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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE INFLUENCE OF EVALUATION TECHNIQUES USED BY TEACHERS ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The most important influence on pupils' learning is the quality of teaching, which is a challenge because most schools have not attained it. The study sought to find out the influence of evaluation techniques used by teachers on pupils' academic performance in Kenya. The study was conducted in Elgeyo Marakwet County, specifically Chepkorio Division using a descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised primary schools, teachers and head teachers from the area. The study used stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques. A sample size of 180 teachers and 18 head teachers were selected. Collection of data involved the use of questionnaires, interview guides and observation schedules. The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, like frequencies, percentages and means, were used. Inferential statistics involved the use of Chi-square tests in order to establish relationships between the variables. Qualitative data was thematically analyzed for discussions in the study. From the findings, the respondents agreed that the teachers mostly use written exams, continuous assessment tests and assignments to evaluate the performance of their pupils. This enables the teacher to know the achievement of a pupil after a period of instruction so as to decide whether the learner has attained the desired behavioural change or not and thus find ways of assisting those who are lagging behind in academic performance and in so doing they will improve the performance of their pupils a great deal. Other respondents did not agree on the reliance of scores on written tests to competence and consequently a benchmark; they argued that there are gifted children who may not do poorly in exams but are good in practical subjects and extracurricular activities. They therefore did not agree with the notion that the most important manifestation of quality education has to do with literacy, cognitive abilities, performance and progression to higher levels of learning. It is thus recommended that schools' administrators and teachers should use a variety of evaluation techniques such as tests, exercises, interviews or exams: other alternative assessments like homework, class work and project are also highly advisable. This paper provides educational planners and administrators with insight into teachers' pedagogical competence and the cause of poor academic performance in some Kenyan primary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Poor academic performance of students has been linked to poor teachers' performance in terms of accomplishing the teaching task, negative attitude to work and poor teaching habits which have been attributed to poor motivation (Ofoegbu, 2004). It has also been observed that there are conditions that would make for effective teaching such as resources available to teachers, general conditions of infrastructure as well as instructional materials in schools (Oredein, 2000). These prevailing conditions would definitely show a negative influence on the instructional quality in public schools, which may translate to poor academic performance, attitude and values of primary school pupils. Although teachers' strong effect would significantly influence pupils' academic achievement, other

factors such as socio-economic background, family support, intellectual aptitude of student, personality of student, self-confidence, and previous instructional quality have been found to also influence students' examination score (Starr, 2002), either positively or negatively. Shulman (1986b) advances thinking about teacher knowledge by introducing the idea of pedagogical content knowledge. He claims that the emphases on teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy has been treated as mutually exclusive domains in research concerned with these domains (Shulman, 1987, p. 6). The practical consequence of such exclusion has been the production of teacher education programmes in which a focus on either subject matter or pedagogy dominates.

This knowledge includes knowing what teaching approaches fit the content, and likewise, knowing how elements of the content can be arranged for better teaching. This knowledge is different

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from the knowledge of a disciplinary expert and also from the general pedagogical knowledge shared by teachers across disciplines. It is concerned with the representation and formulation of concepts, pedagogical techniques, and knowledge of what makes concepts difficult or easy to learn, knowledge of students' prior knowledge and theories of epistemology. It also involves knowledge of teaching strategies that incorporate appropriate conceptual representations, to address learner difficulties and misconceptions and foster meaningful understanding. It also includes knowledge of what the students bring to the learning situation, knowledge that might be either facilitative or dysfunctional for the particular learning task at hand. This knowledge of students includes their strategies, prior conceptions (both "naïve" and instructionally produced); misconceptions students are likely to have about a particular domain and potential misapplications of prior knowledge.

Shulman (1987) argues that having knowledge of subject matter and general pedagogical strategies, though necessary, are not sufficient for capturing the knowledge of good teachers. To characterize the complex ways in which teachers think about how particular content should be taught, he argued for "pedagogical content knowledge" as the content knowledge that deals with the teaching process, including the "the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" (p. 9). If teachers were to be successful they would have to confront both issues (of content and pedagogy) simultaneously, by embodying "the aspects of content most germane to its teachability" (Shulman, 1986b, p. 9). At the heart of pedagogy is the manner in which subject matter is transformed for teaching. This occurs when the teacher interprets the subject matter, finding different ways to represent it and make it accessible to learners. This pedagogical competence is what enhances pupils' academic performance. To teach all students according to today's standards, teachers need to understand subject matter deeply and flexibly so they can help students create useful cognitive maps, relate one idea to another, and address misconceptions. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields and to everyday life. This kind of understanding provides a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge that enables teachers to make ideas accessible to others (Shulman, 1987). Shulman's (1986b) views on pedagogical content knowledge have sparked a whole new wave of scholarly articles on teachers' knowledge of their subject matter and the importance of this knowledge for successful teaching. In Shulman's theoretical framework, teachers need to master two types of knowledge: (a) content, also known as "deep" knowledge of the subject itself, and (b) knowledge of the curricular development. Content knowledge encompasses what Bruner (as cited in Shulman, 1992) calls the "structure of knowledge" – the theories, principles, and concepts of a particular discipline. Especially important is content knowledge that deals with the teaching process, including the most useful forms of representing and communicating content and how students' best learn the specific concepts and topics of a subject. "If beginning teachers are to be successful, they must wrestle simultaneously with issues of pedagogical content (or knowledge) as well as general pedagogy (or generic teaching principles)" (Grossman, as cited in Ornstein, Thomas and Lasley, 2000, p. 508).

Shulman (1986, 1987, 1992) has created a Model of Pedagogical Reasoning, which comprises a cycle of several activities that a teacher should complete for good teaching: comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and new comprehension. This makes a teacher pedagogically competent in subject matter presentation.

To teach is to first understand purposes, subject matter structures, and ideas within and outside the discipline. Teachers need to understand what they teach and, when possible, to understand it in several ways. Comprehension of purpose is very important. A teacher engages in teaching to achieve the following educational purposes: To help students gain literacy, to enable students to use and enjoy their learning experiences, to enhance students' responsibility to become caring people, to teach students to believe and respect others, to contribute to the well-being of their community, to give students the opportunity to learn how to inquire and discover new information, to help students develop broader understandings of new information, to help students develop the skills and values they will need to function in a free and just society (Shulman, 1992). The key to distinguishing the knowledge base of teaching lies at the intersection of content and pedagogy in the teacher's capacity to transform content knowledge into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variety of student abilities and backgrounds. Comprehended ideas must be transformed in some manner if they are to be taught. Transformations require some combination or ordering of the following processes: preparation (of the given text material), which includes the process of critical interpretation; representation of the ideas in the form of new analogies and metaphors. Teachers' knowledge, including the way they speak about teaching, not only includes references to what teachers "should" do, it also includes presenting the material by using figurative language and metaphors (Glatthorn and Fox, 1996). Glatthorn and Fox (1996) describe this as the process of fitting the represented material to the characteristics of the students. The teacher must consider the relevant aspects of students' ability, gender, language, culture, motivations, or prior knowledge and skills that will affect their responses to different forms of presentations and representations. Comprising the variety of teaching acts, instruction includes many of the most crucial aspects of pedagogy: management, presentations, interactions, group work, discipline, humour, questioning, and discovery and inquiry instruction.

Teachers need to think about testing and evaluation as an extension of instruction, not as separate from the instructional process. The evaluation process includes checking for understanding and misunderstanding during interactive teaching as well as testing students' understanding at the end of lessons or units. It also involves evaluating one's own performance and adjusting for different circumstances. As such, this paper discusses the influence of evaluation techniques used by teachers on pupils' academic performance. This process includes reviewing, reconstructing, re-enacting, and critically analyzing one's own teaching abilities and then grouping these reflected explanations into evidence of changes that need to be made to become a better teacher. This is what a teacher does when he or she looks back at the teaching and learning that has occurred – reconstructs, re-enacts, and

recaptures the events, the emotions, and the accomplishments. Lucas (as cited in Ornstein *et al.*, 2000) argues that reflection is an important part of professional development. All teachers must learn to observe outcomes and determine the reasons for success or failure. Through reflection, teachers focus on their concerns, come to better understand their own teaching behaviour, and help themselves or colleagues improve as teachers. Through reflective practices in a group setting, teachers learn to listen carefully to each other, which also give them insight into their own work (Ornstein *et al.*, 2000). Through acts of teaching that are "reasoned" and "reasonable," the teacher achieves new comprehension of the educational purposes, the subjects taught, the students, and the processes of pedagogy themselves (Brodkey, 1986). Students (the teacher's audience) are another important element for the teacher to consider while using a pedagogical model. A skilful teacher figures out what students know and believe about a topic and how learners are likely to "hook into" new ideas. Teaching in ways that connect with students also requires an understanding of differences that may arise from culture, family experiences, developed intelligences, and approaches to learning. Teachers need to build a foundation of pedagogical learner knowledge (Grimmet and Mackinnon, 1992).

To help all students learn, teachers need several kinds of knowledge about learning. They need to think about what it means to learn different kinds of material for different purposes and how to decide which kinds of learning are most necessary in different contexts. Teachers must be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of different learners and must have the knowledge to work with students who have specific learning disabilities or needs. Teachers need to know about curriculum resources and technologies to connect their students with sources of information and knowledge that allow them to explore ideas, acquire and synthesize information, and frame and solve problems. In addition, teachers need to know about collaboration – how to structure interactions among students so that more powerful shared learning can occur; how to collaborate with other teachers, and how to work with parents to learn more about their children and to shape supportive experiences at school and home (Shulman, 1992). Evaluation Techniques Used By Teachers and Pupils' Academic Performance As observed by Nevo (1986), Shiundu and Omulando (1992), evaluation is a vital concept in any education system. In fact, the success or failure of any programme in education may be attributed nearly entirely to the quality and quantity of evaluation done at the beginning of, and during the implementation of the programme. Evaluation has been conceived either as the assessment of the merit and worth of educational programmes (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Glatthorn and Fox, 1996; Scriven, 1991) or as the acquisition and analysis of information on a given educational programme for the purpose of decision making (Nevo, 1986; Shiundu and Omulando, 1992). The focus of instructional evaluation continues to be on the progress of the individual pupil whether in terms of increased knowledge and understanding or in terms of the development of attitude and skill instructional evaluation is that in which one sees how far the learning experiences are producing the desired behaviour (Shiundu and Omulando, 1992, p. 199-200). Based on this argument, it goes without

saying that teachers cannot ignore evaluation as it promotes pupils' academic performance.

Oredein and Oloyede (2007) conclude that teachers' management of homework and assignments given to students has an impact on student achievement, especially when it is well explained, motivational, corrected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students. The purpose of education is to bring the desired behavioural change upon the learner. In order to make sure that this behavioural change is manifested after the provision of education for some time, the learner must be evaluated and his achievement marked and reported. This is because the marking and reporting of the student achievement reveal something to the teacher, the school, the parents, curriculum developers among others stakeholders. Effective learning requires that teachers continuously check and evaluate students learning and behavioural outcomes. Presumably, in order to know the achievement of a student after a period of instruction, he must be assessed and his performance be graded and reported so that, not only to decide whether he has attained the desired behavioural change or not, but also to label his position vis-à-vis his colleagues. There is a consensus that grades assigned to the work of the student should represent the extent to which instructional objectives have been achieved and should be in harmony with the grading policies of the school. As such, this study sought to establish whether or not there was a relationship between teacher pedagogical competence on evaluation techniques used by teachers and pupils' academic performance.

According to Aggarwal (1995), every successful teacher has to know the level students attain in learning, to inform students, parents and the public their results, and to take necessary measures for improving teaching and education. Aggarwal (*ibid.*) further states that evaluation shows the correspondence between the required educational demands of the syllabus and the actual learning result using different techniques such as tests, exercises, interviews, assignments, or exams expressed in different forms. Thus the inclusion of tests and quizzes and the use of alternative assessments, like homework, class work, and project are highly advisable in marking, the decision of whose weight is basically the discretion of the teacher. Davydoy (1984, p. 292) states that the study of psychology of learning shows that teachers should not over emphasize the role of marking but, he points out that it is very important to also make effective use of the psychological possibilities of assessment to provide description of the level of the student learning. Temechegn (2001, p. 309) has strengthened the idea of Davydoy, stating that, although assessment in such approach is difficult, the teacher should assess: the extent to which the children are involved in their own learning; how well they are sharing, cooperating and assuming responsibility; how well they are able to attach and puzzle through problems as they confront them; how well they are able to use the tools of learning; portfolios that contain work products that show evidence of achievement and that indicate that they are overcoming their difficulties. The present researcher therefore sought to find out the influence of evaluation techniques used by teachers on pupils' academic performance.

Scrivens (1991) concludes in his celebrated *Evaluation Thesaurus* that, doing evaluation and doing it well matters in pragmatic terms because bad products and services cost lives and health, destroy the quality of life and waste the resources of those who cannot afford waste. In ethical terms, evaluation is a key tool in the service of justice... in social and business term, evaluation directs efforts where it is most needed and endorses the new and better way when it is better than traditional way and the traditional way when it is better than the new high-tech way. In intellectual term it refines the tools of thought and exposes pervasive and disgraceful prejudice a further step toward demythologizing the discipline. In personal terms it provides the only bases for justifiable self esteem (p. 43). All in all, when all is said and done, evaluation is vital because it is the only way a teacher can measure the effectiveness of a curriculum objective. It is for this reason that the study sought to find out the influence of evaluation techniques used by teachers on pupils' academic performance.

According to Maiyo and Ashioya (2009), in Kenya, examinations are generally accepted as valid measures of achievement. The Kenya's education system is dominated by examination-oriented teaching, where passing examinations is the only benchmark for performance because there is no internal system of monitoring learning achievements at other levels within an education cycle. It is generally agreed that the most important manifestations of quality education have to do with literacy, cognitive abilities, performance and progression to higher levels of learning. There is reliance on scores and transition rates as core measures of achievement. Secondary school placement, and to some extent admission, depend on performance of Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination in standard eight (Michael, Miguel and Rebecca, 2004). Although the government has channelled funds into basic education, performance at KCPE shows that most of the students making transition to top schools are from private schools; this creates inequality to access of opportunities to national and top performing provincial schools (Ngugi, 2007). In 2009 KCPE results, out of 1374 candidates who sat for the examination in public day primary schools, none gained admission to the well-endowed national schools in the country. However, the question of examination as the only route to success has been said to have backwash effects as the learner will strive to pass the test not become educated. This study therefore seeks to find out the influence of teachers' pedagogical competence on evaluation techniques versus pupils' academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

Competent teachers are critical in improving pupils' academic performance and closing the performance gap. The most important difference between the most and least effective classrooms is the teacher. The most important influence on pupils' learning is the quality of teaching, which is a challenge because most schools have not attained it. There is need to conceptualize what good teaching is in order to improve classroom practices, which is a major problem that impacts on pupils' academic performance. The quality of classroom education depends, in the end, on how the teacher imparts

instructional content, how the student acquires this content and to what extent the educational objectives are realized in a given lesson. Considering that teachers play a major role in the teaching and learning process, there was need to assess teachers' pedagogical competence in instructional practices that influence academic achievement. There has been an influx of pupils in Kenyan primary schools as a result of FPE and UPE so that the ratio of teacher to pupil has risen to 1:50. This has put strain on existing teaching and learning resources. Despite the efforts put by education administrators to hold seminars, workshops and in-service training to update teachers on pedagogical skills, most teachers do not make use of them in order to improve pupils' performance. There are several problems in many primary schools; for instance, teachers do not vary their methods of teaching: instead, they emphasize on teacher-centred methods. Furthermore, inadequate or lack of instructional materials and general unpreparedness on the part of the teachers culminates into poor teaching and learning. The study therefore sought to analyze the relationship between teachers' pedagogical competence in instructional practices and academic achievement in public primary schools in Chepkorio Division, Elgeyo Marakwet County. This paper is based on the study and focuses specifically on classroom evaluation techniques employed by teachers and how these influence students' academic performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in public primary schools in Chepkorio Division, which is one of the divisions in Keiyo District, in Elgeyo Marakwet County. Chepkorio Division comprises four zones, namely Mosop, Kitany, Chepkorio and Kapyemit. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design makes use of inferential statistics where the results obtained from a sample are similar to the results expected from the entire population. This design was deemed appropriate as it covers a large population and it enabled the researcher to collect primary data on teachers' pedagogical competence on pupils' academic performance. The participants were drawn from public primary schools in Chepkorio Division with a population of 660 participants which consisted of head teachers and teachers. Six hundred and one teachers and 59 head teachers formed the population of the study. The sampling frames of the two categories of respondents were obtained from the Chepkorio Division Education Office. There were 59 public primary schools in the Division. The schools are divided into four educational zones, namely Kapyemit Zone with 14 schools, Chepkorio with 23 schools, Kitany with 10 schools, and Mosop Zone with 12 schools.

The author adopted stratified random and simple random sampling techniques. Stratified random technique enabled the author to stratify the schools into zones whereas simple random sampling was used to select respondents in this case the teachers, who participated in the study. From the above sampling, 18 head teachers and 180 teachers formed the sample size which was 30% of the target population. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview guides and observation schedules. The author used questionnaires to collect information from teachers. Interview guides were used

to collect information from head teachers. Observation schedule involved collecting information while an event was unfolding. Quantitative and qualitative data analytical techniques were utilized. Data from questionnaires was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics like frequencies, means and percentages; aided by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0 for windows. Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed in themes and categories identifying similarities and differences that emerged. Qualitative analysis included presentation of quotes from different respondents. Chi-square tests were used as an inferential statistic to establish relationship between the variables. They were also used to determine the relationship between the availability and use of instructional resources and the pupils' academic performance. Chi-square test was also used to determine the relationship between the evaluation techniques used by teachers and the pupils' academic performance. They were also used to determine the relationship between instructional methods and pupils' academic performance; it was also used to establish the relationship between teacher preparation and use of instructional products and the pupils' academic performance. Frequencies and percentages were used to determine: the values of the demographics of the respondents, availability and use of instructional resources and its influence on pupils' academic performance, the influence of evaluation techniques used by teachers on pupils' academic performance and the influence of teachers' preparation and use of instructional products on pupils' academic performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Evaluation Techniques used by Teachers and Pupils' Academic Performance. The study sought to investigate the influence of evaluation techniques used by teachers on pupils' academic performance. The findings were tabulated as below.

Table 1. Influence of Evaluation Techniques on Pupils' Academic Performance

	Descriptive Statistics				Kurtosis Statistic Std. Error	798
	Mean Statistic	% Mean Mean / 5 * 100	Skewness Statistic Std. Error	4.03		
Traits regarding evaluation techniques						
Enables teachers to know how much the lesson objective has been achieved	4.4706	89 %	-.714	.403	-.378	788
Guides the teachers in preparing remedial teaching	4.4242	88%	-.250	.409	-.895	798
Facilitates computation of successful and unsuccessful pupils	4.3939	87%	-.631	.409	-.533	798
Guide the teacher address pupils with special needs	4.4118	88%	-.497	.403	-.564	788

Source: Author, 2013

The study revealed that 89% (mean=4.47.6) of the respondents were of the opinion that evaluation techniques, enables teachers to know how much the lesson objective has been achieved, 88% (mean=4.4242) agreed that evaluation

techniques, guides the teachers in preparing remedial teaching, 88% (mean=4.4118) supported that evaluation techniques, guide the teacher to address pupils with special needs, and 88% (mean=4.3939) agreed that evaluation techniques facilitates computation of successful and unsuccessful pupils. Instructional evaluation is that in which one sees how far the learning experiences are producing the desired behaviour (Shiundu and Omulando, 1992). This means that teachers assess their pupils' performance after a period of instruction in order to decide whether they have attained the desired behavioural change or not so as to plan for remedial teaching. Through evaluation the teachers will be able to know the weak and able pupils in class and thus find ways and efforts of assisting the weaker ones. Evaluation therefore is the key to effective learning which requires teachers to exercise in their schedules.

The findings of the study are in line with what Aggarwal (1995) found out in his study that every successful teacher has to know the level students attain in learning, to inform students, parents and the public their results, and to take necessary measures for improving teaching and education. He further states that evaluation shows the correspondence between the required educational demands of the syllabus and the actual learning result using different techniques such as tests, exercises, interviews, assignments, or exams expressed in different forms. Thus the inclusion of tests and quizzes and the use of alternative assessment like homework, class work, and project are highly advisable in marking, the decision of whose weight is basically the discretion of the teacher.

However, the findings of study are not consistent with the studies of Blankstein (1996), who states that students' grades and test scores do not reflect the quality of instruction because teachers' input is not the only factor that influences students' performance in schools. Furthermore, Joshua, Joshua and Kritsonis (2006) conclude that teachers condemn the use of students' scores to evaluate their effectiveness and performance. Starr (2002) has identified peer influence, race, ethnicity, gender, motivation, income, intellectual aptitude of the student, personality of the student, self-confidence, previous instructional quality received by students, household environment and parental education as student related factors that influence the academic performance of students. Likewise, Aduwa (2004) holds the same view as Starr (2002), on determinants of students' academic success, that students' home environment, their cognitive abilities, self-esteem, self concepts, study habits and motivation affects their academic success.

As the study indicates, teacher evaluation techniques for students are statistically significant in academic achievement. The finding concurs with what Black and Williams (as cited in Kapambwe, 2010) conclude, that the use of formative assessment has a powerful impact on students' academic achievement. Evaluation techniques such as Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) are a powerful diagnostic tool that enables students to understand the areas in which they are having difficulty and to concentrate their efforts in those areas. CATs also allow teachers to monitor the impact of their lessons on students' understanding. Using the results of CATs, teachers can modify their pedagogical strategies to include the

construction of remedial activities for students who are not working at the expected grade level and the creation of enrichment activities for students who are working at or above the expected grade level.

Relationship between the Evaluation Techniques and the Pupil Academic Performance

The study sought to establish the relationship between the evaluation techniques and the pupil academic performance. The findings were as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Relationship between the Evaluation Techniques and the Pupils' Academic Performance

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	55.379 ^a	39	.002
Likelihood Ratio	54.960	39	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.584	1	.208
N of Valid Cases	59		

Source: Author, 2013

As indicated in Table 2 above, the large Chi-square value (55.379^a) and its associated significance ($p = 0.002$) indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between the evaluation techniques used by teachers and the pupils' academic performance. Thus it can be concluded that effective use of evaluation techniques by teachers has an impact on pupils' performance. The use of evaluation techniques enhances learning since the teacher can gauge whether the teaching and learning objectives have been achieved or not.

These findings seem to concur with what Quist (2000) says that, assessment is useful for the class teacher, the head of institutions, inspectors, parents and learners. It has been used by teachers to help understand and meet the individual need of their learners. The teacher is able to do this by monitoring and establishing the academic progress of the learners, reflecting upon the teaching-learning with an aim of making future instructional processes learner-centred and more effective.

Other studies by Davydoy (1984) and Temehegn (2001) have established a different view. They recognize the need for psychological learning where teachers should not over emphasize the role of marking but, make effective use of the psychological possibilities of assessment to provide description of the level of the student learning. Here the teacher should assess: the extent to which the children are involved in their own learning; how well they are sharing, cooperating and assuming responsibility; how well they are able to attach and puzzle through problems as they confront them; how well they are able to use the tools of learning; portfolios that contain work products that show evidence of achievement and that indicate that they are overcoming their difficulties.

Interview Schedule Discussion

On the influence of evaluation techniques used by teachers on pupils' academic performance, the respondents agreed that the teachers mostly use written exams, continuous assessment tests and assignments to evaluate the performance of their pupils. This enables the teacher to know the achievement of a pupil

after a period of instruction so as to decide whether the learner has attained the desired behavioural change or not and thus find ways of assisting those who are lagging behind in academic performance and in so doing they will improve the performance of their pupils a great deal. Other respondents did not agree on the reliance of scores on written tests to competence and consequently a benchmark; they argued that there are gifted children who may not do poorly in exams but are good in practical subjects and extracurricular activities. They therefore did not agree with the notion that the most important manifestation of quality education has to do with literacy, cognitive abilities, performance and progression to higher levels of learning. As such they were of the opinion that the Ministry of Education should devote other methods of evaluating pupils rather than exam oriented alone. Psychomotor skills should also be tested.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Assessment is a vital activity of instruction. Assessment is a way of observing, collecting information and making decisions based on that information. Evaluation is done in schools in order to rate the performance and understanding of a certain concept in class. Teachers who evaluate their pupils more frequently will have a chance of assessing whether the lesson objective was achieved or not since it reveals to the teacher what the child knows, what he understands, and what he can do. This will also challenge the pupil to work and improve on the past performance thus boosting their academic achievement. Furthermore, grading of pupils work will enable a teacher to produce a list of successful and unsuccessful pupils for promotion purposes.

Therefore, the students' factors may be more responsible for the poor performance in schools. The school environment is such that the classrooms are overcrowded, infrastructure and facilities are inadequate and so it becomes impossible for good teaching and learning to take place. This poor state of schools makes pupils restive and uninterested in learning. This affects their academic excellence in the long run. However, the study found teachers' pedagogical competence with focus on the various variables as factors that influence pupils' academic performance in public primary schools.

It is recommended that schools' administrators and teachers should use a variety of evaluation techniques such as tests, exercises, interviews or exams: other alternative assessments like homework, class work and project are also highly advisable. Furthermore, the teachers should make effective use of psychological possibilities of assessment in order to provide description of the level of the pupil learning. This will enable the teacher to identify areas of weakness and plan for remedial teaching for weak pupils.

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