

Effects of High Frequency of Examinations on Choice of Pedagogical Approaches in Kakamega County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to establish the effects of examinations on the choice of pedagogical approaches in secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. Inferential statistics were applied to analyze the data. We employed a combination of Saturated, Stratified, and simple random sampling techniques. 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. The research team developed questionnaires 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 analyzed by use of descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data was coded into sub-themes. The analyzed data was organized in tables and figures. The study found that teacher-centered pedagogy was the main method of instruction during teaching and learning. Therefore The study recommends the implementation of curriculum content should be implemented within the defined time frame by KICD so that students can learn and curriculum objectives can be realized.

Keywords: Examinations, Kakamega County, Pedagogical Approaches, Secondary Schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Examinations serve as a prevalent means of assessment that underpin entire global education systems. Standardized assessments have been a prevalent method for evaluating a significant number of students and facilitating the admissions process in higher education institutions (Kompas, 2017). Examinations serve as a widely employed metric of academic achievement within educational systems, facilitating the progression of learners to subsequent levels of education. The grading system is established based on examination results, which are used to periodically classify all pupils (Sadler, 2009).

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 Clark (2012), students are inclined to experience motivation in their academic pursuits when they achieve favorable outcomes in their examinations. The utilization 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 (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Examinations are conducted on a global scale to assess educational programs and gauge the academic advancement and accomplishments of learners. The aim of education has been reduced to the mere achievement of academic success and gaining admission into esteemed institutions of higher education, as perceived by several students and parents (Johnson, 2004). The ongoing issue around evaluation stems from the fact that the assessment of curriculum value relies heavily on the feedback derived from students' examination scores (Nicholas & Berliner, 2007).

The implementation of accrediting standards and procedures throughout the 1930s resulted in the replacement of school inspections, subsequently shifting the educational focus toward inputs and processes (Helm, 2008). In the United States, the assessment practices employed at the secondary school level are primarily centered around the

utilization of objectively scored exams. These tests, particularly aptitude tests, play a significant role in regulating admission to institutions of higher education (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

The assessment system in Finland is primarily focused on enhancing instructional practices, with a significant emphasis on utilizing assessment data to enhance both instruction and learning outcomes (Madaus et al., 2003). Student assessment is conducted in three domains: within the classroom setting, as a thorough evaluation of student progress upon completion of basic education, and as part of the matriculation examination, which serves as a criterion for entrance to higher education institutions. The 2004 National Curriculum offers guidelines for assessing pupils in the early grades and throughout their foundational education. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education in 2004 classified classroom assessment into two distinct types, namely ongoing assessment and summative evaluation (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Both entities are required by national regulations to conform to national standards, yet they fulfill distinct objectives (Laukkanen, 2008). Students' development and self-evaluation are encouraged by formative assessment in the classroom

Japan has a rigorously competitive examination system that lacks mechanisms for holding instructors accountable for the academic performance of their students. In the context of public education, it is worth noting that students at the primary and lower secondary levels are not subjected to high-stakes assessments, nor are they allocated to educational institutions based on their academic performance (Otiendo, 2002). The burden of academic evaluation commences throughout the lower secondary school years, as the outcomes of these assessments dictate the higher secondary school that children will be admitted to (Kariya & Rappleye, 2020).

Despite the implementation of curriculum reforms that prioritize inquiry-based learning, several African countries continue to uphold high-stakes secondary school exit tests. The assessments provided do not effectively evaluate the aptitude for applying, analyzing, and synthesizing information. Furthermore, they rarely gauge the knowledge and abilities that students require for their post-schooling everyday lives (Cleovoulou, 2021).

The utilization of national tests at the primary level continues to hold significant importance in educational reform, particularly in developing countries, particularly those situated in Africa. For instance, the evaluation process in South African educational institutions has been primarily influenced by the administration of the Junior Certificate Examinations, an annual nationwide assessment (Ajoke, 2017). According to author, the Junior Certificate test has substantial significance for South African pupils in terms of their future employment options after completing their education.

In Kenya, during the years 1960, 1961, and 1963, there was a notable increase in the need for educated Africans to fill vacancies left by the departing colonial authority (Ajoke, 2017). The acquisition of educational opportunities and the attainment of a Cambridge school diploma emerged as fervent aspirations among numerous individuals of African descent. Upon gaining independence, the Kenyan government recognized the necessity of implementing a standardized examination system for the purpose of student selection. Consequently, Kenya collaborated with Uganda and Tanzania to establish a unified assessment organization. The establishment of the East African Examinations Council (EAEC) took place in 1967 (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992).

The EAEC examinations were established by committees including experts in respective subjects. Coalitions of educators collaborated to establish panels. Following the dissolution of the East African community, the Kenyan government took the initiative to form the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). This organisation, which functioned under the Ministry of Education's jurisdiction, was entrusted with managing national exams in the nation. The KNEC Act of 2012, Section 10. (1), assigns the Council a number of responsibilities. These include setting and maintaining standards for exams as well as conducting national exams at the primary and advanced education levels in Kenya that are open to the public. Furthermore, the Council has been given the power to award certificates or diplomas to applicants who pass these tests (Shibo, 2019). Thus, the Kenya National Examinations Council is responsible for overseeing primary, secondary, and technical examination administration.

This organisation, which functioned under the Ministry of Education's jurisdiction, was entrusted with managing national exams in the nation. Section 10 (1) of the KNEC Act 2012 states that the Council is in charge of Stakeholders at various levels of the Kenyan education system have long been interested in the topic of exams. Haertel (2013) asserts that educational assessments are now an essential tool for guiding day-to-day decisions made in the classroom. In addition to evaluating student progress towards learning objectives, selecting and promoting students, identifying effective teaching strategies, and monitoring and assessing the overall effectiveness of the educational system, these assessments serve a variety of functions (KNEC Act 2012). These duties include creating and maintaining exam guidelines and managing public

Overemphasis on examinations has resulted in the 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 recognize 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 (Haertel 2013).

The academic proficiency of students who successfully complete national examinations may not necessarily reflect their true academic abilities, as their success may be attributed to rigorous and unethical practices, such as excessive drilling and dishonest tactics like cheating. Several students who enroll in Kenyan Universities to study medicine and applied sciences leave their studies before their second year because they cannot keep up with the demands of the courses despite their quality grades in KCSE examinations (Li & Han, 2022). Although some students may be able to succeed with such courses, the quality of their human resources is always sub-standard, and little productivity can be expected from them due to their subpar performance (Haertel 2013).

One of the contributing factors to the substandard quality of education in Kenya is over-emphasis on examinations. Li and Han (2022), argued that schools disregard aspects of the curriculum that are core but not examined within the curriculum. Educators adopt a selective approach in addressing the curriculum content, focusing mainly on subjects and topics that are commonly examined in national examinations while disregarding non-examined subjects and topics. Li and Han (2022) established that co-curricular activities like games, theater, and music are ignored to allow more time for students to study examined subjects. If these concerns are not resolved, they are likely to have a negative impact on curriculum implementation.

Recognizing 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 criticized 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. Besides, Otiendo (2002) contends that competency-based assessment is complicated, and teachers hardly utilize 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 established effects of examinations on the choice of pedagogical approaches in secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching methods in education refer to the instructional strategies that teachers employ to aid students in learning the subject matter (Nasibi, 2003). According to Killen and O'Toole (2023), students utilize this approach to comprehend and assimilate the fundamental information, principles, overarching ideas, and proficiencies associated with a particular discipline. Martin (2021) asserts that teaching methods refer to the strategies employed by educators to structure educational encounters to facilitate the acquisition of desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes by learners. There is a diverse range of methods, approaches, and strategies employed in the realm of teaching and learning. Examples include the constructive approach, inductive method, deductive method, and cooperative learning.

According to Osborne and Water (2002), it is important to note that there is no universally applicable method. However, when teachers prioritize the examination performance of their students, they often overlook the individual nature and abilities of their students. For instance, Oundo (2014) argue that teaching approaches such as dramatization can provide a sense of reality and concreteness, particularly benefiting students who may be performing at lower levels.

The significance of the global context in classroom pedagogy, as perceived by educators, is constantly regarded as a vital factor in enhancing learning outcomes. It is imperative to consider this aspect in any educational reform aimed at increasing the quality of education (Pedulla et al., 2013). (Madaus & Clarke, 2001) revealed that assessments did not yield beneficial outcomes in terms of teaching and learning as educators utilized previous examination papers as a pedagogical tool to prepare pupils for successful completion of their assessments.

In the past twenty years, numerous industrialized and developing nations have undertaken significant curriculum and pedagogical transformations to fulfill the objective of Education for All (EFA), frequently with the assistance of external donors. The influence exerted by development partners may have served as a catalyst for governments to implement reforms aimed at promoting learner-centered, active, and competency-based education.

The concepts mentioned have garnered positive reception at the community level as a strategy to attain educational, economic, social, and political objectives (Ramirez et al., 2018).

There is a growing interest among academics and educators in Kenya to develop teaching and learning methods that incorporate the ideas of 21st-century pedagogies. This is in acknowledgment of the importance of the social construction of knowledge, real-life experiences, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. Students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds require and are entitled to an educational environment that is both motivating and helpful. This includes access to interesting instructional materials and opportunities to study in settings that foster cooperation with classmates, teachers, and the broader community (Kafwa et al. 2014). According to Kafwa et al. (2015), individuals classified as 21st-century students possess the ability to effectively comprehend, generate, integrate, and assess knowledge derived from a broad range of disciplines and origins, all the while demonstrating an appreciation for and acknowledgment of diverse cultural perspectives.

In the educational institutions of Kenya, there exist well-established instructional methods that are widely recognized for their effectiveness in delivering subject matter. The selection of an appropriate methodology is contingent upon various aspects, including the characteristics of the learner, the subject matter being taught, the resources at hand, and the instructor's perspective (Angwenyi, 2017). Several instructional methods can be employed in educational settings, such as lecture/teacher-centered approaches, discussions, presentations, role play, demonstrations, storytelling, and dramatization. There is no universally applicable procedure. Nevertheless, when educators prioritize the academic achievements of their students, they may overlook the individual characteristics and capabilities of their students. This is problematic because certain teaching methods, such as using dramatization, have been shown to enhance the understanding and engagement of underperforming students (Pallavi et al., 2016).

The findings of Watanabe (2000) contradict those of previous studies. The researcher discovered that educators made efforts to foster innovation in their examination preparation courses by employing a diverse range of self-created instructional resources. The research findings suggest that educators employ examination resources to varying extents when preparing students for assessments. The utilization of exam materials is influenced by the passage of time, as the proximity of the examination prompts an increased reliance on former exams and commercially available exam-related books.

Resnick (1982) argues that an excessive focus on examination performance might lead to pedagogical approaches that prioritize test preparation, potentially resulting in negative consequences for both the intended curriculum and student outcomes. This phenomenon occurs when educators transition their objectives from facilitating students' acquisition of a comprehensive comprehension of the subject matter to prioritizing the regurgitation of the instructed material to get elevated scores and, consequently, favorable academic evaluations.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that the presence of examinations influences educators to prioritize teaching content that aligns closely with the test format and content (Madaus & Clarke, 2001). The selection of instructional approach is influenced by educators' attitudes and preferences with regard to achieving high performance in standardized national assessments (Kafwa et al. 2014). Dufresne et al. (1996) observed that the utilization of suitable methodologies enhances the efficacy of the learning experience, whereas the implementation of unsuitable methodologies hinders the learning process. According to Rehmani (2003), students place greater value on preparation tactics than on subject matter in the country's summative and mono-skill-based examinations. Rehmani further emphasized that educators and students operate within a demanding environment, wherein teachers often resort to predominantly employing the lecture approach for instruction and learning. Students tend to adopt a superficial approach to learning due to the expectation that they must memorize the information presented in their assigned textbooks.

Additionally, a study conducted by Agwagah and Ezeugo (2000) revealed a significant correlation between instructional tactics, namely the use of concept mapping, and academic performance in the field of mathematics. In a similar vein, the study conducted by Kamoru and Isioma (2007) showed that students who were instructed using the guided scoring system had superior academic performance compared to those who were taught using conventional methods. Furthermore, Rhone (2006) conducted a study that demonstrated that engaging in practical conversations beyond the confines of the classroom can enhance students' performance in the field of mathematics.

According to Rind & Ali (2019) study, there was a significant difference in student performance on final test questions based on the instructional format used. Specifically, the years 2007 and 2008, which employed an interactive teaching approach, yielded higher student performance compared to the year 2006, when a traditional lecture format was utilized. The revelations corroborate the findings of Lundberg (2003), which indicate that classrooms that incorporate peer learning are more effective in predicting student learning outcomes compared to typical classrooms that emphasize individual and independent work.

Mupa and Chinooneka (2015) argues that teaching practices should prioritize the cultivation of learners' abilities to inquire, experiment, explore, discover, and problem-solve. The pedagogical approach that prioritizes examinations promotes the practice of repetitive and memorization-based learning, which may be deemed inadequate and inequitable for students. Students get a sense of worth and appreciation when their educational experience acknowledges and incorporates the diverse backgrounds and aspirations of the learners.

According to Salkind (2008), the teaching methods employed in Kenya are impacted by the pressure placed on teachers to meet performance expectations. Regrettably, the evaluation of instructors' effectiveness is predicated on students' examination scores, exerting an influence on their instructional methodologies. These pedagogical methodologies transform students into active learners consistently over the duration of their four-year academic journey. Tella et al. (2010) contend that teacher-centered methods result in rote learning and cramming, where students only participate in the learning process when asked questions and teachers fully participate in class activities through explanations and discussions. In the context of Kenya, there appears to be a lack of initiative among instructors to enhance their educational approaches, which can be attributed to the influence of national test outcomes. According to Samson et al. (2000), educators adopt conventional instructional approaches with the intention of facilitating successful performance in tests.

According to Haertel (2013) the utilization of instructional strategies such as the debate cum narration method offers students the advantage of dual benefits. The platform offers ample opportunities for students to engage in the process of selecting themes or presenting ideas related to problems, assessing these ideas through the interchange of thoughts, and making decisions with appropriate supporting materials. According to Adeyeni (2008), the practice of teaching examinations has implications not just for the structuring of information but also for the way subject knowledge, principles, and concepts are conveyed. Educators relinquish their most effective instructional practices to adhere to standard-based education, for which they are held responsible. This suggests that the instructional methods employed by educators can either effectively convey the desired subject matter or tend to prioritize teaching that places greater focus on tests. Madaus and Clarke (1999) established that examination-oriented approaches fail to adequately address the acquisition of practical skills, values, and attitudes among learners. The techniques primarily focus on the achievement of learners in national examinations. Students are subjected to a state of bondage because of their dependence on educators who impart knowledge through teacher-centered instructional methods (Madaus & Clarke, 1999).

III. METHODOLOGY

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 (Samson, 2000). 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. Additionally, the implementation of simple random selection guaranteed that all children had an equal opportunity to be selected for inclusion in the sample without any inherent bias. Stratified random sampling was used to select schools, taking into consideration their typology. The categories encompassed in this classification are National, Extra County, County, and Sub-County. A representative sample of schools was selected from each stratum, except for the national category. In the national category, all schools were included in the study because the County had only two national schools. An interview guide comprising a set of questions developed by the research was used to collect data from the principals. Utilization of an interview guide was most effective as it provided an opportunity for probing, hence resulting in a greater number of responses. Acquisition of primary data ensured a significant level of integrity and reliability. The study utilized a sample size of 2053

participants, who consisted of 1800 students, 200 academic Heads of Departments (HODs) representing teachers, 40 principals, and 13 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs).

The study included a sample of 40 schools, which consisted of 2 national schools, 2 Extra County schools, three county schools, and 33 Sub County schools. Each school selected a total of five academic Heads of Departments (HODs) from the following departments: Sciences, Languages, Humanities, Technical, Applied, and Mathematics. The sample included principals from the schools that were selected. Saturated sampling was employed as the sampling technique to ensure the inclusion of all Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) from the 13 sub-counties within Kakamega County.

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

The data collection process involved the utilization 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.

National Commission on Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) approval was sought to conduct the investigation. The obtained permit was then used to acquire approval from the County Director of Education (CDE) and Sub-County Directors of Education (SCDE) to facilitate the participation of Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASO), principals, teachers, and students in the study. Pre-visits were done to selected schools to seek permission from the school administrators. With the support of research assistants, most of whom were teachers from the selected schools, the questionnaires were distributed to schools, filled with the guidance of teachers, and collected the same day.

QASO 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.

Before analyzing 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. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if there were statistically significant mean differences between the school examination policy and the MOE policy. Based on the objectives of the study, descriptive statistics or frequency, percentages, mean values, and standard deviation were used to describe and summarize the opinions of respondents. Version 20 of (SPSS) aided in data analysis. The hypothesis was examined with a 5% significance level.

The findings suggest that priority is given to subjects that are included in the assessment process during the teaching and learning process. It is hardly surprising that a majority of 954 students, accounting for 63% of the total, indicated that teachers utilised the designated time for Physical Education to instruct on courses that are assessed through examinations. These findings were analysed according to QASO guidance principles, in which a considerable proportion (60%) of participants said that teachers refrain from instructing some courses due to their exclusion from national examinations.

This suggests that disciplines that are deemed irrelevant in terms of national examinations are often overlooked despite their potential to contribute to students' academic growth. Rather than adhering to the prescribed curriculum and aligning assessments accordingly, teachers prioritised tests to the detriment of syllabus coverage. When specific components of the curriculum are not effectively executed, learners are deprived of essential knowledge, abilities, and values that are crucial to their daily lives. The frequency of tests serves as a motivating factor for both teachers and students, as it directs their efforts toward achieving high grades rather than focusing on the broader aims of the curriculum.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

There cannot be an effective implementation of a curriculum without efficient teaching practices. For this purpose, the third objective sought to establish the influence of examinations on pedagogical approaches used by teachers in learning. The findings are presented in tables 2 and 3

Table 2

Teachers Response on Choice of Pedagogical Approaches

Potential Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
Group Discussion	25(14%)	50(28%)	5(3%)	59(33%)	36(20%)	2.46	0.949
Dictation of notes to students	40(22%)	121(67%)	4(2%)	11(6%)	5(3%)	3.06	0.907
Student's demonstrations and presentation	16(9%)	23(13%)	5(3%)	74(41%)	70(39%)	2.98	0.842
Use of educational media	11(6%)	16(9%)	4(2%)	94(52%)	56(31%)	2.95	1.01
Practical activities	27(15%)	11(6%)	7(4%)	58(32%)	76(42%)	3.13	1.04
Lecture method	18(10%)	61(34%)	54(30%)	36(20%)	11(6%)	3.32	1.066
Use of past examination papers during teaching	22(12%)	97(54%)	4(2%)	36(20%)	25(14%)	3.01	0.918
Composite mean and Std						2.99	0.96

Table 2 presented the teacher's responses on the choice of pedagogical approaches used (Ruxton, 2006). Group discussion is an important student-centered approach that promotes collaborative learning. However, as shown in the table, only 25 teachers strongly agreed and 50 agreed that they employed group discussions, meaning only a minority of 14% and 28% respectively used this approach (Pavia, 2012). A worrisomely high number of 59 teachers representing 33% disagreed with using group discussions and 26 teachers constituting 20% strongly disagreed (Santiago, 2009). This suggests that collaborative learning through group work and discussions, which have significant educational benefits, are rarely used in many classrooms (Blazer, 2011). Dictation of notes was found to be the most commonly used method according to the responses. About 40 teachers representing 22% strongly agreed they took this approach while 121 teachers agreeing was 67% (Nicholas, 2007). Taking down notes verbatim limits students' ability to process information critically and engage in higher-order thinking. It encourages rote learning approaches that are not ideal for achieving deeper understanding (Rehmani, 2003). While notes provide important information to recall content, excessive reliance on dictation restricts other active learning processes (Tella et al., 2010).

Student demonstrations and presentations saw even less use, with only 16 teachers agreeing at 9% and 23 teachers somewhat agreeing at 13% (Klein et al., 2006). However, this is an important way of fostering student-centered, self-directed and autonomous learning. Presenting allows students to develop communication, organizational and problem-solving skills on various topics (Kafwa et al. 2014). With 74 teachers somewhat disagreeing at 41% and 70 teachers strongly disagreeing at 39%, it is evident demonstrations are seldom incorporated into lessons. Educational media which can aid visualization and conceptual understanding recorded very low usage rates (Buhere & Ochieng, 2013). However, 94 teachers representing 52% somewhat disagreed and 56 teachers at 31% strongly disagreed. This implies the limited use of audio-visual aids, models, simulations and other tools that make abstract concepts more concrete and generate student interest. Subjects like sciences benefit immensely from instructional resources yet they seem under-utilized (Esu et al., 2004). Practical activities which link theory with practice fared slightly better but were still not widely adopted. 27 teachers at 15% strongly agreed and 11 teachers at 16% agreed to some extent on using them. Nonetheless, 58 teachers representing 32% somewhat disagreed and 42 teachers constituting 39% strongly disagreed. Hands-on learning through experimentation and fieldwork aids long-term retention of concepts but is evidently not common practice (Burden & Byrd, 2013).

Lecture method recorded relatively more use with 18 teachers at 10% strongly agreeing and 61 teachers agreeing at 34%. However, a significant number of 36 teachers at 20% somewhat disagreed and 11 teachers at 6% strongly disagreed. While lecturing has its place, overdependence on it fails to tap into students' creativity and problem-solving abilities. Too much passive listening discourages active participation critical for meaningful learning (Ajoke, 2017). The use of past examination papers during lessons was the approach most frequently applied. About 22 teachers representing 12% strongly agreed and 97 teachers agreeing at 54% to revising with previous tests. Nevertheless, 36 teachers constituting 20% somewhat disagreed and 5 teachers at 14% strongly disagreed. An overemphasis on tests could negatively impact the intended aims of the curriculum over time. But as an approach

alone, examining past papers provides useful feedback for teachers and students (Rehmani, 2003). The composite mean of 2.99 and standard deviation of 0.96 indicated that teacher-centered approaches like lecturing and dictation were dominant, while learner-centered methods received less preference. The predominance of methods encouraging passive learning is a concern that requires policy-level examination. Implementing a variety of interactive strategies is more likely to produce motivated, independent learners capable of life-long learning.

Table 3
Student's Response to Choice of Pedagogical Approaches

Potential Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
Teachers encourage group discussion	121(8%)	106(7%)	61(4%)	818(54%)	409(27%)	3.01	1.48
Teachers dictate notes	227(15%)	1015(67%)	30(2%)	152(10%)	91(6%)	2.47	0.88
Teachers use a variety of resources	61(4%)	378(25%)	152(10%)	833(55%)	91(6%)	2.53	0.88
Teachers engage students in practicals	333(22%)	182(12%)	91(6%)	727(48%)	182(12%)	2.66	0.869
Teachers ask questions	242(16%)	303(20%)	30(2%)	682(45%)	256(17%)	2.55	0.898
Peer teaching is used	76(5%)	152(10%)	61(4%)	909(60%)	258(21%)	2.60	1.066
Teachers engage students in the demonstration	485(32%)	455(30%)	152(10%)	303(20%)	121(8%)	2.64	1.023
Teachers use KCSE Past papers for revision	212(14%)	621(41%)	227(15%)	318(21%)	136(9%)	2.75	0.898
Composite mean and Std						2.727	1.011

Table 3 presented student responses on the choice of pedagogical approaches used. Regarding group discussion, 121 students strongly agreed at 8% and 106 agreed at 7% that teachers encouraged this. However, an overwhelming majority of 818 students disagreed at 54% and 409 strongly disagreed at 27% (Santiago, 2009). This implies discussion was infrequently used despite its educational benefits in developing critical thinking. Dictation of notes was still favored with 227 students strongly agreeing at 15% and 1,015 agreeing at 67% this occurred (Berliner, 2011). While useful, excessive emphasis on recorded notes fails to stimulate students' active involvement. With 152 somewhat disagreeing at 10% and 91 strongly disagreeing at 6%, over-reliance on dictation constrains learning (Rehmani, 2003).

For using varied resources, only 61 students strongly agreed at 4% and 378 agreed at 25%. In contrast, 833 students somewhat disagreed at 55% and 91 strongly disagreed at 6% (Pavia, 2012). Learning is optimized when different materials suited to diverse learners are incorporated (Blazer, 2011). Practical work saw 333 students strongly agreeing at 22% to being involved while 182 agreed at 12%. However, 727 somewhat disagreed at 48% and another 182 strongly disagreed at 12% (Klein et al., 2006). Hands-on learning through experimentation fosters conceptual grasp and higher-order thinking but is limitedly applied (Au, 2007). Questioning by teachers received 242 strongly agreeing at 16%, 303 agreeing at 20%. Yet 682 somewhat disagreed at 45% and 256 strongly disagreed at 17% that this took place frequently. Interactive questioning is central to gauging comprehension and sustaining interest yet underused. Peer teaching had a meager 76 students strongly agreeing at 5% and 152 agreeing at 10% while 909 somewhat disagreed at 60% and 258 strongly disagreed at 21% (Tella et al., 2010). Collaborative learning enables skills development but is scarcely employed.

Students' demonstrations met with 485 strongly agreeing at 32% and 455 agreeing at 30% it occurred. However, 303 somewhat disagreed at 20% and 121 strongly disagreed at 8%. Presentations improve communication abilities yet form a minority part of lessons. The revision strategy adopted most was use of past papers, with 212 strongly agreeing at 14% and 621 agreeing at 41%. But 318 somewhat disagreed at 21% and 136 strongly disagreed at 9% that this solely guided instruction (Guerra & Wubbena, 2017). Over-reliance on one strategy constricts curriculum delivery. The composite mean of 2.727 and standard deviation of 1.011 validated teacher-centeredness as the dominant model; to the disadvantage of interactive student-centered approaches. Prioritizing examinations jeopardizes deep learning.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

From the findings, it was evidenced that the choice of pedagogy was determined by examinations. Teachers imparted knowledge through conventional approaches, which resulted in rote learning. Teacher-centered methods were used, which did not enhance learners' understanding of the concepts taught. This approach only allows learners to memorize concepts and reproduce them during examinations. The conventional approach applied denied learners room for the acquisition of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, the approach did not provide a holistic approach to educational experiences.

5.2 Recommendations

The attitude of early syllabus coverage is unprofessional; therefore, study recommends that the curriculum content should be implemented within the defined time frame by KICD so that students can learn and curriculum objectives can be realized.

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