher institutions and Universities. This means that the teachers/lecturers, who join Universities to teach, have had no prior teacher training except for those who join the education sector. Those with no prior training have no pedagogical skills required for good presentation of material. This affects educational quality since student achievement, especially beyond basic skills, depends on the teachers' ability, command of subject matter and use of that knowledge to assist students learn.

### Learning Domains

According to Bloom's Taxonomy, after every learning process, a learner should have acquired new knowledge (cognitive, *the head*), skill (psychomotor, *the hand*) and attitude (affective, *the heart*). These three learning domains are referred to as holistic education (Clark, 2015). This means that a teacher training programme should have a curriculum that embraces these aspects.

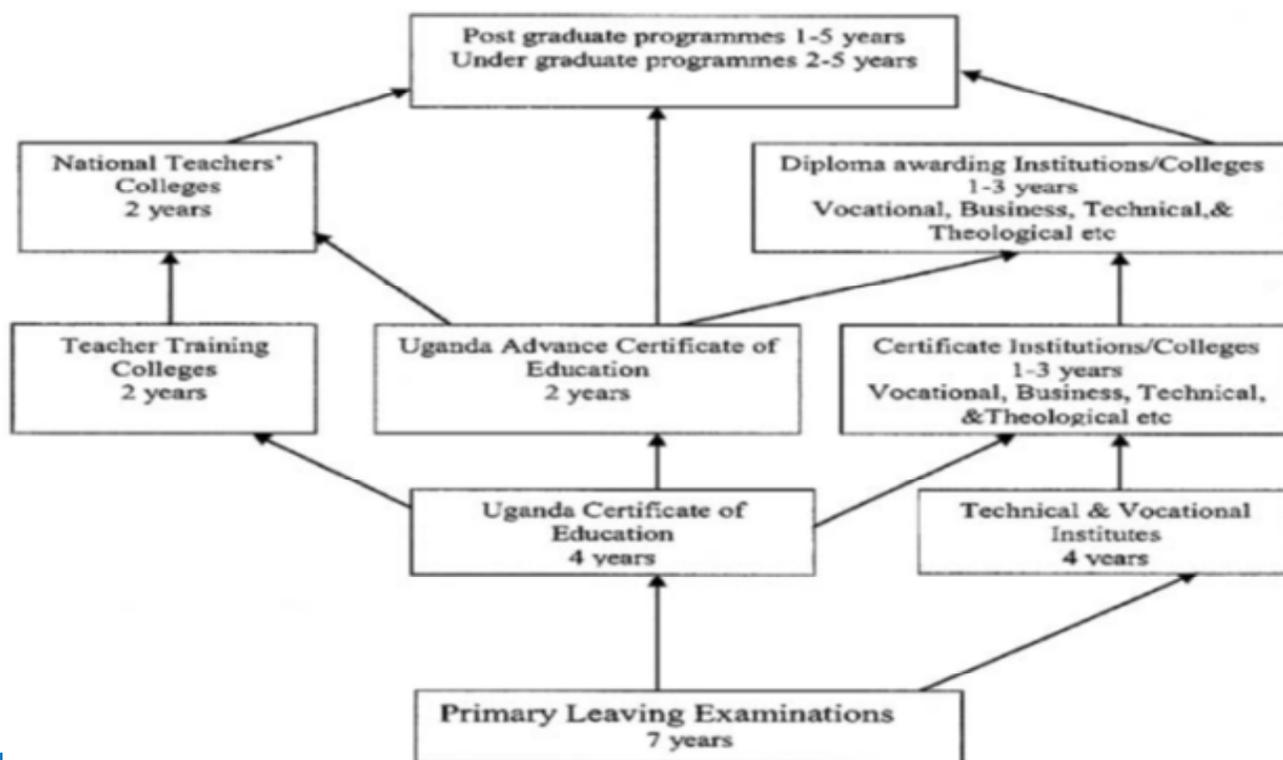


Fig. 1. Uganda general education system (Lubaale, quoted in Otaala, Maani, & Bakaira, 2013).

**The affective domain.** The affective domain in Paramedic education addresses learned behaviours that directly affect clinical and operational performance (Batt, 2014). There are schools of thought associated with affective learning. Miller (2014) argued that most teachers are involved in some form of attitude teaching making attitude learning is the main objective of instruction. On the other hand, Olatunji (2013) argued that there are two main schools of thought concerning affective education the first being concerned with values, morals and ethics. This idea comes from philosophy of realism and idealism and religion where beliefs and values are come from divine inspiration and the wisdom of the elders.

The other school of thought emphasizes human experience only and is closely linked to philosophy of pragmatism enunciated by Dewey in 1939 where values are developed as the individual or group goes through a process in developmental stages.

Borrowing from earlier education researchers, Olatunji (2013) came up with five levels of the affective taxonomy, that is, receiving (willing to listen), responding (willing to participate), valuing (willing to be involved), organization (willing to be an advocate) and characterization (willing to change one's behaviour).

Kasilingam, Ramalingam and Chinnavan (2014) realized the value of the affective domain and they argued that it is critical for learning. They however mourned that it is often not specifically addressed. On the same note, a study by Ituma (2012) investigating the nature of assessment tests in Chemistry in Kenyan secondary schools. It found that tests constructed by Chemistry teachers assessed various domains, however, creativity and affective domains were rarely tested. The study recommended that in-service and pre-service training should emphasize assessment methods especially those directed towards diagnostic evaluation and assessment of attitude and creativity domains. The argument being that this domain focuses on attitude, motivation, willingness to participate, valuing what is being learned and ultimately incorporating the discipline values into real life.

On the same hand, King and Sawyer (2013) carried out a study based on the premise that the affective domain is an integral part of all teaching and learning interactions and that this domain is underpinned by a set of professional values that informs teaching practice. Their project aimed to develop an analytic framework for the affective domain by exploring academics' teaching practices, values and beliefs. Findings showed that

online teaching is an area where participants spoke of the difficulties in developing good material as well as effective relationships with students. The project also found that students are less engaged with the online environment, a lot of online delivery is outdated and it is hard to develop effective rapport in the online environment. A study by Batt (2014) revealed that the assessment of the affective domain was limited because of the inherent difficulty in measuring learning gains in this domain.

**The cognitive domain.** Yanofsky and Nyquist (2014) argued that teaching and assessing the advanced competencies in learners' achievement continue to be a challenge. Curricularists emphasize the need to understand learners holistically, that is, remembering the interwoven relationship between the cognitive and affect domains. Research show that affection has a direct influence on cognition, and many authors believe that critical thinking relies on both cognitive and affective domains (Hughes, Labouvie-Vief & Diehl, cited in Batt, 2014).

Courtney, cited in Batt (2014), emphasized that critical thinking is necessary not only in clinical practice, but should also be an integral component of education programs to promote the development of critical-thinking skills.

A research was carried out in Turkey by Ulum (2016) on Bloom's taxonomy in relation to the cognitive domain. The researcher found out that teachers can use the questioning technique to develop skills in higher order thinking in students. Higher order questions were found to stimulate thinking and the development of other cognitive abilities like decision making and problem solving. The cognitive domain is associated with skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation which are said to be more useful and transferable for everyday life. The research also found out that generally, in the process of teaching, there is an insufficiency of higher order questioning which hinders acquisition of the much needed skills of problem solving and critical thinking which are essential to life.

**The psychomotor domain.** Apart from including the cognitive and affective domains in a curriculum, a balanced curriculum should include the psychomotor which deals with educating the hand. Objectives in the psychomotor domain are best evaluated by actual performance of the skill being taught (Oliva & Gordon, 2013). There is need to make some judgmental calls when students are asked



to demonstrate perceptual skill.

Sullivan and Baker (2011) listed seven steps of psychomotor learning which a teacher, as curriculum evaluator should be acquainted with. These are: preparation, conceptualization, visualization, practice, feedback, mastery and autonomy. A teacher training institute should recognize these steps during pre-service teacher training.

Henson (2010) added that since most schools have some graduates who enter the world of work, care should be taken so that there is a balance between college preparation courses as well as vocational and business causes. The idea of balance has been taken up by Anarfi and Appiah (2012) who pointed out that the Kenya 8-4-4 education policy emanated from the assumption that it would equip pupils with employable skills thereby enabling school dropouts at all levels to be either self-employed or secure employment in the informal sector.

A study conducted in Malawi on factors affecting acquisition of psychomotor clinical skills by student nurses and midwives in CHAM nursing colleges found that psychomotor skills are affected by students motivation, lack of resources, learning environment, knowledge, gap between the qualified nurses and tutors and role modeling. (Mwale & Kalawa, 2016).

Lututala (2012) stated that for employees equipped only with theoretical knowledge acquired at secondary school, it is just a tip of iceberg of the knowledge required for employability of young baccalaureate holders. Many cognitive and socio emotional skills are required. Moreover, psychomotor skills are also sought from baccalaureate holders such as the abilities to manipulate and, above all, communicate.

In their research on psychomotor skills, Ferry and Aziz (2005) mentioned that the operation of tools concerns the ability of the student to hold the tool appropriately for use, to set the tool in action and to perform elementary tasks that abstract task work into most basic unitary forms.

### Theoretical Framework

This study was based on three learning theories namely the Elaboration, the Humanism and the Bloom's Taxonomy theories. Reigeluth, in his Elaboration theory, posits that content for learning should be structured from the simple to the complex at the same time providing the context in which ideas would be integrated (Davey, 2015). Reigeluth's learning theory

has several values which include holistic instruction sequenced for meaning and motivation, addressing primary affective learning and is also intended for complex psychomotor and cognitive learning. It is regarded as a theory of holistic instruction where instructional material is made to develop the whole learner.

The Elaboration theory agrees with Bloom's Taxonomy which states that after every learning process a learner should have acquired new knowledge (cognitive), skill (psychomotor) and attitude (affective). These are domains or categories which are also inferred by holistic education (Clark, 2015). If this is the matter in education, therefore, teacher preparation in tertiary institutions should focus on equipping students with the skills to be able to create learning episodes where these domains can be clearly identified, thus holistic education.

Humanism is a theory of pedagogy which promotes the belief that learning is a personal act to fulfil one's potential (Maslow & Rogers in Davey, 2015). Maslow believed the place for the teacher in this instance, becomes that of a motivator and facilitator of learning and for one to reach full potential, one has to be exposed in totality to all experiences that touch the whole. This theory asserts the idea that true education for one to reach their highest potential should educate the head, the hand and the heart (White, 2017). According to Humanism, a holistic perspective in education aims at developing the learner's intellectual, social, emotional, physical, artistic and spiritual potential (Maslow & Rogers in Davey, 2015).

It can be concluded that the three theories are related for the address the issue of holistic education. This study therefore focused on teacher preparation curriculum at one university in Kenya deliberately assessing whether the three main learning domains are catered for in order to meet the education requirements of the head, the hand and the heart.

### Statement of the Problem

A teacher training curriculum should produce rounded products that meaningfully contribute to the global village. This is because the quality and effectiveness of the education system depend heavily on the quality of its teachers (Mtetsha, 2017). Such a holistic teacher training curriculum addressed the three main domains which are cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Clark, 2015). However, Kafwa,

Gaudiencia and Kisaka (2015) propounded that documents have sufficiently interrogated the current practices in teacher education in Kenya to demand for refocus since the current practices in training teachers reveal dominance in the use of the conventional teaching approaches rather than the modern ones. This study assessed the quality of teacher education curriculum at one university in Kenya answering the research question: Does the teacher education curriculum at the university in question offer holistic education in terms of the following?

- a) The Philosophy
- b) The Objectives
- c) The Content

### Research Methodology

A qualitative research, specifically the documentary research methodology was used for this study. Interviews were also used mainly to complement information on curriculum implementation.

The documents that were used to gather data for the study are the following:

- The Bulletin focus
- Lecturer's notes
- Lesson plan templates

The researchers based their analysis of all the documents above on the Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains, that is the cognitive, psychomotor and the affective domains. Analysis on the Bulletin focused on the philosophy, objectives and contents. The researchers administered interviews to PhD students in Curriculum and Teaching Department to get information on curriculum implementation especially on the affective domain aspect.

### Findings

#### The Philosophy

The philosophy of the Graduate Studies Philosophy of Education curriculum is based on God as the creator and sustainer of the universe and life as well as the source of true knowledge. The restoration of God's image in humanity is taken as the foundation of Christian Education. This shows that the philosophy starts with God and ends with God bringing to the fore a purposively crafted, well developed and implemented affective domain. This aspect is emphasized by the philosophy statement which reads:

*...prepare graduates for service to humanity and for greater service and loyalty to God in the world to come.*

The affective domain does not end on earth but in heaven which is the final destination for those who do God's will. The other part of the philosophy reads: *The university seeks to provide opportunity for developing proficiency in discovering knowledge which is relevant to life.*

This means that there is emphasis on the cognitive domain "knowledge" which is intermarried to the affective domain "relevant to life". This finding tallies that by Hughes, Labouvie-Vief, and Diehl, quoted in Batt (2014), who realized that affection has a direct influence on cognition while critical thinking relies on both the cognitive and affective domains.

#### Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes of the Doctor of Philosophy in Education in general show clear evidence of holistic education. By the end of the programme the students are expected to be able to uphold sound professional ethics for curriculum planners, developers and education administrators; creation of relevant knowledge in research; design documents on curriculum at all levels; monitoring and evaluating policy and standards of academic programmes in schools. The first learning outcome above is on "professional ethics" of the learner in all the possible capacities after obtaining a PhD, hence the affective domain. The second and third learning outcomes are indicating cognitive skills as curriculum designer, monitors and evaluators at all education levels.

When considering the learning outcomes of the Doctor of Philosophy in Education (Curriculum and Teaching), the lecturers identified strategies for improving teacher training programs bringing in the idea of teaching strategies and information technologies, for instance:

- *Demonstrate teaching strategies for teaching teachers and*
- *Evaluate issues and trends related to the use of information technology in the teaching and learning process.*

Both learning outcomes above are mainly cognitive in nature.

#### Curriculum Content



The researcher took their time to evaluate the teaching content of the Doctor of Philosophy in Education (Curriculum and Teaching). They realized that the content area is exhaustive and relevant to a teacher training programme with a total of 65 credits. Core requirement consists of 59 credits while religion requirement comprises 6 credits. This means that the department took cognizance of the humanistic theory in terms of holistic education that is taking care of the head, the heart and the hand. The researchers also realized that their PhD curriculum has clearly defined courses that clearly show the three domains, though few which deal directly with the affective domain; in line with findings Batt (2015).

The researchers also studied the lecturers' notes of the lecturers in the Doctor of Philosophy in Education (Curriculum and Teaching) and they found that there is emphasis on Integration of Faith and Learning in the notes. In the lecture notes, teaching is portrayed as the noblest profession where the teacher is following in the footsteps of Christ (a teacher as Christ-like).

Lecturers' notes as well as interviewees indicated that lecturers in the department always talk of God answering prayers and emphasize on God's will and the need for all to aligning their will with God's will. Interviewees said in admiration that even in unrelated courses like Statistics, the lecturer brings in God in the discussion. An example that was given is of committing Type 1 error of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is in fact true which was likened to how the Jews rejected Jesus when in actual fact he is the true Messiah.

During lectures, students are trained to achieve the affective domain through introducing lessons by prayer as well as choosing materials that are ethical. The lesson plan templates used in the Education Department of that university shows, on the teacher self-evaluation section, the following four domains: cognitive domain, interactive skills domain, affective domain, psychomotor domain, hence the emphasis of all the domains.

After analyzing the Bulletin, the researchers complemented their findings by carrying out interviews with the PhD students in Curriculum and Teaching specifically to find more information on the phenomenon of the affective domain.

When asked the question, "What is your take on the teaching of the affective domain?" one student explained in detail and with confidence that:

*Well, the learning environment encourages it. This is a Christian institution hence the values are naturally seen to be there. Furthermore, as PhD students we are conscious of that. As we join the university, we are inducted into the system well. Our lecturers display values of willingness to listen and they respond promptly. Our attitude towards learning is positive and we respect our instructors.*

From the above response, the researchers realized that the learning environment itself contribute much in terms of the affective domain. The interviewee went on to explain the affective environment saying that there is some time set aside for church services during the course of each and every week while prayer (with some lecturers) and devotion (with others) introduce and/or conclude lectures.

Words that were used to describe lecturers by the interviewees include: consistent, kind, generous, predictable and influential. One interviewee added that: They (lecturers) encourage teamwork, awareness, clarification, internalization and critical thinking.

On the other hand, some interviewees felt that the cognitive domain dominated the curriculum, however for a purpose: due to the examination-driven curriculum. They explained that even the affective oriented courses like Advanced Ethics are serious and examination driven making them true academic course.

An interesting question was asked to the interviewees: "How does your university define religion?" One concerned interviewee answered it as follows:

*At this university religion is Christianity, which is good because that is what they believe in. However, the university is not doing justice to me because as a teacher, I will be expected to be knowledgeable about other religions in the multi-religious society I will be operating in after studying here. Also, this university has diverse students from all over the world and, in some countries, world religions are part of the curriculum, so the university is not adequately preparing me for tolerance of other religions and to live from an informed point with people of other religions.*

## Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be concluded that the Doctor of Philoso-

phy in Education (Curriculum and Teaching) degree programme affirms a holistic approach to the development of the student by cultivating the intellectual, the spiritual, the physical and the social abilities. This means that the intended programme is balanced in term of the three domains. Although the cognitive domain dominates the curriculum due to its examination drive nature, the activities that address the affective domain such as collaboration, devotions, content of some courses, sharing experiences in teaching process, integration of faith and learning process are enhanced in the school of education. The psychomotor domain is less emphasized because the curriculum does not provide course especially in this area. One area of concern is the observation that the university described religion as Christianity and ignores other religions despite the fact that the graduate will serve in a multi-religious society.

This study recommended the need to mainstream the affective domain in the curriculum rather than assuming that students at Christian institutions will “catch” the affective from the hidden curriculum. Also, there is need to balance the affective domain by including other religions to equip the students for a multi-religious society given the fact that religious intolerance has caused some wars in Africa (Obaji, 2014). When the university fails to factor world religions in the curriculum, it does a lot of injustice to the trainees who may face serious challenges dealing with various religions in their places of work.

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