

Effects of High Frequency of Examinations on Curriculum Implementation in Kakamega County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Examinations have been widely used as a tool for curriculum evaluation not only in Kenya but across the globe. The use of examinations as an indicator of performance and promotion of learners has led to competition among schools and learners, which has compromised the quality of education provided. Teachers teach selectively by emphasising examined subjects and topics. The purpose of the study was to establish the effects of examinations on curriculum implementation in secondary schools. Descriptive survey research design and inferential statistics were applied. Sampling was done by use of Saturated, Stratified, and simple random sampling. The study was conducted in Kakamega County. The study population includes principals, students, and teachers from 408 public secondary schools and Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) from Kakamega County. The total sample of the study was 2053, which included 40 principals, 1800 students, 200 teachers, and 13 QASOs. Data collection involved the administration of questionnaires to QASOs, students, and teachers and an interview guide for principals. A researcher developed questionnaire instruments for teachers, students, and QASOs with a reliability index of 0.71 based on the Cronbach alpha reliability method. Analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Quantitative data was analysed by use of descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data was coded into sub-themes. The analysed data was organised in tables and figures. The following were the study's primary findings: More than two exams were given in most schools each term, and this led to selective teaching because teachers only covered topics and subjects that were regularly covered in the KCSE. Moreover, candidates in particular did not engage in extracurricular activities because they were too busy studying for exams. To guarantee that all secondary schools follow the government examination policy, it should be reviewed. Early syllabus coverage is an unprofessional attitude; as a result, curriculum content should be implemented by KICD within the allotted time frame in order to support students' learning and help them achieve the curriculum's objectives.

Keywords: Curriculum Implementation, Examinations, Schools, Kakamega, Kenya

I. INTRODUCTION

The provision of quality education requires an effective quality evaluation mechanism to realise the attainment of education goals as enshrined in the curriculum. Many countries across the globe use examination as a tool for curriculum evaluation. Examinations serve as a prevalent means of assessment that underpins entire global education systems. Standardised assessments have been a prevalent method for evaluating a significant number of students and facilitating the admissions process in higher education institutions (Scouller & Prosser, 1994). The examination serves as a means of evaluating students' progress and functions as a source of motivation, enabling learners to identify their academic strengths and limitations. According to Kyambi (2019), students are inclined to experience motivation in their academic pursuits when they achieve favourable outcomes in their examinations. The utilisation of examinations to advance learners to higher levels of education is a significant factor contributing to their involvement in acts of examination malpractice. This is because assessments serve as the primary mechanism for evaluating performance, determining educational progression, and influencing employment prospects (Kyambi, 2019).

Examinations in Kenya have been a subject of enduring interest among stakeholders across several tiers of the education system. According to Kinoti (2022), educational assessments have become a crucial instrument for informing daily decision-making in the classroom. These assessments serve various purposes, such as communicating learning objectives, evaluating progress toward those objectives, selecting and promoting students, identifying effective teaching methods, and monitoring and assessing the overall effectiveness of the educational system.

Over-emphasis on examination outcomes affects the efficiency of learner evaluation, as schools place excessive burdens on students through frequent, continuous assessment, additional tutoring, remedial instruction, and a heavy workload of assignments (Wamalwa et al., 2019). Besides, students are exposed to a variety of mock examinations from counties and sub-counties that have demonstrated exceptional performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Examination planning and administration take up more time than practical training; thus, there is less emphasis on these areas and no chance for students to improve their technical proficiency or problem-solving abilities (Imbahala et al., 2019).

The establishment of efficient mechanisms for assessing student learning within a well-defined policy framework, organisational structure, and appropriate operational procedures is crucial for global educational reform initiatives (Greaney & Kellaghan, 2012). The United Nations emphasises the importance of ongoing monitoring and assessment of learning to achieve the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which aims to provide equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030 (Kyambi, 2019). Despite enduring concerns and ongoing efforts to change the education system, examinations continue to serve as the predominant means of evaluating students in primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions in Kenya. National examinations continue to serve as the primary means of assessing and ensuring the quality of secondary education. The present study established the effects of examinations as a dominant evaluation approach to curriculum implementation.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The primary objective of education in Kenya is to provide individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that empower them to actively contribute to the advancement of social and economic development (Angote et al., 2023). The provision of quality education equips learners with the necessary skills to effectively contribute to the labour market and maintain productivity. Regrettably, the education system in Kenya is predominantly influenced by examinations, which have become the primary means of evaluating students and even shaping the curriculum (Mugambi et al., 2022). Overemphasis on examinations has resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum, with the primary focus being the achievement of high grades in national examinations, which serve as the primary determinant for placement and job opportunities. Education stakeholders measure the success of the school by the level of learner's academic achievement in national examinations. Institutions of higher learning tend to recognise and reward students who demonstrate exceptional academic performance, often leading to the attainment of prestigious employment. Conversely, students who do not meet the expected standards of academic achievement face negative consequences or disapproval. In Kenya, instances of suicide related to students' performance in the national examination have been reported. These tragic incidents occur when students fail to get their desired grades and resort to taking their own lives (Greaney & Kellaghan, 2012).

Recognising issues surrounding examinations, many countries continue to seek alternative approaches to evaluation. Despite recent changes in the Kenyan education system, assessment of learners remains a thorny issue in the new curriculum dispensation. Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) has been criticised for a lack of clear assessment policy at all levels of learning. The system has been faced with challenges of reliability and validity of performance indicators. Shiundu and Omulando (1992), contends that competency-based assessment is complicated, and teachers hardly utilise all the tools of assessment due to a lack of adequate knowledge and skills on how to use them in evaluation. It is against this background that the study investigated the effect of examinations as a dominant curriculum evaluation approach on curriculum implementation with the view to coming up with alternative approaches of evaluation.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the effects of examinations as a dominant evaluation approach to curriculum implementation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been undertaken to ascertain the effects of examinations on curriculum development. Recent research suggests that high-stakes examinations have the potential to diminish the quality and quantity of curriculum, leading to a heightened focus on a narrower range of subjects within schools (Kaindi & Kimiti, 2019). According to Kaindi and Kimiti (2019), examinations limit the scope of abilities and competencies that students can acquire. The narrowing of the curriculum leads to superficial exposure of learners to examined subjects and a lack of

exposure to non-examined subjects (Kaindi & Kimiti, 2019). The narrowing of the curriculum can manifest in ways such as the reduction of content, prioritising specific topics over others and displacing certain values embedded in the curriculum, limiting materials and methods that reinforce and facilitate testing skills and knowledge assessed in examinations, and excessive pressure and an unbalanced emphasis on testing in comparison to the broader curriculum (Imbahala et al., 2019).

A study by Chepsiror (2020) revealed that when teachers are driven by the pressure to enhance student performance, they allocate a significant amount of instructional time to activities related to examinations. As a result, less time is spent on subjects or topics that are not evaluated, and more emphasis is placed on teaching strategies that encourage students to memorise and repeat lessons. According to Chimuche et al. (2023), physical education (PE) is frequently seen as a peripheral subject in British schools, and many secondary schools purposefully cut PE time to create room for subjects that are prioritised more highly. A comparable discovery was made by Chepsiror (2020) in their comprehensive survey conducted across the United States. Their research revealed that approximately 71% of school districts opted to allocate additional instructional time to Mathematics and Reading while reducing the time allocated to social studies and physical education. This strategic decision was primarily driven by the pressure imposed by high-stakes examinations (Mugambi et al., 2022). Conducted a study wherein he observed a 43% rise in the amount of time allocated for topics that were subjected to testing, such as English and Mathematics. Conversely, there was a 32% decrease in the amount of time allocated for non-tested subjects, including social studies, arts, physical education, and even recess. The study further revealed that teachers in the fourth-grade cohort allocated around 63% of their teaching time to subject areas that were examined, namely reading, writing, and mathematics.

A study by Wamalwa et al. (2019) revealed that while the secondary school curriculum in Zimbabwe consisted of a combination of practical and academic subjects, there was a noticeable inclination towards academic subjects in the selection process despite the presence of ample material and human resources. Furthermore, disciplines that were not included in the examination curriculum, such as Guidance and Counselling and HIV/AIDS education, were not given sufficient emphasis despite their significant contributions to an individual's social and emotional well-being. In addition, educators with prior experience instructing examination-oriented courses analysed the examination structure to discern the specific subject matter that will be assessed in an upcoming examination. Consequently, they prioritised the instruction of those specific areas, neglecting the entire syllabus content (Rotumoi et al., 2019).

Mugambi et al. (2022) Noted that courses that were subject to examination were typically scheduled for the morning sessions, when students were more alert and enthusiastic, whereas non-examinable subjects were allocated to the afternoon slots. Additionally, Mukonyi, (2020) emphasised that in the context of test preparation, educators utilised the time originally designated for non-examined subjects to review the material pertaining to the subjects that were to be examined. When teachers sacrifice non-examined subjects and pay attention to examined subjects, learners' acquisition of relevant skills is not fully realised, and this affects the holistic development of the learners. Every aspect of the curriculum has a role to play in the realisation of educational goals; hence, selective teaching, as practised by teachers, negatively affects curriculum implementation.

Lumadede et al. (2020) noted that effective classroom assessments exhibit certain characteristics, such as evaluating learners on the content they have been taught, utilising assessment questions that align with the stated curriculum objectives, and employing clear, unambiguous, and appropriate assessment questions and scoring procedures. To ensure efficient implementation of classroom assessment, it is imperative that educators possess a comprehensive understanding of their respective subject matter, possess the necessary skills related to assessment, and have access to teaching resources of exceptional quality (Watson et al., 2002). According to Mugambi et al. (2022), it is essential for teachers to possess specialised assessment skills to effectively utilise and create suitable assessment tools, utilise assessment outcomes to make informed decisions regarding individual learners to enhance their learning and communicate information to parents and other teachers.

It is established that national examination grades are the keystone by which Kenyan educators, principals, parents, and legislators assess students' level of academic achievement. The authors of the paper titled "Motivational Factors of National Examination Ranking" highlighted that educators primarily prioritise students' performance in examinations, sometimes neglecting the development of broader knowledge and comprehension. Educators strive to facilitate students' achievement in examinations, prioritising content that is evaluated while perhaps neglecting aspects of instruction that are not formally reviewed (Wößmann et al., 2007).

According to Wamalwa et al. (2019), emphasises that competency-based assessments are crucial and should go beyond measuring students' performance on exams. According to Gardner (1993), it is essential for teachers to consider the unique abilities and potential of each learner. The speaker placed emphasis on the importance of

assessment that encompasses the entirety of student learning rather than solely focusing on the rote memory of acquired knowledge. Gardner's assessment, which encompasses inclusivity, is characterised by its meaningfulness and comprehensive measurement of the curriculum. Chimuche et al. (2023) found that the evaluation methods used by schools evaluate pupils' memory abilities exclusively; they do not evaluate their affective and psychomotor domains.

Moreover, Angote et al. (2023) contend that when the focus shifts from self-regulated learning to test scores, students tend to place excessive importance and exert excessive effort on examinations. Furthermore, Angote et al. established that examinations have a detrimental impact on student's motivation and learning due to the excessive emphasis placed on scores as the ultimate outcomes and assessments of students' abilities. According to Mukabi (2022), an effective system of examination should possess certain characteristics, such as aligning examination with the curriculum, establishing achievement in relation to an external benchmark, assessing a comprehensive range of skills and knowledge, and indicating various levels of accomplishment.

Mukabi (2022) asserts that the implementation of examination-centred instruction and high-stakes testing leads to a reduction in the breadth of curricular content. This narrowing occurs as topic selection is primarily driven by alignment with the test format and requirements. Essential subjects are defined as those who undergo assessment, while subjects deemed inconsequential are disregarded (Nyangweso et al., 2019). Rather than adhering to the curriculum and ensuring that instruction and assessment are aligned with it, teachers often begin with the examination and adjust the content and instruction accordingly. Education encompasses not just the achievement of high scores in examinations but also the acquisition of practical skills that are crucial for promoting sustainability (Chepsiror, 2020). It is imperative for stakeholders to recognise the significance of students acquiring comprehensive topic knowledge in areas beyond what is strictly necessary for examination purposes. This study seeks to establish the effects of highly frequent examinations on curriculum implementation.

The Kenya government's educational policy mandates the inclusion of Physical Education as a core subject in elementary and secondary schools, alongside Mathematics, English, and Kiswahili. According to Chepsiror (2020), Public secondary schools in Kenya are mandated by policy to provide one 40-minute PE class for Forms 1 and 2 and two lessons for Forms 3 and 4 (Chepsiror, 2020). However, physical education (PE) in Kenya encounters numerous challenges, one of which is the lack of effective policy implementation. It has been observed that many schools do not plot PE lessons on the timetable, particularly in the third and fourth forms (Chepsiror, 2020). Physical Education (PE) is commonly perceived as an educational activity that lacks productivity, a perspective that is held by certain educators (Rotumoi et al., 2019).

Januori (2020) posits that achieving comprehensive development in individuals necessitates a harmonious cultivation of both academic and non-academic dimensions within the contexts of formal, non-formal, and informal education. In contemporary culture, characterised by individuals experiencing periods of excessive anxiety and stress that might potentially result in depression, the importance of co-curricular activities is heightened. Co-curricular activities encompass extracurricular pursuits in which students engage beyond regular classroom instruction, with the intention of fostering the growth and cultivation of students' skills, as well as fostering social interaction among students.

Several studies conducted in the United States have identified a positive correlation between engagement in co-curricular activities and academic achievement. Rotumoi et al. (2019) looked at how involvement in extracurricular activities affected grade 12 students' post-secondary results, including grades, course choices, homework, and university and application outcomes, in addition to their academic achievement while in high school. The researchers' findings have demonstrated that engagement in co-curricular activities has a significant role in cultivating a sense of belonging and dedication to the school, ultimately leading to positive academic achievements.

In the context of Kenya, it can be argued that student engagement in co-curricular activities should be regarded as a fundamental entitlement rather than a mere privilege. According to Januori (2020), co-curricular activities programs are acknowledged as a significant component of the educational process and are granted equivalent standing to other elements of the curriculum. Nevertheless, despite the clear directive from the Ministry of Education via the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) that schools are required to provide co-curricular activities, there are numerous instances when this rule is violated, with the justification being that these activities are not inspected and hence considered less important.

The current educational system has been criticised for excessive focus on examinations to the point where additional tutoring is required, impinging on the time designated for co-curricular activities (Imbahala et al., 2019). The study by Januori (2020) found that there is a favourable correlation between students' participation in co-curricular activities and their academic achievement. This finding demonstrates that engagement in co-curricular activities has a beneficial impact on students' academic performance. According to the findings of (Januori, (2020).

study on factors influencing student participation in extracurricular activities in public secondary schools; teachers play no significant role in the development of student's participation in extracurricular activities. A study conducted by Januori (2020) revealed that there exists a positive correlation between the implementation of school policies and the level of student involvement in co-curricular activities. While Laukkanen (2008) examined the elements that influence student participation in co-curricular activities, the present study focused on the effects of examinations on curriculum implementation.

Rotumoi et al. (2019) established that candidates and teachers alike were under pressure to perform well in examinations, and they rarely had time to think or spare time for co-curricular activities. Rotumoi et al. (2019) Discovered that school administrators employ various strategies to discourage co-curricular activities, including limited financial resources allocated for trips, insufficient funds for purchasing equipment and facilities, and discouraging senior students and low achievers from participating in such activities, among other measures. Occasionally, there have been instances of disagreement between the school administrators and physical education instructors about matters pertaining to athletic activities.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research utilized a descriptive survey research design, a scientific approach that entails the observation and description of a subject's behavior in its natural setting without any intentional manipulation. This study methodology focuses on contemporary phenomena, encompassing several aspects such as situations, behaviors, attitudes, processes, and interactions (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The study was conducted in Kakamega County. The County shares its borders with Vihiga County to the south, Siaya County to the west, Bungoma County to the north, and Nandi County to the east. The geographical expanse of the County is recorded to be 3050.3 square kilometers, as reported in the Kakamega County Development Plan of 2013. The elevation of the County ranges from 1,240 meters to 2,000 meters above sea level. The study population consisted of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASO), Principals, teachers, and students from public secondary schools in Kakamega County. As a result of an extended duration of schooling, fourth-year students have been exposed to a diverse range of examinations. Consequently, their accumulated experiences can contribute to the establishment of empirical evidence about the impact of examinations on curriculum implementation. The researchers employed both stratified and simple random sampling techniques to determine the sample size. The utilization of stratified sampling facilitated the inclusion of all categories of schools into the sample, ensuring representation across the various school types.

Table 1
Sampling Frame

Type of School	No. of Schools	Sample schools	Total students population	Sample size Students	Sample size principals	Sample size of HODs
National	2	2	720	90	2	10
Extra/C	23	2	4140	90	2	10
County	26	3	3240	135	3	15
Sub/C	351	33	21420	1485	33	165
Total	402	40	29521	1800	40	200

3.2 Research Instruments

The data collection process involved the utilisation of two research instruments, namely questionnaires and interview schedules. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected using two tools to address the research issues in this study.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Quality Assurance and Standards Officers questionnaires were distributed to all QASOs in each Sub-County by the researcher and collected upon completion. The researcher booked appointments with principals for interview schedules. There was face-to-face interview by some principals and video calls for those who were not accessed physically. Data collection was done within the stipulated time.

3.4 Data Analysis

Before analysing the collected data, accurate data entry was completed, and SPSS V20 was used to perform the analysis. Accordingly, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to the data based on their suitability for answering the research questions. The qualitative data from the interviews was analysed according to QOSA guiding principles. The hypothesis was examined with a 95% significance level.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish the effects of frequent examinations on curriculum implementation in secondary schools. The findings are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 2

Students' Response to Effects of Examination on Curriculum Implementation

Potential Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
Examinations consume time for curriculum implementation.	455 (30%)	424 (28%)	121 (8%)	258 (17%)	258 (17%)	3.01	1.48
Teachers concentrate on examined subjects.	409 (27%)	500 (33%)	121 (8%)	227 (15%)	258 (17%)	2.47	0.88
The syllabus is covered early to allow for revision.	545 (36%)	500 (33%)	76 (5%)	212 (14%)	181 (12%)	2.53	0.88
Teachers concentrate on frequently examined topics in KCSE.	667 (44%)	470 (31%)	106 (7%)	151 (10%)	181 (12%)	2.66	0.869
Teachers emphasise exam techniques.	545 (36%)	651 (43%)	91 (6%)	106 (7%)	121 (8%)	2.60	1.066
Forms 4's are exempted from co-curriculars.	651 (43%)	394 (26%)	76 (5%)	212 (14%)	197 (13%)	2.64	1.023
Teachers don't involve students learning process	576 (38%)	470 (31%)	91 (6%)	182 (12%)	288 (19%)	2.75	0.898
PE lessons are used to teach other subjects.	561 (37%)	394 (26%)	91 (6%)	181 (12%)	288 (19%)	3.24	1.13
Teachers engage students in most practical activities.	561 (37%)	424 (28%)	76 (5%)	197 (13%)	258 (17%)	2.80	0.962
Teachers teach life skills education.	212 (14%)	182 (12%)	91 (6%)	706 (41%)	409 (27%)	3.01	1.48
KCSE past papers are commonly used for revision.	470 (31%)	500 (33%)	106 (7%)	212 (14%)	227 (15%)	2.47	0.88
Composite mean and Std						2.727	1.011

Table 2 showed the teacher's responses on the selection of pedagogical approaches utilized. Group discussion is one of the student centered approaches that foster collaborative learning (Carr, 2012). Worryingly, a high 59 teachers out of totals constituted 33% disagreed with the use that one can make of group discussions and another higher quantity which played at 20%, included even more strongly into it, are shown by Santiago (age not specified) This means that while collaborative learning through group work and discussions has great pedagogical value, they are seldom practiced in most classrooms (Blazer 2011).

According to the responses, dictation of notes was considered as the most widely used method. About 40 teachers out of 22% strongly agreed that they used this method while the number representing or agreeing on it was equal to 121. It accounted for a whopping percentage of about 67% in Berliner, Writing down notes verbatim hinders the ability of students to process information critically and engage in higher-order thinking. It promotes rote memorization approaches which are not great for attaining deep understanding (Rehman, 2003). Although the notes are essential for recollecting information, too much focus on dictation hinders other active learning processes (Tella et al., 2010).

Only 16 teachers agreed at the quite level in those instances, and only 23 were somewhat agreeable with student demonstrations or presentations; both amounted to about 9% However, this is an important

approach towards promoting student-centered learning which is self-directed and autonomous. Presents enable the development of communication, organizational and problem solving skills for students on multiple topic areas (Au, 2007). 41% teachers somewhat disagreed and 27% teachers strongly. As such, the reality of incorporating demonstrations into lessons is disheartening.

Educational media which can help develop visualization and conceptual understanding recorded very low usage rates. 6% of the teachers strongly agreed while 9% agreed to this only (Buhere, 2019). 94 teachers or 52% somewhat disagreed and 56 ones at the rate of 31% in strongly wavered. This means that audio-visual aids, models simulations and other tools which make abstract concepts more tangible or concrete remain rarely used. Instructional resources have greatly benefited subjects like sciences, but they seem underutilised (Esu et al., 2004).

Practical activities that bridge theory with practice scored just a little better but still were not embraced by most. 27 teachers out of 15% strongly agreed and 10 teachers out of 96 seldom consented to use them. 58 teachers for 32% somewhat disagreed, and 42 representatives of the teaching staff amounting to represent Hands on education via experimentation and field work helps for retention of concepts over the long term but clearly not standard practice (Burden & Byrd, 2013). 18 teachers recorded relatively more use with 10% strongly agreeing and 61 teachers agreed at 34%. 36 teachers from 20% somewhat disagreed and another 11 at the same time, making less than%. Although lecturing has its role, the over-reliance on it does not take into account students' creativity and problem solving. A lot of passive listening discourages active participation that is necessary for an effective learning (Ajoke, 2017).

The approach that was most often utilized involved the use of past examination papers during lessons. About 22 teachers, representing 12%, strongly agree and about 97 teachers at 54% agreed that there is a need to revise with previous tests. On the other hand, 36 teachers representing 20% slightly disagreed and five at of them strongly opposed it as per Buhere and Ochieng (2013), the testing culture may hurt the intended outcomes of the curriculum over time. But on its own, reviewing past papers gives effective feedback for educators and learners Rehman2003.

Table 3

Teachers Response on Effects of Examinations on Curriculum Implementation

Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
Many examinations affect curriculum implementation.	54 (30%)	88 (49%)	5 (3%)	23 (13%)	7 (4%)	2.46	0.949
Examined subjects are prioritised during teaching.	56 (31%)	25 (41%)	18 (10%)	16 (9%)	14 (8%)	2.77	0.877
Teachers frequently emphasise examinable topics.	38 (21%)	86 (48%)	20 (11%)	23 (13%)	13 (7%)	3.06	0.907
Teachers use KCSE past papers during revision.	36 (20%)	94 (52%)	13 (7%)	22 (12%)	18 (10%)	2.98	0.842
Teachers cover the syllabus early to prepare students for KCSE.	36 (20%)	106 (59%)	9 (5%)	16 (9%)	13 (7%)	2.95	1.01
Examinations only measure learners' intellectual ability.	72 (40%)	61 (34%)	13 (7%)	16 (9%)	13 (7%)	3.13	1.04
Teachers refer to the KICD curriculum when preparing lessons	11 (6%)	90 (50%)	23 (13%)	43 (24%)	18 (10%)	3.32	1.066
Composite mean and Standard Deviation						2.99	0.96

Table 3 presented the students' responses on their perceptions of teachers' choice of pedagogical approaches. The findings provide understanding from the learners' perspective. Group discussions saw minimal encouragement according to responses, with only 121 students agreeing at 8% and 106 at 7%. However, the majority of 818 students disagreed at 54% together with 409 students strongly disagreeing at 27% (Carr, 2012). This implies learners had little opportunity to build skills through collaboration and debate of ideas. Peer interaction and social learning have significant benefits for cognitive development and knowledge-construction (Blazer, 2011). Dictation of notes was prevalently used as perceived by students. 227 students strongly agreed at 15% this was done frequently along with

1015 students agreeing at 67% (Berliner, 2011). However, dictation fails to promote active engagement essential for meaningful learning (Rehman, 2003). It directs students' focus to note-making rather than comprehension and analysis. More learner-centered methods like summarizing in their own words can aid processing (Klein et al., 2006).

Usage of resources was judged inadequate as only 61 students at 4% strongly agreed and 378 students agreeing at 25% that variety was employed (Buhere, 2019). Over 800 students disagreed at 55% suggesting resources beyond textbooks were under-utilized (Esu et al., 2004). Subject matter and concepts become more graspable through audiovisual aids, simulations and other materials complementing the syllabus (Alexander, 2005). Practical activities engagement received better approval by students compared to other approaches. 333 students strongly agreed at 22% and 182 agreed at 12% they were incorporated regularly (Klein et al., 2000). However, over 700 students somewhat disagreed and 182 students disagreed completely indicating hands-on work merit expansion (Burden & Byrd, 2013). Activities tie theory to application boosting conceptual clarity and retention (Ajoke, 2017).

Questioning strategies employed obtained average ratings from learners. 242 students strongly agreed at 16% and 303 agreed at 20% about being questioned during lessons (Darling-Hammond, 2013). But over 600 students somewhat disagreed and over 250 disagreed completely signifying room for progress in cultivating interactive, stimulating dialog (Pavia, 2012). Peer teaching seen as infrequently adopted with only 76 students strongly agreeing at 5% and 152 agreeing at 10% (Shibo, 2019). Over 900 students representing 60% somewhat disagreed indicating missed opportunities for collaborative learning exchanges between equals.

Students rated teacher-led demonstrations among the frequently observed strategies. 485 students strongly agreed at 32% and 455 agreed at 30% being exposed to them (Au, 2007). Involving learners through model presentations bolsters confidence and public speaking abilities (Tella et al., 2010). Revision with KCSE papers was deemed commonly implemented as perceived by 212 students strongly agreeing at 14% and 621 agreeing at 41% past papers were given attention (Guerra & Wubbena, 2017). However, over 300 students somewhat disagreed suggesting an imbalance may exist favoring examination methods (Santiago, 2009).

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Learners are drilled on examination skills through the use of past examination papers. Less emphasis was put on the acquisition of knowledge and skills; as a result, learners came out of school with no life skills for survival. The use of examination past papers for revision restricted teachers from focusing on curriculum objectives; instead, they preferred KNEC objectives that were frequently tested. Frequent examinations led to selective teaching of curriculum content by the teachers. For instance, predicted topics were taught while the rest were either taught partially or completely left out. The unexamined subjects like Physical Education were not taught; instead, time allocated for them was used to cover content in examined subjects. Learners, especially candidates, were exempted from co-curricular activities so as to invest more time in preparation for the examination. All these happenings are contrary to the curriculum goals that are expected to be realised in the school system.

5.2 Recommendations

From this study, the following recommendations emerge. There should be a comprehensive assessment system that ensures diagnostic, formative, and summative evaluation as well as integration of formal and informal curriculum in evaluation. Therefore, the study recommends future studies should be conducted to develop assessment system that ensures diagnostic, formative, and summative evaluation of curriculum content

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