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Indigenous Pedagogy for Developing Essential Life-Skills of Children in Masaka District, Uganda

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Contemporary education practice is widely seen as practices that blend conventional approaches with either new innovations or culturally tested practices. In a situation where being cultural or modern has its own drawbacks, towing the middle position becomes an inevitable choice. The paper presents findings from an exploratory sequential study that examined the influence of Indigenous Pedagogy (IP) on developing children's life skills in Masaka District, Uganda. It was anchored on Lewin's (1922) change theory; likened to Manion and Cohen's (1975) reinvention theory and adopted as a restoration theory. Snow bowling, purposive and stratified random sampling were used to select 44 participants. Twenty (20) key informants including 6 parents, 2 elders, 6 religious, 2 District Education Officers; 2 Ministry officials and 2 local council leaders were interviewed. Twenty-four (24) other respondents participated in three-eight-member Focus Group Discussions (FDGs). The findings portray replicable practices of skilling based on deep-rooted beliefs set on standards that are supported by aspirations in harmony with nature. The study found that methods used by Masaka parents combined theory and practice daily; in lessons that happen where knowledge was situated, mainly through apprenticeship, attachment, heart-to-heart and one-to-one encounters. They also embraced global citizenry based on firm principles of what Africans value. The study concluded that indigenous methods were still useful in grooming children with life skills of productive work, character, positive attitudes, mental acuity and social orientation. It recommends that teacher education institutions require academic programmes blending contemporary with indigenous methods anchored on core African values to prepare pro-cultural-modern teachers. To link the valuable past to the inevitable contemporary ways of knowing, the application of hybrid pedagogy becomes imperative.

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INTRODUCTION

Many African and Western states still believe that it is appropriate to protect their indigenous methods of thinking in order to preserve their civilisations and legacies today, despite globalisation (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019; Gupta, 2015; Funteh, 2015). Gupta (2015) argued in favour of a third space pedagogy that has limitations set by many ideologies and civilisations for the social, contextual and cultural dimensions. There have already been numerous initiatives to reintroduce schooling that places an emphasis on cultural values (Ejuu, 2019). Research on traditional cultures and modernisation in Japan, for instance, by Noafusa (2013), focused on value-worldly education in the Shinto tradition, while LeVine et al. (2015) found that parents in North America preferred Gusii modes of early socialisation that were culturally appropriate among children.

We know that all early years' education (EYE) teachers should practise fairness to children by using effective and influential EYE pedagogy that fosters positive attitudes and values and encourages critical thought as well as the development of practical skills (Awopegba et al. 2013). With a cost-benefit ratio of 1.6% (UNICEF, 2016; Hohmann and Weikert, 2007), children who are well-prepared at the foundational stages cope better with later schooling and are more suited to achieve in life. In many African communities, it is now well-recognised that modern practices go against the idea of a gradual transfer out of one's native environment (Awopegba et al., 2013). In a study on child development and education conducted by Swadener et al. (2000), it was discovered that Kenyan parents were dissatisfied with the

exceedingly demanding formal unrealistic curriculum that isolated learning from children's realities and caused unnecessary fatigue (Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019, 2017).

Ninety percent (90%) of Uganda's Early Childhood Education (ECD) pupils, according to Ejuu (2018), are unable to complete activities in the areas where they score highly. According to a study on Early Learning Development Standards [ELDS] (Ejuu, 2012; 2018), western-oriented teaching methods fall short of parents' expectations. Adversely, current pedagogy sometimes prioritises knowledge growth while stifling other parts of child development. Traditional informal pedagogy sought to foster the development of well-rounded individuals (Opio-Oloya, 2018). It is important to emphasise the need to analyse how communities have transformed over time and that we must be aware that communication across linguistic barriers requires the ability to multitask and talk in various languages in today's interconnected, multicultural society (Salzburg, 2017).

Thus, the goal of education should be reemphasised in order to produce competent human capital that will improve the quality of life for each person, family, and wider community while also assisting children in learning how to be, to-know, to-do, and live (UNESCO, 2013). However, it is not clear whether IP still meets the life-skilling needs of children in a modern world. In which ways does IP contribute to Contemporary Pedagogy (CP) towards building a hybrid that effectively prepares children for multiple settings? The quality of an educational system's output is solely dependent on the pedagogy that underpins it. This pedagogy must be intergenerational in order to leave lasting

impressions on African learners' minds, hearts, and hands, enabling them to transform their villages without simply adopting the modern way of life, but rather adopting a hybrid pedagogy for their triple heritage (Mazrui, 1986), which fits in well with Africans value.

The study sought to establish how well IP and CP influenced the life-skill development of six-year-old children so as to determine the methods that work best towards a hybrid. This paper focuses on the influence of IP on the development of six-year-olds life-skills in one District in Uganda.

The findings on how IP influences life-skills development will inform the process of improving CP towards crafting a hybrid pedagogy that will enable children to live and work successfully in the local and global contexts as well as build theory to inform practice.

Theoretical Framework

The paper employs Lewin's (1922) change theory, which posits that behaviour is a dynamic balance of forces acting in opposing directions (Kritsonis, 2012) to examine how IP informs CP towards a hybrid pedagogy (HP). According to the notion, when social services become stuck, it is critical to unfreeze practises that no longer work and re-ignite those that do. Unfreezing-change-refreeze is a three-stage technique that encourages Africans to relax, unlearn and replace irrelevant facts (Kritsonis, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an exploratory sequential design to collect qualitative data, guided by the pragmatic school of thought. The research was carried out in the nine sub-counties of Masaka district, in the central region of Uganda. Selection of participants was based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970 in Bukhari, 2021) table for determining sample size; calculated at 3% margin of error for continuous data. Through rigorous screening, a total of 44 participants were selected from the population size of 50 people identified as users of IP. Though 30 is the common magic sample size for qualitative data, the number rose

to 44 to embrace a representative sample of the essential participant categories.

To gather qualitative data, purposive sampling was employed as the most appropriate non-probability technique to identify 20 key informants with experience in skilling children using IP. The key informants including 6 parents; 2 elders from the Buganda Kingdom; 2 District Education Officers; 2 Ministry officials; 2 local-political and 6 religious' leaders [representing Catholics, Protestants and Muslims] were engaged in semi-structured interviews to generate data on IP. Interview instructions were paired with checklists containing emergent ideas used to probe so as to obtain deeper insights.

To triangulate data, 24 additional respondents were selected through snowballing: 8 Elders, 8 parents; and 8 Religious leaders. After identifying the potential participants through snowballing; they were categorised and their names written on paper; then picked from a basket in a lottery style. The selected persons were engaged in three respective FGDs consisting of 8 participants per category. Each category of respondents had an equal number of males and females.

Raw data were coded under each objective and reduced manually until saturation through interpretive thematic content analysis. This was the most effective way to derive the meaning behind human behaviour. Emerging themes were identified and tested for frequency and consistence using Excel sheets. The most repeated common ideas were recoded under each theme, objective by objective.

FINDINGS

The findings are presented under three separate objectives as follows:

Exploring Beliefs Guiding Standard IP

Silent Personal Beliefs Informed Ways of Nurturing

Parents held firm unspoken beliefs (philosophy) which guided nurturing with a definite purpose as they respectively disclosed:

Good conduct is worth more[important] than wisdom, honour and fame... So, I often use riddles, modelling and wise sayings to pass on the wisdom of the Ganda to children and grandchildren ... start the way you want to go [k'oneweeka...] Mother bird teaches the nestlings to fly... [Enyonyi enkulu ...] (P7RMMM).

Life of essence begins in the early years ... we prepare a child to be of the essence in life to leave a mark. Being of essence is cardinal in preparing for life (P14F).

Humane makes a child's life easy and simple. Children must fit everywhere they go, so we teach them humility to enable them to say 'sorry' when they are wrong and tolerance to negotiate in conflicts (P1RMM).

In Buganda, we prepare a child for life and keep our family legacy (leaving a mark). Ganda comes from muganda (bundle), signifying togetherness (K3UEEM).

The most common beliefs that masterminded IP were the propagation of family heritage, legacies, essence and humane as determinants of a successful and civilised individual. By the above beliefs, solidarity was given prominence above individuation, although learner independence was encouraged within a pre-determined frame of reference:

A degree of independence is vital for children to succeed and live happily. A child's independence should agree with the fundamental universal truths and common agreed standards (K1UEMM).

Revelations indicate that every child has to work hard to redeem his better future, not relying on what parents have as an inheritance:

A child who shows a good reputation is given special attention as the heir, even if it is a grandchild. This was done to encourage other children to work harder to increase family-tree possessions. Children were denied certain things to nurture autonomy (K2REF).

The above excerpt reflects parents' belief that depriving children of certain privileges induced self-sustenance. The belief holds that if a parent provides whatever a child requires, he/she will always be dependent on elders. If the parent was incapacitated in any way, the family legacy would collapse. Another belief that drives the actions of many parents in Buganda is the idea that harsh discipline helps to shape the character of the child at an early age, as one states:

The Ganda fear shame! So, they use all means, including harsh discipline, to ensure their children acquire a status in life. First-born children are raised with an iron hand to have an exceptionally admirable, exemplary character (K2REM).

The preceding excerpt depicts the use of corporal punishment on children despite the fact that it is a government-prohibited practice. The fear of having a "weak" heir who has been raised with too much love and remains infantile when he is meant to be strong sustains the ill practice. It also highlights the question of male offspring being favoured as family heirs over the girl-child, who may forever be subject to the male child's influence. Girls do not succeed their fathers since they marry into another clan (Ssozi, 2012). A typical Muganda is believed to be foresighted, capable of predicting what a child will be like at birth. One elder explained,

Konooweeka tokalinda kusaaba ttaka,' mwana mugimu ava ku ngozi.' 'Kakyama mamera... bw'okagolola kamenyeka bumenyesi'. That is, a child has to be skilled at an early age. ... When a child is born, you train proper posture when he or she is breast-feeding to train him/her to be respectful. It is that time that you identify the ancestor the child resembles and name him or her accordingly. The child will then be skilled to inherit the work of the person she/he resembles (K9REF).

The preceding philosophy explains how children are socialised into specific skills and trades during their formative years. It might portray how some

children are compelled to pursue careers that are not their passion for the rest of their lives merely because they resemble someone. As explained below, the approach of skilling follows a community structure, with the strong notion that the child working with adults helps strengthen social cohesiveness (Awopegba et al. 2013).

... emiti emito gyegiggumiza ekibira. (Young trees thicken the forest). A child does not belong to one family but to the clan and community (K5RMF).

Every family desired their siblings to offer community service. They have to be trained in a group so that they learn to be part of each other. Child nurturing is guided by the aspiration of talent development for clan and community benefit (K8REM).

The above expression underscores the widely held notion that children are part of the community and must learn from it. This notion filters out individualistic thinking in children and replaces them with communal thoughts that must be maintained for the rest of their lives if they are to be recognised as vital and useful members of the Ganda community.

Essential life skills that IP Intentionally developed among Six-Year-Olds

Theming revealed commonality in seven categories of life skills: productive, intellectual; social, communication; civilisation, character; living/health, and hygiene. For Productive Work Skills (PWS), 16/20 interviewees shared the same ideas as K3UEEM, who believes that children can perform many tasks in 6 years depending on exposure and practice:

Children of six years can do most home chores like washing utensils, cleaning the house, laying beds, peeling, cooking, serving, fetching firewood, picking and drying coffee, pounding nuts, preserving food using local methods, giving directions; finding their way to neighbourhoods; sweeping the yard; grazing goats; collecting firewood; fetching water; carpentry and even blacksmithing! Children's life skills advance with practice.

There were significant differences in the life skills expected of 6-year-olds among rural, urban poor, and urban youthful-elite respondents. Age and location factor into parents' expectations. Analysis indicates that most elite youthful parents tend to overprotect their children and tend to do even the simplest tasks for them. To such parents, loving their children means pampering them to keep them 'off-dirt.' They may even underestimate what their children are capable of doing. In an interview, a mother aged 34 disagreed with the rest in the FG3RP, arguing that,

... Children of six years cannot sell items or make things out of wood, not even clay pots. Some of these skills are quite mature [advanced], not even grazing goats; blacksmithing is for old [mature] men (K10UYF).

She tended to base her arguments on personal theoretical assumptions relating to her own nurturing practices but not on actual collective training in indigenous communities (Eseanya-Esiobu, 2017). Social and effective communication skills expected of children of 6 years were common among all participants. A grandfather advised to put 'how' above 'what':

Good manners are more vital than knowledge accumulation. The Ganda have a saying, 'musajja gy'agenda, gy'asanga banne' [A man finds friends wherever he goes]. So, children are expected to make friends wherever they go. Other skills that 6-year-olds should possess include polite speech, welcoming visitors, dressing well, greeting while kneeling for both girls and young boys, proper diction, helping others, respectful habits, asking for permission, patience, timekeeping, self-control, peace-making, sharing, making requests, turn-taking and giving way (K6REM).

The preceding excerpt confirms the emphasis on communalism. Attitudes and social skills are important drivers for success in life. The Ganda adhere to and respect their traditional social norms, which are sadly eroding as a result of

intermarriages and urbanisation! To preserve these norms, they recommend incorporating IP like *kisaakate*, *kyoto*, and *kigango* with current EYE pedagogy. Buganda's nurturing took a special interest in developing children's mental capacities through errands, riddles, puzzles, fairy stories, group games using oral counting, and memory training. The majority of games are unknown to parents and teachers in urban areas that rely on computer gaming. They shared:

A six-year-old child has a good memory, sequences ideas, reports back, shows mental alertness and reasoning through puzzles (ebikokko) and riddles (ebikokyo), creativity (obuyiia), decision-making; completes tasks, names things, answers questions, tells a story from imagination; counts in order, relates and compares (FG3RE).

Ganda men disassociate themselves from mentally weak children. Consequently, mothers must stimulate mental abilities mainly through storytelling. Fathers play games with males to teach skills, but with the gender vibe, they are gradually altering their perspective towards girls' potential.

Safe and Health-Living Life-Skills Desired but not Obvious

All participants saw life skills for safety and health as vital, but they did not readily point out essential indicators observable among children. This was due to the assumption that children require adult assistance in these areas. After some persistent paraphrasing, one revealed:

Children can brush their teeth, bathe, wash, cover food, report sickness, recognise strangers, escape danger, comb, swim, climb, wash hands, safely cross, use the road and cut nails... (PIRMF).

Parents mainly support children in matters of cleanliness. Safety skills were acquired accidentally through free play as depicted in the excerpt below:

... To be safe from diseases, children need skills in rubbish disposal and keeping personal hygiene implements like toothbrushes and combs clean. ... Child safety was not a big issue like it is today... children learnt to swim in streams and climb trees as part of play... but these are real life-saving skills... (K11REF).

Safe and Health-Living Life-Skills Matched with Age

Parents were reserved on matters of sexuality. They preferred that lessons on sexuality were sensitively handled within the family structures as reflected below:

... skilling is age-specific to match age-related needs for immediate skill application. Since children of 6 are not expected to engage in sex, we consider it a taboo to introduce sexuality education before 12 years, when the paternal aunt (senga) one-to-one-talks are expected to start... It is at 12 years that sexuality skills are relevant to prepare children for puberty. Sengas intensely guided adolescents on managing menstrual hygiene and prepared them for successful marriage... (FG1RE).

Today, introducing sexuality education earlier trades off cultural norms for global trends due to negation powers for African beliefs (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017).

Participants were asked to tell what skills form Ganda children's character and civilisation. They first cited personalities they admired in Buganda: late Mulwana, Katikkiro Mayiga, Nabagereka, and Jennifer Musisi. Masaka archives on personalities held in high regard gave Benedict Kiwanuka – first Prime minister, Bishop Kiwanuka, Msgr. Ngobya, Sr. Zabali Amadeo. These examples depicted to these parents that training children's character was about building the inner positive energies to enable them to become exceptionally superior. They grow an inner drive that beats all odds. Elders gave a list of essential skills:

The desired character traits are 'boldness, kindness, faithfulness, consistency, compassion, bravery, willingness to serve, generosity, trustworthiness, selflessness, reliability, dependability, honesty, firm and wise (FG3RE).

When an individual gains a set of the above life-skills, she/he is considered to have humane [*obuntubulamu*], widely known as *Ubuntu* in Africentric philosophy, because they transcend personal feelings and gains. It implies that a person with good character lives outside of self. Such individuals supersede selfish tendencies and pursue the common good.

Education without Civilisation is Rendered Inadequate

For civilisation (*obugunjufu*), the Baganda would develop skills related to public conduct and self-management. The spread of COVID-19 is attributed to a lack of life skills pertaining to the category of civilisation, as implied in the elders' thoughts:

Children should be civilised by 6 years. Lack of basic skills like handwashing, mouth-covering when sneezing and blowing the nose leads to diseases like COVID-19. The other essential civilisation life skills we know are respect for others' culture, caring for the common good, cleanliness, hygiene, proper rubbish disposal; right dispositions, social and table etiquette, orderliness; time management, respecting invitations, and sending regrets (FG01RE).

The Ganda value civilisation, since education (*obuyigirize*) is rendered inadequate without the latter, regardless of the degrees obtained. Multiple life skills are essential for 6-year-olds in order to adjust to their environment to ably deal with life situations. Complex life skills such as herbal-medicine processing, decision making and conflict management start early and improve with age and practice. This implies that practical appraisal of diverse abilities for different age groups needs hybrid frameworks with well-

defined standards of performance at different levels.

IP Effectively Developed Life Skills among Six-Year-Olds

Based on the study findings, participants agreed that life-skilling is important. It takes place in a variety of learning environments through product-driven activities in real-world contexts. They are age-appropriate, socially acceptable and easily implemented. Children can be prepared for productive lives using a variety of methods, but apprenticeship, attachment, experiential learning, and modelling-the-way (do-as-I-do) are the most popular. To fill the skill vacuity caused by schools, Buganda Kingdom established *kisaakate* (Gumisiriza, 2012). Through non-formal education based on *obuntubulamu* philosophy, *Kisaakate pedagogy* boosts children's life skills. This strategy is an effort to leverage global trends. As implied below, several life skills are taught in various ways:

For character training, special arrangements are made to give children exposure by attaching them to families where they observe personalities with desired character traits. This method is rooted in the proverb "mbulira gw'oyita naye, nkubulire empisa zo" (birds of the same feathers flock together). Storytelling (enfumo) is a very old but still powerful method of character grooming. Other methods used were fairy tales, adventure-play, legends about great men, taboos, superstitions and fabrications, which are still used to communicate strong messages and enhance vocabulary acquisition and forecasting. Training was a one-way-valve in case of threats and taboos (FG2P).

The extract supports multi-model pedagogy that embraces collective ways of nurturing life skills. Individual assistance was provided to children through intergenerational interaction in extended family settings and through external family attachment, where they were taught in the most effective way possible under the best conditions. Due to the close-ended talk about taboos, children

could not challenge the logic behind them, such as their teeth falling out if they belittled a lame person.

The Ganda employ real-life learning opportunities like hosting visitors in a capture-the-moment approach to civilise and foster social skills. Mealtime (*olujjuliro*) is used to teach social and table manners, self-control, fairness, serving practices, and courteous requests. The Ganda attribute today's greed to the absence of dining halls in schools and communal eating spaces in homes. Without order in serving, children miss out on essential skills such as self-control as they do self-service, where they learn to be considerate. Other methods of civilising and nurturing social skills are described below:

The most effective methods for civilisation and socialisation are modelling-the-way, heart-to-heart talk, guidance and cancelling (okulambika n'okubudabuda), often conducted in a special half-built shelter called ekigango or at the fireplace (kyoto). At ekigango and ekyoto, teaching of theory is done through proverbs, songs, puzzles (ebikokko) and riddles (ebikokyo). In special cases, a child was attached (Okusiga [sowing] for royals or okuwereka for non-royals) to a special family, where she/he would learn specialised skills meaningfully. Individualised instruction was given through one-to-one chats and senga/kojja private talks (FGFB3).

The Ganda believe that children internalise and value social skills since they are directly relevant in the present and future. Children are taught to express themselves in appropriate and rational ways. Due to relatedness of language and mental acuity, similar methods are used to nurture linguistic and intellectual abilities as reflected in this verbatim:

Nurturing effective communication and mental skills was done using games, free and guided child-play like targeting, counting songs/rhymes, chants, zaala, mweso, dice,

tongue-twisters, riddles, questioning, quiz, oral recitations and songs (K3UEEM).

Childhood speech reveals a lot about a child's mental capabilities. Thus, approaches for communication and mental training have a connection and are traditionally done in groups by rote learning through intergenerational interactions. Participants believed that the rote approach is still effective for brain sharpening. Role-playing, education, monitoring, and *senga*-child-dialogues help to develop skills for safe living, health, and hygiene. Children are shown how to utilise herbal combinations as follows:

Children are taught to make herbal mixtures using a combination of herbs for bathing to keep fresh, treat body odour and get cleansed from misfortunes. It was the role of grandmas (jjajjas) to make a special herbal wash called 'ekyogero' (local-assorted-herb warm-steam-birth) intended to protect children's skins from rushes or treat the infected skins. The 'kyogero' birth was believed to bequeath favour and blessings upon a child. Children were trained on how to keep their bodies, homestead and surrounding clean, latrine-smoking and making utensil racks (obutandalo) (K4REM).

The above narrative demonstrates Ganda's commitment to teaching children excellent health practices and basic hygiene. Personal and public hygiene standards have to be met by the children. They learnt on-job through task-based learning and community service (*bulungi -bwa-nsi*). Children were encouraged to regard human existence as interconnected with the natural environment as a Divine-pharmacy provider and life-protector. It was safeguarded as a livelihood cradle through the totem-taboo system (Ssozi, 2012). Every clan in Buganda has a totem that must be preserved. Classrooms conducted in real-life settings provide the best opportunities for hands-on and mind-on practice: *lujjuliro*, marketplace, roadside, kitchen, wells, *lusuku* (banana plantation), and nature. Modern teaching in EYE is 99% restricted within the four

walls of the classroom, resulting in handicapped children.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings revealed common beliefs on which the Ganda base their parenting practises: 1) a life of essence, 2) *obuntubulamu*-humane; 3) preparation for future life, 4) continuation of family legacies, 5) cultural identity per defined standards, and 6) societal expectations. African beliefs are embedded and preserved through oral proverbs/wise sayings that emphasise starting early and appropriately (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017). Douglas (1817-1895) agrees with the local proverbs, stating that "it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." The bible says, "*train up a child the way he will go so that when he grows, he will not part from it*" (Prov. 22:6). Both quotes suggest that an early start in training children is a universal belief. However, variations arise in terms of skill-performance standards expected of children by specific cultures.

Undocumented standards remain at the back of dedicated trainers to deliver the greatest apprentice in specific life skills. The period of training was determined by the learners' pace. The focus of the training was on the child's future life and the immediate advantages to the family and community. Intergenerational interactions were employed to instruct children on adult jobs. Children had the opportunity to learn from an expert during their formative years, as opposed to today, when children are entrusted to under-skilled teachers with a low attitude towards service (World Bank, 2018). The 'starting early and right' approach works. Ganda children are taught to respect food during breast-feeding, and toddlers are taught to peel through scaffolding (MoES, 2007). The interplay among principles, aspirations, standards and practices contributes a concentrate that provides fertile ground for realising the nurturing ideologies; combining a successful life for the individual child, community and family. Muller (2013) emphasises instituting an educational ideology at the foundation of

schooling to focus, and steadily pursue educational goals more strategically.

Accordingly, Yiga (2018) advises formal schools to borrow a leaf from informal education in Buganda, which prioritised life skills over knowledge. IP was specifically designed to distinguish a productive individual with multiple dispositions. According to the interviews and FGDs, a six-year-old Ganda child needs a set of life skills for productivity, social interactions, proficient communication, intellectual acuity, safe living, good health and hygiene, astute character and a civilised mindset to operate successfully. The integration of life skills enables the child to navigate the tides of life and apply information in the context of real-life situations (Yiga, 2018). In the lives of children, fixing a jigsaw puzzle is as important as knowing the processes for doing it. Knowledge giants who lack the ability to cross barriers of unemployment end up as city idlers. Children with well-developed life skills serve as a cornerstone of the productive human capital envisioned by Uganda's Education Development Plan (EDP) III (National Planning Authority [NPA], 2020). Developing children's life skills from the first day of school is essential for a great education system. Life skills inspire children to choose a path to long-term economic independence (Yiga, 2018).

IP has always been associated with authoritarian and authoritative control as firm-but-friendly aspects of Ganda cultural practice (Ssozi, 2012), where obedience and compliance are the norm. The Ganda regarded skilling as an essential tool for life. Because skill attainment is associated with successful life, there is no tolerance for non-performance. Skilling is by hook or crook. Parents ordinarily worry about how the child sails through life to succeed. Social etiquette and the frequently practised '*okutuuzza*' (child grooming) are used to foster civilisation. Findings reveal the most common methods that worked to develop life skills were apprenticeship, songs, modelling, demonstration, task-based-learning; use of fairy tales, stories, nature walks, *senga* talks, *kisaakate*, attachment, *kigango* for theoretical lessons, intergenerational interface, riddles (*bikokyo*),

puzzles/brain teasers (*bikokko*), games, myths, proverbs, taboos, exposure visits, one-to-one, heart-to-heart talk, rewards/punishment and experiential learning.

Each skill required a specific set of methods applied in a unique combination. The skill to be learnt is determined by both the method and learning spaces. Parents are keen to capture opportune moments to teach something new. There is a traceable pattern of practice where theory lessons emphasising character and identity happened at the '*kyoto*' or '*kigango*' (half-open hut-like shelter) and are applied during the following days' practical lessons at training spots like granary, plantation (*lusiku*) kitchen, kraal, *shamba*, palace or in a home of an expert in case of attachment for acquisition of specific skills. Each successful lesson had a tangible outcome in the form of a product (Awopegba *et al.*, 2013).

Nevertheless, IP still has a number of limitations, threats, hardships, and control. Most parents have a tendency to transfer their early experiences to their children as if they're suggesting that what worked for them still applies to their children (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017). Pampering does not groom; instead, it spoils children by making them permanently reliant on others. Coercive measures are used when a child is neither self-driven nor compliant. It is the responsibility of EYE providers to ignite a change in paradigm about the employment of friendlier forms of nurturing through enhancing life-skills from the beginning. For context-specificity, gender ideas must be repackaged to bear basic universality, rooted in Ganda value systems (Murove, 2018). The use of harsh practices might give a false impression that Africans cherish children less than their Western counterparts. The Ganda, who combines praise and punishment, successfully employ both gentle and strict discipline. They patiently give children deserving attention and encouragement. Based on the idea that making mistakes is a good way to learn (*mu nkyamu, mwemuva engolokofu*), balanced nurturing skills groom children better. The majority of participants (80%) agreed that children under the age of six need more adult guidance since they are unable to balance their

likes with developmental requirements. Since children often mimic the "bad things" in other cultures, media, and technology, it shows a discerning gap, which parents need to bridge by skilling for life.

A close examination of the skilling practices reveals that the Ganda used more practical rather than abstract ways. However, rote learning is still beneficial in memory training, breath control, speed, accuracy, awareness, and factual information mastery. The Ganda are concerned about dependence on technology, which affects brain capabilities even in easy tasks like spelling and calculations. Authentic approaches are contextualised and enhance human well-being while working with natural learning processes (Murove, 2018).

The study unearthed beliefs that Ganda families have towards good nurturing and skilling of children. These beliefs serve as a guide for IP decisions within the region. It also reveals the guiding principles for local childcare practises, some of which appear archaic or inappropriate by standards of contemporary childcare and child development (LeVine *et al.* 1994). Sayings were used to enliven tacit beliefs. It is assumed that if these beliefs were upheld, clan fortunes, cultural legacy, communities, and family legacies would be preserved, and children would be better prepared for successful adulthood and productivity.

CONCLUSION

The intention of this study was to investigate the feasibility of restoring the valuable IP using Lewin's (1922) theory of change, which is linked to Manion and Cohen's (1975) reinvention theory. The two notions were combined in this study to form a "restoration theory," connoting that human behaviour (nurturing) is influenced by both driving and restricting forces. Global foreign agendas devalue IP by replacing it with unpractical Western systems such as the adoption of English as MoI, the introduction of female heirs for men, and child ownership by women, which destabilise African skilling patterns within the clan-heritage system. African philosophies of

productivity, *obuntubulamu*, voluntarism, communalism, conservation, interdependence and solidarity should be restored as driving forces in order to build strong pillars for safe, ecologically conscious education for black children (Wadende, 2016; Awopegba et al., 2013). The main findings indicate that IP is based on strong but documented ideologies aimed at preparing children for life. Its aspiration is to sustain family legacies, develop desirable characters and preserve essential life-skills education. Most indigenous methods still work because they promote hands-on, minds-on skill acquisition in real-life situations while nurturing children of outstanding character with positive attitudes. Developing life skills is based on acceptable standards of the common good, intergenerational interface, in harmony with natural systems (Murove, 2018) and adaption of foreign patterns of behaviour built on Africentric principles. Fear of failure and extinction, essence; prominence associated with achievement, royalty, conformity, and continuation of legacy are all strong stimuli for IP. Indigenous life-skills education aims to prepare students to know, to be, to do, and live peacefully with others (Awopegba, et al. 2013). A six-year-old Ganda child with essence is one who bravely sails through the present-day practical life tides to bring honour to the family, clan, and community without forfeiting the treasured priceless essentials. As Ezeanya-Esiobu (2017) argues, the recognition, validation, and mainstreaming of Africa's traditional, true, original, indigenous knowledge in education is all that is required for African people's growth and transformation. Thus, hybrid pedagogy to skill twenty-first-century children is preferred to combine elements of essential universality, multiculturalism, and multi-ethnicity anchored on indigenisation to be relevant in Africans (Murove, 2018).

Implications

The findings have implications for respective providers of ECE services.

The Ministry of Education and Sports can make a difference if officers build frequent dialogue with the community it serves. It is not helpful to

fragment community and parental effort from policy. Solidifying a strategy to build strong-minded actors to market IK requires ministerial intervention and drive. The study found that IP was still relevant because of its guiding ideology: quality time to skill children in real-life settings, use of local MoI, and concentration on developing a balanced child. MoES needs to support the notion of indigenising pedagogy to connect present skill training with future aspirations of learners guided by a clear education ideology and support the policy on MoI.

The department in charge of Teacher Education Training and Development (TETD) may disseminate the findings to various partners to inform policy and programming through the education development partners and ECD-Working-Group, the body responsible for advancing early childhood education-related issues, for action by Ministry (Ejuu, 2012).

A policy brief is necessary to enable the Government to consider expanding maternity leave and reduction of working hours for breastfeeding mothers (Samman *et al.*, 2016; Swadenor *et al.* 2000) and young fathers to create more time for child skilling. Universities and Teacher Education Institutions (TTIs) have the audacity to contribute to Africa's advancement if they make a concerted effort on research that influences policy. Collaborative and consistent positive energy is required to make headways in building strong childhoods. The study found a dire need for more local research in the area of indigenous pedagogy to make the area academically viable and tradable. Ugandan universities could open up a journal for indigenous knowledge to publish literature generated and use it to teach and inspire further research. The study was an initial exploratory case requiring more researchers to conduct replica studies targeting other Ugandan regions.

Universities require deliberately designed ECE programmes that blend conventional and contemporary pedagogy to provide empirical evidence on the hybrid model for informed decision-making. Developing an EYE model that

combines theory and practice daily to produce balanced individuals should be the trend. TTIs could tailor Teacher Education programmes on cultural foundations (Ejuu, 2019), allocating 80-60% of the time for integrated hands-on, minds-on learning in favour of life-skills development in real-life situations. Graduate teachers would then transfer the same practices to elementary schools.

National Curriculum Development Centre's (NCDC) effort to anchor contemporary curricula pedagogy on indigenous ways of knowing, coupled with supporting literature, would redirect education to the core elements of life. Findings show that IP offers replicable benchmarks on life-skill development, which can be used to inform EYE framework design. Secondly, stakeholders desire EYE Curricula dominated by the local knowledge of the area for a solid knowledge base; with some content on wider communities and universal essentials for exposure. NCDC could utilise findings to review the Learning Framework (LF) to address gaps related to practical life-skill development; also consider blending IP with CP to harmonise contextual and modern trends in timetabling to cater for "knowing what" and "knowing how" on a daily basis and advance the emerging notions of multiple classrooms; LoI; parenting education and adapting *kisaakate-pedagogy* to nurture skills.

Pre-Primary School Proprietors are gatekeepers to constructive or destructive efforts. It is important that they promote children's identity. One of the effective methods for life-skilling was intergenerational interface. Founders of schools could put in place resources and facilities to promote life-skill development involving teachers and community members in letting the children to-be. Schools could invite volunteers to tell stories to children.

Pre-primary teachers who are responsible for formation ought to take their teaching role more seriously and intentionally. The findings show that IP was effective as it supported skills acquisition in multiple learning third spaces (Gupta, 2015). The implication is that teachers place learning in created or live-meaning-making

situations to make skill acquisition more deliberate.

Religious and Local Leaders have a vital role to play in correcting the state of education if it is to serve and develop African societies. The findings reveal minimal use of IP and local languages in urban areas. Leaders could educate families about the value of conventional practices in developing essential life skills for better citizenry. They could also guide them on how to advance ideologies for more relevant education and advocate for stronger community-school links.

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