



« A THEORETICAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF CORONA VIRUS CRISIS ON LEARNERS' SOCIAL INTERACTION IN KENYAN LEARNING INSTITUTIONS »

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ABSTRACT: The education sector worldwide has greatly been impacted negatively by corona virus crisis, the republic of Kenya included. This is because teaching and learning activities in all learning institutions have severely been disrupted. The worst hit learners are the primary and secondary school candidates who should sit for their national examinations at the end of this year. The other learners whose education has been affected negatively are the unprivileged, vulnerable, marginalized, special needs and poor learners whose families are mainly found in urban informal settlements, refugee camps, rural hard to reach areas and internally displaced people camps. This is because their guardians or parents depend on donations, small scale farming, vendition, informal employment and small scale businesses to fend for their families. Corona virus crisis has compromised the financial ability of these families dismally especially when it comes to financing school related expenditure like paying for online classes, buying learning materials like textbook, revision materials and others. Learners from these disadvantaged backgrounds always prefer to be taught physically by a teacher rather than being taught remotely or online. This is because physical teaching helps them to closely interact socially and bond physically with their teacher. The online education and distance learning which has been implemented by the Kenyan government through the Ministry of Education do not allow learners to have a personal relationship and intimate interaction with the online teacher. Also online teaching do not favor such learners as most of them do not have access to mediums like Smartphone, internet connectivity, computers, televisions, radios, among others. This has widened inequality in access to relevant quality education by such disadvantaged learners. There is need to examine these challenges and propose suitable remedies which can be utilized during and after this corona virus crisis by educationalist in order to ensure uninterrupted learning in educational institutions in future. Thus this write up will address this gist in this study. Since this study is a theoretical review, it will review secondary data material to discuss the challenges and remedies of corona virus crisis on social interaction in Kenyan institutions of learning with special reference to learners. This theoretical review is based on the Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunities advocated by Sherman and Wood.

KEYWORDS: *Corona virus crisis, Impact, and Social interaction.*

1. Introduction:

Socio-economic changes in any nation globally can best be achieved through education. That is why the 4th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) aims at promoting quality education for lifelong learning opportunities for all. It goes alongside the 9th SDG goal which focuses on accessing affordable information and communication technology like internet access in the least developed nations by 2030. This technological development is aimed at fast tracking social interaction among learners together with their teachers with an aim of enhancing teaching and learning activities in all learning institutions in Kenya. This

is since it can be used to revolutionize the learning process by changing the way learners and their teachers interact. However as we strive to achieve quality and relevant education and training for learners in all Kenyan learning institutions, many challenges emerge in the education sector as learners interact socially with each other and with their teachers (Ministry of Education Sessional Paper, 2018). The most recent challenges is the outbreak of the corona virus worldwide.

Corona virus illness is a disease that is caused by a novel strain of corona virus. The virus infects both human beings and animals. It is a group of viruses that mostly affect the respiratory system. The virus cause mild illness that is similar to common cold. Other strains cause more severe types of common cold like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The virus is spread through cough droplets and interacting closely with an infected surface or person by touching, shaking hands, etc. The signs and symptoms of the disease are respiratory symptoms like coughing, fever, shortness of breath, and other cold like symptoms. Learners in basic education are at high risk of being infected or infecting others since they are in close contact with other learners, teachers and parents (World Health Organization, 2020).

The virus emerged from Wuhan in China in December 2019. China had reported 83,878 infected cases and 4636 deaths. World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Corona Virus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of Global Concern on at 30th January 2020. The virus has since then spread in the whole world with immediate and long term social and economic effects on nations and their citizens. By 28th April 2020, the disease had infected over 3.04 million people with over 211,305 deaths and over 895,261 recovery cases. United States of America was leading with over 988,469 infected cases, 56,253 death cases and 111,583 recoveries. Italy had 199,414 infected cases, 26,977 deaths and 66,624 recoveries. UK had 158,348 infections, 21,157 deaths and 809 recoveries. Spain reported 229,422 infected cases, 23,521 deaths and 120,832 recoveries. In Africa, the first case was reported in early February 2020. As at 28th April 2020, Africa had 33,389 cases reported. South Africa had reported 4,793 infected cases, 90 deaths and 1,473 recoveries. Egypt had 4,782 infections, 337 deaths and 1,236 recoveries. Ghana had 1,550 infections, 11 deaths and 155 recoveries. Nigeria reported 1,337 infections, 40 deaths and 255 recoveries. Tanzania had 299 infections, 10 deaths and 48 recoveries. Uganda had 79 infected cases, 0 deaths and 47 recoveries. Rwanda had 207 infections, 0 deaths and 93 recoveries (Nation Media Newsplex Team, April 29th, 2020).

The first corona virus case was reported in Kenya on 13th March, 2020. Since then, the virus has been spreading exponentially in the country with Nairobi and Mombasa counties being the worst affected. By 28th April 2020, Kenya had reported 374 corona virus cases with 124 recoveries and 14 deaths. Most of these cases were reported in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kilifi, Kwale and Mandela counties. More cases are also being reported along the border areas. In order to protect learners across the country from contacting the disease, the government of Kenya closed all learning institutions abruptly between 16th and 20th March 2020. Additionally, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has set policy priority that aims to reduce

the spread of communicable disease including corona virus (Nation Media Newsplex Team, April 29th, 2020).

The continued spread of corona virus worldwide has caused long term severe social and economic effects on nations and their citizens as noted earlier. As the number of deaths due to the virus continue to rise globally, it implies that many learners will be orphaned and thus become vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Closure of learning institutions and businesses has led to many varied challenges like physical and psychological health risks, widespread loss of jobs and incomes, family confinement and conflicts, isolation and economic vulnerability, among others (Olingo, 2020).

In relation to education, the corona virus crisis has impacted negatively on all learning institutions worldwide. This is because it led to the total closures of all the institutions of learning globally. According to UNESCO, 189 nations had effected nationwide cessations while 5 had effected local closures (UNESCO, 2020c). This measures hit about 98% of the learners worldwide. This crisis affected many learns globally since it has disrupted the learning of over 1.7 billion learners globally. For instance, on 23rd March 2020, Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) gave a brief shelving of Cambridge O Level, Cambridge International AS & A Level, Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge AICE Diploma, and Cambridge Pre-U exams for May / June 2020 series across all states. International Baccalaureate examinations were also suspended (UNESCO, 2020a). In Kenya, although the Cabinet Secretary (CS) for Education Prof. Magoha indicated that the national examinations for primary and secondary schools remain on schedule, it is uncertain whether the examinations will be done within this year or not. In addition, several Kenyan learners pursuing internal curricular in various institutions were left in limbo after cancellation of exams scheduled for May and June 2020 due to the prevailing corona virus crisis (Kariuki, 2020).

In order to address the challenges of learning disruption by corona virus crisis, various countries globally have opted to invest in online programs like distance learning, social sites and digital applications to enable teachers to reach their learners by interacting socially online in order to propagate learning. In Kenya, the government has developed a three-pronged approach to aid the continuation of learning remotely adhering to the international and national guidance for social distancing, quarantine and self-isolation. The Ministry of Education has developed online content which learners are to access through various digital channels to ensure uninterrupted learning for learners in the country while they are at home. However, this is faced with a lot of challenges (MoE, 2020).The Ministry of Education has also formed a task force to access, evaluate and propose a way forward in matters of education as well as reporting their findings and outcomes to the Cabinet Secretary for Education.

All these undertakings that have been implemented globally have already been marred with various challenges (UNESCO, 2020a). For instance, the lockdowns and prolonged closure of learning institutions due to the corona virus crisis has accelerated other challenges on the socio-economic well being of the households where learners hail from. Learners who come from the less fortunate families are the worst hit by the corona virus crisis. This is because in addition to being unable to provide for their basic need like meals, their parents cannot afford to finance their learning through digital platforms. This implies that they are facing a very high risk of being left out in accessing education. The other marginalized and most vulnerable learners who are also at higher risk of being excluded include learners with disabilities, those in urban slums, informal settlements; remote locations, asylum seekers and refugees, and those whose families have lost livelihoods as a result of job cuts or businesses closures and casual jobs among other difficult situations (Areba, 2020).

In light of all these, legal documents in Kenya like the constitution, the education act and the childrens act documents that every child in Kenya has a right to access quality and relevant education, training and research (Republic of Kenya, 2010). As such, it is worthy to examine the impact of corona virus crisis on the social interaction of learners in Kenyan learning institutions. This theoretical paper review therefore endeavors to establish the possible remedies that can be adopted in an attempt to address the challenges posed by the corona virus crisis on the social interaction of learners in our institutions of learning, with a special focus on learners. This is because no known similar study has been conducted in Kenya.

1.2 Study Objectives

This theoretical study was guided by the following objectives:-

- i. To determine the challenges posed by corona virus crisis on learners' social interaction in Kenyan learning institutions.
- ii. To establish the remedies of the challenges posed by corona virus crisis on learners' social interaction in Kenyan learning institutions

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The indefinite closure of all institutions of learning in the entire republic of Kenya has seriously disrupted and hence affected the teaching and learning process in the entire education sector. This is because all the learners together with their teachers continue to remain at home for an unspecified period of time. Although the government through the Ministry of Education (MoE) has introduced online and digital learning to assist learners to continue covering their syllabus, most parents feel that their children are lacking a personal and individualized close attention from their teachers which always occur when learners interact socially with their teachers. This corona

virus crisis has also hindered team work among learners. This is because learners cannot work together as a team with their colleagues through group discussions, peer teaching, team teaching, among other. This disruptions has majorly effected underprivileged, vulnerable, marginalized, special needs and poor learners whose households are mainly found in hard to reach areas, in urban informal settlements, in rural areas, in refugee camps, and in internally displaced people (IDP) camps. As such, there is a serious and urgent need to underpin these challenges that have been brought about by corona virus on learners' social interactions in institutions of learning in Kenya. Further, remedies that aim at mitigating these challenges should be sought. This will go a long way in offering an education, training and research that is all inclusive, equitable, quality and relevant in order to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all learners in Kenya.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This theoretical study will help the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education (MoE) together with all the other stakeholders in the Education sector to prepare, plan, assess and be ready to formulate relevant and realistic policies or measures that will enable them to deal with contagious diseases like corona virus among others when they erupt. This will in turn enable the close contact teaching and learning process to continue smoothly through close social interaction without causing the learners and teachers to fear to be infected with such infectious diseases. The study will significantly also cause the government to see the urgency of introducing health education and strengthen the life skills lessons in the education curriculum.

1.5 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The corona virus crisis which led to the closure of Kenyan learning institutions brought a lot of challenges to the disadvantaged learners. These challenges included hindering the social interaction of these learners. This is because the parents of the unprivileged learners cannot afford to give their children robust digital gadgets like laptops, internet connectivity, televisions, Smartphone's, computers, among others. These gadgets help learners to maintain close healthy social interactions with their colleagues and teachers during this period when they are at home due to corona virus. This social interaction can however only be maintained by learners from privileged backgrounds since their parents can afford to give them these digital gadgets to continue learning from the comforts of their homesteads by interacting with their teachers and fellow learners online. Thus it is incredibly difficult to refute the fact that unequal provision of educational opportunities which have been triggered by the corona virus crisis will finally undermine the education of the susceptible learners (Njeru & Orodho, 2003). Hence, this study found the classical liberal theory to be appropriate as the challenges posed by this corona virus

crisis is mostly affecting the poor, marginalized and vulnerable learners. This is because their parents and / or guardians cannot provide the basic necessities needed to enable them to continue learning digitally by interacting with their teachers and colleagues when they are at home and later proceed with the same in learning institutions when the crisis is over. This virus crisis has worsened the situation since the fortunate learners are being taught digitally through radio, televisions and social sites like facebook, whatsapp, YouTube, among. Nevertheless, the less fortunate learners are busy labouring to help their parents to put a meal on the table hence not having equal educational opportunity.

It is believed that by availing education to learners from every social stratum, one eliminates the barriers that are congenial by the virtue of being born in less unfortunate background, marginalized or vulnerable (MoE, 2018). The Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunities supports the view that learners should have equal chances at all levels of education irrespective of their socio-economic background. This will ensure that ideal conditions are created to implement the vision of equal opportunity, where every learner has admittance to the education being offered. Therefore, this theory was found to be appropriate for this theoretical study since unequal provision of education through the digital platform outside learning institutions discriminates the learners from unprivileged families in their quest for basic education. This is because their parents cannot afford to purchase for them the digital infrastructure to equally learn and interact socially from home just like their colleagues who come from the privileged families. This issue do not give them equal opportunity and hence this perpetuates inequalities.

2. Methodology:

This study was a theoretical review. As such its success depended greatly on reviewing of secondary data material in order to facilitate the discussion of the challenges posed by corona virus crisis on learners' social interaction in Kenyan learning institutions. The secondary data would also assist in establishing the remedies of the challenges posed by corona virus crisis on learners' social interaction in Kenyan learning institutions.

3. Challenges of Corona Virus Crisis on Learners' Social Interaction:

Institutions of learning are hubs of human activities and social interactions. As such, when institutions of learning are closed for a long time, many learners lose out on social interaction that is crucial to learning and development. This challenge have been witnessed especially with the closing down of learning institutions due to the prevailing corona virus crisis as outlined in the theoretical reviews below:

3.1 Withdrawal of Contact between Learners and Teachers

There are stipulated contacts hours which learners are entitle to have with their teachers per day. However, the outbreak of corona virus led to a reduction and to a larger extent removal of the physical contact between learners and tutors. This implied that learners could not closely interact socially with their teachers to be taught. This reduced social interaction was further enhanced by the safety precautionary measures taken by the Ministry of Health to prevent corona virus from spreading by embracing the concept of social distancing. The government of Kenya introduced digital learning to ensure that content is delivered to learners. However, this solution does not allow learners to have a close personalized contact and individualized attention with their teachers. Further, the online teacher cannot perceive whether the learners are understanding the content that is being delivered or not. This is because the online teacher cannot read the mood of learners through facial expressions, gestures, among others. The online teacher cannot know whether all the learners are in attendance in his / her lesson or not. The online teacher can also not judge if the learners are concentrating and paying attention during the lesson or not. The online teacher cannot call his real physical learners by name because the teachers do not know the learners who are following his lesson. Further, the online teacher cannot ascertain whether the learners are writing notes and doing all the assignments they are given. This is because the online teacher cannot mark physically the work of the learners. Hence the online teacher cannot detect the area where the learners are making mistakes or the learners have not understood. All this drawbacks that lead to lack of a close physical social interaction between the learners and their teachers have been brought about by the outbreak of corona virus.

3.2 Hindrance to Interaction between Learners and their Colleagues

The first national goal of education in Kenya is *to foster nationalism, patriotism, and promote national unity* (MoE Sessional Paper, 2018). All the people of Kenya belong to different communities, races and religions. They should be able to live and interact as one people. The education sector has therefore been charged with the responsibility of enabling learners to acquire a sense of nationhood and patriotism. It should also promote peace and harmonious co-existence. Institutions of learning achieve this goal by giving all the learners a chance to work together as a team irrespective of their social status, religion, race and tribe. This is attained through peer teaching, team teaching, collaboration, group discussions, creating family units within the institutions, games and sports, competitions, clubs and societies, debates, building team spirits, among others. All these activities require learners to interact with each other closely by working together, shaking hands and touching each other. Nevertheless, this corona virus crisis

has impeded the attainment of this goal of education in Kenya. This is because the learners who are already at home cannot be able to come together and work together to achieve a given objective. For instance, all the co-curricular activities like games, sports, music, drama athletics, and others which were scheduled for first term in Kenyan were interrupted when institutions closed abruptly (Areba, 2020). Playing is crucial in the learning process. This is because playing enables learners to explore, create experiment, adapt, communicate, socialize, and learn problem solving techniques. In addition, playing allow learners to build and have extension of their skills and knowledge in the process of interaction with others, environment, and own on their own. Gergen (2012) opined that it is only by means of play that the intellect of humanity is uncovered.

3.3 Promotion of Inequalities among Learners

The fifth national goal of education in Kenya *aims at promoting social equity and responsibility* (MoE Sessional Paper, 2018). Education should promote social equity and responsibility among all the learners in our learning institutions. It should provide inclusive and equitable access to quality and relevant education including learners with special educational needs and disabilities. Education should also give learners opportunities for shared responsibility and accountability through community service learning. However, corona virus crisis has lead to promotion of inequalities in the provision of education among learners. This is because it has lead to separation of learners based on their family backgrounds. This implies that learners from the unprivileged families do not have the financial stamina to access education on an equal footing with learned from the privileged households. This inability to access the availed mediums of learning worsens further inequality in access, relevancy and quality of education (MoE, 2020). Learners from the marginalized and vulnerable homes lack the digital infrastructure to help them interact online freely with their colleagues from the fortunate families. This is because their parents are unable to buy for them digital gadgets like radios, televisions, smartphone, internet connectivity, and others. This shows that this corona virus crisis has impeded the provision of an inclusive education to learners from different backgrounds. The worst hit are learners from poor backgrounds. This is in contravention of the recommendation that was given by UNESCO in relation to closure of institutions due to corona virus crisis. It proposed the use of distance learning platforms and open education applications and any other platforms that institutions and instructors can use to get in touch with learners distantly and minimize the interruption of learning (UNESCO, 2020a)

3.4 Upsurge of Unethical Social Behaviours among Learners

The fourth national goal of education in Kenya *focuses on promotion of sound moral and religious values*. Education

is geared towards developing a self-disciplined and ethical citizen with sound moral and religious values. It promotes acquisition of national values as enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya. Institutions strive to achieve this goal by ensuring high standards of discipline when learners are in and out of the institution. Most parents / guardians are unable to maintain the discipline of their children when they are at home. Also the employed parents / guardians cannot provide childcare and manage distance learning as learners are out of their learning institutions. In the absence of substitute options, most working class parents frequently leave learners at home on their own during this period when institutions have been closed due to the corona virus crisis (UNESCO, 2020d). This has led to hazardous behaviors like amplified substance abuse, influence of peer pressure, early marriages, teenage pregnancies (Areba, 2020). It has been proved that elongated closures of schools together with restricted movements and small houses among the poor households has risen cases of exposure to pornographic materials, increased rape, and insect, drug and substance abuse, Gender Based Violence, school dropout, child labour, child abuse, neglect and defilement (UNESCO, 2020b). Cases have also been reported of some children committing suicide in some parts of the country while others joining gang groups to engage in theft and criminal activities. All these effects could lead to low transition rates of learners in the education sector when teaching and learning will resume. This will consequently in turn undermine the novel strategic policy of 100% transition and access to education which has already been laid down in the Education sector in Kenya.

3.5 Discrimination and Stigmatization of Learners Infected by Corona Virus

Promotion of individual development and self-fulfillment is the third national goal of education in Kenya. The education sector is required to give learners opportunities to develop to the fullest potential. This includes development of one's interests, talents and character for positive contribution to the society. However, with the upsurge of corona virus, there are chances of some learners not achieving their full potential. This is basically due to discrimination and stigmatization of the learners who are or were affected and / or infected by corona virus. There are high chances of learner who come from countries and counties that were and are hard hit by corona virus (like Tanzania, Somalia, Mombasa, Nairobi, Kilifi, and others) to be discriminated and stigmatized by other learners. This is because other learners will be reluctant to interact with them. Learners from poor families can be discriminated and stigmatized by their colleagues from fortunate families especially when they cannot share out their experiences in relation to the digital learning they had during the prolonged corona virus period. Discriminations on religious line can also be witnessed in our learning institutions.

3.6 Cultural Practices and Spread of Corona Virus

Promotion respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures is the sixth national goal of education in Kenya. Education should instill in learners appreciation of Kenya's rich and diverse cultural heritage. Learners should value own and respect other people's culture as well as embrace positive cultural practices in a dynamic society. One of the key cultural practices that define Kenyans is greeting people physically in the hand as a sign of peace especially when you meet that person (s) for the first time. Kenya's also like staying together in crowds rather than staying far apart. Such cultural practices have made Kenya to be identified as a corona virus high risk country. Other risk factors that can enhance the spread of corona virus in Kenya include the high enrollment rate in all our learning institutions, the high number of foreign learners in learning institutions, the high number of refugees in refugee camps like Kakuma and Daadab, among other. This therefore implies that when learning institutions will be opened in Kenya, it is feared that the high enrolment of learners in this institutions can cause the disease to spread. This is because congestion of learners in classrooms and dormitories will make it very difficult to attain social distancing in these institutions of learning. It may take some time before the learners embrace and adopt the new culture of not shaking hands and maintaining social distance. Also most institutions may not have enough water to enable learners to be washing their hands frequently. With measures to prevent the spread of the virus hugely reliant on information campaigns, hand washing and social distancing, information targeted for consumption by children is scarce or non-existent.

3.7 Anxiety and Depression among Learners

This prolonged closure of learning institutions has brought stress on guardians and parents as most of them are unable to contain their children at home. The interruption of learning by this corona virus crisis has increased psychological trauma, uncertainty, and anxiety among learners, teachers and parents. This is mainly in relation to the National Examinations; inequity in the ongoing online programs due to majority of learners not having access to digital platforms due to lack of devices and internet connectivity at home; different levels of parental knowledge and attitude given that parents are supposed to support children in learning (Areba, 2020). Confirming parents' and stakeholders' anxiety over examinations, Education Cabinet Secretary for Education Prof. Maghoha while addressing media briefs organized by Ministry of Health on 26th April 2020 indicated that Kenyan schools will remain closed for the next one month, following a directive by the government in measures purposed to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The CS said this while not categorical on the opening of schools which he said depended on interventions of the government on the control of the virus.

4. Remedies of Challenges posed by Corona Virus Crisis on learners' Social Interaction:

This section of this theoretical study provides some hypothetical remedies that could be applied to reduce and / or prevent the challenges of this crisis on the social interaction of learners in Kenyan institutions of learning. These proposed remedies would cushion all learners in order to enhance and ensure normal continuity of all teaching and learning activities in all the learning institutions in Kenya during and after the corona virus crisis. Some remedies would be short term (immediate), medium term (six months to two years) or long term (five to ten years) as indicated by Arebe (2020). This would be in line with the government's post-corona virus recovery strategies and health priorities.

4.1 Promotion of enhanced effective Guidance and Counselling of Learners

The government of Kenya should roll out guidance, counseling and mentorship services to learners who will survive the corona virus crisis. This is because the disease has heightened stress among learners, especially the candidates. This will ensure that all the learners in the republic of Kenya are guided and counseled properly during and after this crisis. For instance, just the same way the government is enhancing learning using social media like radios and televisions, the government can take advantage of these media plus other social sites like facebook, whatsapp, YouTube, among others to offer guiding and counseling program to learners during this period when they are at home due to the virus. The government can also enlighten parents on how they can guide and counsel learners during this period when they are at home with them. This will go along way in reducing or curbing the many cases of depression, committing suicide, violence, peer pressure, among others, that are being reported.

Learners should be talked to by teachers, health workers, social workers, and quality assurance and standards officers upon opening of learning institutions to explain to them why some measures are being taken. They should do so in a manner that expresses care and concern rather than fear. This can be achieved by the government through the MoE developing content on corona virus pandemic psychological support awareness and safety measures which should be disseminated for use in institutions of learning. The MoE should come up with programs and modules which teachers and other educators can use to guide and counsel the learners when they will resume learning after the protracted schools closure period that was caused by corona virus crisis. Areba (2020) opined that "*strengthening of guidance and counseling departments and programmes in schools through building the capacity of instructors in life skills, guiding and counseling to efficiently respond to variations in social behavior will be significant*".

This will enable the learners to avoid discriminating and stigmatizing the learners who were or are affected and

infected by the virus. This will help learners to accept and support their colleagues who were or are affected or infected by the disease. Guidance and counseling will also help the learners who were or are affected and infected by the disease to heal, accept them, and accept the situations they went through. Guiding and counseling learners will go along way in ensuring that harmonious social interactions among learners continue to flourish in all our learning institutions when normalcy is restored in the education sector. This will therefore be in tandem with the first national goal of education in Kenya. This goal intends to foster nationalism, patriotism, and promote national unity. This is because all the people in Kenya belong to different communities, races and religions and should be able to live and interact as one people. Education should therefore enable the learners to acquire a sense of nationhood and patriotism. This would in turn promote peace and harmonious co-existence among all the learners in our learning institutions.

4.2 Offering Health Education Lessons to Learners in all Learning Institutions

The government of Kenya should consider investing in teaching health education in all the learning institutions in Kenya. This will advance further the knowledge of learners on prevention of transmittable ailments and their general health quality. This is because there is empirical evidence in the importance of offering health education on contagious ailments among primary, secondary, and university students (Juniarti & MNurs, 2008). Various researches have indicated that giving learners health education lessons in learning institutions is favorably important. This is because health education helps learners to willfully embrace healthy behaviors and healthy lifestyles which reduce or remove risky elements that spread transmittable ailments, stop communicable diseases, promote health and improve the value of life. Areba (2020) indicated that efforts should be made to debunk the myths on serious pandemics like corona virus and rely on scientific information provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the MoH through provision of health education knowledge. The MoE in conjunction with the MoH should further disseminate knowledge on health and hygienic practices in learning institutions to avert the possibility of infections arising from infectious diseases like corona virus and such like infirmities (Areba, 2020). Health education is paramount because it will enlighten all the learners in our learning institutions on how to keep themselves safe from contracting corona virus as they interact socially with other learners, teachers and workers in the institution.

4.3 Drafting and Implementing Health Care Policies and Guidelines in and for Learning Institutions

The MoE has formulated some policies to address the emergencies that arise in the education sector like fires. For instance, the Disaster Management policy was launched in July 2018 by the MoE (Education Sector

Disaster Management Policy, 2018). It was formed to mitigate the risks of fires and heavy rains ruining institutional infrastructure in order to promote the safety of educators and learners in learning institutions. This MoE Disaster Policy reinforces other policies and guidelines being enforced in institutions of learning like The Education Sector Policy on Peace Education (2014), The Health and Safety Standard Guidelines for institutions (2008) and The Education Sector Policy of Education for Sustainable Development (MoE Sessional Paper, 2018). However, these policies are deficient since they do not address contemporary crises that emerge and disrupt the programs of the education sector like the corona virus crisis.

The MoE and all stakeholders in the education sector need combine forces to draft comprehensive health policies and guidelines to address such emerging issues. They should also facilitate the adoption and implementation of such guidelines and policies in all institutions of learning in Kenya to ensure and enhance sanitation and hygiene practices are observed in and out of learning institutions. The policies should include the various interventions that should be used to curb corona virus and to ensure that the virus or other similar contagious diseases and pandemics do not spread in learning institutions. For instance the MoE in conjunction with the MoH should provide sanitizers, water, hand washing facilities like soaps and sanitation infrastructure in institutions of learning. Enough water will enable learners to be washing their hands frequently and hence reduce the spreading of the disease. Other interventions to be adopted include: fumigating the institutions that were used as quarantine and isolation centers; providing masks; enforcing social distance in learning institutions; starting school-based health programs or clubs; and among others.

Such policies should also guide and inform the training of administrators, teachers, workers and learners on pandemic emergency responses and measures before they occur (MoE, 2020). For example, the policies should stipulate how teachers should be trained to be able to disseminate correct information on perceptions of the crisis and how to counter misinformation about the disease. The policies should further formulate guidelines on how to come up with learner friendly messages which can be understood easily by learners. This can be achieved through designing banners, pamphlets, posters, fliers, among others. Efforts must be made to train school cooks on hygiene, sanitation and safe food preparation. This is because food hygiene and preparation is also key in curbing the spread of corona virus and other related ailments (Areba, 2020). As such, the health policies to be adopted in learning institutions will ensure that all safety precautions like social distancing are taken to ensure that all members in the institution remain safe as they interact with each other socially.

4.4 Assistance for Poor, Special Needs, Vulnerable and Marginalized Learners

This virus has led to a very serious social, cultural and economic backlash in the whole world. The worst affected people are the poor, marginalized and vulnerable members of the society. This backlash has trickled down to the learners from these backgrounds. The MoE in conjunction with the Department of Children Services should collaborate to promote safety, protection of children and increase awareness of reporting protocols for incidences of child abuse and neglect. They should also scale up on identification of orphans and learners who come from poor, marginalized and vulnerable families in order to provide them with additional assistance like food, cash and other basic need. These measures will ensure that such learners continue to remain in learning institutions after the corona virus crisis by avoiding the possibility of drop out of institutions of learning for lack of basic needs, funds and support. This implies that the government of Kenya should prepare a supplementary education budget for post-corona virus crisis. This will go along way in shielding the affected and infected learners in order to recover from the unexpected corona virus socio-economic shocks. This will be in line with the second national goal of education in Kenya that focuses on promoting social, economic, technological and industrial needs for national development. Education should prepare the learner to play an effective and productive role in the nation.

4.4 Carrying out a Survey on Preparedness of Learners to cope up with Corona Virus

The MoE should conduct a survey to determine the preparedness of learners to accept and cope up with the corona virus crisis both during and after this pandemic. The MoE can develop an appropriate digital tool to use to conduct this survey during the period when learners are at home because of corona virus. The MoE should also come up with another different tool that will be used to conduct the surveys after the pandemic is over.

5. Conclusion

The fifth national objective of education in Kenya aims at promoting social equity and responsibility. Education should provide inclusive and equitable access to quality and differentiated education including learners with disabilities and special educational needs. Education should also provide the learner with opportunities for shared responsibility and accountability through community service learning. Therefore, when normal learning will resume after this corona virus crisis, there is an urgent necessity for all learning institutions to promote positive social interactions among learners as they Endeavour to recover the precious learning time which they lost due to the crisis. No learner should be discriminated based on gender, race, religion, county of origin, country of origin, health status, cultural or socio-economic background. Collaboration and team work

should greatly be propagated among all the learners. Measures should be put in place to address any challenges that arise from the strategies formulated by the MoE. This will conclusively help all our institutions to ensure 100% access, retention and completion of education by all learners in order to produce an all round Kenyan citizen. Hence, education in the post-corona virus crisis era should be equitable, all-inclusive, accessible and quality to all learners with no single element of learner discrimination.

6. Recommendations

A practical research study of the impact of corona virus crisis on social interaction of learners in Kenyan learning institutions should be conducted. This will provide a real empirical analysis on the effect of corona virus on social interaction among learners in learning institutions.

A study on post corona virus on the education sector in Kenya should be conducted. This will enable the education sector to make necessary plans for the present and future such as providing more infrastructures in learning institutions to cater for social distancing among others.

The MoE should conduct a needs assessment among learners after the corona virus crisis. This will enable the government through the MoE to develop and provide intervention programmes that will sort or help the most deserving learners like the poor, the marginalized, the vulnerable and the special needs learners in emergency situations.

The government through the MoE should formulate and legalize guidelines to mitigate corona virus pandemic and other related emergencies and include them in the already existing Risk Management and Safeguards policies in the education sector to strengthen these policies.

The Government through MoE should prevent the spread of corona virus in all learning institutions in Kenya by providing learners, teachers, education officials and other stakeholders in the education sector with information that will help in prevention of transmission and spread of the disease. This can be achieved by using mass media, social media, and social sites and by using other strategies that are learner centered and learner friendly.

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