

Influence of Professional Code of Conduct on Examination Management in Public Secondary Schools in Makueni County, Kenya

Author: Mary Nyiva Makau | The University of Nairobi

Email: nyivamary04@gmail.com

Abstract

Professional practice among teachers is considered an important element towards shaping various school practices. The purpose of this study was to establish whether professional code of conduct affected management of examinations in public secondary schools in Makueni County. The study used cross-section survey design. This study targeted the principals, teachers and students in secondary schools in Makueni County. The target population included all the 319 public secondary schools in Makueni County, 319 principals, 3865 teachers and 97200 students. Proportional Stratified sampling was used to select the sample which included 85 principals, 349 teachers and 383 students. The research instruments used were questionnaires and interview guides. A pilot study was done in one school to ascertain the validity of the research instruments. Data from interview guides was analyzed qualitatively. Quantitative data from the questionnaire was summarized using descriptive statistics. Quantitative data was then categorized and transferred to computer software; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson coefficient correlation was used to explore the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The findings showed that there was a significance relationship between professional code of conduct and examination management in secondary schools. This study recommended that the government through the Ministry of Education to monitor the professional conduct of teachers for effective management of examination.

Keywords: *Professional code of conduct, Examination management, Assessment malpractice*

1. Introduction

The legality of national examinations in Kenya is anchored on a parliamentary act through which examinations are lawfully prepared with the intention to improve the responsibility to taxpayers by educators and thus improve levels of performance (Omari, 2012). Other aims of examinations include comparing the effectiveness of different methods of teaching, giving guidance that focuses on allocation of pupils to appropriate educational courses, dictating the procedure of selection for individuals for particular educational institution or type of employment as well as certification which provide evidence that someone has achieved specified standard of attainment (Alo, 2015). Given the importance of examinations aforementioned, it is only critical that examinations are carried out with utmost integrity and have high levels of credibility.

Davies (2017) notes that the society is very dynamic and struggles to establish goals of socialism and democracy after the revolutionary changes of independence. Many studies reveal that the teacher is a great agent of change in the lives of students and thus teachers should create a setup which enables the students to spend a better life in the society. The teacher can bring this change by awareness of society and methodology of teaching and remaining professional at all times.

The teacher should remain professional at all times as this will mostly influence examination management at the end of the course for all learners which is a very important exercise for all learners in the world thus the need to be carried out with the maximum professionalism it deserves. A constant awareness of the social reality and method to teach are important tools for teachers to prepare students as the society.

Badamus (2006) writing on the causes of examination malpractice discovered the teacher acts as a principal factor. He sees the teacher as a vital figure in the business of schooling on which the quality of instruction given is highly dependent. The quality of instruction he professed is affected by the calibre of people in the teaching job and the extent to which they desire to upgrade themselves and the working environment. Touching on the background and the ability of instructor asserted the two key factors play an integral part in the learning process and almost account for 40%. He was also quick to add that instructors do not possess the capacity to offer learners the experience and a formidable guide with respect to progress and development as they themselves lack the cutting edge, rendering them ineffective to act in that capacity and challenge their students enough to build them up.

Erakhumen (2006) confirmed this by arguing that basic and second cycle instructors do not have adequate know how in the disciplines they themselves profess to teach as their trainers at the time lacked the knowledge and were not properly empowered. Aside instructors lacking the quality of teaching, other external factors also hinder their performance in executing the job with perfection. Olatunbosun and Omoregie (2012) identified working conditions, societal pressure and poor remuneration.

Alutu and Aluede (2006) looking at the issue from a different angle suggested that most schools do not have the capacity to churn out students with excellent results, in the same vain these instructors have their upgrading and promotion linked to the performance of their students. Expatiating further, the writers gave several instances where institutional heads have been blamed for the poor performance of their students. In the bid to redeem their image and save their face resort to giving students the necessary push to secure their future. On the part of lazy teachers they believe will chart the same course as performance is linked to results. Badejo and Gandonu (2010) closing the chapter on the teachers as contributory factor to cheating in exams discovered that 83.3% agreed that poor attendance of lecturers in class encourage learners to cheat in examination, 62.5% in support of their colleagues, also agreed that the high-handedness of lecturers in marking script also breeds sharp practices in examinations.

The most important contextual causes of academic misconduct are often out of individual teachers' hands. One very important factor is time management. One survey reported two thirds of teachers believed that poor time management was the principal cause of cheating (Carroll, 2002). Another important cause of academic misconduct is the contextual factor of an environment of peer disapproval of cheating. Thus, students who believe that their peers disapprove of cheating are less likely to cheat. Indeed, multiple studies show that the most decisive factor in a student's decision to cheat is his perception of his peers' relationship with academic dishonesty (Mcabe and Trevino, 2002).

Moral behavior of teachers has a profound effect on teachers' professionalism and standard of education. Teachers' behaviors with their colleagues and students character formation of students basically depends on the teachers' professionalism and character. Winch, Oancea, and Orchard (2015) concluded that a teacher's success reflects his own philosophy of life and professionalism. Stronge (2018) found that teachers are focusing on developing positive relationships with pupils, fellow teachers, parents and administrators. They also need to understand and accept their own strengths and shortcomings. They are true in their profession and try to get competency in subject area and teaching methods. This in turn relates directly to the examination management process. If they are extremely competent in their subject area and teaching methods, the examination management becomes smooth.

Neil (2017) notes that the teachers' behaviours and attitudes toward students become permanent character trait for those students. This is because most students spent most hours with their teachers than any other person. The teachers behaviour in most cases becomes the final thought for the students. This is because they have authority and very powerful influence on the students. Therefore, the teachers should be very professional as they interact with the students on a daily basis.

Professional practice among teachers has in various studies been considered important elements towards shaping various school practices. Various elements have been identified as components of professionalisms in school set ups. These include professional training, conditions of service, and the relationship of the teacher with the school head or social status. Lack of professionalism among teachers affects effective teaching, learning and administration of the school; these according to Okeke, (2004) could be termed as professional management that could influence examination management in school. Common unprofessional behaviours among teachers in school include; absenteeism from school lessons, lateness, non-preparation of lesson notes, failure to mark students exercise books, non-completion of school records such as diaries, registers, students results, involvement in examination management, illegal collection of money from parents to students, unapproved study leave with pay, drinking , drug taking and sexual immorality (Okeke, 2004).

According to Onyamebo (2005), the teacher is saddled with the responsibility of moulding the child into functional adult that will contribute to the national development with the following knowledge of subject matter being taught in school. This as Onyamebo notes may not be possible when the teacher influences learners towards examination management and other indiscipline behaviours. Teacher classroom practices could affect the extent to which management occur in examination. In Wenglinsky (2001) study, it was established through qualitative research that classroom practices that include individualism, collaboration and authentic assessments could in one way or another affect learners examinations and classroom behaviours.

According to KNEC, (2016), stringent measures have been taken over time to ensure and sustain credibility of the Kenya National Examinations but despite the measures there are still instances of breaches. Examination management continues to face a lot of malpractices, students scoring

highly undeserved marks. The ever increasing incidences of management in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination continue to be accused of examination management in Kenya secondary schools with a focus on Makueni County. The following table shows clearly different counties that were involved in cases of examination irregularities in Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Examination 2015.

Table 1

Counties Involved in Examination Irregularities in KCSE

No	County	Students involved	Number of centres
a)	Makueni	382	22
b)	Bomet	343	19
c)	Nairobi	341	20
d)	Kisii	294	17
e)	Meru	306	18
	Total	1666	96

Source: KNEC 2016

From the table above Makueni County led in the country with 382 candidates and 22 examination centres involved in examination irregularities. This study therefore focussed and sought to establish the influence of professional code of conduct on examination management in public secondary schools in Makueni County.

2. Methodology

This study used cross section survey design. This study targeted the principals, teachers and students in secondary schools in Makueni County. The target population included all the 319 public secondary schools in Makueni County, 319 principals, 3865 teachers and 97200 students (Makueni County Education Office, 2017). Proportional Stratified sampling was used to select the sample. Proportional Stratified sampling technique was applied so as to obtain a representative sample as the population does not constitute a homogeneous group (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The following formulae were used to calculate the sample size of teachers and students. From Normal distribution the sample size was estimated to be:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 PQ}{\alpha^2}$$

Where:

Z is the Z – value = 1.96

P Population proportion 0.50

Q = 1-P

$\alpha = \text{level of significance} = \text{level of significance} = 5\%$ (Quine, 1993)

$$n = \frac{1.96 \times 1.96 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05 \times 0.05}$$

$$n = 384$$

Adjusted sample size

$$n.' = 384 / [1 + (384/97,200)]$$

$$n = 383 \text{ students}$$

$$n.' = 384 / [1 + (384/3,865)]$$

$$349 \text{ teachers}$$

Table 2

Sample Size

Level	Population	Sample size
Principals	319	85
Teachers	3,865	349
Students	97,200	383
Total	101,384	817

Therefore, the total sample for this study comprised of 85 principals, 349 teachers and 383 students in secondary schools in Makueni County.

The research instruments used in this study were questionnaires and interview guide. Questionnaires are tools of data collection which provide comparable data from all subjects. Orodho and Kombo (2002) states that in questionnaires respondents fill in the answers with complete information. They are cost effective and easy to administer especially to literates. They also help the researcher come up with qualitative data. The teacher's questionnaires consisted of two parts. Part one consisted demography data and short answer questions while part two had questions that provide data on the study variables. The students questionnaires also had two parts with part one having demography data while part two had questions on the study objectives. The principal's interviews were orally administered. A pilot study was carried out in one percent of the target population thus one school to determine the validity of this study. The Test Retest method was used to determine the reliability of the reserach instruments. Data was collected and after two weeks the same data was collected again after which a reliabilty coefficient was computed using the Pearson's Product Moment Corelation Coefficient(PPMCC).This is to determine the consistency of the respondents in responding to the items, the closer the reponse by the respondents the higher the degree of reliability. The research instruments scored a coefficient of 0.84 for the principals interview guide, 0.82 for the eacher;s questionnaire and 0.80 for the students' questionnaires. This was deemed satisfactory as stated by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003)

After collection of the returned questionnaires and interviewing all the principals, the obtained raw data was first coded to have homogeneous organization of the valid tools. Data from interview guides was analyzed qualitatively. Quantitative data from the questionnaire was summarized using descriptive statistics. Quantitative data was then categorized and transferred to a computer software; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Means and standard deviations were used to identify the influence of professional code of conduct in relation to

examination management of KCSE in secondary schools. Pearson coefficient correlation was used to explore the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. This formed the basis for drawing conclusions and recommendations.

3. Results

This section covers the demographic information of the respondents who took part in the study and the reporting of the results based on the influence of professional code of conduct on examination management in public secondary schools in Makueni County.

3.1 Demographic Information

The study sought to establish the demographic information of teachers and principals which is gender, age and academic qualification there were 65 male principals and 167 male teachers compared to their counterpart females 20 and 127 respectively. With reference to age, slightly more than half of the principals (55%) were over 40 years of age with only 2% of them below 30 years. On the other hand, most of the teachers (41%) were thirty years and below and only 8 percent were over 40 years. When asked about their education level, two thirds (66.3%) of the secondary school teachers were Bachelor's degree holders, 19% had a teaching diploma as their highest level of education while the remaining 15.3% percent were masters' degree holders.

3.2 Professional code of conduct and examination management as perceived by teachers and principals

The study sought to find out the response of principals and teachers on how professional code of conduct influence examination management in their respective schools. Therefore they were issued with questions that were ranked on a five Likert scale ranging from: 1. strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Not sure 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 3

Perception of teachers and principals on Professional code of conduct and examination management

Professional code of conduct	Mean	Std. Dev
Pedagogical incompetence	4.1	1.4
Compromise of examination standards	4.0	1.3
Aiding and abetting exam malpractice	3.7	1.4
Absence and lateness to exam venues	2.7	1.7
Assessment malpractice	1.9	1.3

From Table 3, the results show that most teachers and principals are convinced that under their professional code of conduct with their employee, pedagogical incompetence is a vice to examination management in Makueni County with the mean score of 4.1. This may imply that majority of teachers were competent with their employers recommendations and thus able to manage examinations effectively. Compromising of examination standards in the County followed closely with a mean score of 4.0 showing that some teachers were likely to be compromised. Aiding and abetting of examination malpractice followed with a mean score of 3.7. Moreover, assessment malpractice seemed not to be influencing examination management in the County at a significant extent as evidenced with the mean score of 1.9. Also, majority of the principals interviewed during data collection stated that professional codes of conduct provided for elaborate guidelines on teacher professionalism to ensure that they conduct themselves as expected. They also stated that the codes of conducts from the employer (TSC and PTA) had provisions on disciplinary measures to teachers who abated in examination malpractices among other disciplinary codes.

4. Discussion

This study found out that majority of the respondent agreed that professional code of conduct play a key role in examination management .Indeed, teachers and principals agreed that part of professional code of conduct emerges as problem to examination management in Makueni County. This professional code of conduct includes pedagogical incompetence of some principals and teachers and this leads to poor delivery of concept to learners hence resort to examination malpractices as represented by mean of 4.06. These findings are in agreement with observations from Badamus (2006) that the quality of instruction is affected by the calibre of people in the teaching job and the extent to which they desire to upgrade themselves and the working environment. A study by Erakumen (2006) agrees that basic and second cycle instructors do not have adequate know how in the disciplines they themselves profess to teach as their trainers at the time lacked the knowledge and are properly empowered.

Also in some schools in Makueni County teachers and principals compromise with exam standards which significantly affect students negatively as they face national exam which set up to standards as indicated by mean score of 4.03. Okeke (2004) asserts that professional practice among teachers has been considered an important element that shapes various school practices. Various elements have been identified as components of professionalisms in school set ups. These include professional training, conditions of service, and the relationship of the teacher with the school head or social status. Lack of professionalism among teachers affects effective teaching, learning and administration of the school; these according to Okeke, (2004) could be termed as professional management that could influence examination management in school. Common unprofessional behaviours among teachers in school include; absenteeism from school lessons, lateness, non-preparation of lesson notes, failure to mark students exercise books, non-completion of school records such as diaries, registers, students results, involvement in examination management, illegal collection of money from parents to students, unapproved study leave with pay, drinking , drug taking and sexual immorality (Okeke, 2004).

Teachers dishonor their professional code of conduct and facilitate aiding and abetting of exam malpractice which has adverse effect in examination management. Abayeh (1996) sharing in the opinion believes those militating factors are very key and to a larger extent influence their involvement in perpetuating examination malpractice. Abayeh (1996) found out that poverty level of supporting staff was at its worst stage and in a bid to improve their lot will employ nefarious tactics to get additional income to augment their meager salaries. Supporting this assertion with facts and figures declared 90% of staff as a matter of fact will ignore laid down regulations and indulge in sharp practices at an agreed fee, 10% he discovered will not be interested in naming a price, but rather trade with students for sex. Alutu and Aluede (2006) looking at the issue from a different angle suggested that most schools do not have the capacity to churn out students with excellent results, in the same vain these instructors have their upgrading and promotion linked to the performance of their students. Expatiating further, the writers gave several instances where institutional heads have been blamed for the poor performance of their students. In the bid to redeem their image and save their face resort to giving students the necessary push to secure their future. On the part of lazy teachers they believe will chart the same course as performance is linked to results.

Lateness and absence of teachers in exam venues emerged as one of the elements that facilitated examination malpractice. Carroll (2002) , notes that the most important contextual causes of academic misconduct are often out of individual teachers' hands. One very important factor is time management. One survey reported two thirds of teachers believed that poor time management was the principal cause of cheating. Badejo and Gandonu (2010) agree that teachers contribute a lot to cheating in exams. They note that poor attendance of tutors in class encourage learners to cheat in examination, and that the high-handedness of tutors in marking script also breeds sharp practices in examinations.

Teachers and principals from Makueni County do not believe that assessment malpractice has an effect on examination management as shown by mean of 1.86. However, examination malpractice could be influenced by factors beyond their control. These additional factors are solely dependent on their students. Thus, students who believe that their peers disapprove of cheating are less likely to cheat. Indeed, multiple studies show that the most decisive factor in a student's decision to cheat is his perception of his peers' relationship with academic dishonesty (Mcabe and Trevino, 2002).

5. Conclusion

The study found out that professional code of conduct plays a very important role in the examination management process. Pedagogical incompetence of some principals and teachers leads to poor delivery of concept to learners hence resort to examination malpractices. In addition, teachers and principals compromise with exam standards which significantly affect students negatively as they face the national exam which set up to standards. Teachers also tend to dishonor their professional code of conduct and facilitate aiding and abetting of exam malpractice which has adverse effect in examination management. Moreover, lateness and absence of teachers in exam venues emerged as one of the elements that facilitated examination

malpractice teachers. Lastly, principals from Makueni County do not believe that assessment malpractice has an effect on examination management. Romiszowaki, (2016) observes that a monitoring mechanism is available for school teachers but with no particular design and structure in existence. There is need to develop a professional standard with the spirit to shift moral codes in behavior of our school teachers. Teachers' moral codes are vital for the process of teaching. It also provides socialization and stability in our younger generation because teacher's morality always acts as a model

The findings of this study inform government policies and recommend specific strategies with clear designs and structures through the Ministry of Education that should monitor the professional code of conduct teachers and principals from time to time. In addition teachers and principals should always ensure that students are well prepared for exams at any time.

References

- Abayeh, A. (1996). *Teacher Classroom Practices and students performance: How schools can make a difference*. Princeton: Education Testing Service.
- Alo, M. (2015). *Curriculum Development in Statistics Education*, Sweden: Uppsala University press
- Alutu, A.N., & Aluede, O. (2006). *Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research*. New York: Free Press.
- Badamus, C. (2006). Outcome of teacher participation in the curriculum development process. *Educ.* 115
- Carroll, C. (2002). *Effective Teaching in Schools: Theory and Practise 2nd Edition*. Deltal Place: Stanley Thornes Ltd.
- Davies, W. (2017). *British Educational Research*. Wiley online Library
- Erakhumen, J. (2006). *Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*. London: Heinemann
- Kerkvliet, C., & Sigmund, P. (1999). *Principals' Leadership Practices And Their Influence On Students Discipline In Public Secondary Schools In Makindu Sub County, Kenya*. Nairobi : Kenyatta University .
- Mcabe, A., & Trevino, P. (2002). *Recruiting Retaining and Retraining Secondary Schools. Teachers and Principals in Sub – Saharan African: Secondary Education in Africa. Thematic Study No. 4* . Ireland: World Bank.

- Mugenda, O.M., and Mugenda, A.G. (2003). *Research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approach*. Nairobi: Act Press.
- Neil, M. (2017) *Studies in Philosophical Realism in Arch, Design and Education*, Landscape s: the Arts, Aesthetics and Educatin 20, DOI.1007/978-3-319-42906-9-18
- Winch, C, Oancea, A, Orchard, J (2015) “The Contribution of educational Research to teachers’ professional learning: Philosophical understandings” , Oxford Review of Education. 41(2) 2012-216
- Okeke, B.S. (2004). *Teaching in Nigeria: The Bureaucracy and Professionalism*. Enugu: Mercury International Publishing.
- Olatunbosun and Omoregie (2012). Police Nab Two Natabe Officers for Exam Fraud. *The Punch Newspaper*.
- Omari, I.M. (2012). Teachers’ participation in curriculum development: what status does it have? *J. Curricul. Super.* 3(2):109-121
- Onyamebo, P. (2005). *Curriculum: Concept, Development, Implementation and Revision*. Nigeria: Ikare-Akoko; Calvary Ways Publishers
- Romiszowaki, A. (2016). *The Effect of Teaching Method and the Motor Educability towards Learning Result Skills to Play Basketball*, Medan State University, Mesnan
- Stronge, J.H. (2018). *Qualities of Effective Teachers*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, (DLC) 2017057163
- Wenglinsky, H.H. (2001). Condition for classroom technology innovations. *Teach. Coll. Record.* 104(3):482-515.