

TEACHERS' AND PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE EFFECTS OF PUPILS' RANKING IN KENYA CERTIFICATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION (KCPE) ON THE USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS BY TEACHERS IN SELECTED PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ELDORET MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

School ranking especially at K.C.P.E level which used to show top performing schools was abolished and replaced by top candidates ranking. The objective of this study was to investigate primary school teachers' and pupils' perception on the effects of pupils ranking in K.C.P.E on the use of instructional methods by teachers in selected public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality. There being fifty public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality, 30% of them were selected through stratified and simple random sampling method. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from the teachers and pupils. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The study findings were that teachers vary their teaching methodologies; that there is unfair competition in schools amongst learners which is a big blow to the slow learners. It was recommended that teachers should embrace current pedagogical skills; that examinations that cut across the curriculum be adopted.

Key words: Effects, perception, influence, pupils' ranking, teaching instructional methods:

1.1 Background Information

Ranking of schools is not a new phenomenon. Ranking of schools in various countries is done for various academic and professional reasons. According to Leiter (2007), the excellence of the faculty and professional opportunities afforded by an education must surely be two: traditional and central markers of academic excellence in law school or any professional school. He adds that schools themselves engage in constant self representations on both counts, while professionals and learners tend to have impressions of their own. Ranking in most cases has been used for academic purposes. Ranking of schools is not only limited within ones country, but also in a global dimension where various schools across the globe have been ranked.

Lagos business school (LBS) made history as the first of its kind to sub-Saharan Africa to attain world ranking. According to Chuku (2007), the school was ranked among top 50 business schools worldwide in the area of open environment executive education programmes. The international rankings do not only market Lagos business school but promote the morale of teachers in these schools. At the same time, it shows that teachers are highly performing. Teacher performance can be said to be high based on the rankings or position of schools both nationally and internationally.

Ranking of schools both internationally and globally has and continues to make education competitive in the world. Teachers would do their best to ensure they are recognised as most performing and competitive in the world. Africa has not been left out in the international ranking. According to Chuku (2007), four South African schools were rated among the World's best in the 2008 financial time's business rankings. Lagos Business School (LBS) in Nigeria was the African institute to appear in that year's ranking. LBS was ranked 48th in the open enrolment programme category. Overall the rankings were led by business schools in Europe and North America (Chuku, 2008). It is clear from the rankings that, African schools are not doing well on the global scene. Therefore, ranking, as well as showing competence and performance in various schools and countries also shows lowly performing, incompetent schools and teachers of various schools.

According to News Vision 27 February, (2009) entitled: Uganda: Top Schools dominated final exams, Uganda Martyrs S.S. and Namugongo had emerged the best in previous years' A level exams out of 61 schools across the country. Kings College Budo closely followed Namugongo in that ranking. Private schools like Atlas high school, Gayaza, Turkish Light Academy and Sweta high school, Mukono all were among the best 20 of the ranked schools. It is very evident that competition among schools was high even as private schools struggled for a share of the top 20. Ranking therefore can be seen as a tool of increasing performance of schools and their teachers. Since schools on their own cannot appear top in any country, teachers must put in a lot to ensure that pupils shine in their final exams. When pupils perform well in the exams, the schools emerge top and their respective teachers are recognised as highly performing.

A teacher is charged with the responsibility of causing learning to the learner (Farrant, 1980). The teacher spends most of the time with the learner and through their interaction the learner is expected to exhibit change in behaviour and classroom performance as well as in co-curricular activities. In most cases ranking of schools focuses on the performance of learners in national and international examinations. Since pupils' performance is the product of teachers input, the teacher is well placed to tell if they are performing well or not thus the school performance. However, there were various reasons given for and against ranking of schools. A given section argued that ranking of schools promoted unhealthy competition. "Schools would do anything to appear in the national dailies" (Siringi, 2010). Ranking was blamed for encouraging cheating and top performing students and teachers were not celebrated. The abolishing of the system is perceived to change the teaching instructional methods to improve school performance by eliminating drilling and rote learning and prefacing it with acquisition of relevant skills.

In Kenya, ranking of primary schools in national exams started in 1989 for the 8-4-4 Curriculum (Otieno, 2010). The aim of ranking schools in National Examination was to help individual schools and teachers to know how they fared in the exams and gauge their performance. Reactions to the release of K.C.P.E results by the ministry were predictable. Others would be celebrating their top ranked positions nationally and their dominance in the top cream while others would be moaning their poor performance based on their ranked positions. On the other hand, some would feel no difference. Jubilation and sorrow would sweep across the land in equal measure. Teachers' and students' performance is inseparable. They have been used synonymously. One may think it was the teachers fault for learners not to excel. Learners' performance boosts the school mean score and every teacher will do all it takes to appear among top schools. According to Muindi (2009) head teachers in many schools paid and pledged to pay rewards motivate teachers and learners in promoting school performance.

Emphasis on education in developing countries gained credence following the 1961 Addis Ababa conference which considered it a right of all young people (Thompsons, 1981). The Kenya education commission (1964) - the Ominde Report- in its attempt to formulate the educational needs for Kenya as an independent nation also strongly recommended Free Primary Education. This saw its eventual implementation in 2003. Through government funds and donor agency aids, there was a massive influx of pupils into primary school to a time of additional 1.2M (East African Standard, March 2003). This has been the onset of challenges to teaching and learning. Over enrolment was apparent in every school. This included average children joining different classes and with them street children and those from questionable backgrounds (ibid).

The government's noble cause of having all legible children in school has been hailed. However, it has been blamed for not showing a serious and consistent effort towards provision of quality education through hiring sufficient teaching staff, constructing new schools and expanding existing facilities, providing in-service training or improving on supervision. Since its inception, F.P.E has continually faced problems of inadequate facilities, falling teacher pupil ratios, reducing personal teacher pupil interaction, low staff motivation, ineffective management, absenteeism, overcrowding and inadequate sanitation facilities (Chege ,2004).

Ranking of schools is blamed for the cheating in National Examinations. According to The Standard Friday, 20th March 2009, the only advantage of ranking was that schools would use it as a motivation to work hard to stay at the top. Ranking of schools has also been blamed for only encouraging unhealthy competition. However, it is evident that school performance in Eldoret Municipality has drastically declined according to educational stakeholders during the period of ranking of schools (EMC 2010). This is shown in Table1

Table 1: KCPE analysis for years 2006-2009 (Eldoret Municipality)

School category	Year			
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Private schools	347	377	342	360.5
Public schools	213	207	210	200
Out of 500	280	292	276	280.25

From the KCPE of year 2009 results analysis, it was observed that only 12 out of 37 public schools had a mean score of over 250 marks and that out of the 51 candidates who scored 400 marks and above, only 6 of them came from public schools. In contrast, 579 candidates from public schools as compared to 56 from private schools scored below 200 marks (EMC, 2010). This indicates that the academic performance of pupils in public schools is wanting as compared to their counterparts in private schools in Eldoret municipality. The low academic performance in the municipality can be attributed to many factors like Free Primary Education, shortage of teachers and lack of teachers' commitment to their work. However, the present study sought to investigate primary school teachers' and pupils' perception on the effects of pupils' ranking in KCPE on the use of instructional methods by teachers in Eldoret Municipality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There has been increased concern on school performance in the recent times. School ranking especially at K.C.P.E level which used to show top performing schools was abolished in favour of

individual candidates ranking. According to Siringi (2010) ranking of schools promoted unhealthy competition since schools could do all it takes to appear in the national dailies. Cheating had replaced hard work amongst teachers and students who wanted their schools to emerge top. A survey by the researcher in Eldoret Municipality indicates that schools performance has declined tremendously since the abolition of schools ranking in favour of individual pupils ranking (see table 1). Thus the study sought to investigate the influence of pupils' ranking in KCPE on the use of instructional methods by teachers in selected public primary schools in Eldoret municipality. Data was presented by use of tables.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to assess the influence of pupils' ranking in KCPE on the use of instructional methods by teachers in selected public primary schools in Eldoret municipality.

1.4 Pupils' Ranking and use of Instructional Methods

Teachers' method of teaching or strategies employed by teachers in an attempt to impact knowledge to the learner is referred to as methodology. Osokoye (1996) sees teaching method as the strategy or plan that outlines the approach that teachers intend to take in order to achieve the desirable objectives. It involves the way teachers organize and use techniques of subject matter, teaching tools and teaching materials to meet teaching objectives. Sometimes when a teacher teaches and at the end of the lesson, evaluation is carried out and it is discovered that students are unable to carry out the behavioural or instructional objectives what the teacher needs to do is to examine his teaching methods rather than looking at students as the causes. Most untrained teachers point accusing fingers on students rather than on themselves when the students are unable to carry out the expected behaviour at the end of the lesson or in examinations.

Joyce (1992) notes that the main reason why a teacher is in the classroom is to deliver organized conditions to enable the learner achieve the required content. The learning process should be made to be sure, more predictable and more efficient. Harrison (1983) says that if the teacher chooses the conditions of learning carefully, it will assist the learner to recall what was previously learnt.

According to Mukwa and Jowi (1988), laboratory and practical work techniques are highly suitable for teaching Agriculture, Social and Natural Sciences. In this method, the cause, effect and nature of the learning activity are determined by actual experience or experiment under controlled conditions. Students therefore learn skills and acquire knowledge in a real life setting. Other appropriate teaching methods are demonstration and direct experience as they provide students with concrete experience of real life situations. On the other hand demonstration and informal lecture are vital as they allow exchange of points of views amongst students and between students and the teacher so as to arrive at collective decisions and conclusions (ibid).

This comes in handy after the laboratory and practical work. In their study, Fonseca and Conboy (2006) quoting Easton (2002) said that students in a residential high school in the USA were interviewed in order to determine perceptions of their learning needs. The needs they identified included personalized learning, teachers who care and active learning. They also quoted Wong et al (2002) who said that teacher behaviours that promote development of student autonomy were important. Another study by Tucker et al (2002) as quoted by Fonseca and Conboy (2006) analysed student generated solutions to enhance the academic success of African-American youth. Among them was praise and encouragement by teachers.

Teaching methodology is very important in class room as Farrant (2000) puts it. According to him, a child centred method for teaching for older primary schools and secondary school students is most appropriate. It tries to break from formal and conventional methods of teaching. Bell (1983), argues that pupils' understanding of basic needs develops slowly and the keener the teacher is the more advantageous it is to the learner. Larcombe (1985) observes that the learners have difficulties due to unplanned activities. With declining academic achievement, has come the push for educators to improve scores on yearly standardized tests. Educators are finding themselves in a double bind (Bateson, 2005). They need to teach what is going to be tested; however, they must also teach the students to become learners. Educationalists would have us believe that the assessment used to judge pupils' work should not dictate the curriculum content. Examination syllabuses should be designed to develop capability and test competence. However, the importance of public examination results to pupils and teachers alike dictate that the nature of assessment and its criteria influence what is learned and how it is taught (Scott 1990).

With the extensive list of standards to be taught at each grade level and only $\frac{3}{4}$ of the school year to teach them before the test is given, teachers are confusing the curriculum for the learning. What they are teaching doesn't necessarily address meaning and relevance (Bloom, n.d.). The information is taught in fragmented bits and pieces. For learning to occur, everything must be interconnected (Bloom, n.d.). Students are being taught pieces of the puzzle and are expected to figure out how to fit it together by themselves.

In the world's higher achieving countries such as Finland, Singapore, and China, emphasis is not put on the standards, but the teaching and learning system. Students are taught to be learners through higher order thinking skills and problem solving. School based assignments and students natural inquisitiveness are brought together by research, inquiry and science investigations. Extensive writing is used to analyze instead of multiple choice. Students are able to explain views and analyze data (Hammond, 2010). This can be done through a technology enhanced learning environment. Connecting pupils to the world with current and interesting information allows children to make meaning and develop insight through careful guidance by the teacher. Student interests and questions become the focus of classroom activity. Educators teach students effective searching, gathering, interpreting and communicating skills. Questioning and information literacy become fundamental parts of the curriculum (McKenzie, 1998).

In the normal school routine the teacher assumes the role of tester until the public examination takes place. It seems difficult for him to deviate from what he thinks the examinations expect of him. Even if he is committed to sound educational aims, both his supervisors and his pupils, consumers, jointly conspire against these aims. Since a school is rated according to the number and quality of passes its pupils have made in the national examinations, school heads may consider desirable certain activities such as note-giving, writing out sample answers to typical questions called from past examination papers, and so on. The consumer in turn expects an intensely directed chalk-talk, note-rote, and grill- drill programme (Isaac 1964:132).

Mukwa (2002) points out that for the achievements of comprehensive objectives of teaching different subjects, the method used must expose the learner to knowledge and experiences helpful in the development of understanding, critical thinking, and practical skills and interested to develop through a particular subject instead of teaching for examination convenience purposes. A variety of instructional

methods should be well selected and blended for meaningful learning to take place. There are many techniques that a teacher can use to make the lesson successful as outlined by (Mukwa 2002). These are: Lecture Method; Discussion; Demonstration; Problem solving; Assignment; Supervised study; and Team teaching and many more methods. This research study seeks to establish whether the teaching instructions employed by the teachers are affected by the Kenya's pupil ranking system based on KCPE in public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality.

1.5 Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This design gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions, identifying the standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationship that exists between specific events (Orodho, 2005). A descriptive Survey research design was suitable in this study since the population to be studied was too large to be observed directly. Here, the natural setting was the selected public primary schools which provided the required data. Koul (1992) argues in favour of descriptive survey research design because it is efficient in collecting a large amount of information within a short time. This study adopted a quantitative research methodology.

1.5.1 Target Population

The target population for this study were pupils, teachers and head teachers in public primary schools in Eldoret Municipality. The study targeted 50 head teachers, 600 teachers and 1,600 standard seven pupils in selected Public primary schools in the Municipality making a total of 2,250 respondents.

1.5.2 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

For the purpose of getting a representative sample, the schools were stratified into 5 Zones. A Stratified sampling technique is a useful blend of randomization and categorization, which enables both quantitative and qualitative process of research to be undertaken (Cohen, 2003). The advantage in stratified proportionate random sampling is that it ensures inclusion, in the sample of subgroups, which otherwise, would be omitted entirely by other sampling methods because of their small numbers in the population (Cohen, 2003).

Simple random sampling was then used to select 30% of the schools from each zone. This agrees with Kerlinger (1986) who noted that. Purposive sampling was used to select the 15 head teachers from the selected schools.

Upper primary school teachers were purposively selected to participate in the study. The study also included those teachers who have been in the profession for the last five years. Therefore 15 head teachers, 60 teachers and 160 standard seven pupils participated in this study making a total of 235 respondents as shown in Table 3

Table 2: Target Population and Sample Size used in the Study

ZONE	No. of					
	Public primary schools	Schools Selected	Head teachers	Head teachers selected	Teachers selected	Pupils selected
Kapsoya	8	2	8	2	8	16
Chepkoilel	9	3	9	3	12	27
Pioneer	12	4	12	4	16	37
Kapyemit	10	3	10	3	12	43
Kibulgeny	11	3	11	3	12	37
TOTAL	50	15	50	15	60	160

Responses from teachers on the Influence of pupils ranking in KCPE on teaching instructional methods

Table 2 discusses the responses of teachers on the influence of ranking on pupils in KCPE on teaching instructional methods

Pupils ranking in KCPE make teachers to:	Responses							
	A		U		D		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	F	%
Vary their teaching methodologies	40	72.7	3	5.5	12	21.8	55	100
Keep themselves abreast of the new developments in pedagogy	10	18.2	5	9.1	40	72.7	55	100
Vary evaluation techniques	40	72.7	7	12.7	8	14.6	55	100

When asked if the ranking system makes teachers to vary their teaching methodologies, 40 teachers (72.7%) agreed, 3 (5.5%) were undecided and 12 (21.8%) disagreed. This implies that, majority, (40) of respondents vary their teaching methodologies so as to ensure that their learners understand what they are taught in order to pass their examinations.

From the table, 10 (18.2%) agreed, 5 (9.1%) were undecided and 40 (72.7%) disagreed that, the ranking system, encourages teachers to keep themselves abreast of the new developments in pedagogy. From the finding, majority 40 (72.7%) of the teachers are not versed with new innovations in education. This means that, there is need for teachers to update themselves with developments in subject areas if they want their learners to be top in the KCPE ranking.

Lastly, from the table, 40 (72.7%) teachers agreed, 7 teachers (12.7%) were undecided while 8 teachers (14.6%) disagreed that the ranking system challenges teachers to use better learner evaluation techniques. This means that, majority of teachers 40 (72.7%) varied the evaluation techniques to ensure that learners are well prepared for KCPE. A few of the teachers, 8 (14.6%) do not vary the evaluation techniques as suggested by their disagreement with the statement that teachers vary the evaluation techniques.

The influence of the Ranking of pupils in KCPE on teachers' instructional methods according to pupils

The table below presents learners views on the influence of the ranking of pupils in KCPE on teachers' instructional methods

Table 3: Influence of the ranking of pupils in KCPE on teachers' instructional methods according to pupils

Pupils Ranking in KCPE make teachers to:	Responses							
	A		U		D		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Concentrate mostly on the bright learners when teaching.	90	58.8	32	20.9	31	20.3	153	100
Vary their teaching methods	46	30.1	45	29.4	62	40.5	153	100
Vary the evaluation techniques	115	75.2	25	16.3	13	8.5	153	100

From table 3, teachers concentrate mostly on the bright learners when teaching was supported by 90 pupils (58.8%) who agreed, 32 (20.9%) were undecided while 31 (20.3%) disagreed. It is clear from the table that, majority of the pupils, 90 pupils (58.8%) are in agreement that teachers concentrate on bright learners. Only 31 (20.3%) disagreed. This implies that pupils believe that teachers focus mostly on bright pupils ignoring weak pupils. This may be informed by the perceived desire of teachers to have their school candidates ranked among the top in the national rankings.

When asked whether ranking of pupils in KCPE makes teachers to vary their teaching methods 46 (30.1%) agreed, 45 (29.4%) remained undecided while 62 (40.5%) disagreed. This shows that majority, 62 (40.5%), of pupils believe that teachers do not use various teaching methods in their schools. However, a minority, 46 (30.1%) agreed that teachers vary their teaching methodologies while 15 (9.8%) were not aware if teachers vary their teaching methods. This shows that the school had a mixture of pupils who were either aware of teaching methods teachers employed or did not care what was happening in the schools.

On whether ranking of pupils in KCPE challenges teachers to use better learner evaluation techniques 115 (75.2%) supported it, 25 (16.3%) were undecided and 13 (8.5%) disagreed. It is clear from the table that majority of learners are aware of different evaluation techniques and are in agreement that better ones are being used. This shows satisfaction of most pupils on various techniques employed by teachers to evaluate the learners.

Influence of pupils ranking in KCPE on teaching instructional methods according to head teachers

Head teachers interviews conducted by the researcher revealed that pupils were being drilled by teachers in order to pass examinations, the plight of every teacher. This suggests that rote learning was common in most schools that wanted their learners to emerge top in the examinations. They also noted that syllabus was not covered in most schools in time or was rushed through very fast to have time for teaching examination. This may be as a result of drilling of learners which was preferred to teaching of pupils as outlined in the objectives of the curriculum.

1.6 Findings

The influence of pupils' ranking in KCPE on the use of instructional methods by teachers

The study reveals that teachers have been made to vary their teaching methodologies and evaluation techniques. Fonseca and Conboy (2006) found out that the most important factor and, one of the most difficult to influence directly, is the quality of teaching. They said that learners readily recognize if their teachers are effective or ineffective, but education leaders may not be privy to the same level of knowledge of the competence of their teaching staff. Ranking of pupils being a concern for both pupils and parents, the best teachers are desired to make pupils appear top in KCPE. There is need for teachers to update themselves with new pedagogies as the study revealed.

The preparedness of the teachers seems to be hampered in schools where the learning facilities seem to be inadequate. Mbiti (1974) asserts that, when school equipment and supplies are delayed, teachers cannot be expected to do their work properly. Poor teaching will lead to poor performance by pupils in public schools. In most of the schools, learners do not complete the syllabus meaning ranking doesn't put pressure on teachers to finish the syllabus. Teachers vary their instructional methods to promote the learners understanding of what they are taught. They also vary their learner evaluation technique. However, Majority of them are not versed with new developments in pedagogy. This erodes the education system since it does not lead to achievement of the objectives of education.

1.7 Recommendations

The recommendation made was that KCPE should be set to cut across the curriculum so as to encourage teachers to complete the syllabus adequately. Teachers should embrace current pedagogical skills as well.

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