



# Investigating the Attitude of Bhutanese Teachers towards Implementing Life Skills Education

Nidup Wangdi <sup>a\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Autsho Central School, Lhuentse, Ministry of Education, Bhutan.

## Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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## ABSTRACT

The present study examined the attitude of Bhutanese teachers towards implementing Life Skills Education in different level of Schools. The researcher used quantitative research approach with descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select a total sample of 100 teachers from the Eastern part of Bhutan. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics like t test and ANOVA using SPSS software. The findings revealed that the teachers with science background hold comparatively higher attitude towards imparting Life Skills Education compare to non-science teachers and significant difference was also found between the teachers holding post graduate and B.Ed. qualification towards infusing Life Skills Education. However, the findings disclosed that there does not exist significant difference in teachers' attitude towards Life Skills Education in term of their teaching experience.

*Keywords: Attitude; teacher; life skills education; Bhutan.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays pivotal roles in the development of the individual and the nation as a whole. It aims at preparing individuals with sound knowledge, skills, attitude and values that enable them to become productive and creative citizens. It is also expected to make a significant influence

on how young people learn to relate with others and make informed decision in their lives. According to Adhiambo [1] in the era of globalization human beings encounter numerous challenges especially during adolescence stages which mark the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. These challenges are often related to physiological, psychological,

\*Corresponding author: Email: nwnidupy2022@gmail.com, nwnidupy2011@gmail.com;

social and economical which may render the youth vulnerable to social and health risks, such as drug abuse, risk sexual behavior, increased in crime, violence, school dropout, teenage pregnancy and general indiscipline among adolescence [1]. Ancient cultures which was the strength of human life, and respect to elders, respect for the social norms, proper reading habits for acquisition of knowledge by developing thinking, reasoning and creativity are missing. Even pupils are facing hard situation to make right decision. Hence, worldwide there appeared value crisis. In this regard, Life Skills Education plays a vital role in creating awareness and providing guidance and directions to youth.

Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) has a long history of supporting child development in terms of health promotion, social development, emotional and social adjustment. According to WHO, Life skills refers to “abilities for adoptive and positive behaviour that enables an individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” [2]. Life Skills Education as defined by the UNICEF (2005) “a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of areas; knowledge, attitude and skills.” Life skills are further classified into three broad categories; thinking skills, social skills and emotional skills [3].

Life Skill Education helps adolescents to develop interpersonal relationship with their parents, teachers, adults and peers. They also learn to take control of their emotions and make more informed decisions, set boundaries for appropriate behaviours, sustain relationships, and learn to be responsible for their actions and adopt healthy life styles. School as one of the important socializing agency and institution, plays an important role in Life Skills development among individuals, to cope with the current progress of life.

Hence, it is paramount importance for teachers to develop positive attitude towards imparting life skills education, which are indispensable for youth during their transition period. The present study intended at examining the attitude of Bhutanese teachers towards implementing Life Skills Education in different level of Schools.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of related literature is an important step and it plays a vital role in all types of research. It helps to identify a problem, to formulate

hypothesis, in the selection of tools and methods to be used for the investigation. The study of literature review implies to locating, recording and evaluating the related research works.

According to Kabiru and Njenga [4] attitude is a mental disposition that is expressed towards something with favour or disfavour. It includes beliefs and opinions that tend to influence behaviour. They comprise favourable or unfavourable evaluations of reactions to objects, people or situations, for example, in presence of someone respectable [4].

Truphena [5] state that a positive learning environment is dependent on teacher, instructional content and methods. Parents and teachers can create positive learning environments by applying child-centred methods, providing the necessary material resources and establishing friendly atmosphere where the learner feels accepted and valued. If pupils dislike the teacher they will also dislike the subject taught by that teacher. Therefore, teachers should create a pleasant environment [5].

Dhamane [6] found out that knowledge of Science Student Teacher regarding HIV/AIDS & Life Skills Education was more than non-science student teacher and the attitude towards HIV/AIDS and Life Skills Education of all student teachers was found positive [6].

Adhiambo [1] found out that the implementation of life skill education was determined by the lack of qualified and trained teachers in schools. Further, he asserts that LSE should be made exam orientated and seminars should be held occasionally to ensure proper implementation in the school [1]

Chege [7] assert that the negative attitude among teachers and principals undermined implementation of life skill education in school curriculum. The study further established that shortage of teaching and learning materials negatively influences realization of life skill education in the school curriculum [7]

Ramesh and Farshad C. [8] in his study proved the effectiveness of life skills training in increasing mental and physical health, pro-social behavior and decreasing in behavioral, social problems & self-destructive behaviors [8].

“In work of Abobo & Orodho [9] on the Level of Preparedness of Teachers and School Managers in Implementing Life Skills Education in Trans-Nzoia District, Kenya, found out that most teachers had not been trained on Life Skills Education hence indicating low level of preparedness by teachers. It was established that while teachers had negative attitude towards teaching of LSE, students portrayed a positive attitude towards learning of LSE. It was concluded that the level of preparedness by teachers and school managers was fairly low and this hampered effective implementation of the educational component in schools visited.” (p.32) [9].

Githaiga, Gathanwa & Thinguri [10] found out that “life skills education was not given enough attention as it should to equip the learners with adaptive skills that would enable them to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life” [10]

## 2.1 Problem Statement

In Bhutan Life Skills Education was adopted by Comprehensive School Health Division (CSHD), Ministry of Education since 2008 to build the skills of teachers and students to adopt and build positive behavior that enable them to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. After its inception a total of 7106 teachers have been trained through Training of Trainer (TOT) and School based in service Program (SBIP) [11]. A manual has been developed to implement it in the schools. Moreover, National Youth Policy and National Adolescent Health Strategy (2014 -2017) identified Life Skills Education as one of the strategy to achieve health and wellbeing of youth in the country. In the present scenario in the school curriculum, areas related to personal development, including value education, scout Programme, career guidance and orientation to vocational Skills, physical education, and games and sports are being expanded and strengthened. Accordingly, focus have been given in implementing education programmes on mastery of different life skills education along with mastery in the core subject.

However, not many studies have been done in relation to Life Skills Education programmes since its inception. There are no studies relating to the attitude of teachers toward the implementation of Life Skills Education in different level of school. Therefore, there was

need to conduct a study in order to fill the existing gap. The concern of the study was to understand the extent to which the programme has been implemented. This study in particular, aims to explore the attitudes of teachers towards Life Skills Education implementation.

## 2.2 Research Hypotheses

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant differences in the attitude of school teachers of Bhutan towards life skills education in relation to gender variation.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant differences in the attitude of school teachers of Bhutan towards life skill education in relation to subject variation.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant differences in the attitude of school teachers of Bhutan towards life skill education in relation to professional qualification

**HO<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant differences in the attitude of school teachers of Bhutan towards life skill education in relation to teaching experience.

**HO<sub>5</sub>:** There is no significant differences in the attitude of school teachers of Bhutan towards life skill education in relation to level of school.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used quantitative research approach with descriptive survey design to acquire relevant and specific information regarding the existing condition of the phenomenon.

### 3.1 Participants

100 teachers were selected as the research participants from Eastern part of Bhutan using the simple random sampling technique.

### 3.2 Research Instrument

A questionnaire developed by the investigator was used. This scale consisted of 2 sections. Section— A consisted of 20 items measuring the significance of life skills. Section — B contained 20 items related to particular life skills. The survey questionnaire used five-point Likert scale items: Strongly Disagree (DA), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). These responses were assigned values ranging from 1 to 5 respectively.

The reliability and validity of the attitude scale was also determined by split half method and content validation method which was found to be reasonable high (0.78) with N as 50. Further, the content validity was established through expert judgments.

### 3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Data was gathered using the questionnaire developed by the investigator from teachers teaching in four levels of schools in Eastern District. The data collected were analyzed in the form of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22.0). Both descriptive and inferential statistics like 't' test and ANOVA were obtained to test the hypotheses formulated.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In case of male and female variation, the Calculated 't' value 0.33 was found not significant as it is lesser than the tabular value of 't' at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (HO<sub>1</sub>) stated as "There is no significant difference in the attitude of school teachers of Bhutan towards Life Skills Education in relation to gender variation" was accepted. Thus, the finding revealed that both male and female teachers teaching in four levels of schools in Bhutan do

not vary due to their gender with regard to attitude towards Life Skills Education. The above finding is in conformity with the earlier study examined by Sandhu [12], who found that there was no significant difference in life skills between male and female pupil teachers as well pupil teachers belonging to urban and rural area [12].

From the above table it revealed that the calculated 't' value 4.7 was found to be significant as its value was greater than the tabular value of 't' at 0.05 level. Thus, the null hypothesis (HO<sub>2</sub>) stated as "There is no significant difference in the attitude of school teachers of Bhutan towards Life Skills Education in relation to subject" was rejected. The finding confirms with the previous study conducted by Dhamane [6] & Sandhu [12], who found out significant difference between Science and Arts pupil teachers. Science pupil teachers were found to possess higher level of life skills as compared to Arts pupil teachers [6,12]. Thus, the finding indicated that the science teachers have higher level of positive attitude towards Life Skills Education as compared to that of non-science teachers in Bhutan. The other reason could be that the Life Skills education in Bhutan mostly focuses on sex related issues and consequently more numbers of science teachers are given opportunity in terms of training and courses.

**Table 1. Summary of test significance of difference between mean scores due to gender variation**

| Contrast | Number of samples | Mean  | SD   | SE <sub>D</sub> | 't'  | Remarks         |
|----------|-------------------|-------|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|
| Male     | 50                | 155.7 | 12.6 | 2.4             | 0.33 | Not significant |
| Female   | 50                | 154.9 | 11.1 |                 |      |                 |

**Table 2. Summary of test significance of difference between mean scores in relation to subject variation**

| Contrast    | Number of samples | Mean  | SD   | SE <sub>D</sub> | 't' | Remarks     |
|-------------|-------------------|-------|------|-----------------|-----|-------------|
| Science     | 50                | 159.1 | 10.8 | 2.3             | 4.7 | Significant |
| Non-science | 50                | 148.2 | 11.9 |                 |     |             |

**Table 3. Summary of test significance of difference between means scores due to variation in professional qualification**

| Contrast      | Number of samples | Mean  | SD   | SE <sub>D</sub> | 't' | Remarks     |
|---------------|-------------------|-------|------|-----------------|-----|-------------|
| Post Graduate | 50                | 159.5 | 11.8 | 2.2             | 3.8 | significant |
| B.Ed          | 50                | 151.1 | 10.3 |                 |     |             |

**Table 4. Test of significance of difference through ANOVA on attitude of teachers towards Life Skills Education in relation to teaching experiences**

| Variable            | Categories  | N  | SSt     | SSb   | SSw     | F    | Remarks         |
|---------------------|-------------|----|---------|-------|---------|------|-----------------|
| Teaching experience | 1-5 years   | 25 | 12964.6 | 144.7 | 12819.9 | 0.36 | Not Significant |
|                     | 6-10 years  | 25 |         |       |         |      |                 |
|                     | 11-15 years | 25 |         |       |         |      |                 |
|                     | >15 years   | 25 |         |       |         |      |                 |

**Table 5. Test of significance of difference through ANOVA on attitude of teachers towards Life Skills Education in relation to school levels**

| Variable         | Categories              | N  | SSt     | SS b   | SSw     | F   | Remarks     |
|------------------|-------------------------|----|---------|--------|---------|-----|-------------|
| Level of schools | Primary school          | 25 | 12964.6 | 1889.5 | 11075.1 | 5.5 | Significant |
|                  | Lower secondary school  | 25 |         |        |         |     |             |
|                  | Middle secondary school | 25 |         |        |         |     |             |
|                  | Higher secondary school | 25 |         |        |         |     |             |

With regard to the intra variables of post graduate and B.Ed variations, the calculated 't' value 3.8 was found to be significant as its value was greater than the table value of 't' at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_{O_3}$ ) stated as "There is no significant difference in the attitude of school teachers of Bhutan towards Life Skills Education due to their level of professional qualification" was rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that there existed significant difference in Bhutanese teachers' attitude towards implementing Life Skills Education in relation to their professional qualifications.

From the test of ANOVA, the finding vividly elucidates that the calculated 'F' value (0.36) is lesser than the tabular values at 0.05 level. Hence, the hypothesis ( $H_{O_4}$ ) stated as "There is no significant difference in the attitude of school teachers of Bhutan towards Life Skills Education in relation to number of years in service" was retained. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in teachers' attitude towards life skill education in relation to their teaching experience. The reason behind may be that the teachers in Bhutan are given equal training in Life Skills Education irrespective of their teaching experiences.

Through the test of ANOVA, it revealed that the 'F' value (5.5) was greater than the table value at 0.05 level. Thus, the hypothesis ( $H_{O_5}$ ) stated as "There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers teaching in different school levels (Primary school, lower secondary school, middle secondary school and higher secondary school)

to towards Life Skills Education" was rejected. The finding discloses that there exists significant difference in the attitude of teachers in Bhutan teaching at four levels of school towards Life Skills Education. It signifies that teachers teaching in secondary schools have higher positive attitude towards Life Skills Education as compared to primary school teachers. One of the underlying reasons could be that Life Skills Education is given more importance from secondary stage onwards which marks the transition of childhood to adolescents. Subsequently, more number of secondary schools' teachers may be trained in life skills education as compared to primary school teachers.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In the present study, sincere effort was made by the investigator to explore and to see the ground realities on attitude of Bhutanese teachers towards implementation of Life Skills Education. The current study showed that teachers teaching in four levels of school (Primary, lower secondary, middle secondary and higher secondary schools) have significant difference in their attitude towards life skills education. Therefore, it was deduced that attitude of teachers teaching in Bhutan have significant difference in accordance with the levels of schools served.

The study found that the teaching experience does not make significant difference in

implementing life skills education. On the other hand, while testing the attitude of teachers towards life skills education in relation to gender, the study showed that there does not exist significant difference in respect of male and female teachers. Similarly, the study disclosed that there is no significant difference in teachers' attitude towards life skill education in relation to their teaching experience.

While examining the attitude of science and non-science teachers towards Life Skills Education, the result revealed that there was significant difference between the two intra variables, which was in conformity to past researchers. However, this study is a preliminary step undertaken by the investigator in this area and the investigator plans to conduct further investigations into the determinants that influence the attitude of teachers towards implementing Life Skills Education in Bhutan.

Nonetheless, the investigator also hopes that this study would aid curriculum designers, principals, administrators, teachers and parents to understand teachers' perceptions concerning the implementation of Life Skills Education. In view of the findings from this study, the researchers recommend that all educators, regardless of the subject they teach, should be trained in life skills to understand and address learners' needs and problems. Hence, this in turn may lead to adequate training of teachers, professional development, and development of appropriate life skill curriculum which would definitely contribute to production of prolific and creative citizen who can meaningfully help in nation building.

## CONSENT

Participants' written consent has been gathered and retained by the author as per the mandate and requirement of international or university standard.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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