

Challenges of Teaching Integrated Subjects in the Case of Aesthetics and Physical Education in Some Selected Primary 1st Cycle Schools of Dessie Town

Arega Abate Hailu*

Lecturer at Wollo university, Dessie, 1145, Ethiopia

Email: arega1963@yahoo.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the major challenges faced during Teaching integrated subjects (Aesthetics and Physical Education) of Dessie town primary first cycle schools. The participants in this study were teachers, and school principals. Among the 44 primary schools found in the Town, 17 (11 government and 6 private) schools were selected by stratified random sampling technique. From these schools 61 (100%) APE teachers and 8 (47.05%) principals were taken as a sample because their number is manageable. The schools from each strata, principals and class for observation were selected using simple random sampling technique through lottery method. As a method of data gathering tools; questionnaire, interview, observation and document analysis were employed. To analyze the collected data, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The results of the study revealed that teaching of integrated subjects (aesthetics and physical education) in the PFCS: was not at the appropriate standard, because of the following reasons: the inadequate time allotment per week; the inappropriate contents; the absence of sufficient qualified teachers; the use of APE period for theory than practice; the use of inappropriate instruction and assessment technique for practical physical education, art and music; the facilities and equipment was not sufficiently available or totally absent; the integration of physical education with art and music; the low attitude of teachers; the inadequate facilities and equipment; the in appropriate contents in the curriculum materials and the low interest of school officials and community for APE were found as a major challenges in teaching Aesthetics and physical education in the PFCS. To overcome these problems the following recommendations have been forwarded. These are: the necessary facilities and equipment should be available; art, music and physical education should be given to students separately; training, workshops and seminars where by the experienced expertise in this area should be adjusted for APE teacher and the curriculum materials specially the selected contents should be revise.

Keywords: Physical education; Art; Music; Aesthetics.

* Corresponding author.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Aesthetics and physical education in our country is one of the integrated subjects in the primary first cycle schools that contain Art, Music and Physical education. These three subjects have their own contribution in the overall development of primary first cycle schools children. Art education in the primary first cycle schools stimulates creativity and imagination. It provides visual, tactile and sensory experiences, and a special way of understanding and responding to the world. It enables children to communicate what they see, feel and think, through the use of color, texture, form, pattern and different materials and processes [1]. The implementation of the music curriculum in its entirety is in itself a milestone in achieving well-rounded development of the learner in terms of the social, economic, physical and psychological spheres. Music education, contrary to the belief system of most curriculum developers and implementers, does not stop at the learning of music notation and singing. Group dances and vocal performances can enhance the spirit of unity, co-operation and tolerance among others [2]. Physical education provides children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement and contributes to their overall development by helping them to lead full, active and healthy lives [3]. Physical education in the primary school is essential to the development of physical, social, emotional and mental growth of each student [4]. It is one of the subjects offered in primary schools and an important part of a students' comprehensive, well-rounded education program and a means of positively affecting life-long health and wellbeing. As [5], physical education provides children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement and contributes to their overall development by helping them to lead full, active and healthy lives. This indicates that, to achieve a better result through physical education, music and art instruction, schools should have programs that meet the objectives of the subjects. That is why this study mainly focuses on the challenges of implementing these integrated subjects in some selected primary first cycle schools of Dessie town.

1.2. Statement of the problem

According to [6], movement and play are important in students, critical to all aspects of their growth and development. Therefore, physical education program provides opportunities for all students to learn different kinds of physical activity regularly. It is also true for music and art education. One of the objectives of [7] was "To develop the physical and mental potential and the problem solving capacity of individuals. In relation to this [8] explicitly stated that "Aesthetics Education is one of the fifth core subjects designed to inculcate the development of parts of the human body and developing humanistic relationships among students. At the moment Physical Education, Art and Music for primary first cycle school (Grade 1-4) was given in an integrated manner as one subject called Aesthetics and Physical Education. Research works mostly have been conducted related to physical education. Among these, [9] on the implementation of physical education curriculum found the presence of mismatch between the designed program of the syllabus and the actual practice in the secondary schools. In addition to this on the effectiveness of physical education teachers; poor teaching methods, poor assessment techniques, lack of training field, insufficient period allotment and inappropriate school program, shortage of curriculum materials, lack of qualified teachers, lack of competence to teach and inadequate

refreshment training for teachers as the factors that affect the implementation of first cycle secondary education curriculum. As far as to the knowledge of the researcher, no research work was conducted on the implementation, integration and challenges of aesthetics and physical education (APE) in the primary first cycle schools. To address the above issue schools should implement aesthetics and physical education instruction that have at least a minimum standard. Therefore, the challenges of aesthetics and physical education in the schools need to be checked. Hence, this study aimed at assessing the challenges in teaching aesthetics and physical education (APE) in the selected primary first cycle schools.

1.3. General objectives

The general objective of this study was to assess the challenges on the teaching of integrated subjects (Aesthetics and physical education) in some selected first cycle primary schools of Dessie town.

1.4. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine whether the teaching of Aesthetics and physical education program is at the right level of quality or not.
2. To observe the availability of facilities and equipment for the teaching learning of Aesthetics and physical education.
3. To find out the challenges that hinders the teaching learning process of Aesthetics and physical education in the selected schools.

1.5. Basic questions of the study

1. Is the teaching of Aesthetics and physical education at the appropriate level of quality?
2. Are facilities and equipments for Aesthetics and physical education class sufficiently available?
3. What are the challenges that hinder the teaching learning process of Aesthetics and physical education?

1.6. Significance of the study

This study was expected to provide usable information about the teaching learning process of Aesthetics and physical education in the schools to the different concerned bodies such as school, Aesthetics and physical education teachers, and Education offices for making the necessary adjustment. Moreover, it will serve as a spring board for those who want to investigate a similar study but with a more comprehensive manner.

1.7. Delimitation of the study

This study was restricted on government and private first cycle primary schools (from grade 1-4) of Dessie town. The study focuses on Aesthetics and physical education teacher profile, facilities and equipment, syllabus, yearly and daily plans of Aesthetics and physical education.

1.8. Limitations of the study

The major limitations in the process of conducting this research work were the shortage of time, and the absence of research works particularly on the integration /cluster/ of art, music and physical education.

1.9. Abbreviations and Acronyms

• **APE** Aesthetics and physical education • **PFCS** Primary first cycle schools

2. Methods and procedures of the study

For this study a descriptive survey research methodology was chosen. This is because the descriptive survey method is more appropriate to gather several types of data [10]. So it helps the researcher reaches at a conclusion taking the present state of the problem under investigation.

2.1. Subjects

The target populations of this research were 61 Aesthetics and physical education teachers and 8 school principals. Teachers and principals are of 17 schools of Dessie town. Among the 44 primary schools found in the town, 17 were selected by stratified random sampling technique.

2.2. Sample Size and Sampling procedures

Currently there are 44 private and government schools in Dessie town. From this, the researcher selected 17 (11 government and 6 private) schools by stratified random sampling technique. 61 (100%) APE teachers and 8(47.05%) principals were taken as a sample because their number is manageable. The schools from each strata, principals and class for observation were selected using simple random sampling technique through lottery method.

2.3. Instruments for data collection in sample schools

In this study questionnaire, interview, observation and document analysis were employed for collecting the data pertinent to this research. This is because using more than one data gathering instruments is advised to assure the reliability of the data [11].

2.3.1. Questionnaire

The major tool for data collection for this study was questionnaire. Questionnaire were prepared and delivered to teachers of APE to assesses the challenges on the teaching learning process of Aesthetics and physical

education (APE) in the primary first cycle schools /grade 1-4/ .

Table 1: Distribution of participants included in the study

No	School	Population in each school						Sample taken					
		APE teacher			principals			APE teacher			principals		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<i>Government schools</i>													
1.	AdisAlem	-	3	3	1	-	1	-	3	3	1	-	1
2.	AdisFana	1	1	2	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	-	1
3.	Dawdo	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	2	2	-	-	-
4.	EtegeMenen	4	4	8	1	-	1	4	4	8	-	-	-
5.	Karagutu	3	1	4	1	-	1	3	1	4	-	-	-
6.	MerhaTibeb	1	1	2	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	-	1
7.	Nigus Michael	2	1	3	1	-	1	2	1	3	-	-	-
8.	Robit	1	1	2	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	-	1
9.	Segno Gebeya	1	2	3	1	-	1	1	2	3	1	-	1
10.	Tigl Fire	2	5	7	1	-	1	2	5	7	-	-	-
11.	Tossa	3	1	4	1	-	1	3	1	4	1	-	1
<i>Private schools</i>													
12.	Alif	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	2	2	-	-	-
13.	Alpha	3	1	4	1	-	1	3	1	4	-	-	-
14.	Katolik	2	1	3	1	-	1	2	1	3	1	-	1
15.	TesfaDrigit	1	1	2	1	-	1	1	2	1	-	-	-
16.	Wisdom	3	-	3	1	-	1	3	-	3	1	-	1
17.	Merkez	4	3	7	1	-	1	4	3	7	-	-	-
Total		31	30	61	17	-	17	31	30	61	8	-	8

2.3.2. Interview

Reference [12] Point out that the use of structured interview as a data collection instrument permits a level of in-depth information, free response, and flexibility that cannot be obtained by other procedures. In this study semi structured interview were held with the school principals. The interview took place in a face-to-face situation with the respondents.

2.3.3. Document analysis

Documents have always been used as a source of information in educational research. In this research also aesthetics and physical education syllabus, teachers profile, plans (annual and daily lesson) and programs (time table) were analyzed.

2.3.4. Observation

Class observation was carried out to have personal access to the existing situation. Observations were conducted in 10 sampled APE teacher classes. Observations were recorded in sequential, descriptive and narrative notes in summary for each class.

2.4. Method of data analysis

In this study the data obtained through closed ended questions were analyzed quantitatively and qualitative data analysis for interview, document analysis, observation and open ended questions were employed. After accomplishment of field based data collection activities, the raw data obtained through the questionnaire was first tallied and coded on a code sheet. Then it is analyzed and interpreted using percentage. From the data obtained through open ended items, similar ideas were grouped and discussed qualitatively. Those data obtained through interview, observation and document analysis were described together with those data collected through questionnaire and by doing so they strengthened the reliability of the data. Moreover, the back ground information was all interpreted using the percentage.

3. Characteristics of respondents

Table 2: Characteristics of the Respondents

No	Character	Respondents				
		Teachers		Principals		
		No	%	No	%	
1	Sex	Male	22	46.8	8	100
		Female	25	53.2	-	-
		Total	47	100	8	100
2	Service	0-5	7	14.9	-	-
		6-10	3	6.4	-	-
		11-15	-	-	-	-
		16-20	1	2.1	-	-
		Above 20	36	76.6	8	10
		Total	47	100	8	100
3	Qualification	BED/BSC/BA	1	2.1	-	-
		Diploma	41	87.2	8	100
		Certificate	5	10.7	-	-
		Other	-	-	-	-
		Total	47	100	-	-
3	specialization	Physical Education	2	4.3	-	-
		APE	8	17	-	-
		Others	37	78.7	8	100
		Total	47	100	8	100

This section presents characteristics of the respondents who respond the questionnaires and were interviewed. Totally 61 copies of questionnaires for Teachers of APE were distributed. From the distributed questionnaires 47 (77%) of the respondents were filled in and returned. It was this figure that would be considered as total respondents in the analysis part of the study.

On top of this, to raise the quality of the data and information interview was conducted with 8 school principals. The table below gives detail information regarding the characteristics of the respondents.

4. Responses of respondents

Table 3: The implementation of APE at PFCS

No	Item	Response					
		Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
1.	Adequate time is allotted	9	19.1	38	80.9	47	100
2.	Meaning full content is organized	11	23.4	36	76.6	47	100
3.	The teachers are qualified	3	6.4	44	93.6	47	100
4.	Intramural sport programs are organized	17	36.2	30	63.8	47	100
5.	Most of the allotted time is used for practical work (art, music & physical education)	10	21.3	37	78.7	47	100
6.	Daily APE program is adjusted	-	-	47	10	47	100
7.	Appropriate instruction is applied	24	51.5	23	48.9	47	100
8.	Suitable assessment technique used	35	74.5	12	25.5	47	100

Table 4: Availability of Facilities and equipment for Aesthetics and physical education

No	Item	Response							
		AV	%	PAV	%	NAV	%	T	%
1.	<u>Playing Fields</u>								
	a. football field	32	68.1	6	12.8	9	19.1	47	100
	b. volleyball field	35	74.5	11	23.4	1	2.1	47	100
	c. basketball field	2	4.3	-	-	45	95.7	47	100
	d. handball field	-	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
	e. long jump field	3	6.4	-	-	44	93.6	47	100
2.	f. triple jump field	-	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
	<u>Balls</u> a. foot ball	34	72.3	3	6.4	10	21.3	47	100
	b. volley ball	34	72.3	-	-	13	27.7	47	100
	c. basket ball	-	-	2	4.3	45	95.7	47	100
3.	d. hand ball	-	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
	<u>Locally prepared or commercially bought gymnastics materials</u>								
	a. rope	-	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
4.	b. mattress	-	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
	c. Bars (horizontal & parallel bar, etc.)	2	4.3	-	-	45	95.7	47	100
5.	<u>Locally prepared or commercially bought Athletics materials</u>								
	a. javelin	-	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
	b. shoot put	-	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
	c. discuss	-	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
	d. mattress for high jump	-	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
6.	e. cones	4	8.5	-	-	43	91.5	47	100
	<u>Locally prepared or commercially bought art and music materials</u>								
7.	a. music materials	=	-	-	-	47	100	47	100
	b. Art materials	=	-	-	-	47	100	47	100

AV= available

PAV= partially available

NAV=not available

Table 5: Factors that affect the implementation of Aesthetics and physical education in the PFCS

No	Item	Response							
		A	%	UD	%	DA	%	T	%
1.	The integration of physical education with art & music	47	100	-	-	-	-	47	100
2.	The inadequate time allotment per week	47	100	-	-	-	-	47	100
3.	Large class size	4	8.5	1	2.1	42	89.4	47	100
4.	The low attitude of teachers	38	80.9	4	8.5	5	10.6	47	100
5.	The inadequate facilities and equipment	38	80.9	2	4.2	7	14.9	47	100
6.	The inappropriate selected contents in the curriculum materials	41	87.2	6	12.8	-	-	47	100
7.	The interest of officials to implement and develop APE.	37	78.7	4	8.5	6	12.8	47	100

A= agree

UD= undecided

DA= disagree

5. Conclusion

Based on the major findings presented above the following conclusions were made.

- The teaching learning process of Aesthetics and physical education /art, physical education and music/ in the PFCS was not at the right level of quality. This is due to not enough time allotment per week; the absence qualified teachers in the subject; the use of APE period for theory than practice because of the inappropriate contents in the teaching material; the use of inappropriate teaching methods and assessment technique for the subjects.
- The facilities and equipments of APE for PFCS were not sufficiently available. Especially art and music facilities and equipments were totally absent.
- The integration of subjects /physical education, art and music as one subject/ ; the low interest of teachers to teach this integrated subject ; the low interest of school officials and community for APE subject were found as a major challenges in the teaching learning process of Aesthetics and physical education in the PFCS.

6. Recommendations

Depending on the findings obtained and the conclusions drawn from the study, the following suggestions were forwarded:

- In order to support and make effective the teaching learning process of Aesthetics and physical education in the PFCS the necessary facilities and equipment should be fulfilled by the schools and responsible bodies.
- In order to make the teaching learning process of physical education, art and music /Aesthetics and physical education/ practical and benefit children at PFCS; art, music and physical education should

- be prepared separately / not in an integrated manner/.
- The subjects should be thought by subject professionals. Most of the teachers of APE in the PFCS were not qualified with the subject. They teach for a longer period of time without any additional training. Therefore, to fill this gap it is advisable to offer them training, workshops and seminars where by the experienced expertise in this area and so as to upgrade the skill of APE teacher.
 - The contents of art, music and physical education in the curriculum materials of PFCS should be revised according to the national standards of the subjects.

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