

Influence of Examinations Oriented Approaches on Quality Education in Primary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

This paper provides a critical appraisal of the influence of examinations oriented approaches on quality education in primary schools in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to determine effects of examination oriented teaching approaches on learning achievement among primary school pupils in Kakamega County, Kenya. It explored the assumptions underlying pedagogical approaches as well as the negative influences of exam-oriented approaches in Kenyan schools. Examination oriented approaches don't address acquisition of practical skills, values, and attitudes in learners. The approaches merely concentrate on passing of national examinations by pupils. Globally, primary education is recognized as the pillar of any country that is expected to have the stable economy. Due to the role played by education in economic development and promotion of peace development, the United Nations (UN) general assembly in 1948 endorsed education as a fundamental human right. The purpose of the study is to interrogate the influence of examinations oriented approaches on quality education in primary schools. The paper examined the advances of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in defining and actualizing quality education. The paper further assessed the role played by examinations in determining teaching approaches in schools. Instructional approaches play the crucial role in learning achievement of pupils. Appropriate approaches enhance achievement of competencies during the learning process. However, inappropriate methods affect knowledge retention negatively and lead to rote learning. The study was guided by transactional analysis theory as advanced Eric Berne in 1950. Transactional analysis is a method that facilitates communication between learners and teachers in a classroom environment. The theory illustrates how people have developed and how they treat themselves. It further outlines how people relate and communicate among themselves. This is actualized in the provision of suggestions and interventions which enable people to change and adjust to the environment. Flanders (1970), notes that teachers as initiators of communication adopt teaching methods based on their cognitive orientation. Through the pedagogy selected, the teacher communicates to learners in the classroom. Pupils are stimulated in order to achieve learning objectives. Flanders further developed a system of interaction analysis on the transaction that goes on in the classroom. The analysis came up with teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches. This study adopted by transactional analysis theory in order to analyze the influence exam oriented model of education on the use of convectional approaches by teachers in Kenyan primary schools. The qualitative property to be acquired is quality oriented model in primary school education. Inputs which lead to quality education in primary schools are the independent variables of this study. The outputs which culminate into outcomes of quality education are realized in quality indicators. The study had to examine the challenges of educational quality that arise due to pressure from examinations excellence. The study further examined how enrolment in primary schools influences examinations oriented approaches. Particular attention was given to the crises in inputs and processes that affect the output of quality primary education. These crises are reflected in class size, teacher establishment and physical resources that influence

quality education. The study, therefore, focused on teaching approaches practiced by teachers in primary schools. The study adopted mixed methods of study. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research were used. Descriptive survey design was therefore adopted. It targeted a population of 536000 in Kakamega County, Kenya. The target population comprised of head teachers, teachers, and pupils. Purposive and simple random sampling was adopted to obtain the desired sample size. Using the descriptive survey design, data was collected using three sets of questionnaires. The reliability was estimated through use of Cranach's Alpha Coefficient using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0. Findings of the study revealed that examinations oriented approach negatively affect pupils' learning achievement. It is therefore anticipated that this study is significant as findings of the study may help in the formulation of education policies and legal framework which are geared towards curbing inequalities leading to the qualitative approach to primary school education. The policy implementers would also understand and appreciate education policies within which they are supposed to operate in providing effective leadership and management practices in the implementation of quality-based education at primary level. The study is also significant to the field of comparative and International education as it provides data on what the Kenyan government is doing in addressing equality and inequality in education leading to the development of quality based approach to primary school education. The study suggests moderate pressure to excel in school, as exam oriented approach can stifle a student's imagination, creativity and ultimate success the learning process. Inefficiency has infiltrated primary schools due to exam oriented system. It is there recommended that the government should come up with clear policy to redress inefficiency in primary schools to entrench qualityeducation.

Keywords: Approaches, Examinations oriented, Instructional methods, Primary education, Quality education.

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